

The Connections Between Childhood Overindulgence and the Transition to Adulthood

Dr. David J. Bredehoft

**Professor of Psychology and Family
Studies**

Chair, Social & Behavioral Sciences



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Recent Quotes

“She’s my favorite grandchild. I have a right to spoil her if I want to! I don’t see a problem with that!”



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Recent Quotes

“I had a difficult time when I was growing up after my mother died. I don’t want my children to work and do chores like I had to! That’s why I do everything for my children -because I want them to love me.”



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Recent Quotes

I am a recent immigrant to the U.S. and that's what I thought you were supposed to do – give them everything they want! Isn't that your secret for making children happy?



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Recent Quotes

Why shouldn't I give my kid everything he wants? I have the money to do it, and besides, I enjoy it and he really likes it! What's the harm in overindulging anyway?



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What is Overindulgence? and **WHAT'S THE HARM IN IT?**



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What is Overindulgence?

- Giving children too much of what looks good, too soon and too long.
- Giving them things or experiences that are not appropriate for their age, interests or talents.



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What is Overindulgence?

- Giving things to children that meet the adult's need, not the child's need.



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What is Overindulgence?

- Giving a disproportionate amount of family resources to one or more children in a way that appears to be meeting the children's needs but does not.



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What is Overindulgence?

- Doing or having so much of something that it does active harm to or at least stagnates a person and deprives that person of achieving his or her full potential.



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What is Overindulgence?

- In short...
 - Too much
 - Meets parent's needs (not the child's)
 - Disproportionate amount of resources
 - Does harm



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Our Research Findings (see handout)



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HISTORY OF THIS PROJECT



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Contributors to the Project

LEAD RESEARCHERS

- Dr. Bredehoft
- Dr. Michael Walcheski
- Dr. Kate Ralston,
Statistician and Path
Analyst

STUDENT RESEARCHERS

- Anna Bjorlin
- Elizabeth Glynn
- Vang Lor
- Julie Watson
- Choua Vang, research
assistant
- Mary Slinger, research
assistant
- Gabriel Sims, research
assistant



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You are invited to participate in our study. As a participant in this study:

- **Open to those who are 16-33 years of age**
- **You will be asked questions about your behaviors and attitudes concerning a number of topics.**
- **There are no right or wrong answers.**
- **You will answer a questionnaire taking approximately 20-25 minutes.**
- **All information you submit to the researchers will be kept confidential.**
- **Individual data will never be used. It cannot be physically connected to a specific subject's name, email address, or any other identifying marker.**
- **Individual information will not be shared with any individual or outside group.**
- **You are free to withdraw from participation in this study at anytime without negative results.**

This study meets all standards required by the Concordia University Senate, the American Psychological Association, and the American Counseling Association for conducting research with human subjects. Approved on 4.7.09.

[I agree to participate in this study](#)

[I choose not to participate](#)

Principal Researchers:

Dr. David J. Bredehoft, Professor of Psychology and Family Studies, Chair of the Social and Behavioral Science Department, at Concordia University. bredehoft@csp.edu

Dr. Michael J. Walcheski, Professor & Associate Dean - College of Education, at Concordia University. walcheski@csp.edu

Researcher Assistants:

Anna Bjorlin, Concordia University Research Assistant.

Elizabeth Glynn, Concordia University Research Assistant.

Vang Lor, Concordia University Research Assistant.

Choua Vang, Concordia University Research Assistant.

Julie Watson, Concordia University Research Assistant.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study please contact Dr. David Bredehoft (651-641-8827/bredehoft@csp.edu) or Dr. Michael Walcheski (651-walcheski@csp.edu) Concordia University, 275 Syndicate Street North, St. Paul, Minnesota, 55104-5494.

Background Information: All information you share in this survey is kept confidential. We will not connect the data we collect to a specific subject's name. While an Individual's information will analyzed, the researchers will combine and sum background information to describe the sample population, and for the purpose of analysis. Individual data will not be shared with anyone outside of those working on this study.

- **Read and answer each question carefully.**
- **You MUST answer all questions before you submit them.**
- **Your first impression is usually the most accurate response.**
- **Do not leave any blank.**
- **Use the scroll bar to scroll down to the next question.**

Please indicate your sex: (Check One)

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

Tell us how you entered this study:

- ☐ From the overindulgence.info web page
- ☐ As part of a class at Concordia University
- ☐ Other

Please indicate the highest level of schooling you have attained: (Check One)

- ☐ Less than High School Diploma
- ☐ High School Diploma or GED
- ☐ Vocational Technical Degree
- ☐ Some College, No Degree
- ☐ Associate in Arts Degree
- ☐ Bachelor's Degree
- ☐ Master's Degree
- ☐ Doctoral Degree

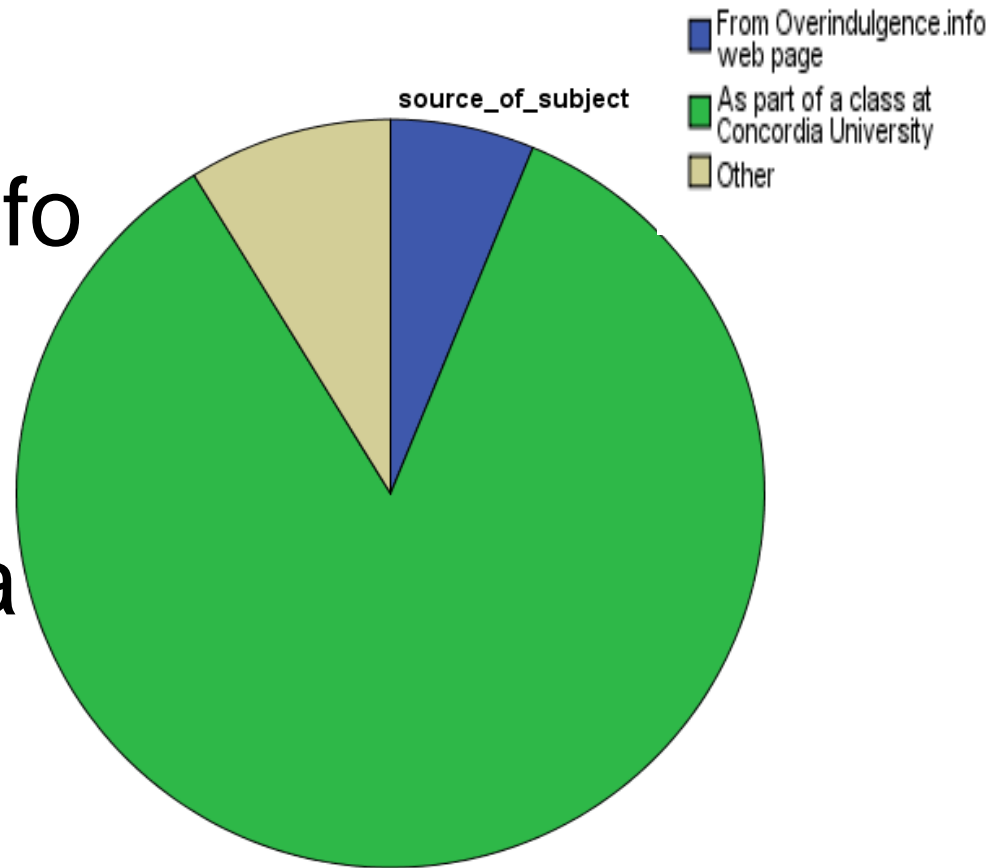
DEMOGRAPHICS



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Tell us how you entered this study:

- 6.2% From the Overindulgence.info web page
- 85% As part of a class at Concordia University
- 8.8% Other

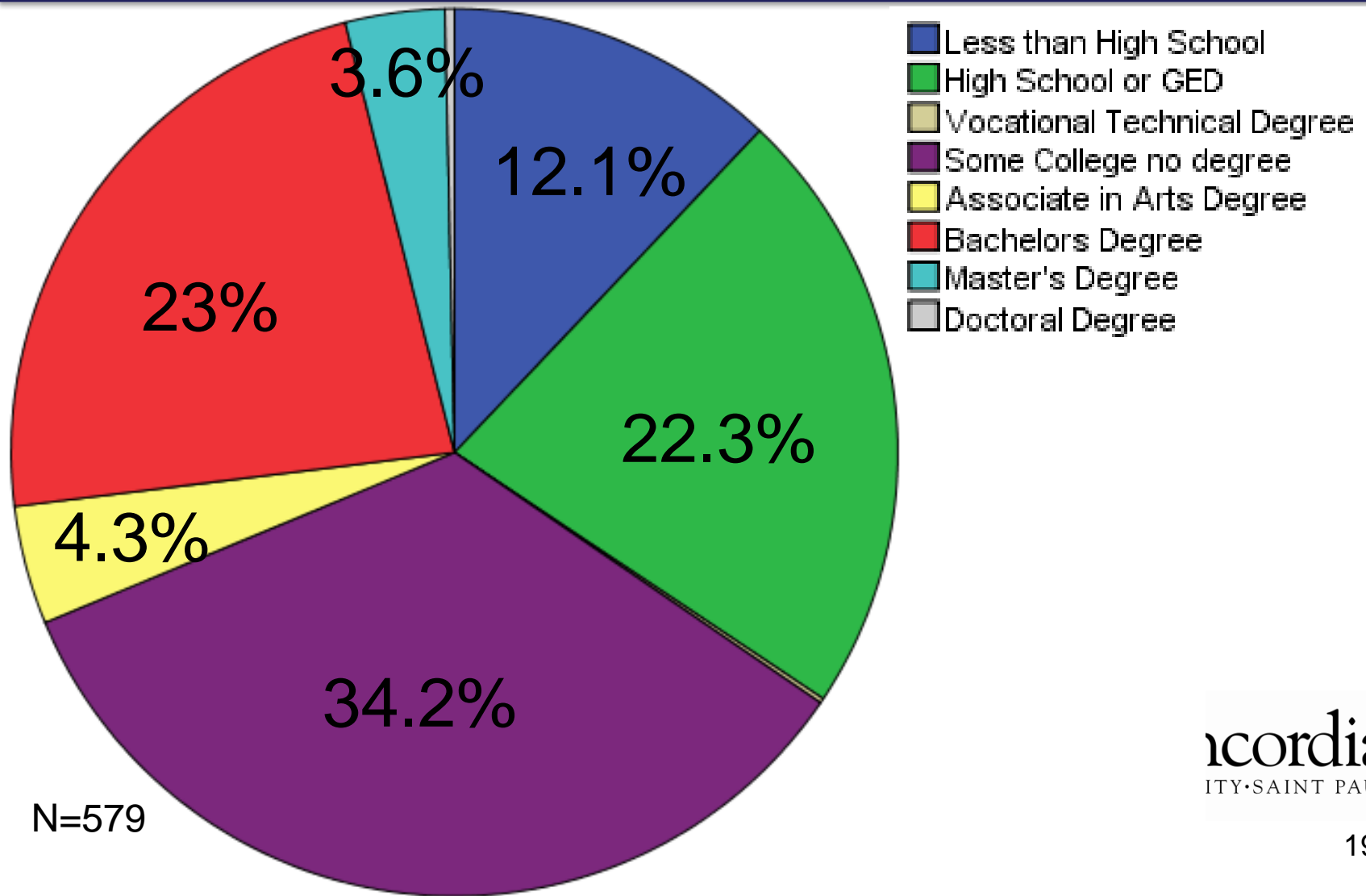


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Level of Education



AGE

- N=579
- Age (mean = 23.27)
- Age Range = 16-59

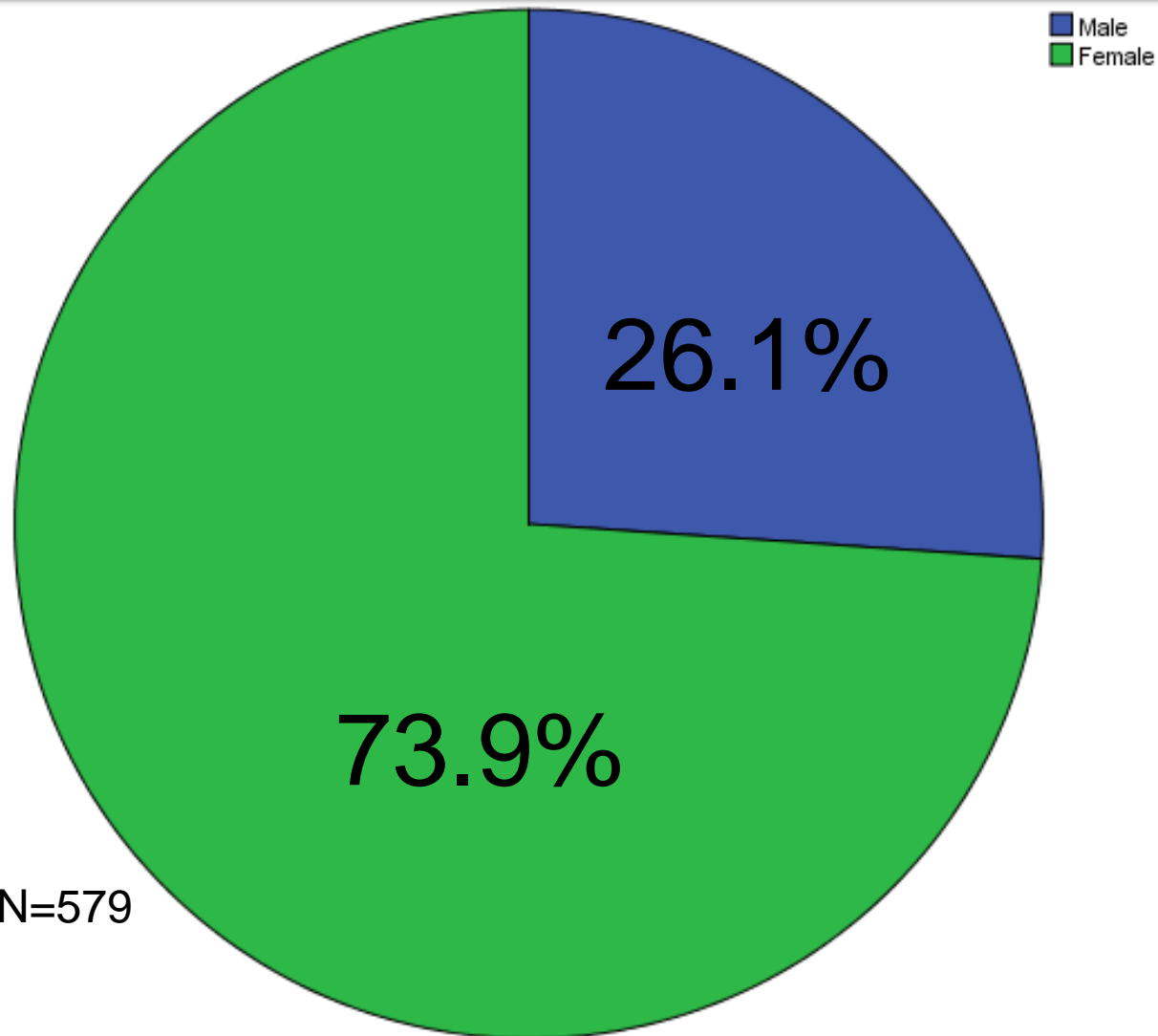


AGE

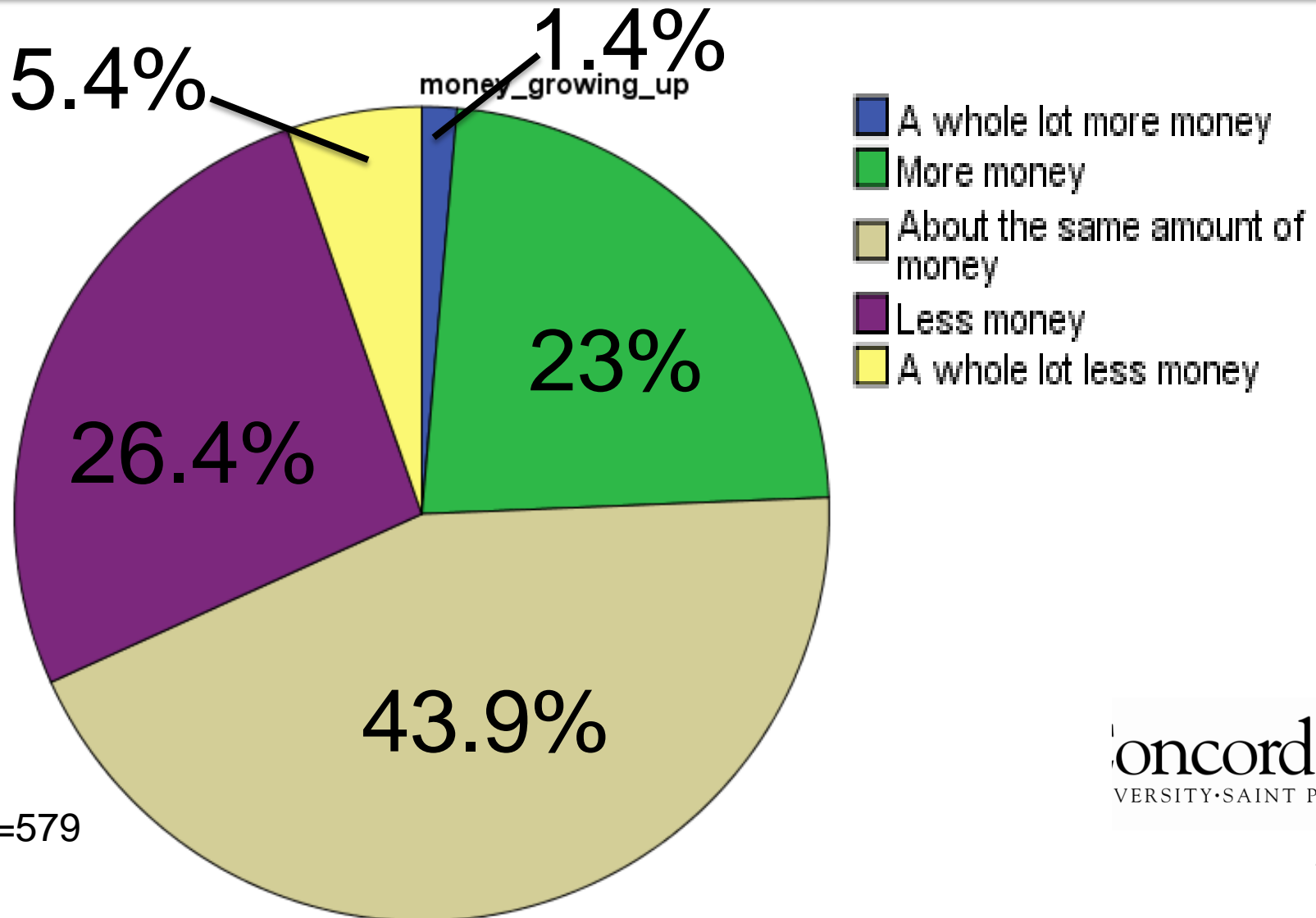
- ≤ 17 ; 60
- 18-29; 439
- ≥ 30 -33; 80



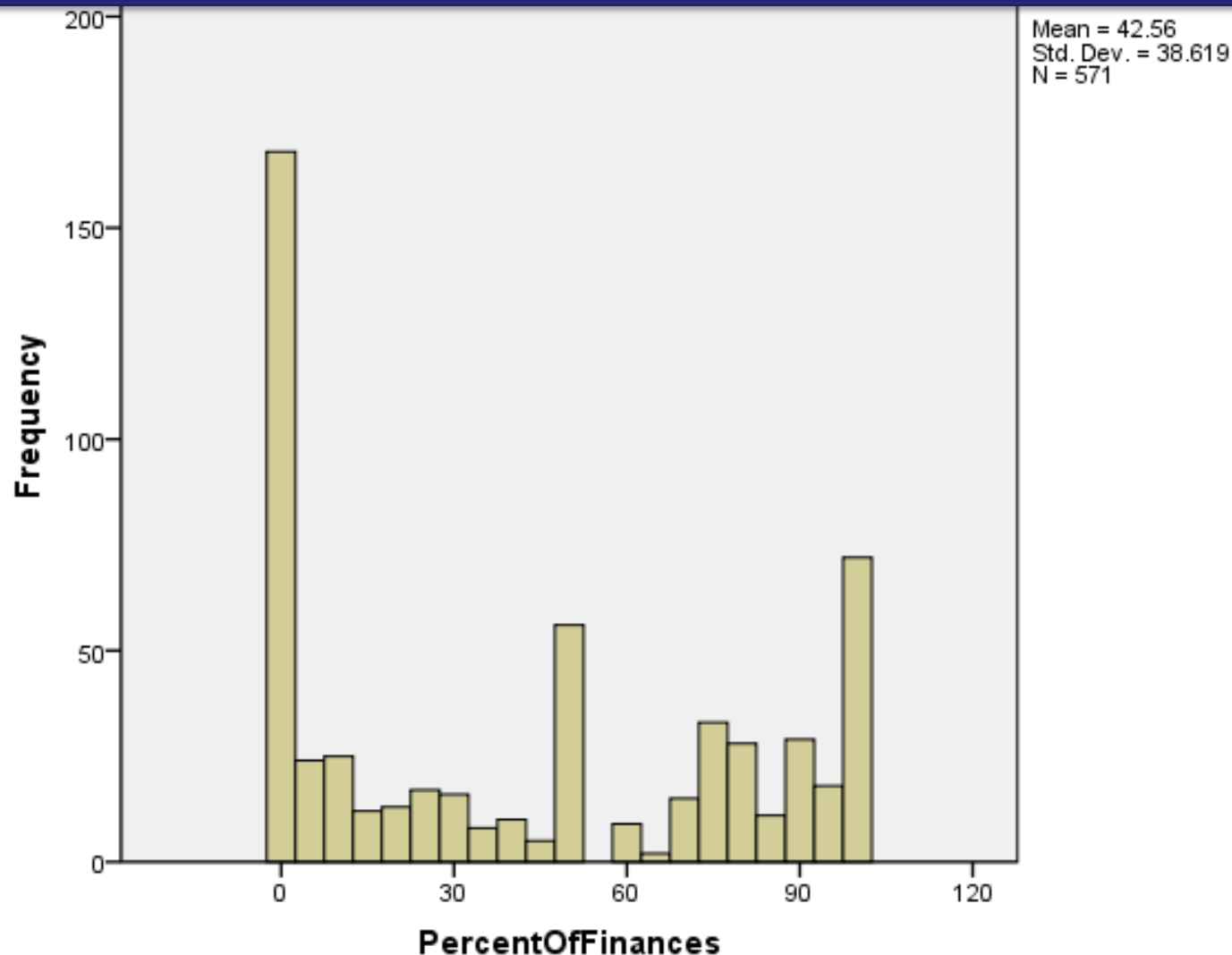
GENDER



When you were growing up, compared to other families, did your parents have

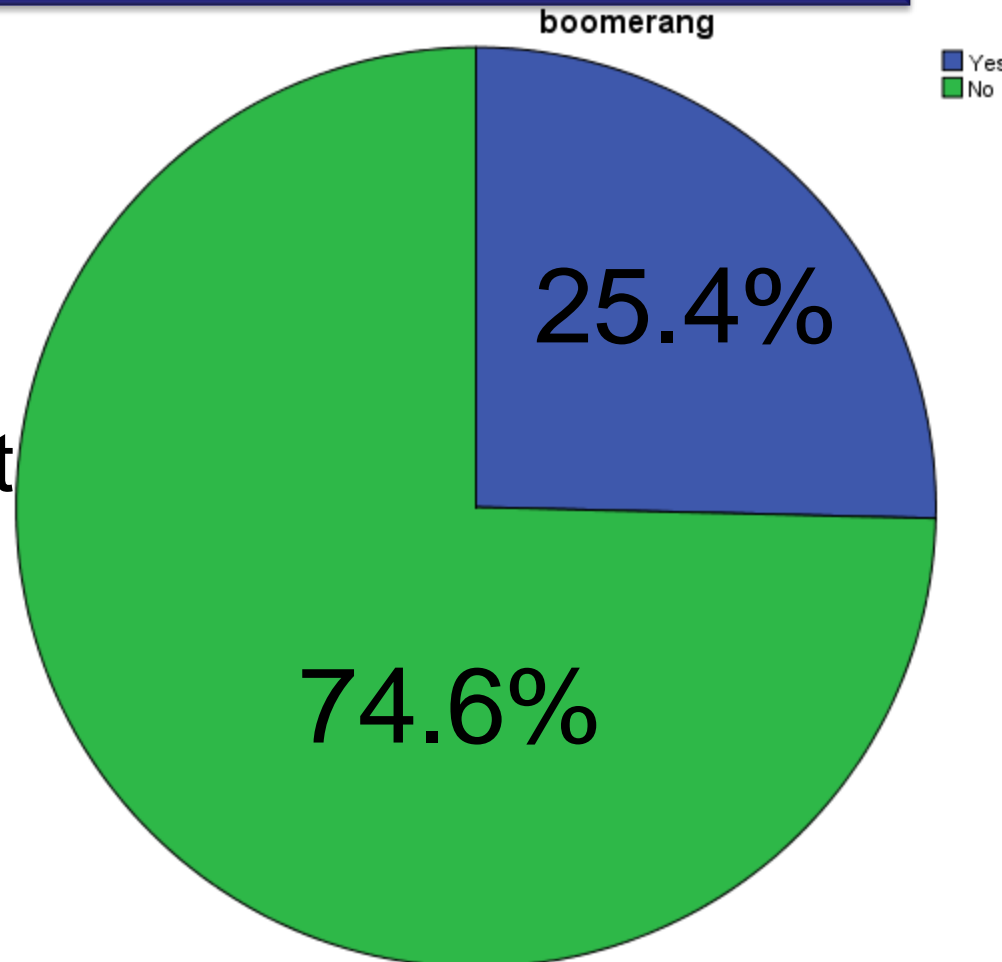


What percentage of your present lifestyle (including school or college) is financially supported by one or both parents?



BOOMERANG

- Since your 18th birthday have you moved back into your parents' home and then out again at least once? (except for typical college breaks like summer and holidays?)



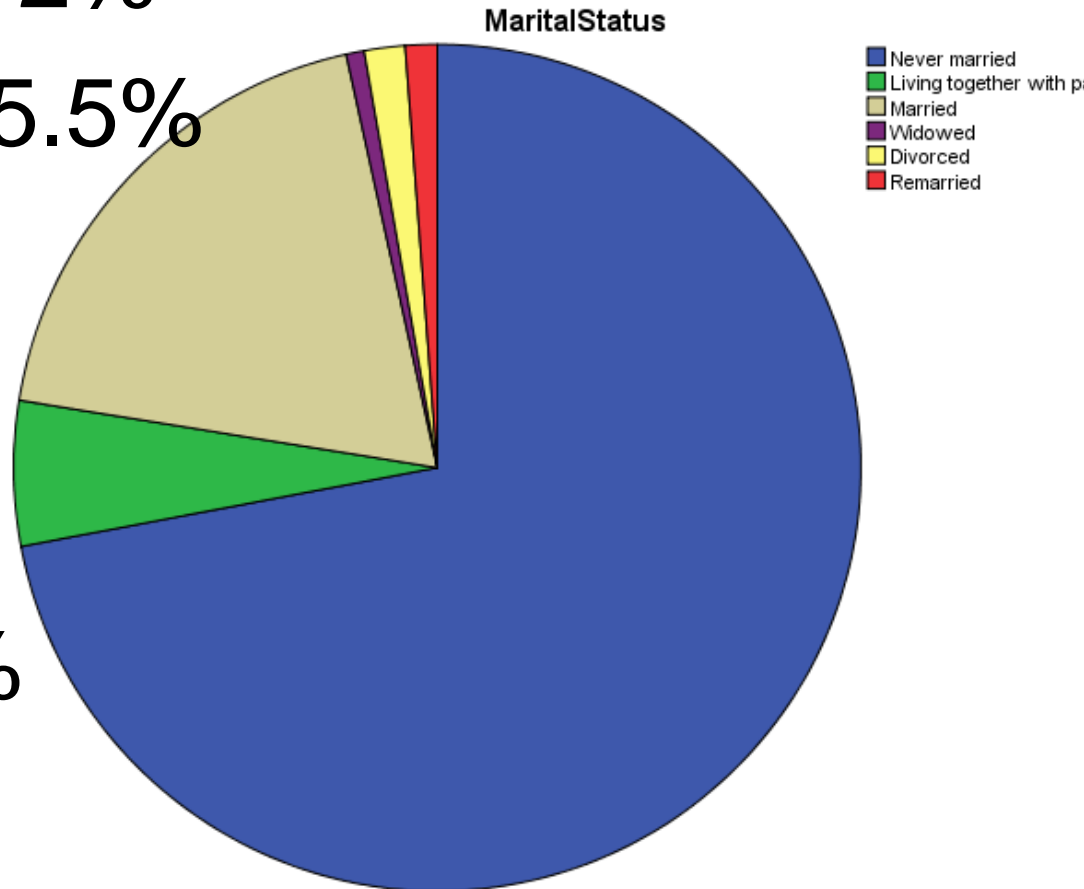
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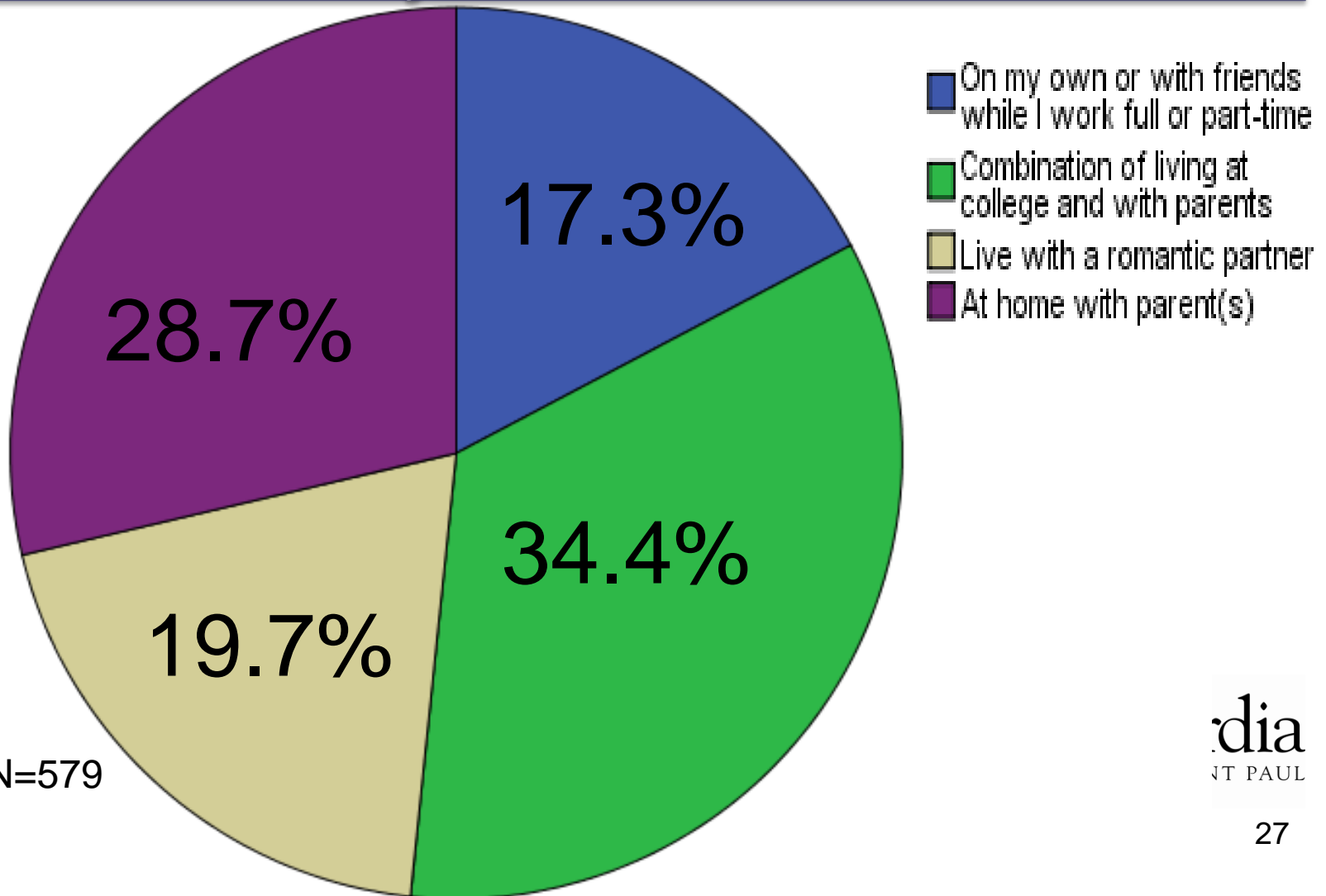
MARITAL STATUS

- Never Married; 72%
- Living together; 5.5%
- Married; 19%
- Widowed; 0.7%
- Divorced; 1.6%
- Remarried; 1.2%



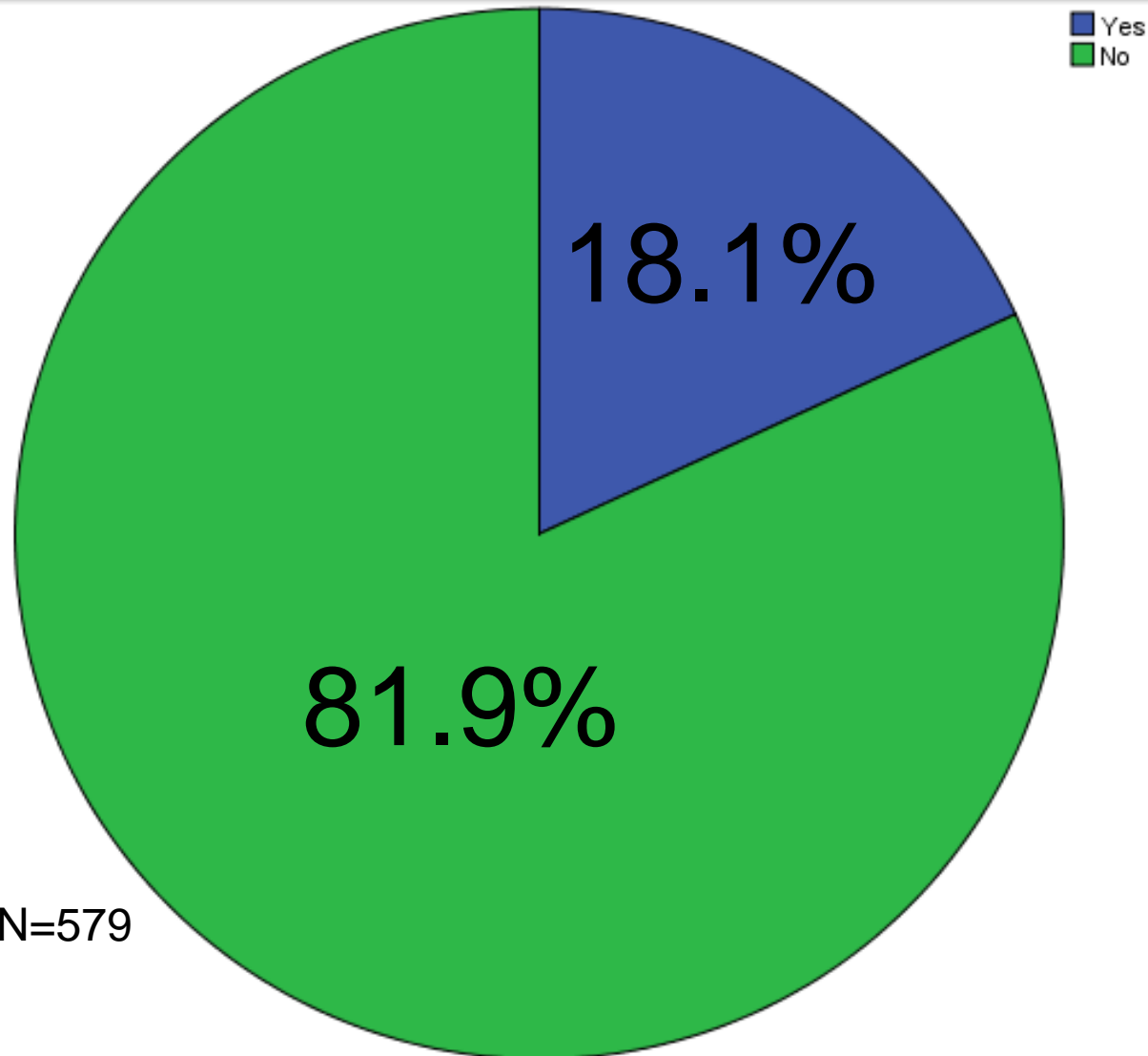
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Residential Status – Where do you live?



N=579

Do You Have Children?



State or Country in Which You Live?

States

- Alaska (2)
- Arizona (2)
- California (4)
- Colorado (2)
- DC (1)
- Florida (2)
- Georgia (6)
- Hawaii (1)
- Iowa (6)

Countries

- Canada (4)
- England (2)
- Germany (5)
- Iceland (1)
- India (1)
- Malaysia (1)
- Okinawa, Japan (3)
- South Korea (1)
- United Kingdom (3)

State or Country in Which You Live?

States

- Idaho (2)
- Illinois (5)
- Indiana (2)
- Kansas (3)
- Louisiana (3)
- Maryland (2)
- Michigan (5)
- Minnesota (452)
- Missouri (2)

States

- Mississippi (1)
- North Carolina (8)
- North Dakota (2)
- Nebraska (2)
- New Jersey (2)
- Nevada (1)
- New York (1)
- Ohio (5)
- Oregon (1)

State or Country in Which You Live?

States

- Pennsylvania (2)
- South Carolina (2)
- Tennessee (1)
- Texas (3)
- Virginia (2)
- Washington (5)
- Wisconsin (15)
- United States (1)

States

MEASURES



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Psychological Scales

1. OVERINDULGED (2007). Bredehoft, Clarke, & Dawson. (14 items, 5 point Likert scale)
2. PSYCHOLOGICAL ENTITLEMENT SCALE (2004). Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, & Bushman. (9 items, 7 point Likert scale)



OVERINDULGED: Indicators of Overindulgence Scale

(Bredehoft, Clarke &
Dawson, 2007)

Likert Scale

1. Never or almost never
2. Seldom
3. Sometimes, sometimes not
4. Frequently
5. Always or almost always

Sample Items

- When I was growing up, my parents did things for me that I could or should do for myself.
- When I was growing up, my parents expected me to do chores.
- When I was growing up, my parents gave me lots of toys.
- When I was growing up, my parents enforced their rules.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ENTITLEMENT SCALE

(Campbell, Bonacci,
Shelton, Exline, & Bushman, 2004)

Likert Scale

1. Strong disagreement
2. Moderate disagreement
3. Slight disagreement
4. Neither agreement nor disagreement
5. Slight agreement
6. Moderate agreement
7. Strong agreement

Sample Items

- I honestly feel I'm just more deserving than others.
- Great things should come to me.
- If I were on the Titanic, I would deserve to be on the first lifeboat!
- I demand the best because I'm worth it.
- I do not necessarily deserve special treatment.
- I feel entitled to more of everything

Psychological Scales

3. HELICOPTER PARENTING SCALE

(2008). Barton. (17 items, 5 point Likert scale)

4. SPIRITUAL INVOLVEMENT AND BELIEFS SCALE (2006). Hatch, Spring, Ritz & Burg. (21 items, 7 point Likert scale)



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HELICOPTER PARENTING Scale (Barton, 2006)

Likert Scale

1. Not at all
2. .
3. .
4. .
5. Very much

Sample Items

- When I have disputes, my parents encourage me to handle them myself.
- I feel that my parents are overprotective
- My parents encourage me to be independent in what I do.
- When something goes wrong in my life, my parents usually jump in to help me.
- My parents communicate with me (either by phone, text messaging, or email) at least once a day.

SPIRITUAL INVOLVEMENT & BELIEFS SCALE

(Hatch, Spring, Ritz & Burg, 2008)

Likert Scale

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Mildly disagree
4. Neutral
5. Mildly agree
6. Agree
7. Strongly agree

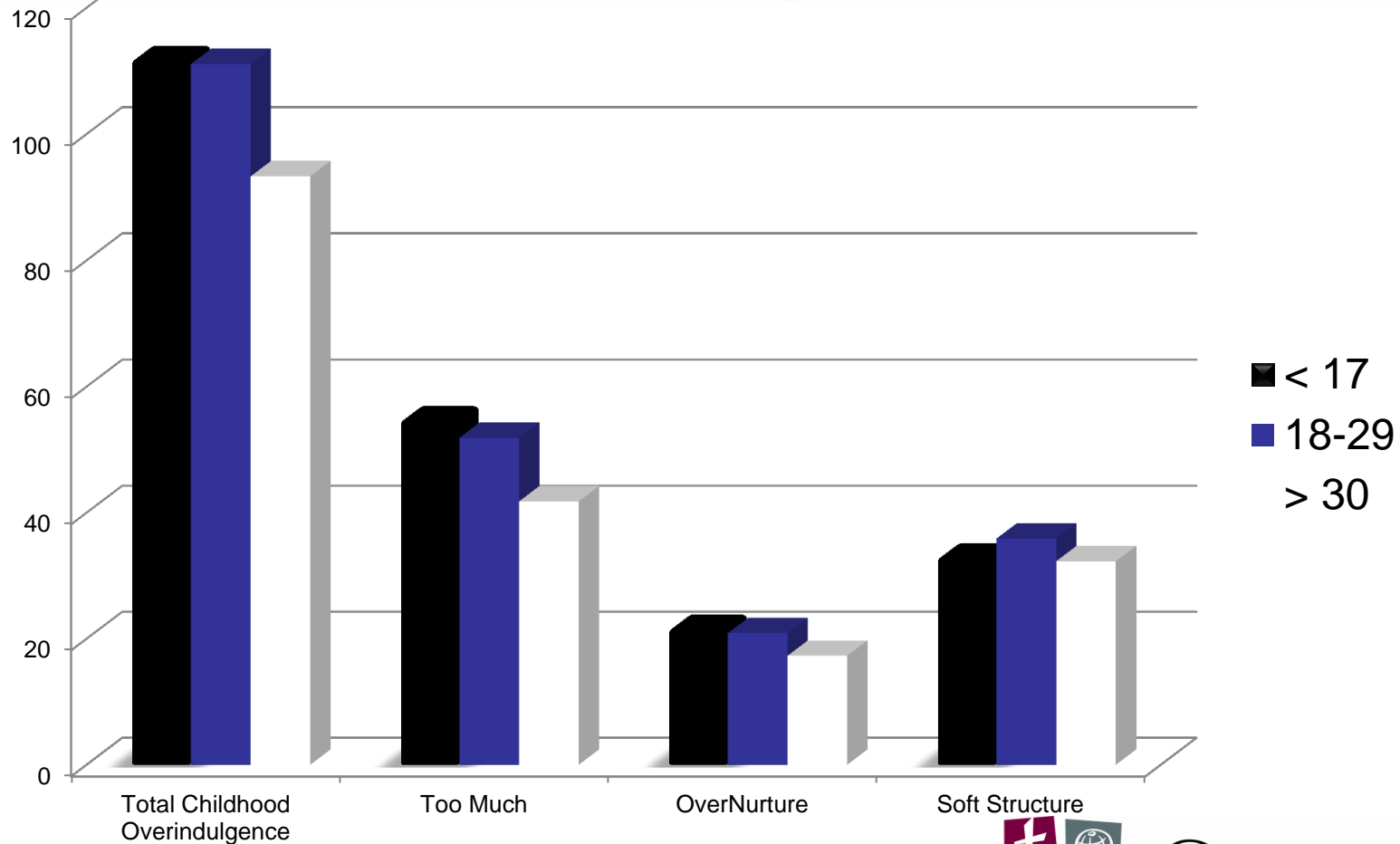
- I set aside time for meditation and/or self-reflection
- I can find meaning in times of hardship.
- I have a relationship with someone I can turn to for spiritual guidance.
- Prayers do not really change what happens.
- I have a personal relationship with a power greater than myself.

OUR FINDINGS



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Are Children More Overindulged Today?



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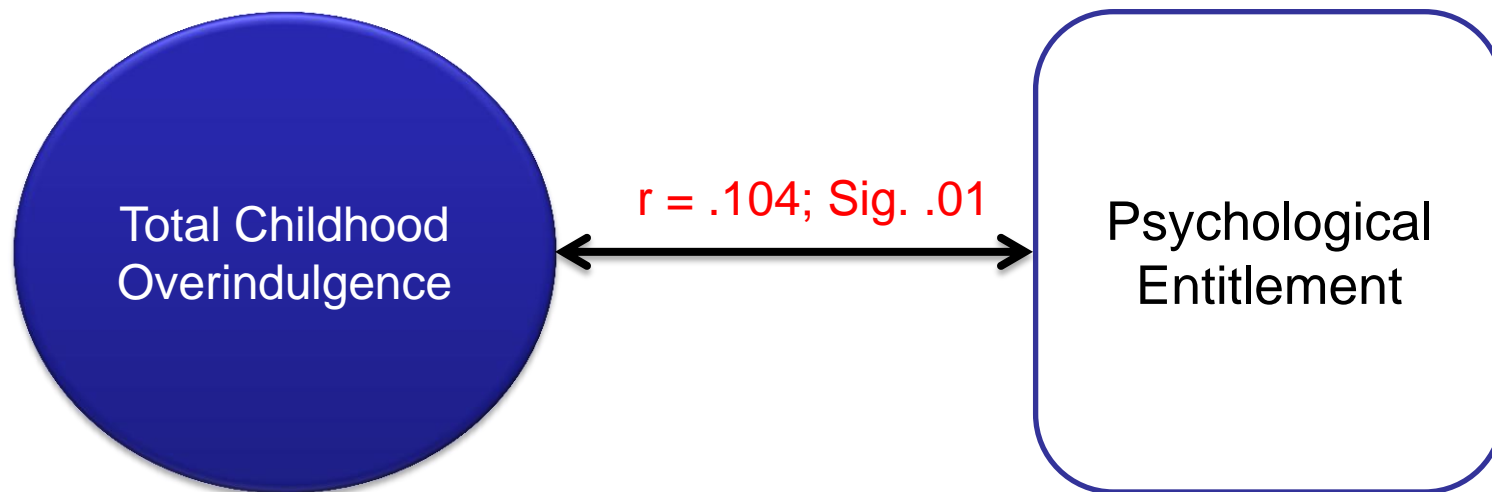


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CORRELATIONS



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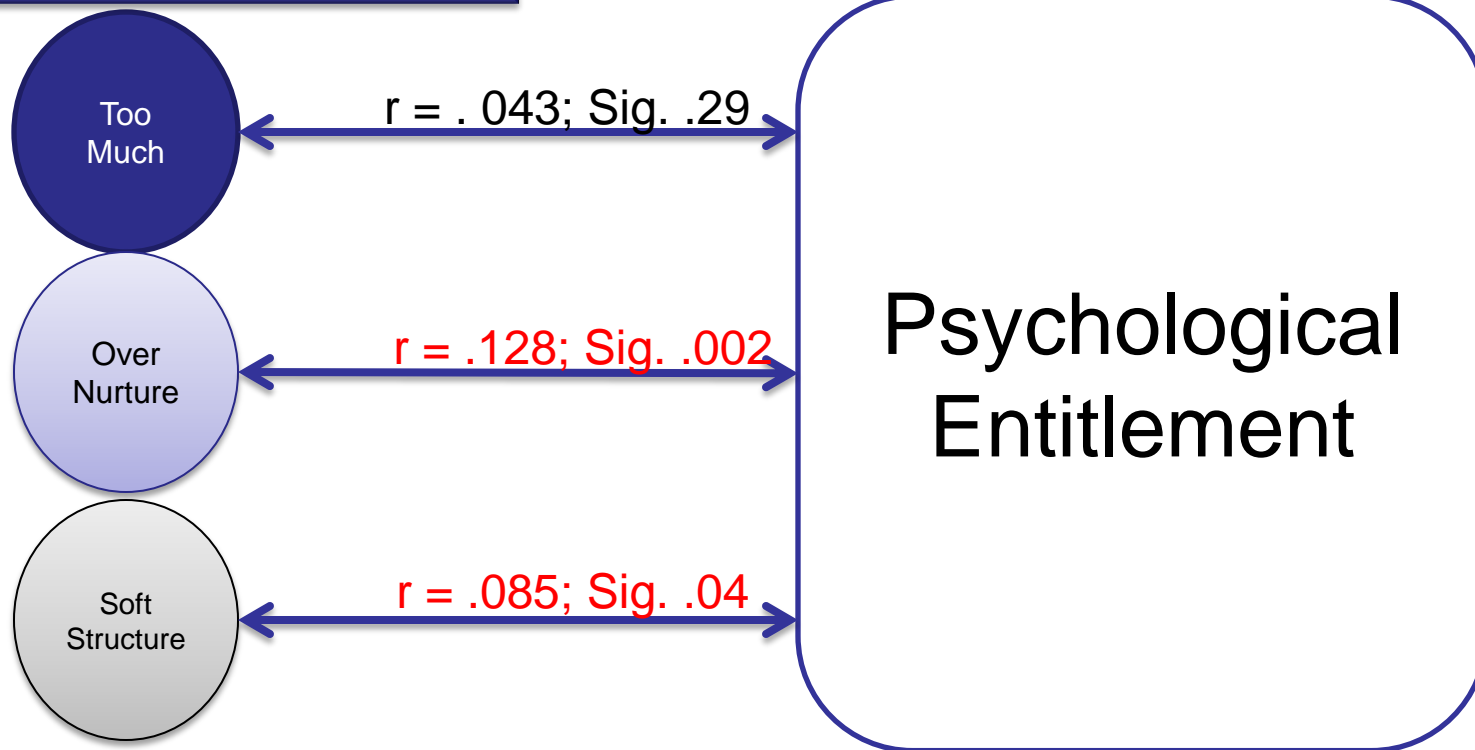


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Childhood Overindulgence

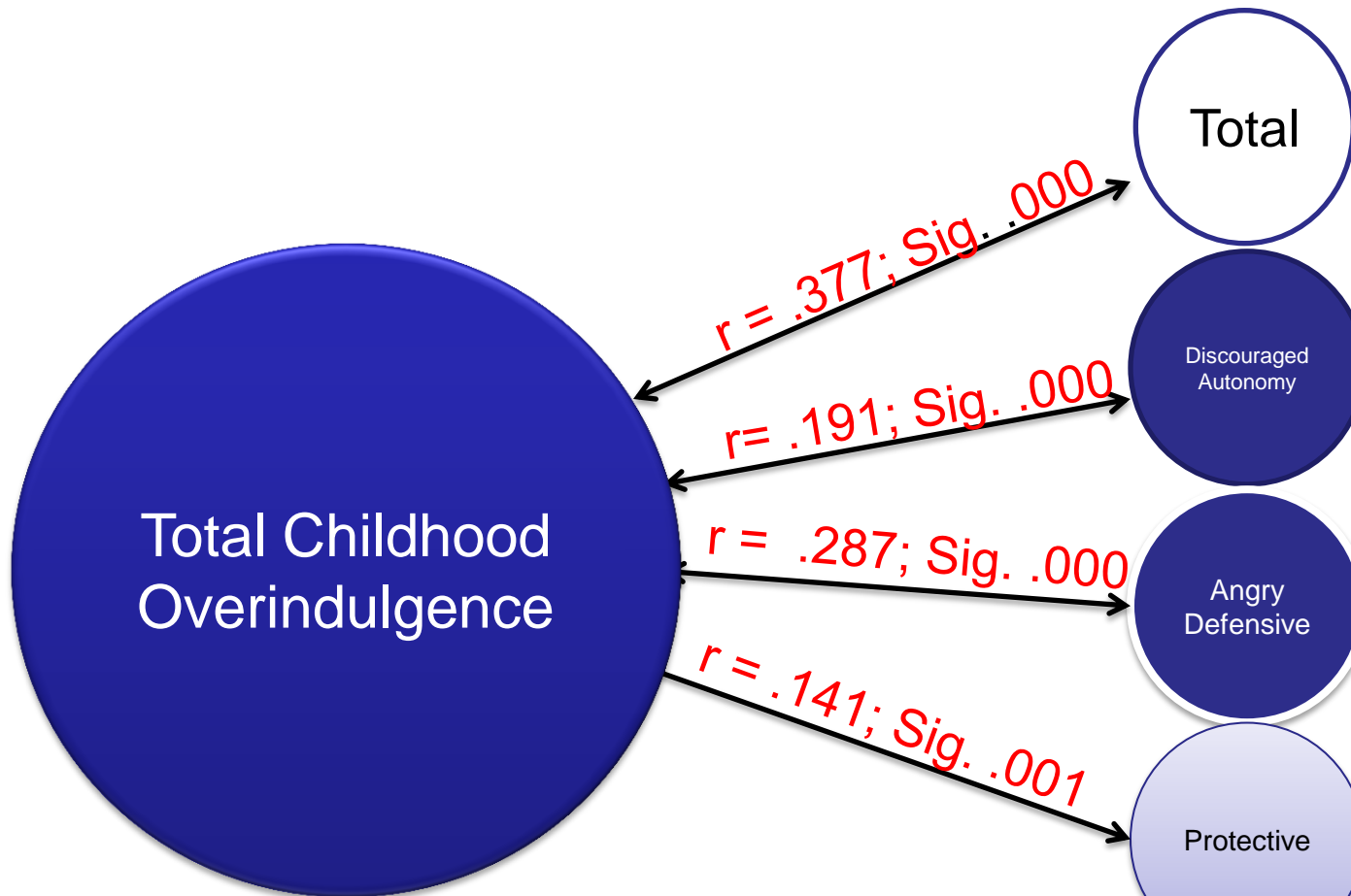


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Helicopter Parenting

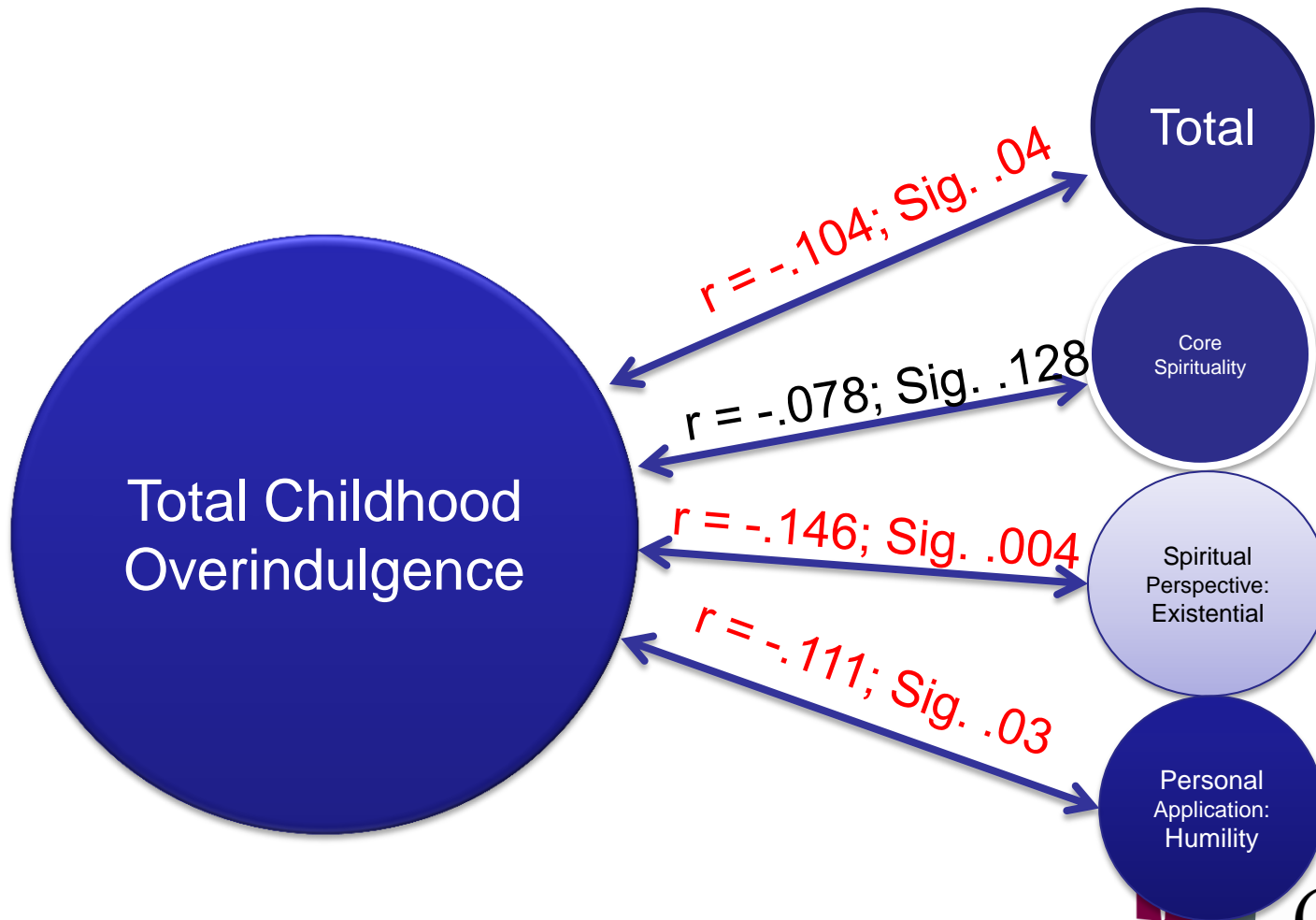


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Spiritual Involvement & Beliefs Scale



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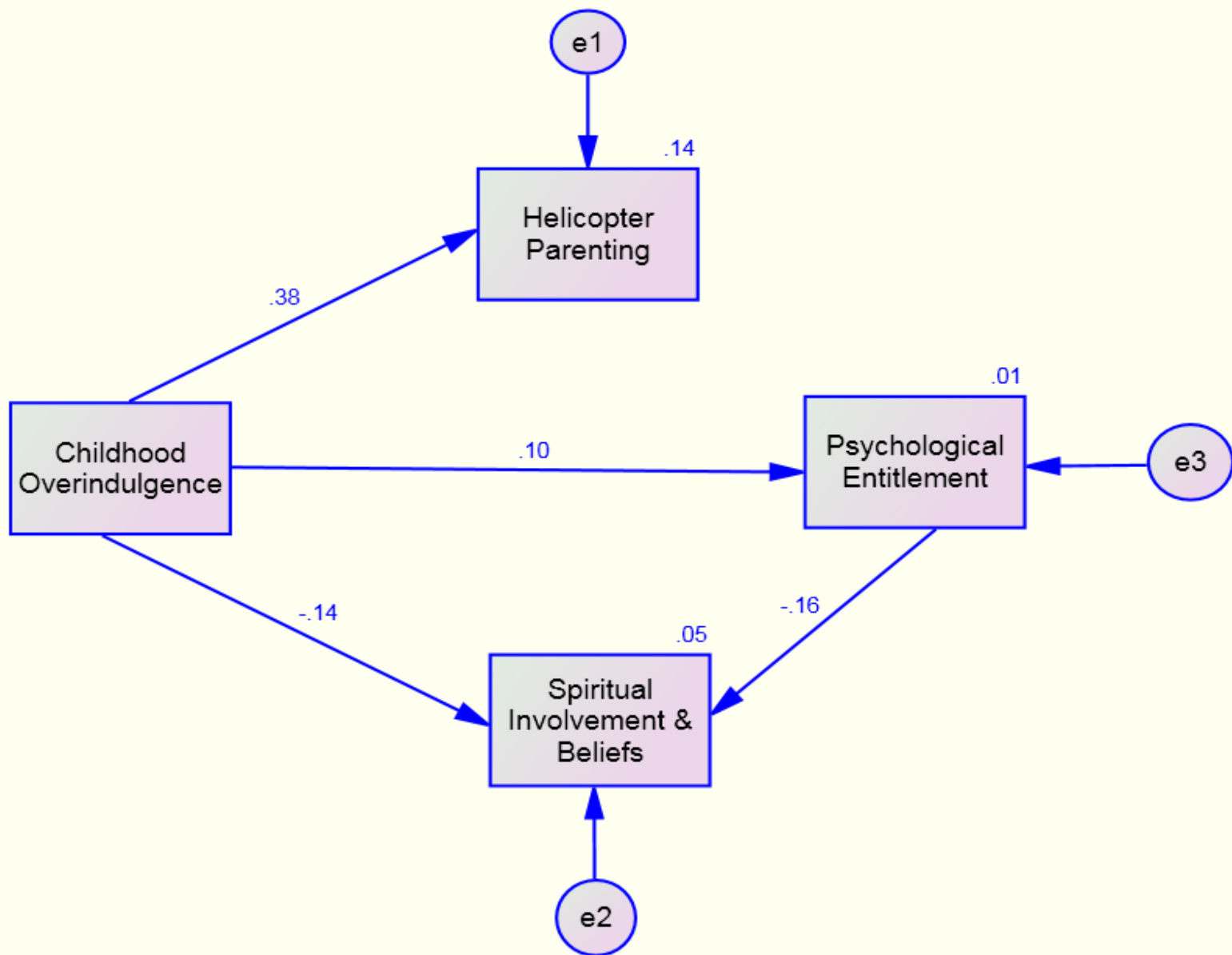
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Path Analysis

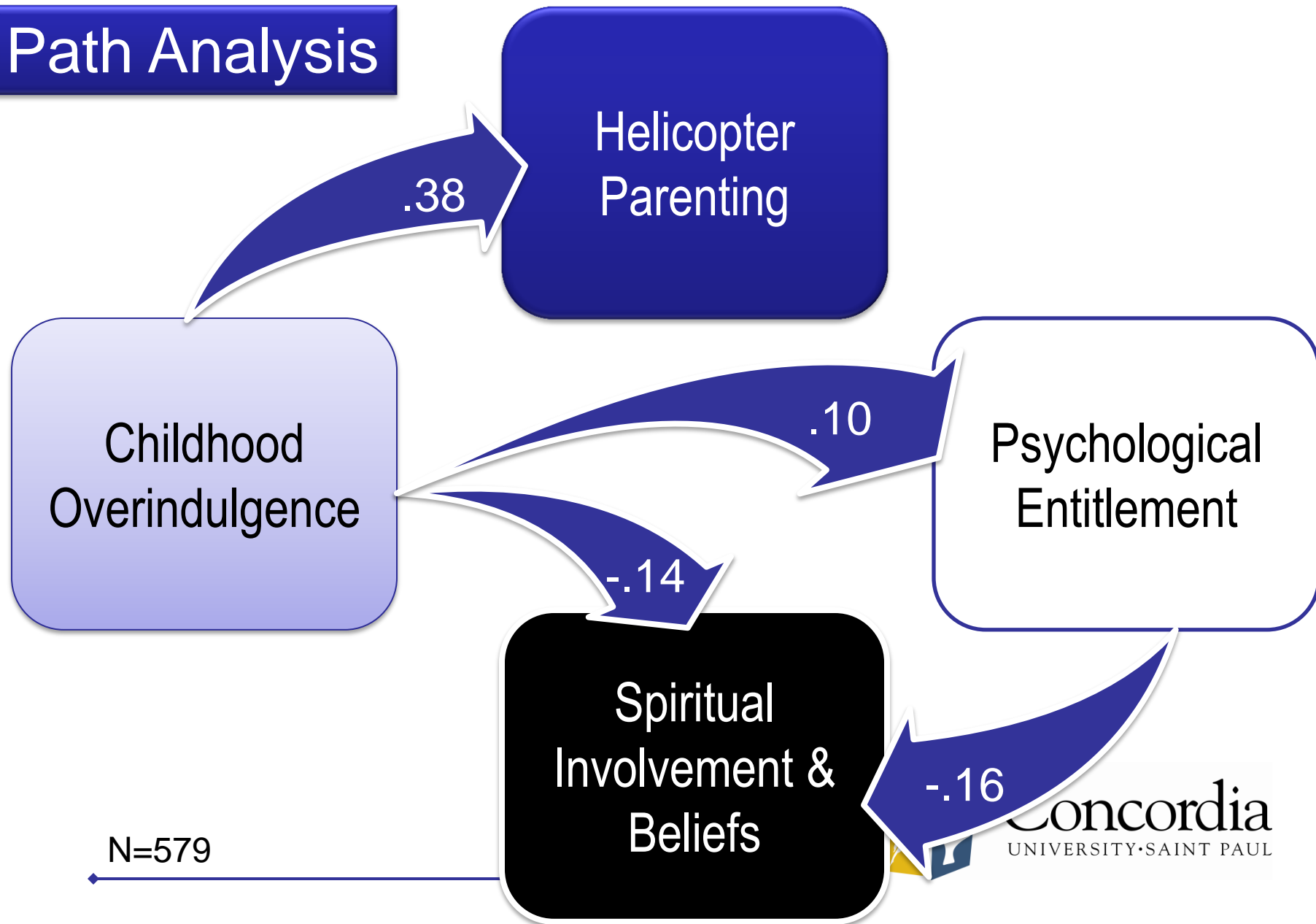
- “A statistical method of finding cause/effect relationships.”
- “Some people call this stuff (path analysis and related techniques) "causal modeling." The reason for this name is that the techniques allow us to test theoretical propositions **about cause and effect** without manipulating variables.”



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Path Analysis



Path Analysis

- Chi-square = 1.607
- Degrees of freedom = 2
- Probability level = .448
- Low chi-square value and lack of statistical significance indicates a good fit of the model to the data (no significant differences between the model and the data).



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Path Analysis

- All regression paths are statistically significant

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	
TotalWeightedOverindulgenceScore	<---	HPTotalRawScore	.920	.094	9.786	***	
TotalPsychologicalEntitlement	<---	TotalWeightedOverindulgenceScore	.037	.015	2.514	.012	
TotalSpiritualInvolvementBeliefScaleSIBS	<---	TotalPsychologicalEntitlement	-.483	.120	-4.038	***	
TotalSpiritualInvolvementBeliefScaleSIBS	<---	TotalWeightedOverindulgenceScore	-.146	.042	-3.433	***	



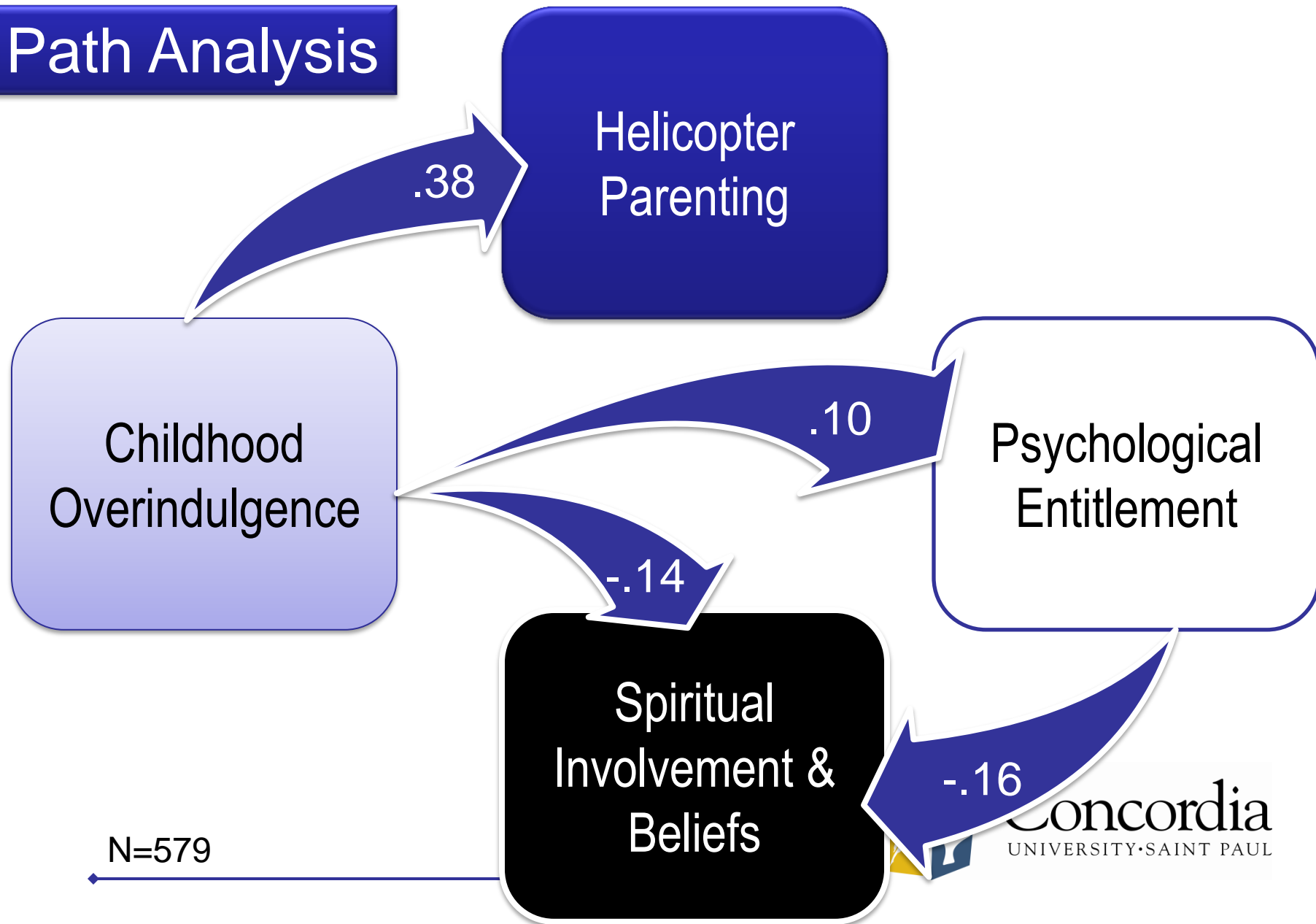
Path Analysis

- Fit indices indicate a solid model fit: Comparative Fit Index as perfect, and Normed Fit Index as sufficient/good.
- Root mean square of approximation value is below .05, indicates excellent fit.
- Critical N value is very high (3313) (rule of thumb: above 200), indicates excellent fit.



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Path Analysis



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?



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What Does This Mean?

- Childhood overindulgence leads to HELICOPTER PARENTING.
 - it creates child dependence on the helicopter parent
 - boundary issues between parent and child
 - encourages over-protection

What Does This Mean?

- Childhood overindulgence leads to A SENSE OF ENTITLEMENT.
 - An overblown sense of entitlement
 - Believing one is the center of the universe
 - Believing one is more deserving than others



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WWW.OVERINDULGENCE.INFO



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I Was Born
To Have A
Chauffeur
NOT BE ONE

What Does This Mean?

- Childhood overindulgence and entitlement leads
 - to an erosion of spiritual involvement and beliefs



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Jesus and the Rich Man (Matthew 19)



Christ and the Young **Rich Man** by Heinrich Hofmann (1889)

When it comes to Spiritual Involvement and Beliefs - Jesus was right!



25It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”

Where From Here?

- You will find ideas on what to do about overindulgence in “How Much is Enough?”
- And at www.overindulgence.info
- You can also participate in our research



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Write something...



Overindulgence.info
Avoid overindulging your child. Hear Dr. Bredehoft speak at Trinity Lutheran Church in Stillwater, MN on Jan. 25, 2012, 6:00-7:30pm

 **Stillwater Gazette** > Community > Avoid overindulging your child
www.stillwatergazette.com

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Overindulgence.info
Join the conversation with my coauthor Jean Illsley Clarke and other parenting

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