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LEVELS OF ATTACHMENTS AND CHILDHOOD ABUSE
AMONG MEXICAN-AMERICANS

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Social Work

by
Christina Shinn

June 2010

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Approved by:



Dr. Carolyn McAllister, Faculty Supervisor
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ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of the present study was to investigate the relationship between mother-child attachment and childhood abuse trauma. Moreover, mediating factors were examined as potentially increasing the likelihood of childhood abuse, such as parenting styles, household structure, and social economic status. Self-reports of attachment and childhood abuse were obtained from 50 undergraduate students from the California State University, San Bernardino. The instruments utilized in the present study were: (1) the Parental Attachment Questionnaire, (2) the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire, and (3) the Parental Bonding Instrument. This study found, as predicted, a negative relationship between the security of attachment and the reduction in childhood abuse. Finally, the results were discussed in detail, limitations and strengths of the study were recognized, and suggestions for social work at micro and macro levels were offered.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Dr. McAllister, thank you for being my advisor during what I perceived as the most challenging yet, most fulfilling project of my life. Often times you have made academic comments about me that have touched me, and motivated me. Thank you for faithfully meeting with me in order to complete this project and for allowing me to feel that this was all doable.

DEDICATION

Atras de todas las palabras que se encuentran escritas en estas paginas existe un denominador comun, el cambio. Por tu lealtad, apoyo, y amistad en todos estos cambios te estoy eternamente agradecida. Te dedico este tesis a ti, Antonio Castro. A mi hermano Manuel Carrasco, nuestra amistad me ha ayudado a sanar, a enfrentar la vida, y a superarme. Te amo! To "mis cuatro amorsitos" Alice, Bianca, and Maritza and my nephew Brandon. Your innocence and perspective in life has always humbled me, I strive to imitate your sense of gratitude and unconditional love. A mis amigasas Nayeli Corona and Patricia Pasillas. You both have reminded me what the meaning of sincerity is; I have loved how we have cheered for one another in our accomplishments thus far. I love you both! (Senal de manita ☺). To my Best friend, and sister, Dulce Villasenor. Your love and friendship fill me with tears of happiness and gratitude. I have no friend like you! For your unconditional belief in me since we were kids, I thank you. Your love gives me strength. To my undergraduate mentor Dr. Luis M. Rivera. Your investment and commitment to my academic success

have forever changed the course of my life. Thank you for doing all that you have done because you did not have to. To my mentor Dr. Cramer, in the same way that fire refines gold, your belief in me have refined me. I am forever grateful for this rare gift. There are not many days of my life when I don't think of the many lessons I have learned from you. My gratitude is summarized in the words of Isaac Newton, "If I have seen a little further it is by standing on the shoulder of the Giants". I will never forget you, I love you. To *My friend*, Joshua D. Shinn. Thinking of your loyalty during my academic journey brings me an overwhelming feeling of gratitude! For listening to me when things got challenging, when quitting seemed like an easier route, for sharing in my joy when I finally transferred and graduated, I thank you. Thank you for reading my papers, for in those papers I told my story. Lastly, I dedicate this thesis to myself. I have learned that through the hardships and challenges in this life I can rely on my own strength. It is my very perseverance that has motivated me to become a Clinical Therapist and my hunger for life that have never allowed me to quit. I cheer to my innocence, to my perseverance, to my resilience, and my dreams.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

The goal of the proposed research is to investigate the relationship between mother-child attachment and the severity of childhood abuse trauma in a sample of Mexican-American female and male college students. Earlier research has focused on other factors that may increase the risk of childhood abuse including parenting styles (e.g., Doyle, 2001), household structure (e.g., Turner, Finklehor, & Ormrod, 2007), and social economic status (e.g. Gillham, Tanner, & Cheyne, 1998). However, although these factors will be measured in the research proposed they are only of a secondary interest.

Within the field of mental health, personal and social consequences of childhood abuse continue to be acknowledged and investigated. Child abuse is defined as "physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, or negligent or maltreatment of a child younger than the age of 18" (Rick & Douglas, 2007, p. 48). Although there are many characteristics that are shared by different types of abuse, there are also major differences that are

important to recognize. For example, sexual abuse is often done in secret, emotional abuse typically is not (Glaser, 2002). Furthermore, sexual abuse is often accompanied by emotional abuse; emotional abuse is often described as the "murder of the soul" (Shengold, 1979, p. 533).

Different types of abuse tend to co-occur (Glaser, 2002). For example, sexual abuse can lead an individual to feel emotionally abused. In the same way, emotional and physical abuse tends to take place simultaneously. It is estimated that 65% of children that are emotionally abused are also physically abused (Glaser, 2002). However, since physical abuse can be more apparent, physical abuse is typically detected much earlier than emotional abuse. Consequently, childhood abuse is a complex social issue.

Children that are abused tend to keep their experiences a secret for many years before telling anyone (Ainscough & Toon, 2000). In their book "Surviving Childhood Sexual Abuse," Ainscough and Toon (2000), investigated the barriers to disclosing child abuse. Among the reasons are: (1) not knowing who to talk to, (2) not knowing what to say, (3) being afraid of the

abuser, (4) fearing other people's reactions, and (5) being confused about the abuse itself (pp. 50-51). Therefore, the child often is forced to face the traumatic experiences on his/her own.

Such a stage of disequilibrium is again experienced if the child decides to disclose the secret; the crisis is now experienced by the whole family (or those people directly involved). Moreover, there are many dilemmas that a child faces before disclosing to someone else his/her traumatic experiences. Because many of the victims have been abused by someone he/she knows, often a family member, a survivor of abuse will often feel as if he/she is betraying the abuser by disclosing this dark secret. The source of betrayal stems from a form of attachment, typically developed with the abuser. Attachment theory has been adopted by researchers to investigate the relationship between child-adult attachment and child abuse (Aspelmeier, Elliott & Smith, 2007; Hinnen, Sanderman, & Sprangers, 2009; Robison, Lindaman, Clemmons, & Doyle-Buckwalter, 2009).

Humans' innate desire to build strong emotional bonds with others, specifically with the mother, is known as "attachment" (Bretherton, 1992). Attachment theory is

well accepted by many disciplines, including evolutionary biology. Our innate desire and ability to form attachments with others, lead us to form groups. Group formation serves to protect each of us, and therefore, ensures our survival. The need to form social bonds is arguably preferred over the need to meet physical interests like food/eating (Parke, Ornstein, Reiser, & Zach-Waxler, 1994). When a child is deprived of social attachments, he/she is left to his/her own, therefore, becoming more interpersonally and physically vulnerable. Attachment can affect the way child abuse is faced, how abuse is processed, and its acceptance. These factors will be revisited and further discussed below.

Based on a research study in Uganda, Mary Ainsworth introduced the world to her new concepts of secure and insecure (ambivalent and avoidant) attachments. When mother-child attachments are secure the child is willing to separate from her and freely explore the surrounding area, returning to her just to "touch base." Children with ambivalent attachments cling to their mothers and were not likely to explore. Children with avoidant attachments were willing to explore but did not "touch base" with their mothers, and were unresponsive when she

left and then returned (Bretherton, 1992). Her correlational results revealed that mothers who were sensitive developed a secure attachment with their infants, whereas mothers who were insensitive developed insecure attachments with their children.

During her Baltimore Project, Ainsworth expanded on her previous research findings. Her study focused on the mother-child interaction using reactions analyzed through an intense observational, note taking technique. Ainsworth focused on the mothers' sensitivity towards the child's needs. If the mother was in tune with the child's needs, and had a secure attachment with him/her, then the feeding process went smoothly. However, if the mother was unclear as to what the child needed then the child presented problems for her while feeding. Overall, mothers who were more sensitive to her child had a more harmonious relationship with the child. In contrast, the children of mothers who were insensitive showed poor coping skills in the form of elevated crying.

The relationship between child-mother attachment and childhood abuse has been previously investigated (e.g. Aspelmeier et al., 2005). According to a study by Aspelmeier et al. (2005), it was found that if the

mother-child attachment is secure, the child will experience less severe childhood abuse trauma. In contrast, insecure attachments (both ambivalent and avoidant) are related to increased severity of childhood abuse trauma (Alexander, 1992). Unfortunately, due to the correlational nature of the research, often necessary when investigating the relationship between childhood abuse and attachment, causality remains unclear. In any case, the relationship has not been thoroughly researched using Mexican-American samples. Previous research has focused on investigating attachment styles in Mexican-American adolescents but did not investigate childhood abuse history, (Tacon & Caldera, 2001); and childhood sexual abuse in Mexican-American population but the attachment styles were not addressed (Huston & Parra, 1995). Therefore, this study seeks to incorporate childhood abuse history, and levels of attachments among Mexican-American college students. Currently, the Inland Empire has a large concentration of Mexican-American men and women, as reflected in the student population at California State University (CSUSB), San Bernardino. For example, according to the census.gov website, Hispanics represent the largest ethnic group (40.57%) nationwide;

the Hispanic population is the largest ethnic group in the Inland Empire (72.22%). Thus, it would be ideal to use the Latino population at CSUSB to learn more about the relationship between attachment and childhood abuse amongst Mexican American college students.

Studying the relationship between childhood abuse and attachment is important because childhood abuse is a serious social problem. In the year 2007, for example, 1,760 children died in the United States from abuse/neglect. A total of 75.5% of the children were under the age of four (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008). Children under the age of five are more vulnerable because they do not go to school, and therefore the possibility of outside help becomes more limited, if not totally impossible. Studying childhood abuse and its relationship to attachment is important because many children depend on professionals like social workers for help and hope. In fact, the influence of a social worker in an abusive home may save a child's life. Furthermore, the investigation of the childhood abuse/attachment relationship using Mexican-American women and men will assist human service workers in the Inland Empire and further their understanding of the

child/parent dynamic, and how to deal with the emotional, physical, and psychological damage that survivors face. Such knowledge could lead to the implementation of "culture-sensitive" preventative programs which could reduce the occurrences of child abuse in Mexican-American households. Lastly, statistics obtained through the Center for Social Services Research University of California at Berkeley (Child Welfare Service Report for California, 2009) reveal that our current "curative approach" has not proven to be effective in decreasing the number of child abuse reports, and a greater sense of urgency in the study of this social problem is required. California has reported a total of 97,136 substantiated child abuse cases so far this year. The number of Mexican-American children involved equals 35,508 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008). Research on the childhood abuse/attachment relationship in Mexican-Americans is needed because it may assist in lowering the prevalence of childhood abuse.

At the macro-level of public policy, investigating the relationship between mother-child attachment and the severity of childhood abuse trauma in a cultural context may also influence the development of policy. In the

past, research dealing with childhood abuse has successfully informed the development of public policies such as the Child Abuse and Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) state grants. This policy was signed into law in 1974. Over the years CAPTA has been amended. The revisions were expressed in the following acts: (1) The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment and Adoption Reform Act of 1978, (2) the Child Abuse Prevention, Adoption and Family Services Act of 1988, (3) the Child Abuse Prevention Challenge Grants Reauthorization Act of 1989, and (4) the Drug Free School Amendments of 1989 (Department of Health and Human Services). It is important to highlight that policies developed to prevent childhood abuse, as well as the development of future preventative policies stemming from culturally sensitive research, like that proposed, function under the basic belief that the government has a fundamental role to protect a child if the parent fails to do so; a concept known as "Parents Patriae."

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of the study is to investigate mother-child attachment and childhood abuse trauma. More

specifically, the study will examine levels of attachment and their relationship to different types of abuse including physical, emotional, sexual, and negligence. Moreover, a secondary purpose of the study is to analyze mediating factors that may increase the likelihood of childhood abuse, such as parenting styles, household structure, and social economic status. Results from this research can hopefully serve to begin the process of moving our culture away from a "curative culture" and toward a "preventative culture."

One potential solution in assisting the move away from a "curative culture" to a "preventative culture" is to use evidence-based treatments (EBT). It is believed that EBT is the best kind of therapy for a child who has been victimized (Robison et al., 2009). However, implementing these types of therapies require a high level of expertise and additional training, money, and time.

Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) is an EBT that focuses on increasing the level of attachment between the parent-child. The therapist coaches a parent through the therapeutic sessions, and allows the father/mother to be at the forefront of change. The

parent is active in listening, praising, redirecting the child, and the child typically responds in a compliant way when these positive reinforcements are present. As a result of the developing attachment, the "intunement" increases (Bigner, 2006). In the same way, Theraplay focuses on increasing the attachment of parent and child. Theraplay is also effective in strengthening parent-child relationships and can prevent the removal of a child from his/her home (Robison et al., 2009). Additionally, Theraplay focuses on the aftermath of child abuse by meeting attachment needs. Post-tests of the Theraplay method revealed improvements in a child's attachment levels. The goals of Theraplay are to increase the child's working models, and to help the child develop affect regulation (Robison et al., 2009).

In order to increase the quality of the therapeutic services agencies offer to families, government funding needs to continue to support the agencies that prove to be effective. The number of therapists specialized in EBT are also limited. A study conducted by Kolko, Herschell, Amanda, and Kolko, (2009) utilized a study from Child in Child Welfare (CCCW) to examine the quality of mental health services received. The results revealed that of

the agencies that had contracts with the Child Welfare System (CWS), only half used EBT; and from the agencies that used EBT, only half of the clinicians showed clinical expertise. Therefore, more therapists need to become specialized in the use of evidence-based therapies.

A quantitative research method using participants over the age of 18 will be adopted in order to test the hypotheses. The sample will be collected from California State University, San Bernardino. Questionnaires that measure attachment qualities and childhood abuse experiences will be given to each participant. This method was chosen since interviews may increase the risk of re-traumatizing an individual who has experienced childhood abuse trauma. This will be a correlational study in which the relationship between mother-child attachment and childhood abuse trauma will be examined.

Significance of the Project for Social Work

Results of this study, focusing on mother-child attachment and childhood abuse trauma, whether or not a relationship is found, the research is important. It will contribute to the practice arena, to social work at a

micro level, and a macro level, potentially influencing public policy making. For example, finding a correlation between mother-child attachment and childhood abuse trauma will assist practitioners at a micro level in developing specialized, culturally-sensitive therapies that prove to be effective (i.e., EBT). The results would urge clinical practitioners to focus on understanding and building on the attachment between the child and the primary caregiver in a Mexican-American household. The clinical practitioner can then use this avenue to address the behaviors, phobias, emotions and traumas the child faces due to his/her abuse. The results of this study can contribute to the social work field at a macro level by identifying factors that may put children at risk for childhood abuse, and subsequently to public policies developed to prevent abuse. Therefore, this study seeks to shed light on ways to prevent childhood abuse, and to identify potential ways of stopping the abuse cycle. If one is able to demonstrate the relationship between mother-child attachment and childhood abuse trauma, one can also deduce that strengthening levels of attachment may serve as forms of childhood abuse prevention.

In accordance with previous research, it is hypothesized that there is a significant negative relationship between levels of attachment (LOA) and severity of childhood trauma (SOCA). In other words, the higher the level of attachment (where secure is assumed to be a higher level of attachment than insecure), the lower the severity of childhood abuse trauma. It is also hypothesized that there are specific negative relationships between LOA and emotional, physical, sexual abuse, and neglect. In other words, the higher the level of attachment, the less emotional, physical, sexual abuse, and neglect will be reported. Factors like parenting styles, household structure, and social economic status, which have been found to be related to childhood abuse, will also be examined. However, as noted above, investigating the relationships among these factors and childhood abuse trauma is of only a secondary interest.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In this chapter, attachment theory will be discussed in further detail. The discussion is initiated by explaining the origins of attachment theory, and how the theory was formed and shaped through research. Additionally, literature reporting a negative correlation between levels of attachment and severity of childhood abuse trauma will also be discussed. Literature reporting the relationships between different types of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual and negligence), and the levels of attachment (secure, ambivalent, avoidant) are reviewed as well. Although only of secondary interest, factors that have been found to increase the risk of childhood abuse, such as parenting styles, household structure, and social economic status, will also be examined.

Attachment Theory

In order to understand attachment theory, one must understand its origins. The development of attachment theory began when John Bowlby (1969) challenged Freud's

psychoanalytic theories. According to Freud, children sought close contact with the mother because she was the provider. Bowlby argued that this concept was incorrect, and that a child would prefer physical and psychological nurturance over being fed (Bowlby, 1969).

When physical and psychological needs are met, a secure attachment between parent and child forms. The most common characteristics of secure attachment are a secure base and parental sensitivity, warmth and responsiveness (Bretherton, 1992). When these needs are not properly met, a child will build what is known as an insecure attachment, termed ambivalent or avoidant attachments. An ambivalent attachment is typically formed in unstable or stressful environments. The mother in such an environment is often insensitive (although not necessarily rejecting) of the child's needs (Bigner, 2006; Bowlby & Ainsworth, 1992). For example, if the child is crying, the mother may be confused as to whether the child needs a diaper change, to be fed, or he/she is simply having a "meltdown." Children who have developed an avoidant attachment will more likely than not have a mother who is insensitive and unresponsive to a child's needs. Body contact is limited in insecure attachments,

and the parent tends to have compulsive tendencies (Bigner, 2006). Insecure attachments leave a child vulnerable. For example, because children desire love and acceptance, they often seek attention, and tend to be people pleasers (Robison et al., 2009). The role of attachment is continually being researched in order to further understand its role in the prevention and treatment of childhood abuse.

Childhood Sexual Abuse, Levels of Attachment and Psychological Disorders

Aspelmeier et al. (2007) investigated the relationship between childhood sexual abuse (CSA), levels of attachment, and psychological disorders. The study tested two hypotheses: the first hypothesis predicted a correlation between CSA and psychological dysfunctions, and the second hypothesis predicted a correlation between CSA and levels of attachment. A total of 324 female college students participated in their study. There were ten attachment measures utilized in the study, and three measures of trauma symptom inventories (TSI). The ten attachment scales measured the bonds between peers, close-adult relationships, and parent-child attachment. Both hypotheses were supported. There was a positive

correlation between CSA and psychological dysfunction; results also revealed that parent-child attachment was related to CSA. Children who had been abused prior to the age of 16 reported lower levels of secure attachment, and higher levels of insecure attachment. Insecure attachments were also associated with higher levels of trauma related symptoms. Since secure attachment promotes warmth, sensitivity and responsiveness, it was expected that children who have been abused come from households in which they had insecure attachments.

Childhood Trauma/Adverse Experiences

Hinnen et al. (2009) analyzed the relationship between childhood trauma/adverse experiences and levels of attachment in a group of 437 individuals who completed a series of questionnaires through a psychology research website in which the study was announced. Previous research led the authors of this study to hypothesize that secure attachments would result in better life satisfaction, despite the childhood abuse trauma, while the insecure attachments (avoidant, as well as preoccupied and fearful) would lead to diminished life satisfaction. The correlation between childhood

trauma/adverse experiences and levels of attachments were analyzed. Results revealed that adults who had experienced trauma (such as childhood abuse) reported that they came from households with insecure attachments. Global themes can be found across empirical studies that are congruent with this study. For example, according to Hinnen et al. (2009) secure attachments are strongly believed to allow an individual to see others in an "accessible, trustworthy and responsive" way (p. 18). Those who have formed a fearful attachment would often seek the approval of others, would be worried about being rejected and abandoned. Lastly, those who developed avoidant attachments worked independently from others, and rarely asked for any assistance. This self-reliance is believed to result from a household setting in which the child had to take care of him/herself and parents who were often absent or insensitive to his/her needs.

Parenting Styles

Doyle (2001) assessed parenting styles and their relationship to childhood abuse. Children who were abused have a tendency to grow up in authoritarian households where the parent is high in control, shows low level of

warmth and the emphasis is on restricting behaviors, or in permissive household lacking rules and parents who are overly tolerant of positive and negative behaviors. Doyle (2001) also found that parent-child attachments facilitated the coping process of emotionally abused children. The participants (four males and 10 females) were interviewed at the time and place of their choice. The interviews revealed key factors that assisted the survivor to make sense of the abuse and to convert the perception from an internal attribution (blaming oneself for the abuse) to an external attribution (learning to accept that the abuse happened independently of them). For five of the participants, both of their parents were abusive, and viewed by the child as authoritarian. For another four cases, one of the parents was a passive parent who permitted the abuse; the parent in this case was described as not being in control. However, it is important to highlight, that a permissive parent is often reported as a loving parent. For the remaining five cases, the parent was considered to be a co-victim. Nonetheless, the family per se was viewed as playing an important role in most of the children's lives, with the biggest support coming from a sibling who would help them

in secret. The survivors reported that additional sources of support were friends, and non-human lifelines such as a pet or toys.

Levels of Attachments and Childhood Abuse among Mexican-Americans

In the article, "Attachment and parental correlates in late adolescent Mexican American women" Tacon and Caldera (2001) conducted a pilot study in which they investigated (a) the attachment dimensions and styles, (b) parental care giving styles, and (c) acculturation. The study used two comparison groups, one was a group of 96 Mexican American college students, and the second group was made up of 59 White, non-Hispanic college student females. Due to the deficiency of attachment research done with the Hispanic population, this study sought to shed some light on this needed area of study.

The attachment theory has often been described as a universal theory; however, recent research has shown cross-cultural variations in attachment distribution behaviors. In the past, researchers like Lamb, Gaensbauer, Malkin, and Schultz, (1985), and IJzendoorn and Kroonenberg (1988), have researched the correlation among ethnicity (however, this did not include Hispanics)

and attachment. Their Meta analysis results revealed that among children from Germany, avoidant (or type A) attachment style was the most frequent; whereas children from Japan and Israel showed a more ambivalent (or type C) attachment style. In the past thirty years, researchers (Cote, 2003, Escovar & Lazarus, 1982, Fracasso, Busch-Rossnagel, & Fisher, 1994; Harwood, Miller, & Irizarry, 1995;) have shifted the focus towards the Hispanic population. The study Escovar and Lazarus (1982) focused on the values of the Hispanic population. These values were compared to those of the Anglo population. Anglo mothers reported that they preferred a secure attached child because they are more competent and independent; whereas Puerto Rican mothers preferred a secure attached child because they are more obedient, quality of relatedness, and are respectful. These results correlate with the Hispanic values since "Respeto" sets at the core of the Hispanic practices. The researchers noted that Hispanics displayed a closer mother-child relationship in comparison to Euro-American samples. The attachment among the mother-child Hispanic sample was strengthened by the physical and verbal emotional expressions.

However, these differences were not found in the current article. Tacon and Caldera (2001) found more mother-child attachment similarities across cultures than differences. Among these similarities between the Anglo group and Hispanic groups were: (a) maternal care giving scores were higher than paternal care giving scores, (b) no attachment styles were found to be associated with security. Two limitations are mentioned in the study one was that acculturation was not taking into account, and the second one relates to the fact that the attachment measures are based on the Anglo population. Therefore, culturally sensitive attachment measures should be developed in order for the continuation of such studies to occur.

In the study called "Characteristics of childhood sexual abuse in a predominantly Mexican-American population" the authors reviewed a caseload of 2,130 children who were abused before the age of 18 (Huston, & Parra, 1995). These children were physically evaluated at either the (a) Medical Center Hospital or, (b) a specialized sexual abuse clinic. These physical examinations took place between 1987-1989. The results of these case analyses revealed that race, ethnicity, and

age showed significant differences in relationship to (a) the perpetrator to the child, (b) number of perpetrators, and (c) time interval from the abuse to the evaluation. The following factors were kept in mind while reviewing the children cases: age distribution, relationship of the perpetrator to the child, cases involving multiple perpetrators, interval from the last abusive episode to the evaluation, frequency and duration of the time, types of abuse, physical findings and siblings of abused children. With respect to age distribution it was found that boys were much younger than girls at the time the abuse took place. One fourth of the Mexican-American and Anglo children who were abused reported that the perpetrator was either a father, or a father-figure. This information is important to keep in mind since the psychological trauma in this case is arguably higher since there is a close relationship to the perpetrator. It was also found that Mexican-American children show a higher rate of intra familial sexual abuse. Furthermore, age was an important factor to keep in mind since the results revealed that younger children are at higher risk of becoming abused by a family member; while older children are at higher risk of been abused by

strangers or an acquaintance. In addition, children who report that they were abused by a stranger also report multiple abuses by different perpetrators. With regards to the timing interval (from the time the abuse took place to the physical/psychological evaluation that takes place at the time of the abuse disclosure), it was found that gender plays a role in the time it takes for a child to disclose the abuse; boys take longer than girls to report abuse. Another factor that plays a major role in the timing of the disclosure was race. It was also found that Mexican-American children took longer than Anglo and black children to report abuse. In other words, a Mexican-American boy will take the longest to report abuse. Fifty percent of the child abuse reports that the abuse was a single episode, while seven percent report that the abuse lasted more than three years. The longer the abuse occurs, the greater the child is at risk of been sexually penetrated. The types of abuse increase as time increases. Penetration is associated with greater psychological trauma. Black boys and girls were found to have experience greater penetration. Specifically girls reported higher levels of vaginal penetration in comparison to Mexican-American girls, and Anglo girls.

Mexican-American boys and girls reported a higher number of rectal penetrations.

Household Structure

In addition to the levels of attachment, household structure can also predict the risk of childhood victimization (Turner, Finkelhor, & Ormrod, 2006). In a second study, Turner et al. (2007) analyzed how, and if, household structure plays a role in childhood victimization. In order to test the hypotheses that children in stepfamilies and single-parent homes were at higher risk for abuse than children who live with both biological/adoptive parents, data were collected from the Developmental Victimization Survey. The data were collected for four months using telephone numbers dialed at random; the total number of surveys completed was 1,000. The results revealed that 75% of the children who reported being abused came from a stepfamily setting, or a single parent household. A further breakdown of these data also revealed that children who come from a stepfamily are at more risk of childhood abuse than those who come from a single-parent household. Additional factors such as social economic status, neighborhoods,

employment status, drug/alcohol history of the parents, and chronic parental arguing also serve as factors increasing the risk of childhood victimization (Turner, et al., 2007). While the authors of the research acknowledged that cause and effect cannot and should not be inferred when correlational analyses are conducted, it was recognized that these mediating factors often do increase abuse in an at-risk population. Acknowledging that one third of the United States population are single parents, and that 23% of the U.S. children population spend time in a stepfamily setting, is a good place to start conducting research when considering the development of prevention strategies.

Different Types of Abuse and Social Economic Status

Gillham et al. (1998) investigated the relationship between different types of abuse (sexual, physical, emotional and negligence) and social economic statuses in both intact families and in single parent households. Childhood abuse reports from 1991 to 1993 were utilized to analyze this relationship. In particular, researchers were interested in the employment history of the father and/or mother, rates of free school meals, and clothing

grants. The results revealed a strong correlation between father unemployment and childhood physical abuse, but no significant correlation was found between father employment and sexual abuse and neglect rates. These findings provide a possible explanation of the increasing childhood abuse reports in 1993; yet, due to the correlational nature of the study no causality can be deduced. However, these results are alarming since the current financial status of the country may lead to more child abuse cases due to the increased stress that families are experiencing.

Summary

In this chapter, the origins and development of the attachment theory were discussed in detail. Previous studies that have investigated the role of Attachment styles in the process of childhood abuse trauma were analyzed. Also, the correlation between childhood trauma/adverse experiences and types of attachments were reviewed. Finally, literature on the role that factors like household structure, parenting styles and social economic status play in relationship to childhood abuse were also addressed.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Introduction

In this chapter, the methodology of the present study will be discussed. The methods section will be divided into the following sub-categories: study design, sampling, data collection and instruments, procedures, protection of human subjects, and data analysis.

Study Design

The purpose of the study was to explore the relationship between levels of attachments (where ambivalent and avoidant were low levels of attachments, and secure was a high level of attachment), and the severity of childhood abuse trauma. Also, the role of levels of attachments as predictors of neglect, emotional, physical, and/or sexual abuse was also explored. A correlational-regressional approach was adopted in order to test the hypotheses. This design was used since the levels of attachment and childhood abuse trauma were not manipulated, they were simply measured (Grinnel & Unrau, 2008). A limitation of this correlational design was that one was not able to derived

causality; however, one was able to analyze the relationship between the two variables, and to predict one variable from the other (Grinnel & Unrau, 2008). In order to test the relationship between the variables, self-administered questionnaires were distributed. This quantitative survey design was chosen in order to prevent retraumatization that a qualitative approach may have created. However, a limitation of this quantitative approach was that it may not have provided the extensive detail that an interview may have provided (McCall, 2001). Also, since the participants were taking the surveys home, extraneous variables were not monitored by the researcher. A secondary reason why a quantitative research design was chosen was because a larger sample was obtained, therefore, giving the data results more power (McCall, 2001). It was hypothesized that there will be a significant negative relationship between levels of attachment (LOA) and severity of childhood trauma (SOCA). In other words, the higher the levels of attachment, the lower the childhood trauma. It was also hypothesized that there will be a negative relationship between attachment and emotional, neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse, respectively. In other words the higher the levels of

attachment, the less emotional, neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse will be reported.

Sampling

The sample was obtained through Mexican-American undergraduate college students attending the California State University, San Bernardino. The surveys were distributed in undergraduate classes. Based on the sample sizes used in the literature review discussed earlier (but keeping in mind the time constraints that this study faces), the desired sample size was about 50. All participants were over the age of 18 and of Mexican-American ethnic background. The present study was focus on the Mexican-American population since the research on this topic using this population is limited. This group of potential participants was targeted in order to include a wide variety of experiences in regard to levels of attachment and child abuse. Due to the Institutional Review Board guidelines, participants had to be totally voluntary. Moreover, because college students' participants were recruited, random sampling was not done. The sample was considered to be convenient and variable sample (Grinnell & Unrau, 2008).

Data Collection and Instruments

The data for the present study was collected through self-administered questionnaire responses of the Mexican-American college students attending California State University, San Bernardino. The independent variable was levels of attachment (LOA) and the dependent variable was severity of childhood abuse (SOCA). In addition to these two variables, grouping variables (i.e. parenting styles, household structure, and social economic status) were also included. The variable LOA was measured by Parent Attachment Questionnaire (Kenny, 1987). The variable SOCA was measured by the childhood trauma questionnaire (CTQ), this article was published in 2001. Since the levels of measurements vary within each instrument, these were discussed in the following session. Household structures and social economic status were assessed through the demographic questionnaire. This instrument included questions regarding age, sex, current marital status, ethnic background, current annual household income, highest level of education of the mother, father's primary occupation. Questions regarding the parent's current marital status will also be addressed.

The Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ) is a self-report retrospective inventory that contains 28 items. The items are scored on a 5-point Likert-scale. The score range of these items is from 5-140, where "5" shows childhood trauma and a score of 140 shows high childhood trauma. The reliability of the CTQ was tested by Bernstein and Fink (1985). The instrument is divided into two categories: abuse and neglect. These two categories are then divided into five different subcategories. For example, the abuse category is categorized into emotional, physical and sexual abuse. While the neglect category, is divided into emotional or physical abuse. The results show that the sexual abuse subscale reveal the highest alpha scores, .93 to .95, followed by emotional neglect, alpha scores of .88 to .92, and emotional abuse, scores of .84 to .89. The two areas that showed lower levels of reliability were: physical abuse where the alpha scores were .81 to .86 and physical neglect where the alpha scores were .63 to .78. According to the "Reliability Analysis: Stats notes from the North California University" website, the alpha cut-off reliable criterion is .60. Therefore, the above alpha scores reflect the instrument's adequacy.

Furthermore, the validity of the CTQ was investigated by Wright, Gordon, McCreary, Scher, Hami and Stein (2001) and it was shown to be sensitive to sex differences. A limitation to the CTQ is that it is a retrospective self-report measurement. However, researchers have used the instrument in both clinical and non-clinical fields and with adults and adolescents (Wright et al., 2001).

The Parental Attachment Questionnaire (PAQ) is a measurement that was developed by Kenny (1987). This instrument is a 55 item questionnaire that measures levels of attachment. This instrument was developed based on attachment concepts that were conceptualized by Ainsworth. Furthermore, the PAQ is divided into three sub-categories: affective quality of attachment, parental fostering of autonomy, and parental role in providing emotional support. In this 5 point Likert-scale instrument, a score of 1 indicates there is "no security" (not at all) and a score of 5 indicates a "strong security" of attachment (very much). The validity and reliability of this instrument has been tested (Kenny 1987, 1990) through internal consistency and testing and re-testing of .92 alpha coefficients. In order to address a limitation of the first PAQ instrument is that it

measures the attachment bond to both parents (Kenny, 1990). However, an individual can have two different types of attachments with each parent. For example, a child can have a secure attachment with the mother but an insecure attachment with the father.

The parental bonding instrument (PBI) is a self-report measurement developed by Gordon Parker, Hilary Tupling, and L.B. Brown in 1979. The 25-item instrument contains two scales, the first one is care scale, and the second is the overprotection scale. The instrument was designed to measure parenting styles. These parental styles are characterized into four bonding quadrants: (a) affectionate constrain (where there is a high care and high protection), (b) optimal parenting (where there is a high care and a low protection), (c) affectionless control (where there is a high protection and low care), and (d) neglectful parenting (where there is a low care and low protection. These four quadrants reflect the three parenting styles (authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive). Several of studies have shown that the reliability and validity of the PBI has been proven to be adequate (Arrindell,

Gerlsma, Vandereycken, Hageman, & Daeseleire, 1998; Qadir, Stewart, Khan, Prince, 2005).

Procedures

Human subjects' proposal related to this study was submitted to the IRB. Upon IRB approval the data was collected from January to June 2009. Permission was obtained from instructors to make a classroom announcement in order to recruit participants for this study. After making the classroom announcement, subjects interested in participating in this study were given a package which included the informed consent, demographic information, and three sets of questionnaires. Participants took these packages home and completed them at the time of their convenience. The first item on the packages was the informed consent, which instructed the participants to read the form, and mark an "X" at the bottom of the page if they agreed to participate in the study. The participants then completed the three questionnaires. These packages were returned to the next class-meeting period, which was collected by the investigator. When the participants turned in the packages, the investigator gave the subjects a debriefing

statement. The debriefing statement included contact information regarding questions about the study and psychological services that may have been of interest to them. The expected duration of this study was anywhere between 30 to 45 minutes.

Protection of Human Subjects

In this study, a quantitative analysis was adopted. Descriptive statistics such as the mean, standard deviation, range, and frequencies for the following scores was obtained: levels of attachment, degree of child abuse trauma, and types of abuse (including sexual, physical, and emotional abuse and negligence). Participants were given an informed consent form and were asked to mark an "X" to indicate their willingness to participate in the study. By marking an "X" instead of signing their name, their confidentiality was protected since the results of the surveys did not link any real names. All participants were informed that participation was voluntary and that they were able to stop at any point if they felt distressed and still got the incentive. All information remained strictly confidential; no identifying information such as

participants' names or social security numbers was asked. Although the statistical results and findings were discussed in this project, names were not used. A debriefing statement was provided after the questionnaires were turned in, in the debriefing statement the purpose of the study was explained, how the results of the study could be found and a contact phone number in case they had further questions. Also, the data was kept in a locked down cabinet and was destroyed after the research was completed.

Data Analysis

The correlation coefficient between levels of attachments and severity of childhood trauma was calculated and its significance will be tested. Both variables were quantitative and continuous. Also, a correlational coefficient between levels of attachment and each of the following types of abuse (emotional, neglect, physical and/or sexual) was calculated and its significance will be tested. Again, both variables were quantitative and continuous variables. Pearson's r was used to describe the relationship between these variables (Grinnell & Unrau, 2008). Finally, ANOVA tests were run

to look at the relationship between the reported experiences of abuse or neglect, type of bonding participant has with their parents, and the type of attachment the participant reported with their parent. A significance level of $p = .05$ was adopted to conclude statistical significance for the results.

Summary

The study design covered the purpose of the study, which was to (a) explore the relationship between levels of attachments and the severity of childhood abuse trauma and (b) to explore the role of levels of attachments as predictors of neglect, emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse. A correlational-regressional approach designs was adopted. A quantitative design, in which self-administer questionnaires were distributed was also adopted. The questionnaires were composed of three instruments:

(1) CTQ, (2) PAQ, and (3) the PBI. The instruments' validity, reliability, and their limitations were addressed. Lastly, a total of 50 Mexican-American CSUSB college participants over the age of 18 were recruited. Ways to protect their confidentiality were also discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

In this chapter, the results of the present study will be discussed in order to answer the research questions. The result section will be divided into two sub-categories: (a) univariate findings (descriptive statistics) and the bivariate findings (inferential statistics).

The demographic variables will be utilized in order to discuss the univariate findings. Among these demographic variables are: participants' ethnicity, age, sex, marital status, mother's and father's highest level of education, participant's primary occupation, their social economic status while growing up. Furthermore, the participants were also asked to indicate if the parents were separated/divorce, and if so, they were asked to indicate their age when this took place. The last demographic question asked the participants to indicate their mother's current marital status, and the father's current marital status. If their answer was "married",

they were asked to specify if they were married to each other.

The inferential statistics will be provided for all the instruments that were used, starting with the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire. The findings from this instrument will be discussed in the following categories: Emotional Abuse, Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Emotional Neglect, and Physical Neglect. Next, in order to demonstrate the inferential statistics from the Parental Attachment Questionnaire three different tables will be provided, each illustrating the three subscales that this instrument is divided into. These subscales are:

(1) Affective Quality of Relationships, (2) Parents as Facilitators of Independence and (3) Parents as a Source of Support. Lastly, the statistical findings from the Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI) will also be provided. This instrument is divided into four different parental bonding quadrants. The first quadrant is the affectionate constraint, the second one is optimal parenting, followed by the affectionless control quadrant, and the last one is neglectful parenting. The cutoffs for these instruments will be discussed at the introduction of each instrument.

Presentation of the Findings

Demographic Information Data

A total of 50 Mexican-American CSUSB college students participated in this study. The age distribution of the 49 CSUSB college students that indicated their age varied from 18 to 39, where the $M = 23.32$ (which was expected since the population was a college student one), and the $SD = 4.44$. From the 49 participants that indicated their sex, 84% were females, and 14% were males.

The marital status of the participants was as follows: 78% were single, 12% were married, 2% were widowed, 6% checked the "other" answer, and 2% did not answer the question. This testifies to the presumed assumption that most of these college students would be single.

The next two questions asked for the mother's and father's highest level of education completed (respectively). The 49 participants that answer the mother's background education question report their answers as follows: 30% of their mothers did not finish high school, 24% graduated from high school, 24% had some college education, 14% graduated from college, 4% have a

professional degree, and 2% was unknown. The 49 participants that answered the father's background education question report their answer as follows: 36% did not finish high school, 22% graduated from high school, 4% attended a trade school, 18% had some college, 8% graduated from college, 4% have a professional degree and 6% checked the "don't know" answer.

Furthermore, when the participants were asked about their primary occupation, 64% filled in the blank as "students". Other occupations included cashier, counselor, educator, hairstylist, etc. The 49 participants that answered the annual household income, 22% reported less than \$10,000, 16% checked the \$10,001-\$25,000 bracket, 4% checked the \$25,001-\$35,000 bracket, 24% checked the \$35,001-\$50,000, 14% checked the \$50,001-\$75,000, and 18% checked the over \$75,000 bracket, (it is speculated that most of the students used their parent's annual income information to answer this question).

The following two questions were of particular interest to the researcher since they were both dependent variables in this study. When the participants were asked to categorize their social economic status growing up,

the statistics reflect the following: 10% report upper middle class, 34% report middle class, 38% report lower middle class and 16% report lower class. The second question asked the participants to indicate if their parents were separated/divorced or widowed, and if so they were also asked to indicate their age. A total of 40% of the participated indicated that this was the case for them. The ages from when divorce/separation or widow occurred were from ages 4-25; ages 9 and 10 were the most checked answers, both reporting a 15% mark.

Furthermore, 68% of the participants indicated their mother's current marital status as married, 22% indicated separated/divorced, 2% widowed, 6% checked "other" (one participant did not answered the question). When asked about the father's current marital status 66% of the 47 participants that answered the question 66% reported married, 16% reported separated/divorced and 12% reported "other". In order to make this question more specific participants were asked to identify whether the parents were (a) married to each other, or (b) married to another. From 42 participants that answered the question, 62% indicated that their parents were in fact married to

each other, and 22% indicated that they were married to another.

Descriptive Statistics for Childhood Trauma Questionnaire

The childhood trauma questionnaire is broken down into five different categories: (1) emotional Abuse, (2) physical abuse, (3) sexual abuse, (4) emotional neglect, and (5) physical neglect. Therefore the descriptive statistics for each subcategory will be discussed individually. All these categories are scored from a range of 5-25; five indicating a low level of abuse and 25 indicating a high level of abuse (Bernstein & Fink, 1985).

Emotional Abuse

From the 49 participants that answered this question, 20% scored a five, which indicates a low level of emotional abuse. Furthermore, 8% scored a six, 10% scored a seven, 18% scored an 8, 10% scored a 9 and 10% scored a 10 indicating a moderate low level of emotional abuse. The moderate level of emotional abuse was categorized by the following scores: 6% scored a 10, 6% scored an 11, 2% scored a 12, 4% scored a 13, 2% scored a 14. Lastly, 4% scored a 15, 4% scored a 16, 2% scored a

19 and 2% scored a 20, which indicates a moderate high level of emotional abuse. However, no participants scored in the 21-25 range, which means that none of the participants felt they were severely emotionally abused. This subcategory reflects the following statistics, $M=9.02$, $SD=3.81$

Physical Abuse

Again, 49 of the participant answered this question. Their answers are as follows: 32% scored a five, indicating a low level of physical abuse. The moderate low level of physical abuse category reflects the following scores: 8% scored a six, 30% scored a seven, 2% scored an eight, and 2% scored a nine. The $M = 7.69$ and the $SD = 3.38$.

Sexual Abuse

Two of the 50 participants did not answer this question. From the 48 participants that did, 70% scored a five; which means that the majority of the participants do not believe they were sexually abused. Furthermore, 6% scored a 6, 4% scored a seven, 4% scored an eight and 2% scored a nine. The only other scores that were marked by the participants were a 13, a 17, and a 25; the percentages were 6%, 2%, and 2% respectively. A score of

25 indicates that the participant(s) clearly believed they were sexually abused. This category reflects the following statistics: $M = 6.52$ and $SD = 3.77$

Emotional Neglect

From the 50 participants that took the survey, 3 did not answer this question. The biggest percentage (30%) was found in the five point score, indicating a low level of emotional neglect. The moderate low level of emotional neglect is reflected by the following scores: 10% scored a six, 6% scored a seven, 10% scored an eight and 10% scored a nine. The moderate level of emotional neglect reflects the following scores: 4% scored a ten, 6% scored an 11, and 4% scored a 14. The 14, 15, and 16 scores all reflect the same percentage, 4%. Similarly, the 17, 20, and 25 scores all reflect the same percentage, 2%. This category has an $M = 9.17$ and a $SD = 6.04$. These scores suggest that the majority of participants felt a moderate level of emotional neglect growing up.

Physical Neglect

Only two participants did not answer this question. A total of 30% scored in the five-point range, indicating a low level of physical neglect. The moderate low level of physical abuse reflects the following scores: 16%

scored a six, 6% scored a seven, 4% scored an eight, and 20% scored a nine. The most variation was found in this category, indicating that most of the participants experienced some type of physical abuse. Furthermore, 2% scored an eleven, and 4% scored a thirteen, these scores indicate a moderate level of physical neglect. The last score was a 15, marked by 4% of the participants, these scores suggest that these participants believe they experience a moderate high of physical abuse, and no one experience severe physical neglect. This category reflects the following statistics: $M = 7.64$ and $SD = 2.73$.

Parental Attachment Questionnaire

A total of 39 students answered the Affective Quality of Relationships portion of the survey. A score of 27 reflects a low affective quality of relationships, while a score of 135 reflects a high Affective Quality of Relationships (Kenny, 1987).

The lowest score was a 67, which falls in the middle of the range. The lowest score in this case indicates that all of the participants felt that they at least had a fair affective quality of relationships. The scores that reflect a 2 percentile are: 72, 77, 84, 85, 88, 90,

94, 95, 102, 104, 106, 108, 110, 111, 115, 116, 119, 120, 124, 126, 129, and 131. The scores that lie on the 4 percent range are: 101, 103, 113, 121, and 123. Lastly, the scores that reflect the 6 percent range are: 127 and 130. The $M = 109$ and $SD = 17.45$

Parents as Facilitators of Independence

A total of 42 participants answered this portion of the survey. In this case a score of 14 means that the parents were not Facilitators of Independence, whereas a score of 70 means that the parents were Facilitators of Independence (Kenny, 1987).

The lowest score was a 24 and the highest was an 68. The scores that reflect a 2% response were: 24, 30, 34, 36, 40, 41, 51, 54, 55, 57, and 64. The scores that reflect a 4% response are: 42, 43, 45, 49, 52, 59, 62, and 68. The scores that reflect a 6% are: 48 and 50. The only score that reflected an 8% response was 56, and the only score that reflected a 10% response was 58. The $M = 50.80$ and $SD = 9.66$.

Parents as Source of Support

A total of 43 participants answered this portion of the survey. In this care, a score of 13 means that the participants viewed their parents as a weak Source of

Support; whereas a score of 65 means that the participants viewed their parents as a strong Source of Support (Kenny, 1987).

Parental Bonding Instrument

The Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI) is divided into four different parental bonding quadrants. The "Affectionate Constraint" quadrant indicates a high care and high protection. The "Optimal Parenting" quadrant indicates high care and low protection. Furthermore, the "Affectionless Control" indicates high protection and low care and the "Neglectful Parenting" indicates low care and low protection. The results of the 46 participants that answered this portion of the questionnaire are as follows: 17.6% indicated to have an Affectionate Constraint relationship with their mother. A total of 31.4% indicate an Affectionless Control Relationship, while 29.4% fall under the Optimal Parenting category. Lastly, 11.8% of the participants perceived their mother as having a Neglectful Parenting style (Parker, Tupling, & Brown, 1979).

Inferential Statistics

In order to test the effect of parental bonding quality (PBQ) on childhood abuse, we conducted an ANOVA

test in which parental bonding types (affectionate constraint, affectionless control, optimal parenting, and neglectful parenting) were the independent variables and abuse (physical neglect, emotional neglect, sexual abuse, physical abuse, and emotional abuse) were the dependent variables.

Although there was no relationship between type of attachment relationship reported and the variables of sexual abuse, physical and emotional neglect, all other variables were significant. There was a main effect of Parental Bonding Quality (PBQ) on Affective Quality of Relationships $F(3, 33) = 9.975, p < .0005$. A Tukey HSD post-hoc test was conducted, and analysis, results revealed that Affective quality of relationships shows a lower average score ($M = 95.00$) on the neglectful parenting quadrant than participants who reported an affectionless control parent ($M = 98.15$), affectionate constraint ($M = 118.62$), and optimal parenting ($M = 123.27$).

There was also a main effect of PBQ on Parents as facilitators of independence, $F(3, 36) = 7.698, p < .0005$. A Tukey HSD post-hoc test was conducted, and analysis, results revealed that facilitators of

independence shows a lower average score ($M = .48.75$) on the affectionate constraint parenting style quadrant than a participant who reports having a neglectful parenting relationship with the mother ($M = 56.20$) and those who report an optimal parenting relationship with the mother ($M = 58.08$).

There was also a main effect of PBW on Parents as a Source of Support, participants who reported having optimal parenting scored higher on parents as a source of support than participants who reported neglectful parenting $F(3, 36) = 4.699, p < .007$. A Tukey HSD post-hoc test was conducted, and analysis, results revealed that parents as a source of support shows a lower average score ($M = 39.40$) neglectful parenting style quadrant than participants who reports having an affectionless control ($M = 42.46$), affectionate constraint ($M = 49.87$), optimal parenting ($M = 53.58$).

There was also a main effect of PBQ on emotional abuse, people who reported affectionless or neglectful parenting on the PBQ reported more emotional abuse than people who reported optimal parenting $F(3, 42) = 8.338, p < .0005$.

Finally, there was a main effect of PBQ on Physical abuse, $F(3, 42) = 3.320, p < .029$. Post-hoc tests, however, do not show any significant differences between groups, which makes this researcher question whether or not this test is significant.

Next, by in order to test Hypothesis 2, in which it was hypothesized that there was a negative relationship between LOA and types of abuse, correlations were run between the types of abuse and the scores on the Parental Bonding instrument. Some of these correlations were significant. There were negative correlations between Parent as a Source of Support and Emotional Neglect ($r = -.410, p = .007$), Physical Abuse ($r = -.338, p = .027$), and Emotional Abuse ($r = -.370, p = .015$). There were negative correlations between Parents as Facilitators of Independence and Emotional Neglect ($r = -.464, p = .003$), Physical Abuse ($r = -.324, p = .036$), and Emotional Abuse ($r = -.388, p = .011$). There were also negative correlations between Affective Quality of Relationships and Physical Neglect ($r = -.406, p = .012$), Physical Abuse ($r = -.322, p = .045$), and Emotional Abuse ($r = -.506, p < .0005$). All of these correlations are moderate.

Finally, the relationship between type of abuse and sociodemographics were considered by reviewing correlations. Socioeconomic status, level of education for the mother and the father, relationship status of the biological parents, and annual income were all not correlated to the reported experience of abuse or neglect of participants. Therefore, we ruled out that any of these factors play a role on predicting child abuse. In other words, the stronger predictor of childhood abuse is the level of attachment the parent has with the child.

In order to test the idea that different types of abuse tend to co-occur (Glaser, 2002), we calculated a correlation between the different types of abuse (physical neglect, emotional neglect, sexual abuse, physical abuse and emotional abuse). There was a strong correlation between emotional abuse and physical abuse, $r = .643$, $p = .0005$, such that people who reported emotional abuse tended to report physical abuse. There was also a strong correlation between physical neglect and emotional abuse, $r = .378$, $p = .008$, such that participants who reported physical neglect also tended to report emotional abuse.

Summary

In this chapter, the researcher described the descriptive statistics for all three measurements. These measurements included the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire, the Parental Attachment Questionnaire and Parental Bonding Instrument. The means and standard deviations were given for all descriptive statistics. Also, the inferential statistics were covered as well.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

In this chapter, the interpretation of the results will be discussed in detail. Child abuse national statistics will be provided separated by types of abuse. Furthermore, the limitations of the study will discuss, and suggestions at the micro and macro level will also be provided.

Discussion

Demographics

In order to participate in this study, all participants needed to be Mexican-American. A total of 50 CSUSB college students participated in this study, with 41 women and seven men participating.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore the relationship between levels of attachment and the severity of childhood abuse trauma. Specifically, ambivalent and avoidant represent low levels of attachment, and secure a high level of attachment. The role of levels of attachments as predictors of neglect,

emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse was also explored. In order to measure the levels of attachment, two instruments were utilized, the Parental Assessment Questionnaire (PAQ), and the Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI). In order to measure childhood abuse trauma, the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ) was also utilized. Each instrument used in the present study was also discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

Relationship between Levels of Attachment and Childhood Abuse

It was hypothesized that there would be specific negative relationships between Levels of Attachment (LOA) and emotional, physical, sexual abuse, and neglect. In other words, the higher the level of attachment, the less emotional, physical, sexual abuse, and neglect would be reported. A negative correlation between these two factors was found. In other words, when the level of attachment was secure, childhood abuse was not reported. The present study also found a positive correlation between LOA and feelings towards parents. That is, participants reporting having positive feelings towards their parents, or an affectionate constraint relationship (where there is a high level of care and high level of

protection), reported a secure attachment with the mother; and no childhood abuse reported. As described by Hinnen, et. al, (2009) having a secure attachment with a parent allows the person to see others in an "accessible, trustworthy and responsive" way, p. 18.

Parenting Styles

The present study found a relationship between authoritative parenting style and the absence of childhood abuse. Consistent with the present results, Doyle (2001) found a positive correlation between authoritarian parenting styles and childhood abuse. These findings taken together support the claim that when there is a secure attachment the parent takes on an authoritative parenting style, which decreases the risk of childhood abuse. In contrast, when there is an ambivalent attachment, the parent tends to take on an authoritarian parenting style, which may increase the risk of childhood abuse.

The Role of Household Structure, and Social Economic Status

The results of this study also revealed no correlation between abuse and social economic status and household structure. The findings were contrary to

results reported by Turner, et. al, (2006), in which the author describes the increased risk of childhood abuse in a step-parent household structure. Moreover, social economic status was not significantly related to childhood abuse in this study. This finding was also contrary to other studies including Gillham et al., (1998). In this study, a correlation between fathers' employment status and childhood physical abuse was found. Therefore, the findings suggest that because there were no relationships between socioeconomic status, household structure, parental education level and abuse/ neglect there is support for the claim that attachment was the most influential factor to childhood abuse in this sample. However, it is important to point out that the two studies mentioned above did not focus on the Mexican-American sample population, which may explain the discrepancies between those studies and the present study's findings.

Types of Childhood Abuse Sexual Abuse

In this study, the overall measure of sexual abuse was low; the mean score for males 5.43, in comparison to 6.71 for females. The small mean differences between men and women reporting being sexually abused do not conform

to the national childhood abuse report statistics. At the national level, a large increase of sexual abuse cases between the two sexes has been noted. Specifically, 4,581 sexual abuse reports were filed for girls, in comparison to 844 reports for boys. This large gap is observed at the national level, but not in this study. One can assume that this gap is not observable in this study because the overall number of sexual abuse cases revealed through the study's data was significantly low.

Emotional and Physical Neglect

This study reports a mean score of 10.50 regarding emotionally neglected as children, in comparison to women with a mean of 8.98. The mean scores for men who felt physically neglected were 8.57, versus the mean score for women of 7.49. At a national level, the number of reports for boys filed for physical neglect was 23,528, in comparison to 11,555 cases filed for girls.

Emotional Abuse

The overall mean regarding emotional abuse was 9.02. This number suggest that majority of participants did not report feeling that they were emotionally abused while growing up. However, men did report a rating for emotional abuse than did women. For example, the mean

score for the female participants was 8.83 in comparison to the mean score for the males which was 10.14. Two factors that may contribute to the likelihood of male participants reporting higher percentages of emotional abuse than female participants are gender and ethnicity.

Since it typically is more socially acceptable for girls than boys to express their emotions, one can speculate that girls are more likely than boys to report emotional abuse to an adult. However, since this study utilized questionnaires to ask the Latino participants questions about childhood abuse, this may have facilitated their opening up about emotional abuse more than they would have done as children. It is important to point out that although girls (26,175) are reported to endure more emotional abuse than boys (23,166), there is a strong possibility that Latino boys are not opening up about emotional abuse since it is not culturally acceptable (Center of Social Services Research University of California at Berkeley, 2008). In the Latino culture a boy's emotional feelings are usually not respected. If a boy cries it is typical for the parent to respond by saying "no llores" or don't cry, "no seas niña" or don't be a girl, "no seas maricon" or don't be a "fag".

Therefore, the Latino culture teaches boys to act according to their gender roles, which implies being emotionally neutral, and seemingly in control. These emotional expressions are then substituted by a sense of responsibility, in which the male is expected to be the sole provider for the family; therefore, a shift from emotions to actions takes place. The literature on childhood abuse among the Latino population is limited. Although studies have investigated childhood abuse with Latina women (Tacon, et, al. 2001), research on childhood abuse with Latino men still needs further development.

Furthermore, there is a major discrepancy between the emotional abuse reported by Latinos and other races. According to the statistics provided by the Center of Social Services Research University of California at Berkeley, 2,251 Latino boys were abused emotionally in comparison to 486 African-American boys, 739 Anglo boys, 735 Asian boys, and 24 Native American boys. On the other hand, 2,376 Latino girls were emotionally abused 473 African-American girls, 791 Anglo girls, 168 Asian girls and 37 Native American.

Physical Abuse

Men reported an mean score of 9.71 regarding being physically abused as children versus women who reported an mean score of 7.36. At the national level, in 2008 a total of 2,030 physical abuse reports were filed for boys, in comparison to 3,952 reports filed for girls (Center of Social Services Research University of California at Berkeley).

Abuse Co-Occurrence

The present study found when emotional abuse was reported, physical abuse was more likely to be reported as well. This positive correlation supports the belief that emotional abuse and physical abuse tends to co-occur. As stated by Glaser (2002), approximately 65% of children that are emotionally abused are also physically abused. Although these two types of abuse tend to co-occur, the detection of emotional abuse is much more challenging than that of physical abuse. The physical evidence provided by hitting a child allows for a childhood abuse case to be substantiated much easier. However, the findings of this and other studies mentioned earlier may allow social workers and other professionals

to recognize these co-occurrences, and may therefore assist in identifying red flags.

Recurrences of Childhood Abuse

According to the Center of Social Services Research University of California at Berkeley (2010), child abuse recurrence increases as time passes. For example, between October 2008 and March 2009, the number of childhood abuse (which includes sexual abuse, physical abuse, general neglect and emotional abuse) recurrences increased by 7.1 percent. These figures are specific to the State of California. Furthermore, the number of child abuse recurrences within a twelve-month period after a child report was substantiated was 10.3 percent. These statistics are from April to September 2008.

Specifically, 8,616 out of 18,255 Latino children who were abused experienced a recurrence of abuse by the time of their six-month follow-up (Center of Social Services Research University of California at Berkeley, 2010). These statistics were gathered from April 2008-March 2009. Such data allows one to see that the risk of children becoming re-abused increases as time passes.

The Role of Trust

One of the factors that allow children to formulate trust is a daily routine. A routine creates predictability, and predictability creates trust (Bigner, 2006). When a child is unable to predict who he/she can talk to about being a victim of abuse, the child becomes confused about who to trust. As previously discussed in Chapter One, Ainscough and Toon (2000) point out that one of the barriers that a child faces when debating whether to disclose any type of abuse is not knowing who to talk to. These facts are important, since it serves as a reminder for both the survivor's family and the social workers who are working on treating the child to formulate a routine at the home, and in the therapeutic sessions. These therapeutic tools can assist the child in healing by reconstructing a sense of trust.

Limitations

One of the limitations of this study was the relatively small sample size, possibly limiting the validity of the present study. This limits our ability to generalize the findings of this study to the general public. Another limitation of the present study was that

participants reported their experiences from a retrospective point of view. Therefore, the information may not be fully reliable. It should also be noted that there was no control of extraneous variables while the participants answered the questionnaire since they were instructed to take the survey home. Lastly, the study utilized a college population; therefore, the results cannot be fully generalized to the general population.

Strengths

One of the major strengths of this study was that it focused on an area of research that has not been thoroughly investigated using a Mexican-American sample. The findings of this study may shed light on future research in a similar area of study. Also, one of the advantages of using a survey method was that this may have allowed the participants to feel less threatened by the intrusiveness that comes with answering questions during an interview. The fact that the participants did not have to answer questions in an interview format, may have led the participants to feel that the questions were less threatening and intrusive.

Recommendations for Social Work Practice, Policy and Research

While the research on child abuse is vast, this social problem continues to need to be further assessed in the Latino population. Future research should take into consideration the impact whether child abuse is intra-familial or not, and if so, how the attachment between the perpetrator and the child affects the child's healing process. Also, children who have been abused are at higher risk of becoming victimized by multiple perpetrators (Huston & Parra, 1995). Therefore, this problem needs further research in order to identify patterns, and ways of preventing these potential re-occurrences. When studying these areas of interest, the frequency, type, and duration of abuse should be kept in mind. Lastly, the role of acculturation with regards to childhood abuse should be taken into account. This type of research will allow social workers to become more culturally competent when providing mental health services to survivors of childhood abuse, and to their families. Lastly, when formulating policies that seek to meet the needs of the Latino population, immigration issues should also be taken into consideration. Many

Latino families face an arduous and stressful immigration process that can silence the reporting of actual abuse. Hence, a child may feel pressured to keep silent about his/her experiences of abuse within an undocumented immigrant family due to the perceived fear of jeopardizing the legalization of his/her parents. Furthermore, parents may also feel too threatened to seek out mental health services due to the same perceived fear of jeopardizing their legalization process. Finally, the fact that the results of this study allows us to make a link between attachment, abuse and relationship with parents, reminds us of the importance of healthy attachment. As discussed in Chapter Two, the best strategy for responding to childhood abuse is to become a profession that focuses on prevention and less on treatment. Knowing that secure attachment supports the prevention of childhood abuse can allow social workers to strengthen parent-child attachment relationships in hopes of preventing childhood abuse. Attachment issues can be assessed during an assessment, and these concerns can guide the therapeutic sessions. However, in order to become a preventative profession, social workers need policies that support these beliefs and styles of

practice. This is why social work on the micro level depends on social work on the macro level, and vice-versa.

In this chapter, the interpretations of the results from the present study were discussed in detail. The demographics of the participants were provided and were interpreted in relationship to childhood abuse. The relationship between levels of attachment and childhood abuse was also discussed, along with factors of secondary interest such as parenting styles, household structure, and social economic status. The statistical findings of the different types of abuse (emotional and physical neglect, emotional, physical and sexual) from this study and at the national level were also mentioned. The tendency of childhood abuse to co-occur and its recurrence were acknowledged; while the role of trust was highlighted. The strengths and limitations of the study were also discussed. The chapter concluded with recommendations for Social Work practice, policy, and further research.

APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE

MOTHER FORM

This questionnaire lists various attitudes and behaviours of parents. As you remember your MOTHER in your first 16 years would you place a tick in the most appropriate box next to each question.

	Very like	Moderately like	Moderately unlike	Very unlike
1. Spoke to me in a warm and friendly voice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Did not help me as much as I needed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Let me do those things I liked doing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Seemed emotionally cold to me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Appeared to understand my problems and worries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Was affectionate to me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Liked me to make my own decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Did not want me to grow up	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Tried to control everything I did	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Invaded my privacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Enjoyed talking things over with me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Frequently smiled at me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Tended to baby me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Did not seem to understand what I needed or wanted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Let me decide things for myself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Made me feel I wasn't wanted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Could make me feel better when I was upset	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Did not talk with me very much	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Tried to make me feel dependent on her/him	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Felt I could not look after myself unless she/he was around	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. Gave me as much freedom as I wanted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. Let me go out as often as I wanted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. Was overprotective of me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. Did not praise me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25. Let me dress in any way I pleased	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The following pages contain statements that describe family relationships and the kinds of feelings and experiences frequently reported by young adults. Please respond to each item by filling in the number on a scale of 1 to 5 that best describes your parents, your relationship with your parents, and your experiences and feelings. Please provide a single rating to describe your parents and your relationship with them. If only one parent is living, or if your parents are divorced, respond with reference to your living parent or the parent with whom you feel closer.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at All (0-10%)	Somewhat (11-35%)	A Moderate Amount (36-65%)	Quite A Bit (66-90%)	Very Much (91-100%)

In general, my parents....

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>___ 1. are persons I can count on to provide emotional support when I feel troubled.</p> <p>___ 2. support my goals and interests.</p> <p>___ 3. live in a different world.</p> <p>___ 4. understand my problems and concerns.</p> <p>___ 5. respect my privacy.</p> <p>___ 6. restrict my freedom or independence.</p> <p>___ 7 are available to give me advice or guidance when I want it.</p> <p>___ 8. take my opinions seriously.</p> <p>___ 9. encourage me to make my own decisions.</p> <p>___ 10. are critical of what I can do.</p> <p>___ 11. impose their ideas and values on me.</p> <p>___ 12. have given me as much attention as I have wanted</p> <p>___ 13. are persons to whom I can express differences of opinion on important matters.</p> | <p>___ 15. have provided me with the freedom to experiment and learn things on my own.</p> <p>___ 16. are too busy or otherwise involved to help me.</p> <p>___ 17 have trust and confidence in me.</p> <p>___ 18. try to control my life.</p> <p>___ 19. protect me from danger and difficulty</p> <p>___ 20. ignore what I have to say.</p> <p>___ 21. are sensitive to my feelings and needs</p> <p>___ 22. are disappointed in me.</p> <p>___ 23. give me advice whether or not I want it.</p> <p>___ 24 respect my judgment and decisions, even if different from what they would want.</p> <p>___ 25. do things for me, which I could do for myself.</p> <p>___ 26. are persons whose expectations I feel obligated to meet.</p> |
|--|--|

___14 have no idea what I am feeling or thinking. ___27. treat me like a younger child.
(go to next column)

1	2	3	4	5
Not at All (0-10%)	Somewhat (11-35%)	A Moderate Amount (36-65%)	Quite A Bit (66-90%)	Very Much (91-100%)

During recent visits or time spent together, my parents were persons. . .

- ___28. I looked forward to seeing. ___36. to whom I enjoyed telling about the things I have done and learned.
- ___29. with whom I argued. ___37. for whom I felt a feeling of love.
- ___30. with whom I felt relaxed and comfortable. ___38. I tried to ignore.
- ___31. who made me angry. ___39. to whom I confided my most personal thoughts and feelings.
- ___32. I wanted to be with all the time. ___40. whose company I enjoyed.
- ___33. towards whom I felt cool and distant. ___41. I avoided telling about my experiences.
- ___34 who got on my nerves.
- ___35. who aroused feelings of guilt and anxiety.
(go to next column)

Following time spent together, I leave my parents. . .

- ___42. with warm and positive feelings. (go to next ___43. feeling let down and disappointed by my family.
column)

When I have a serious problem or an important decision to make. . .

- ___44. I look to my family for support, encouragement, and/or guidance. ___47. I work it out on my own, without help or discussion with others.
- ___48 I discuss the matter with a friend.

___45. I seek help from a professional, such as a therapist, college counselor, or clergy.

___49. I know that my family will know what to do.

___46. I think about how my family might respond and what they might say. (go to next column)

___50. I contact my family if I am not able to resolve the situation after talking it over with my friends.

When I go to my parents for help. . .

___51. I feel more confident in my ability to handle the problems on my own.

___54. I feel confident that things will work out as long as I follow my parent's advice.

___52. I continue to feel unsure of myself.

___55. I am disappointed with their response.

___53. I feel that I would have obtained more understanding and comfort from a friend. (go to next column)

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT

INFORMED CONSENT

The study in which you are being asked to participate is seeking to explore the relationship between levels of attachments, and the severity of childhood abuse trauma among Mexican-Americans. This study is being conducted by Christina Shinn under the supervision of Dr. Carolyn McAllister, Assistant professor of Social Work, California State University, San Bernardino. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board, California State University, San Bernardino.

PURPOSE: The purposes of the study are (a) to investigate the relationship between levels of attachment and severity of childhood trauma, (b) to investigate the relationship between attachment and emotional, physical, sexual abuse and neglect.

DESCRIPTION: You are being asked to fill out a self-administered questionnaire. You will be asked questions regarding levels of attachment, and childhood abuse trauma.

PARTICIPATION: Participation in this study is voluntary. You may withdraw from this study at any time without any penalties.

CONFIDENTIALITY OR ANONYMITY: All information will remain strictly confidential, no identifying information such as your name or social security number will be asked. Although the statistical results and findings will be discussed in this project, your name will not be used. The collected data will be kept in a locked down cabinet and will be destroyed after the research is completed.

DURATION: The expected duration of this study is anywhere between 30 minutes to 45 minutes.

RISKS: Participants may experience discomfort when answering the questionnaires since the participants are asked to recall potential childhood traumas related to their parental attachment. Should the questions become distressing, please feel free to withdraw from the study at any time. You may also contact the counseling center at California State University, San Bernardino at (909) 537-5241 to obtain free counseling services if you feel the need to.

BENEFITS: Benefits of this study include a further understanding of the topic and identifying potential risk that may help in the prevention of childhood abuse. There will be no direct benefits for the participants.

CONTACT: If you have any questions regarding this study call Dr. McAllister, Assistant professor at California State University, San Bernardino, at (909) 537- 5559 or you may also contact her via e-mail cmcallis@csusb.edu

RESULTS: The results can be obtained at the John M. Pfau Library on the California State University, San Bernardino campus, after September, 2010.

By placing a check mark below, I acknowledge that I have been informed of, and that I understand, the purpose and nature of the study, and I willing consent to participate. I also acknowledge that I am 18 years of age or older.

Please make a mark here _____ Today's date: _____

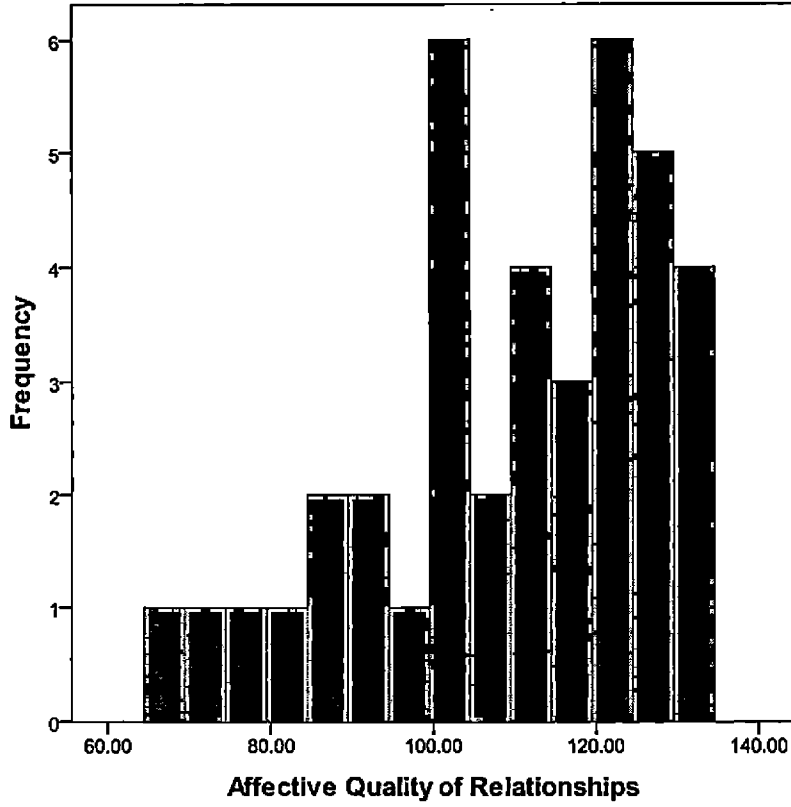
APPENDIX C
DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

The reasons to for conducting this study is to explore the relationship between levels of attachments (where ambivalent and avoidant are low levels of attachments, and secure is a high level of attachment), and the severity of childhood abuse trauma among Mexican-Americans. Also, the role of levels of attachments as predictors of neglect, emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse is also being explored. It is also hypothesized that there will be a negative relationship between Levels of attachment (LOA) and emotional, neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse, respectively. If you wish to find the general results of this study you may contact the John M. Pfau Library at the California State University, San Bernardino campus located at 5500 University Parkway San Bernardino CA, 92407. If you have any concerns about this study please contact Dr. McAllister, Assistant professor at California State University, San Bernardino, at (909) 537- 5559 or you may also contact her via e-mail cmcallis@csusb.edu. If you feel you need counseling services contact the counseling center at California State University, San Bernardino at (909) 537-5241. Please do not reveal the nature of the study to other potential participants.

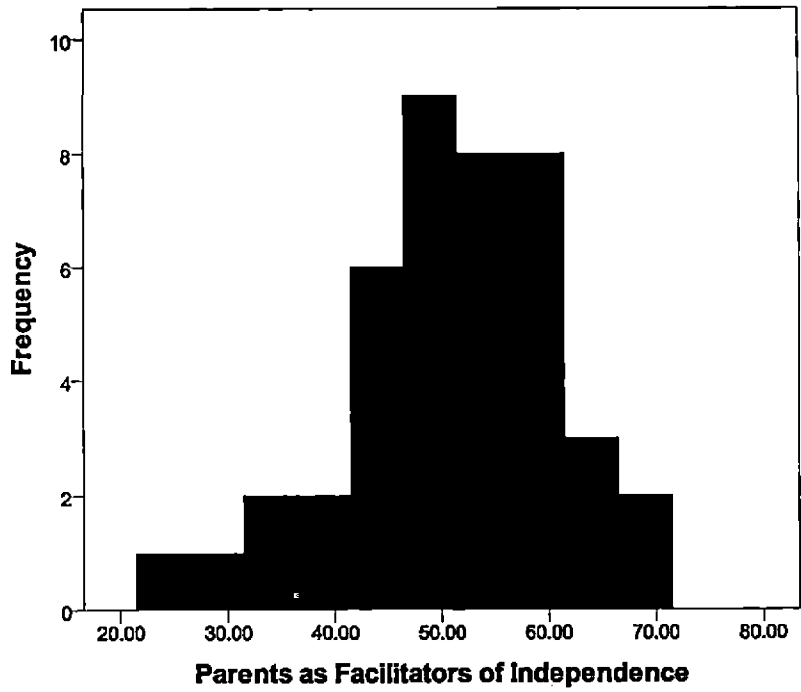
APPENDIX D

FIGURES



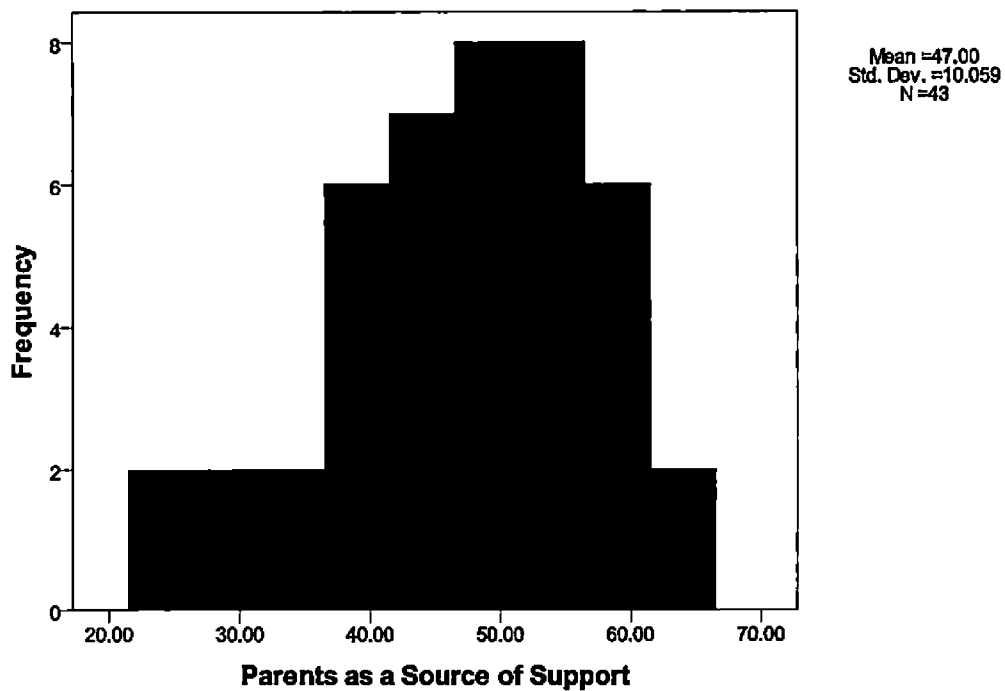
Mean =109.38
Std. Dev. =17.453
N =39

Histogram



Mean =50.81
Std. Dev. =9.683
N=42

Histogram



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