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

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ABSTRACT
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. Life satisfaction was assessed using the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, 1985). Gender was included as a covariate to control for expected gender differences in resilience and life satisfaction. The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) was utilized to assess levels of resilience in those participants reporting a history of abuse. The main purpose of the current study was to investigate the relationship between instances of child sexual abuse and current life satisfaction. The intent of this study was to expand the existing literature that supports resilience as a moderator in the current study. Results indicated significant positive correlations among the study's variables. These results support the hypothesis that the relationship between a history of child sexual abuse and life satisfaction is moderated by resilience. Future research should examine these relationships in other independent variables, such as child sexual abuse, or other traumatic life events. Given that our results did not yield resilience as a significant moderator of the relationship between instances of child sexual abuse and life satisfaction, future research should examine this relationship in other studies with a larger sample size.

PARTICIPANTS
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.

METHOD
Students enrolled at a large southeastern university were recruited to participate in a study assessing previous life experiences and current attitudes. Participants answered questions related to previous trauma (i.e., “Have you ever been sexually abused?”). Participants also answered questions assessing their level of resilience to life events on the CD-RISC (e.g., “I am able to adapt when changes occur”; “I bounce back”); “I give my best effort even when I am not sure what will happen”). Finally, participants answered questions assessing their overall satisfaction with life via the SWLS (e.g., “In general, life is good”); “The conditions of my life are excellent.”)

Table 1: Demographic Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>19.78 (1.13)</td>
<td>81 (84.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>81 females; 14 males</td>
<td>55 Caucasian; 35 African American; 6 Asian; 2 Hispanic; 2 Bi/Multi Racial</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RESULTS
Satisfaction, however, must be considered a more generalizable sample important to determine the consistency of this relationship across other demographics. Previous research shows resilience as a moderate to strong positive correlation with resilience and life satisfaction 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 this pattern is replicable 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. Future research should examine these relationships in other samples to see if this pattern is replicable 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. Future research should examine these relationships in other samples to see if this pattern is replicable and consistent, particularly among emerging adults who do not attend college.

DISCUSSION
Resilience may be used to cope with stress and may explain why people with histories of abuse have differing levels of satisfaction with life. The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC; Connor & Davidson, 2003) was administered to assess levels of resilience in those participants reporting a history of CSA. We examined the relationship of resilience to life satisfaction by administering the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, 1985) to assess levels of life satisfaction in those reporting a history of CSA. Understanding the outcomes of CSA is vitally important because there is a gap in the current literature, and filling that gap may lead to a greater understanding of those with a history of CSA. Considering these findings, resilience did not moderate the relationship between instances of child sexual abuse and life satisfaction. Given that our results did not identify resilience as a significant moderator of the relationship between a history of child sexual abuse and life satisfaction, future research may need to reconsider factors that influence the relationship between CSA and life satisfaction in order to reduce negative outcomes in those with a history of child sexual abuse.