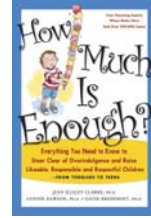




**An Overview of the Overindulgence
Research Literature
David J. Bredehoft CFLE
NCFR Annual Conference, Orlando, FL
11.19.04**



Study 1:

Perceptions Attributed by Adults to Parental Overindulgence During Childhood

N=730 (85.5% female; 14.5% male; modal age 41-50)

Methodology

Author-developed questionnaire based on in-depth interviews with adults overindulged as children

Findings

Adults Overindulged as Children:

- were overindulged most often by both parents (43.4%); mother (41.6%); father (10.6%)
- 53% had things done for themselves, 53% no chores, 41% clothes, 36% privileges, 35% toys, 32% freedom, 32% dominated the family, 32% not required to learn skills, 23% love, 23% didn't have to follow rules, 22% lessons, 18% entertainment, 17% holidays, 14% summer camps, 12% time with parents, 10% sports, 8% drugs (allowed to checked more than one response)
- were overindulged for a significant period of their lives (39% through adolescence; 9% childhood – adulthood; 22% throughout life and continuing)
- were overindulged due to parental issues such as poverty, chemical dependency or overwork (57%)
- felt both positively and negatively about the overindulgence (loved, confused, guilty, bad and sad)
- related the overindulgence to physical abuse (27%), sexual abuse (15%), and addiction (51%)
- reported symptoms in adulthood such as overeating (21%), overspending (17%), and problems with childrearing (17%), interpersonal boundaries (12%), and decision making
- were deficient in life skills: interpersonal skills (31%), domestic skills (13%), mental and personal health skills (12%), decision making skills (11%), money and time management skills(10%), responsibility skills (8%).
- Were more likely to overindulge themselves and their children compared to their non-overindulged counterparts.

Study 2

The Relationship Between Childhood Overindulgence and Young Adult Personality

N=74 (58% female; 42% male; age 18-25). Students from small private Midwestern university

Methodology

Research assistants met the participants in a lab setting and gave them written and verbal instructions on how to log onto the university's computer network. Once the study's web page was located they completed the questionnaire and submitted their data electronically for analysis.

The study employed the following instruments:

- FACES (Olson, Portner & Lavee, 1986);
- The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1979);
- The Dysfunctional Attitude Scale (Weissman, 1979 & 1980);
- The Life Distress Inventory (Thomas, Yoshioka, & Ager, 1994);
- The Self-Efficacy Scale (Sherer et al., 1982);
- The Self-righteousness Scale (Falbo and Belk, 1985);
- The Satisfaction With Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985); and
- Fourteen author-developed likert-style questions on overindulgence based on study 1.

Findings

Childhood overindulgence was significantly related to characteristics in young adulthood:

- lower self-efficacy, $r = -.237$, $p < .05$
- an inflated sense of self-righteousness, $r = -.248$, $p < .05$
- an increase in dysfunctional attitudes. $r = .233$, $p < .05$
- In addition, childhood overindulgence significantly correlated with: lack of chores ($r = .403$, $p < .001$), too many toys ($r = .325$, $p < .01$), too many clothes ($r = .261$, $p < .05$), too much freedom ($r = .325$, $p < .01$), parents being over-loving and providing attention ($r = .467$, $p < .001$), lack of rules ($r = .334$, $p < .001$), not enforcing the rules ($r = .417$, $p < .001$), and parents providing too much entertainment ($r = .274$, $p < .05$)
- Childhood overindulgence **was not** significantly related to self-esteem, satisfaction with life, life distress, socioeconomic background, or type of family system the young adult grew up in.

Study 3

Relationships Between Childhood Overindulgence and Parental Attributes

N=391 (89.7% female; 10.3% male; age 23-95). Participants were parents from 39 states and 12 countries

Methodology

Recruited parents logged onto the study's web page and submitted data electronically for analysis.

The study employed the following instruments:

- FACES (Olson, Portner & Lavee, 1986);
- The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1979);
- The Dysfunctional Attitude Scale (Weissman, 1979 & 1980);
- The Parental Locus of Control Scale (Campis, Lyman, & Prentice-Dunn, 1986); and
- Fourteen author-developed likert-style questions on overindulgence based on study 1.

Findings

Childhood overindulgence was significantly related to the following parental attributes:

- Family Adaptability, $r = .129$, $p < .05$
- Self-esteem, $r = -.101$, $p < .05$
- Dysfunctional Attitude Scale, $r = .227$, $p < .001$
- Parental Locus of Control, $r = .244$, $p < .001$
- Parental Efficacy, $r = .206$, $p < .001$
- Child Control of Parent's Life, $r = .295$, $p < .001$
- Parent Control of Child's Behavior, $r = .144$, $p < .01$
- Parent Belief in Fate, $r = .200$, $p < .001$
- Childhood overindulgence **was not** significantly related to Family Cohesion and Parental Responsibility
- As hypothesized, factor analysis showed the 13 indicators of overindulgence loaded into three factors: **Too Much**, **Over-nurture**, and **Soft Structure**.

Top 10 Parental Locus of Control Beliefs Associated with Overindulgence

- I feel like what happens in my life is mostly determined by my child.
- My life is chiefly controlled by my child.
- My child usually gets his or her own way, so why try.
- I allow my child to get away with things.
- It is often easier to let my child have his/her own way than to put up with the tantrum.
- Neither my child nor myself is responsible for his/her behavior.
- I have often found that when it comes to my children, what is going to happen will happen.
- My child influences the number of friends I have.
- In order to have my plans work, I make sure they fit in with the desires of my child.
- When something goes wrong between me and my child, there is little I can do to correct it.

Study 4

Relationships Between Parental Overindulgence, Parenting Styles, and Parental Sense of Competence

N=231 (91% female; 9% male; age 23-95). Participants were parents from 42 states and 3 countries

Methodology

Recruited parents logged onto the study's web page through www.overindulgence.info and submitted data electronically for analysis.

The study employed the following instruments:

- The Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (Robinson, Mandleco, Olsen & Hart, 1995);
- The Parenting Sense of Competence Scale (Gibaud-Wallston & Wandersman, 1978); and
- The Parent Overindulgence Assessment Tool (Bredehoft, Clarke, Dawson & Walcheski, 2004)

Findings

Parental overindulgence was significantly related to:

Baumrind's Parenting Styles

- Authoritarian parenting style, $r = .219^{**}$ Yes
- Permissive parenting style, $r = .551^{***}$ Yes
- Authoritative parenting style, $r = -.017$ No

Parenting Sense of Competence

- Global Sense of Competence, $r = .157^*$ Yes
- Parenting Efficacy (skill/knowledge), $r = .031$ No
- Lack of Parenting Satisfaction (valuing/comfort), $r = .240^{***}$ Yes

Note: $*p < .05$, $**p < .01$, $***p < .001$

Go to

www.overindulgence.info/Research_Folder/Bibliography.htm

to read

Overindulgence and Related Literature: Annotated Bibliography

The search for the annotated bibliography was conducted in the spring of 2003 using the following online databases: ProQuest (Psychology Journals, PsycARTICLES, PsycINFO, Social Sciences, Criminal Justice); Dissertation Abstracts; InfoTrac (Expanded Academic ASAP); and ERIC. The key words used in the search include: overindulgent, overindulge, overindulgence, indulge, indulgence, pampering, self-indulgent, self-indulgence, self-gratification, spoil, spoiled, spoiling, overprotective, over-involvement, overprotection, narcissism, narcissistic, favoritism, materialism, misbehaving, permissive parenting, and children.