

RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY FINDINGS FOR A MEASURE OF CHILDHOOD OVERINDULGENCE



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Abstract

This study, the seventh in the overindulgence project, reports the preliminary test-retest reliability and validity findings for OVERINDULGED a simple measure of childhood overindulgence. OVERINDULGED is a 14-item instrument designed to measure parental overindulgence from the point of view of the child (of any age). OVERINDULGED uses a weighted scoring system that produces an aggregate score and three subscale scores: (1) Too Much; Over-nurture; and Soft structure. Test-retest reliability for a seventeen day average testing period is reported along with a measure of construct validity comparing OVERINDULGED to the Parental Authority Questionnaire. Implications for parents and family practitioners will be highlighted.



Introduction

To date only one scale, the Roth Mother-Child Relationship Evaluation (MCRE) questionnaire (Roth, 1961) has been developed to measure parental attitudes toward the child and child-rearing practices including overprotection and overindulgence. The MCRE has been used in numerous studies (e.g., Handford, Mayes, Baginato & Bixler, 1986; Behar & Spencer, 1969; and McCollum & Gibson, 1970)

but was later found to have a flawed factor structure and since then the instrument has been questioned. No instrument to date has been identified which measures parental overindulgence from the child's point of view except the "Indicators of Overindulgence" developed by Bredehoft, Clarke & Dawson; (2001) for a study investigating overindulged children and locus of control when they become parents. At the time Bredehoft, Clarke & Dawson (2001) conducted their study the "Indicators of Overindulgence" did not have reported internal consistency, but since does and has been renamed: OVERINDULGED.

This study, the seventh in the overindulgence project, reports the preliminary test-retest reliability and validity findings for OVERINDULGED a simple measure of childhood overindulgence. OVERINDULGED is a 14-item instrument designed to measure parental overindulgence from the point of view of the child (of any age). The 14 items making up OVERINDULGED were derived from 17 "areas of overindulgence" identified by (Bredehoft, Mennicke, Potter & Clarke, 1998). Respondents answer each item using a five-point Likert scale (Never or almost never = 1 to Always or almost always = 5). Example of items are: "When I was growing up, my parents did things for me that I could or should do for myself," and "When I was growing up, my parents expected me to do chores."

OVERINDULGED uses a weighted scoring system that produces an aggregate score and three subscale scores: (1) Too Much (too many clothes, privileges, toys, activities, and entertainment); Over-Nurture (doing things for the child, and over-loving); and Soft Structure (no chores, too much freedom, allowed to dominate the family, not taught skills, no rules, rules were not enforced). Bredehoft, Dawson & Clarke (2003) reported factor loadings for the three subscales in OVERINDULGED (Too Much .593-.767; Over-Nurture.707-.745; Soft Structure .389-.910) along with good internal consistency (Chronbach's Alpha of .81 for the scale; subscale alphas of .76 (Too Much); .45 (Over-nurture); and .76 (Soft-structure).

In addition to test-retest reliability for an average 17 day testing period, a measure of construct validity is made comparing OVERINDULGED to the Parental Authority Questionnaire (Buri, 1991). The PAQ is a 30-item instrument designed to measure parental authority and disciplinary practices from the point of view of the child (of any age). It was selected because like OVERINDULGED, it takes the point of view of the child. The PAQ was derived from the Baumrind model of parenting (1978) and yields three subscales: Permissive, Authoritarian, and Authoritative. Both the mother and father forms are identical. The PAQ has good internal consistency for the subscales with alphas ranging from .74 to .87 and test-retest reliabilities for a two-week interval ranging from .77 to .92.

Implications for Parent Educators:

- Past studies have identified overindulgence as a problem issue for youth and for parents who care for them.
- This instrument will help parents, parent educators, and clinicians to identify childhood overindulgence so that appropriate parenting practices, parenting curriculum, and interventions may be developed and presented.
- It raises awareness of what overindulgence is and how it affects individuals.
- Children who were overindulged report that they lack important life skills when they reach maturity. Early identification of overindulgence may address this issue.

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RESEARCH METHODS

124 participants ages 14-31 (mean age: 19.84; 67% female, 33% male) from a small Midwestern liberal arts college participated in this study. At test 1 participants answered standard demographic questions along with the 14-item **OVERINDULGED**. Test 2 occurred following a 17 day average interval. At test 2 participants answered **OVERINDULGED** along with the 30-item Parental Authority Questionnaire, once in reference to their mother and once in reference to their father.



SCORING PROCEDURE

OVERINDULGED is scored using a weighted scoring system? The scale produces four scores: (1) a total or aggregate score and three subscale scores: (2) Too Much, (3) Over-Nurture, and (4) Soft Structure. The aggregate score ranges from 44-220. (Scale and test manual may be purchased from the author contact him at bredehoft@csp.edu).

RELIABILITY

The 14 items making up **OVERINDULGED** were derived from 17 "areas of overindulgence" identified in Study 1 (Bredehoft, Mennicke, Potter & Clarke, 1998). This 14-item scale has very good internal consistency: Chronbach's Alpha of .81 for the scale; subscale alphas of .76 (Too Much), .45 (Over-nurture), and .76 (Soft-structure) (Bredehoft, 2006). Study 7 established test-retest reliability for **OVERINDULGED** of .86 for the scale; .79 (Too Much), .71 (Over-Nurture), and .81 (Soft-Structure).

VALIDITY

This study establishes construct validity for **OVERINDULGED** using the Parental Authority Questionnaire (Buri, 1991), a 30-item instrument designed to measure parental authority and disciplinary practices from the point of view of the child of any age (the same point of view as **OVERINDULGED**). The PAQ was derived from the Baumrind model of parenting (1978) and yields three subscales: Permissive, Authoritarian, and Authoritative. Both the mother and father forms are identical. **OVERINDULGED** has good construct validity. As predicted the **OVERINDULGED** aggregate score positively correlated with Mother and Father Permissiveness and negatively correlated with Mother Authoritarianism.

Correlation Coefficients between **OVERINDULGED** Total Score and PAQ Scores

PAQ Mother Permissive	.491****
PAQ Mother Authoritarian	-.324****
PAQ Mother Authoritative	.090
PAQ Father Permissive	.308***
PAQ Father Authoritarian	-.002
PAQ Father Authoritative	-.164
*** p<.001; **** p<.0001	

Copies of **OVERINDULGED** and the test manual may be purchased from the author at bredehoft@csp.edu

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