Levels of Resilience and Life Satisfaction in Those with a History of Child Sexual Abuse

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The current study examined the relationship between instances of child sexual abuse and life satisfaction. Specifically, we investigated the role resilience may play as a potential moderator between past child sexual abuse and current satisfaction with life. Participants were 95 undergraduate students at a large southeastern university. Participants completed questionnaires assessing history of traumatic life events, current level of resilience, and current satisfaction with life. There was a strong positive correlation between history of sexual abuse and life satisfaction. However, resilience was not a significant moderator in the current study.

**METHOD**
Participants were 95 undergraduate students at a large southeastern university who completed surveys assessing previous life events (i.e., childhood sexual abuse), current level of resilience, and current satisfaction with life. Please see Table 1 for demographic information.

Participants answered questions related to previous trauma (e.g., “Have you ever been coerced into performing sexual acts?” “Have you ever witnessed someone hitting someone else?”). Participants also answered questions assessing their level of resilience to life events on the CD-RISC25 (e.g., “I can adapt when changes occur” “I tend to bounce back” “I give my best efforts not matter what”). Finally, participants answered questions assessing their overall satisfaction with life via the SWLS (e.g., “In most ways my life is close to ideal” “The conditions of my life are excellent”). Questions were randomly presented to participants.

**RESULTS**
Satisfaction, however, is strongly related to the stress variables. In the current study, instances of child sexual abuse were negatively related to scores of resilience (r = -.67, 95% CI [-1.66, .32] measured at the time of the interview). These main effects were significant (p < .05). In the second stage, the interaction term between instances of child sexual abuse and resilience was added to the model. The interaction term was not significant (p = .56). Variance explained in this step did not statistically increase (R² change = .06, p = .23). Table 2 presents the results of the hierarchical regression. Considering these findings, resilience did not moderate the relationship between instances of child sexual abuse and satisfaction with life. Given that our results did not elucidate resilience as a significant moderator of the relationship between a history of child sexual abuse and life satisfaction, we cannot assume that resilience influences this relationship as decreases negative outcomes in those with a history of child sexual abuse.

**DISCUSSION**
The main purpose of the current study was to investigate the relationship between a history of child sexual abuse and satisfaction with life. Specifically, this study examined whether resilience moderated this relationship. It was hypothesised that there would be a negative relationship between history of child sexual abuse and satisfaction with life and a negative relationship between a history of child sexual abuse and resilience. It was also hypothesised that there would be a positive relationship between resilience and satisfaction with life. The bivariate correlation does support these hypotheses. These findings suggest that individuals with a higher level of resilience reported a higher satisfaction with life.

Resilience moderates the relationship between stress and life satisfaction (Shi et al., 1997). There is no current research studying resilience as a moderating between history of child sexual abuse and life satisfaction. The intent of this study was to expand the research on stress to include a specific event, child sexual abuse, and how it relates to life satisfaction and resilience. Unfortunately, the results do not support the hypothesis that level of resilience moderates the relationship between history of CSA and current satisfaction with life. However, given that this relationship does not show a similar pattern with other stress relationships as seen in Shi et al.’s research (1997).

**FUTURE DIRECTIONS**
The current study used a college sample, so examining this relationship utilizing a more generalized sample is important to determine the consistency of this relationship across other demographics. Previous research shows resilience as a moderator to satisfaction with life in stressed individuals. Future research should expand this idea to other independent variables such as child sexual abuse, or other traumatic life events. Future research should examine these relationships in other samples to see if these results are generalizable and consistent, particularly among emerging adults who do not attend college.

There are likely other variables that moderate the relationship between history of CSA and current satisfaction with life. Some potential variables may be age of CSA onset, CSA severity and duration, or other variables such as current social relationships and support.

**REFERENCES**