

**DON'T CALL ME "IT": EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN EXPERIENCES OF CHILD ABUSE AND CREATIVITY
AS AN ADULT**

An Honors Fellows Thesis

by

COURTNEY RAE BOOTHE

Submitted to the Honors Programs Office
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the designation as
HONORS UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH FELLOW

April 2010

Major: Psychology

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ABSTRACT

Don't Call Me "It": Examining the Relationship Between Experiences of Child Abuse and Creativity as an Adult. (April 2010)

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Researchers have conducted numerous studies examining the effects of one's home life on future success; however, only a small portion of that research covers the specific effects that negative home environments can have on adult creativity. Seeing a close relationship between upbringing and the creative mind, one can infer that childhood abuse has a significant influence on an adult's ability to reach high levels of creative achievement. Experiencing abuse at an early age inhibits feelings of psychological safety and may limit creative potential as well. Researchers who have conducted studies in this area have found mixed results on the relationship between child abuse and creativity. To explore this topic, each participant was given the Abbreviated Torrance Test for Adults. This test measures four aspects of creativity: fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration. Each participant was also given the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ), which provided a quantitative measure of abuse experiences for each individual. The study hypothesized that individuals who score higher on the CTQ will score lower on the Abbreviated Torrance Test for Adults. Although the results were not statistically significant, they supported the hypothesis that measures of abuse were negatively correlated with creativity scores. Having identified a relationship between abuse and creativity, experts in the field of creativity should conduct further studies to deepen the understanding of how abusive environments

discourage creative production.

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NOMENCLATURE

ATTA	Abbreviated Torrance Test for Adults
CTQ	Childhood Trauma Questionnaire

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Most agree that traumatic events experienced in childhood have implications in later life. Discussion arises over where exactly these implications fall and what extent of control the individual has in overcoming these influences. In the case of child abuse, the individual has absolutely no power over the immediate circumstance but is forced to live with the memories and consequences for years to come. Although most abused children are able to overcome the heartache of their experiences and move on to lead successful lives, the impact of abuse is deep and the vibrations travel throughout many areas of life. One area that may be affected by experiences of abuse is adult creativity.

In the past, creativity has been thought of as an illusive term. Numerous scholars have put forth definitions in hope of capturing the essence of this phenomenon. The key to describing creativity is recognizing that the term encompasses many forms and methods of production. Torrance (1962) described four dimensions of creativity: fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration. Fluency is based upon the number of ideas generated and flexibility measures the number of categories that the ideas cover.

This thesis follows the style of *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*.

Originality is based upon the uniqueness of the idea (judged against past responses), and elaboration reflects number details included in the answer. Even Torrance struggled to find an all-encompassing definition of creativity (Shaughnessy, 1998). In spite of this, researches have made progress in the field creativity, utilizing the very spirit of what the term describes. Studies have shown that biographical experiences play a role in molding individuals into creative people; however, only a small portion of this research covers the specific effects that a negative home environment can have on adult creativity.

If there is a relationship between upbringing and the creative mind, one can infer that childhood abuse has a significant influence on one's ability to reach high levels of creative achievement. Maslow's (1986) Hierarchy of Needs states that a person must have several basic needs met before that individual can reach self-actualization.

According to this model, the most basic needs are biological needs, such as food and shelter, and safety needs, such as protection and stability. Abused children rarely have these two categories of needs met and therefore cannot move on to experience self-actualization. A person who experiences abuse as a child can only have these needs met after the abuse has ended. When this happens, that person can reach self-actualization and become truly creative. Carl Rogers (1954) added the condition of psychological safety to Maslow's model and deepened its application to this subject. Rogers believed that a responsive and adaptable environment is essential for creativity to develop. For example, if a boy grows up in a home with a physically abusive mother, this child soon realizes that he is not in a secure position. Physically, he is at the mercy of his mother's

feelings and moods and emotionally, he cannot prepare what will happen to him on a day-to-day basis. Most always, abuse is unpredictable and this causes the victim a great deal of psychological distress. As with most traumatic events, the feeling associated with abuse are sealed in that person's memory for years to come. Experiencing abuse at a young age inhibits feelings of psychological safety so that one is incapable of reaching full creative potential. Roger's and Maslow's work provided a humanistic insight into why an abusive home environment might impede creative development, forming the basis for further study.

Some may view creativity as an unnecessary trait, but a creative mind produces valuable advantages. By thinking creatively, individuals are able to reevaluate, reconstruct, and ultimately overcome many life challenges. Csikzentmihalyi (1998) distinguished between little "c" and big "C" creativity. Little "c" creativity is personal creativity. The effects of this type of thinking are less significant to the world at large. Little "c" creativity helps people conquer many of the small problems that each person encounters on a daily basis. This could include using a toothpick to repair a broken toy, a spatula to reach a high shelf, or even finding an alternate route to work. By overcoming these challenges, people are able to lead more comfortable lives and capitalize on the convenience generated by their creativity. Instead of dealing with the same issues on a day-to-day basis, one can learn to avoid roadblocks and live more productively. This small-scale version of creative thinking often goes unnoticed and rarely has an earth-shattering impact, but without it the world would not run as smoothly. Big "C" creativity is

described as cultural creativity. The consequences of this type of creativity reach beyond the life of the creative thinker, influencing the world in some way. Big “c” is important in overcoming large challenges. This form of creative thinking is usually more deliberate and calls a high level of thinking. Often times, individuals form focus groups in order to maximize the quality of creative production. There have been several methods developed that attempt to direct group collaboration and produce a result that is greater than the sum of the ideas being put forth by each group member. Part of this process involves adding to and advancing other’s ideas in order to produce the best possible solution. Many cutting-edge companies are incorporating these types of strategies by hiring employees to examine the infrastructure of the company and develop ways to improve areas of low production. Whether working with big issues or small ones, creative thinking helps people move forward toward a goal, even after reaching a dead-end. Creativity involves moving in a new direction and overcoming obstacles that once seemed impossible to defeat. This could mean looking at a problem from a new angle or overlooking an unimportant issue in order to move forward. This type of skill is indispensable in the process of creating new ideas and products. It is the driving force of forward movement, which ultimately enriches a person’s life.

The unmistakable advantages of creativity show the importance of developing one’s creative potential. Imagine a young girl who has become a victim of abuse. During a key stage of development, this child has been taught that she has no control over her circumstances. She has been stripped of the ability to think independently for fear of

upsetting the abuser. As this young girl grows up, she copes with her past experiences by seeking to stay out of the spotlight, by being invisible. She has learned that her life is better when she is discreet and maintains a low profile. As a result of this learning, the girl lives a fairly unremarkable life. Sadly, this situation is not rare. Numerous victims have been taught these same lessons and had them affect numerous areas of adulthood. Professional and personal relationships are influenced by the traits that developed as a result of abuse. The abused individual may avoid romantic relationships and remain distant for fear of harm. On the other end of the spectrum, an abused person may become especially needy since they have been told by their experiences that they are insignificant and unworthy. No matter what reaction a person has to abuse, it is important for psychological researcher to examine the effects that abuse has on later life. With a better understanding of the consequences, counseling psychologist can develop methods to help victims overcome some of the trauma associated with abuse. This would give these people the advantage in life that was taken from them as a child.

Erikson (1950) also developed a psychosocial model of childhood development that gives understanding the study of the effects of child abuse. Erikson describes eight types of developmental crises, which every individual must overcome in order to reach a healthy level of development. As seen in Figure 1, statistics show that in 2007 the majority of fatalities as a result of child abuse took place when the child was under one year of age (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2008). According to Erikson, it is during this time of life when the child is passing through the “Trust vs. Distrust” phase.

During this stage, the infant depends on its guardian to supply basic needs such as food, warmth, and shelter. The child's understanding of the world is based on whether or not these needs are met. If the child is never lacking this comfort, he or she will view the world as a place of trust where others can be depended on to come through. If the child is lacking these basic needs, the child develops a fundamental outlook of mistrust. If consistent care is not given, the child learns that the world is unpredictable and unsafe.

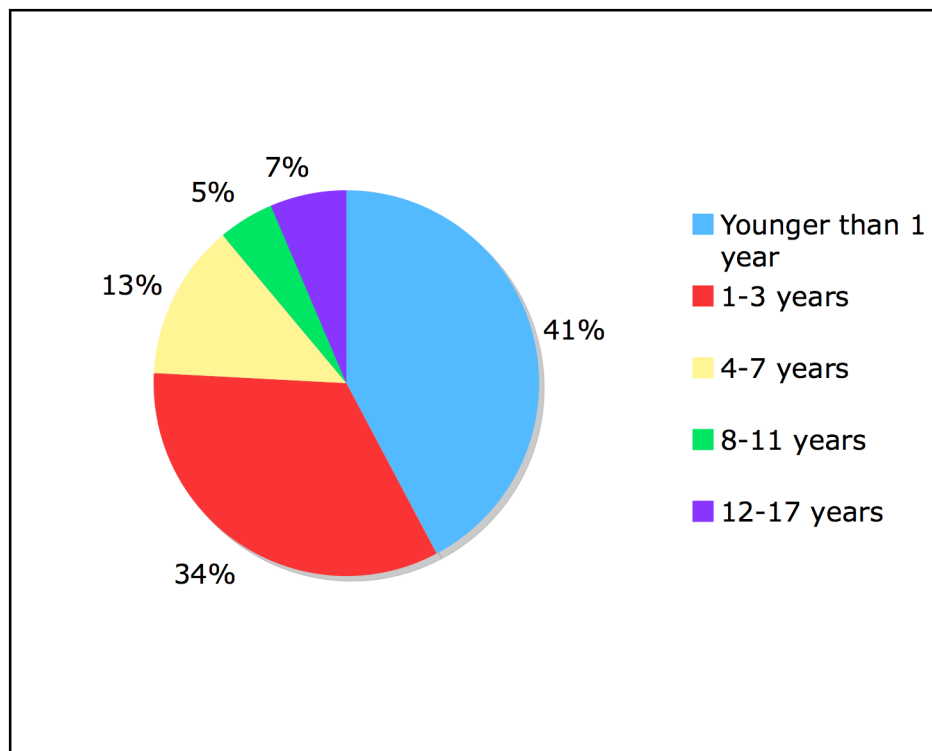


Figure 1. Child Abuse and Neglect Fatality Victims by Age, 2007

By studying child abuse and how it relates to creativity, success can be measured by how much of an understanding can be gained about how these concepts correlate and what can be done to reverse the negative effects of abuse. Based on the models discussed,

abused individuals have not been raised in the type environment that rewards and encourages creative development. To learn the specific impact that abuse has on creativity would further our understanding of how to deal with the effects of abuse and could lead the way for further study in this area. Creativity gives people a clear advantage in approaching all types of challenges, and those who were victims of child abuse should no longer be punished by circumstances over which they were powerless.

CHAPTER II

PROBLEM

Experts in the field of creativity have reported mixed results regarding the relationship between child abuse and creativity. Some researchers have found that repressive environments hinder creative production while others have found that these environments encourage the use of creativity so that individuals can cope with their circumstances. Since the effects of childhood experiences may not be realized until years later, field research has been a valuable tool in examining how home environment affects creative development. In 1996, a conference in Qatar was held, examining the effects of the home environment on the development of creativity (Davis, 1999). The speakers of this conference explicated how repressive home environments that are traditional in Arab societies have harmed the creative ability of Arab men and women. It is believed that this is why creative production in these countries is lower than elsewhere in the world. The speakers of this conference entertain the fundamental idea that environments that do not value creativity will not allow it to flourish. These men and women advocated that if creativity were encouraged, this would enhance the creative production of Arab countries and allow Arabic citizens to live fuller lives. Researchers have been able to develop knowledge about creativity by examining various communities and their attitudes toward creativity.

Research in the field can be a valuable indicator of how being raised in certain

environments can inhibit or encourage creativity. McFarlin, Nelson, and Sherman (1993) tell about the Quarry Hill Community in Vermont who shares a similar point of view as the speakers of the Qatar Conference. This community collectively believes that children who are admired and respected during their early years will have greater capacity for “creativity, self-fulfillment, and compassion.” This community values early experiences and considers them important in the development of the individual. If a child does not have certain forms of support and encouragement from the caregiver, this child will be at a disadvantage to others in developing creativity. Children from abusive homes are rarely admired by the caregiver and are undoubtedly disrespected. According to the view of the Quarry Hill Community, abused children will be deprived of the opportunity to fully develop their creative potential.

Other researchers have conducted controlled experiments to look at this same correlation. Sushma’s (2005) study on child abuse looked at the relationship between both abused and non-abused children in rural areas and abused and non-abused children in urban areas. The results of this study revealed that the rural and abused children scored lower on various dimensions of creativity than their urban and non-abused counterparts. These findings are informative about how abusive environments can harm creativity in children. Children who had been abused performed more poorly on creative tasks, demonstrating that abuse could be an inhibitor of creative achievement. This study looks at the effects of abuse on creativity soon after the abuse has occurred and demonstrates a short-term correlation between child abuse and creativity. The study does

not find out how long these affects last and if the child can eventually compensate for the disadvantage. Nevertheless, this study is a valuable step in understanding abuse and its effect on creativity.

In other studies, researchers have looked at how difficult home environments encourage the development of creative tendencies for use as coping strategies. Myers (1979) examined the experiences of two females who had suffered from parental neglect and who had developed imaginary friends during childhood. Myers believes that the ability to create imaginary friends is a sign of a special ability found in creative individuals in later life. These companions allow the individual to creatively overcome some of the unwanted effects of neglect. Furthermore, events in later life may revive the imaginary companion and the individual may express these fantasies through creative production. Unlike the previous studies discussed, Myers believes that there is a positive correlation between experiences of abuse and creativity. The observation that creativity can be used as a form of escape is a phenomenon that should be looked at in further detail. It is unlikely that every person deals with abuse in the same manner, so it would be valuable to understand what causes some to react to abuse in a way that inhibits creativity versus those who react in a way that advances creativity. Also, this study is valuable in that it looks how experiences of abuse in childhood affect creativity in adulthood. Myers saw that traumatic experiences might produce creative skills that are expressed in later life. The escapist mentality could be the key to the success of many remarkable writers, artists, and inventors.

Bryant-Davis (2005) found similar results when looking at coping strategies used by African Americans to overcome experiences of abuse. A qualitative study was conducted with 70 African American survivors of childhood violence. This study identified several coping strategies, including creativity. Introspection, humor, escapism and creativity were all used by African Americans to overcome experiences of abuse. This study supports the view that creativity can be used to manage the effects of abuse; however, it does not clarify whether abuse actually enhances creativity or if the abuse simply utilizes the individual's current level of creativity. Nevertheless, it is a valuable finding that creativity is one aspect that can be involved in overcoming experiences of abuse. This shows the importance of discovering how abuse can harm creative potential, because if researchers found significant results they could look for ways to reverse these negative effects, encouraging creative development and allowing abuse victims to cope better with past experiences.

Other studies have used a more experimental viewpoint to examine the use of creativity as a coping strategy for abuse. DiPalma (1994) identified creativity as one characteristic that helped sexually abused girls cope with their experiences. The results of this study showed a positive relationship between abusive childhood experiences and high levels of creativity. DiPalma proposed that those who have abusive childhoods are more creative because they had to use creativity to escape from the trauma of their experiences. Because these girls had no power over the outside circumstances, they developed mental abilities that would allow them some sort of control over their lives. Many researchers

have adopted the viewpoint that creativity is something that must be activated and used in order for it to develop properly. Since the abused girls in the study began to use creativity at an early age, their level of creativity proved to be higher than others who had experienced less abuse. The interesting finding in this study is that the level of abuse experienced affected the level of creativity demonstrated. This shows that it is not merely the presence or absence of abuse that affects creativity, but the degree to which abuse occurred. This study finds an obvious correlation between sexual abuse and creativity, but it does not examine whether other types of abuse have the same effect on creativity. Still, these findings are important in showing the relative effect that certain types of traumatic events have on creativity.

In studying how early experiences relate to adult creativity, some researchers have found that certain events do not affect creativity in later life. Plucker and Dana (1998) looked at the influence of parental substance abuse on an individual's creative achievement in college. This study, involving 163 undergraduate students, did not find a significant effect. Still believing that the distress of parental substance abuse would affect individual creativity, the researchers suggested that the effects of the parental substance abuse might not be realized until later life. Even so, the results of this study are important in showing that there may not be a correlation between all traumatic childhood experiences and adult creativity. This demonstrates the importance of looking at specific types of abuse and neglect in order to understand what exactly causes the inhibition or expansion of creativity.

The variety of conclusions that have come from these studies demonstrates the need for

more research in this area. Those studying the relationship between child abuse and creativity must be deliberate and separate both the kind of abuse experienced and the intensity of that abuse. These details may hold the key to understanding what causes some abused individuals to develop creative tendencies while causing other's to have their creative development be repressed. Further study would reveal details about the relationship between abuse and creativity that could help individuals deal with the trauma of their experiences. It is important for those who have experienced abuse to have the same opportunity for creative development as others who did not experience abuse. Gaining understanding in this area is a worthwhile pursuit that may reveal valuable information that could benefit those who experienced abusive childhoods.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between these factors, this study seeks to quantitatively measure various dimensions of child abuse and creativity. Once this data is obtained, the results will be evaluated, noting any significant correlation. Two instruments will be used to compare each participant's experience of abuse and level of creativity. The Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (1997) will be used to analyze experiences of abuse and the Abbreviated Torrance Test for Adults (1998) will be used to evaluate adult creativity. The study hypothesized that there will be an inverse relationship between each participant's score on the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire and his or her score on the Abbreviated Torrance Test for Adults, indicating that those who have high experience of abuse will perform lower in areas of creativity.

The Childhood Trauma Questionnaire is a 28-item self-report inventory that screens for histories of abuse and neglect. Participants will use a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from Never True to Very Often True, to respond to each item. The CTQ accounts for five types of maltreatment - emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, and emotional and physical neglect. These items reflect the most common definitions of child abuse and neglect found in childhood trauma literature (CTQ Manual, 2). Emotional abuse refers to verbal assaults on a child's sense of worth or well-being, or any humiliating, demeaning, or threatening behavior directed toward a child by an older person. Physical abuse refers to bodily assaults on a child by an older person that pose a risk of, or result in, injury.

Sexual abuse refers to sexual contact or conducts between a child and older person; explicit coercion is a frequent but not essential feature of these experiences. Emotional neglect refers to the failure of caretakers to provide a child's basic psychological and emotional needs. Physical neglect refers to the failure of caregivers to provide a child's basic physical needs, including food, shelter, safety and supervision, and health. The CTQ also includes a 3-item Minimization/Denial scale for detecting false-negative trauma reports. The CTQ has proved to be generally reliable based on the internal consistency coefficients that are offered. The validity of the CTQ has been supported by comparing results obtained from the CTQ with ratings assigned by clinicians using semi-structured interviews.

For the purpose of this study, creativity is defined as the tendency to generate or recognize ideas, alternatives, or possibilities that may be useful in solving problems, communicating with others, and entertaining ourselves and others (Franken, 1998). The Abbreviated Torrance Test for Adults is used to provide an operational definition of creativity. Since the 1960s, this test has been the standard for assessing creative thinking abilities. Longitudinal studies have shown evidence of the relationship between performance on this test and real-life creative abilities. The Abbreviated Torrance Test for Adults will afford information about each participant's verbal and figural creative strengths. This tests included four norm-referenced abilities and fifteen criterion-referenced creativity indicators. This test measures Torrance's four aspects of creativity: fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration. The fluency score is based upon the number of ideas generated. The flexibility score measures the number of categories that

the ideas cover. The originality score is based upon the uniqueness of the idea judged against past responses. The elaboration score depends on how many details the respondent includes in the answer. These components will make up the final creativity index that will be assigned to the participant.

The participants of the study will be undergraduate students who are enrolled at Texas A&M University. These students were recruited from their class and asked to participate in the study, in exchange for a quiz grade in the class. To prevent coercion, students were given the option to complete an alternative essay instead of completing the study. This assignment was equivalent in both time and effort to that which is required for the study. Participants were given an information sheet describing the details of the study during recruitment. The study took place at the Student Computing Center at Texas A&M University. Upon entering the testing facility participants were asked to sign an informed consent and to initial next to their name to provide a record of who attended the study, for use in distributing class credit. Each participant was given a CTQ and an Abbreviated Torrance Test for Adults, each linked by an assigned number. Participants were asked not to provide any personal information on these items. Furthermore, no record was made that could link each participant's identity to their test number. The participants were given five minutes to complete the CTQ and then asked to wait for further instruction. After every participant had completed the CTQ, they were given instructions on how to complete the Abbreviated Torrance. The participants were given three minutes to complete each activity on the ATTA. Activity 1 asks the test-taker to suppose that he or she could walk on air or fly, and then to identify challenges that he or she might encounter. Activity 2 involves two incomplete figures. The respondent is instructed to draw pictures with these figures, making them as unusual as possible. Activity 3 presents a group of triangles and asks the

participant to see how many pictures or objects they can draw using these shapes. Testing time for the ATTA totaled about 15 minutes. Once the ATTA had been completed and the researcher collected the CTQ and the ATTA. The participants were provided with information regarding Student Counseling Services and dismissed from the study room. The experimenter collected the data and examined the correlation between scores on the Torrance Test and scores on the CTQ. Due to the sensitive nature of this information, all data was kept confidential and only seen by the researcher.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Twenty-five undergraduate students participated in the study. The results show a slight negative correlation (-0.240) between measures of adult creativity and child abuse. The outcomes from the ATTA ranged from a minimum score of 31 to a maximum score of 90 with a mean of 74.68 and a standard deviation of 12.270. The total scores from the CTQ ranged from 25 to 83 with a mean of 36.96 and a standard deviation of 13.885. These statistics provide a fairly wide range of input from which to analyze participant performance and are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for ATTA and CTQ

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
ATTA total	25	31	90	74.68	12.270
CTQ total	25	25	83	36.96	13.855

To further analyze these results, data was broken into the different types of abuse and each group was compared to the corresponding ATTA total. Research showed that combined reports of emotional abuse and neglect gave a mean of 16.96 and a standard deviation of 7.602. These numbers provided a correlation of -0.240 with the ATTA.

Total physical abuse and neglect provided a mean of 13.52 with a standard deviation of 3.864. When compared to performance on the ATTA, this type of abuse produced a correlation of -0.181. Lastly, combined reports of sexual abuse produced a mean of 6.48 with a standard deviation of 4.194. This gave a -0.191 correlation to the ATTA total score. These results are summarized in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics by Abuse Type

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Correlation with ATTA total
EMO Total	16.96	7.602	-0.240
PHY Total	13.52	3.864	-0.181
Sexual Abuse	6.48	4.194	-0.191

The results of the CTQ were broken down into high, medium, and low levels of abuse experiences. The low level group was formed of scores that were 1SD (or more) below the mean. The medium group was formed of scores that were within 1SD of the mean in either direction. The high group included scores that were 1SD (or more) above the mean. Five participants scored in the high level, 14 in the medium level, and 6 in the low level. The mean score for the high level of abuse is 45.40 with a standard deviation of 21.126. The mean score for the medium level was 36.64 with a standard deviation of 12.567. The

mean score for the low level was 30.67 with a standard deviation of 5.888. More information about this analysis is shown in Table 3.

Table 3

High, Medium, and Low Abuse Groups

CTQ Total								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval For Mean		Min	Max
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
1	5	45.40	21.126	9.448	19.17	71.63	33	83
2	14	36.64	12.567	3.359	29.39	43.90	25	60
3	6	30.67	5.888	2.404	24.49	36.85	25	41
Tot	25	36.96	13.855	2.771	31.24	42.68	25	83

For further analysis, scores on the CTQ were divided into high, medium, and low abuse groups. The difference in scores between the high and low abuse group was 14.73 points. The significance of this difference was computed to be 0.085, almost at the criterion cutoff for the $\alpha = .05$ level. The other between group differences did not hold up to this statistical scrutiny, as their mean differences were not found to be significant. The difference in scores between the high abuse and medium abuse group was 5.98, with a significance level of 0.37. The difference in scores between the medium abuse and low abuse group was 8.76, with a significance level of 0.23. Table 4 summarizes these results.

Table 4

Multiple Comparisons

CTQ Total							
LSD							
(I) Creativity Group (J) Creativity Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval			
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
1	2	8.757	7.035	0.226	-5.83	23.35	
	3	14.733	8.177	0.085	-2.22	31.69	
2	1	8.757	7.035	0.226	-23.35	5.83	
	3	5.976	6.589	0.374	-7.69	19.64	
3	1	14.733	8.177	0.085	-31.69	2.22	
	2	-5.976	6.589	0.374	-19.64	7.69	

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Overall, these results demonstrate that those who scored higher on the CTQ showed a lower performance on the ATTA. Although the correlation between these two scores is insignificant on the statistical level, the outcome is consistent with the hypothesis that experiences of child abuse correlate with lower scores on creative thinking tasks. The data collected is enough to show that these two concepts are related, but it is not sufficient to prove that child abuse is an inhibitor of creativity. Research showed that of the different types of abuse and neglect- emotional, physical, sexual- the strongest correlation was between emotional abuse and performance on the ATTA. This suggests that the emotional impact of abuse could have a negative influence on creative performance. Data also showed that the strongest correlations are found between the high and low levels of abuse. This shows that the medium abuse level blurs the relationship between levels of abuse and scores on the ATTA. When only the high and low abuse groups are observed, there is stronger support for the relationship between abuse experiences and creative thinking abilities. This could mean that significantly stronger experiences of abuse show lead to lower creative thinking abilities. Clearly, more research should be done in this area to explore this possibility.

These findings are valuable because they show that low levels of creative production correlated with experiences of abuse. This warrants further research in this area so that researchers can draw accurate conclusions about the relationship between types of child abuse and creativity. Since the sample was relatively small, adding more subjects to the pool would be a valuable addition to this research. Increasing the number of participants would provide a better representation of the relationship between abuse experiences and creativity. This would give researchers more confidence in drawing conclusions in this area of study.

The ability to think creatively is an advantage in many areas of life. Creative people can look at problems from several different angles and find unexpected solutions. This trait is advantageous both in personal and professional spheres. As more research is being done in the field of creativity, employers have begun to look for creative thinking abilities in interviewing possible employees. Companies that have used creative approaches have fared well in the business world. Aside from becoming a competitive job applicant, creative people have advantages in their personal life. Creative people are often able to lead more stimulating and exciting lives. The satisfaction that comes from using one's own mind to create soft innovations or to overcome problems is priceless. These are advantages that should not be denied to those with experience of abuse. Ultimately, identifying the specific influence of a history of child abuse on a person's level of creativity will help further understanding about how environmental factors influence creative thought. Identifying a relationship between abuse and creativity can allow experts in the field of creativity to better construct an environment that encourages creative production. This could allow them to develop an atmosphere that encourages creative production. Learning how to foster

creativity can help victims cope with the effects of abuse later in life. Gaining information about this subject could lead researchers into discovering how to reverse some of the harmful effects of child abuse so that victims can lead more fulfilling lives.

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