

EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OVERINDULGENCE AND PARENTING STYLES



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Introduction

Previously, the research literature has examined overindulgence in several primary ways: attitudes and opinions; as one of many dependent variables; and the relationship between overindulgence in childhood and its influence in adulthood. Recently, research has attempted to define overindulgence, identify key participants and roles in overindulgence, and the effects of overindulgence in adulthood; young adults and the relationships between childhood overindulgence and family cohesion and adaptability, self-esteem, life satisfaction, and dysfunctional attitudes; parents and the relationships between their childhood overindulgence and family cohesion and adaptability, self-esteem, dysfunctional beliefs and parental locus local of control



The purpose of this study

1. Is there a relationship between parental overindulgence, parenting styles, and Parents' Sense of Competence?
2. Do previously established overindulgence constructs remain consistent in the Parent Overindulgence Assessment Tool?
3. Is there is a relationship between childhood overindulgence and parental overindulgent behaviors?

Instrumentation

In addition to a standard consent form and demographic information, each subject filled out the following scales:

The Parenting Styles an 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).

Results

Is there a relationship between parental overindulgence and parenting styles?

Broad Categories of Parenting Styles

Authoritarian, $r = .140$ ($p < .001$) Yes

Permissive, $r = .556$ ($p < .0001$) Yes

Authoritative, $r = -.046$ No

Is there a relationship between parental overindulgence and the Authoritarian Parenting Style?

Authoritarian, $r = .140$ ($p < .001$) Yes

Verbal/Hostility, $r = .174$ ($p < .0001$) Yes

Corporal Punishment, $r = .037$ No

Non-reasoning/punitive strategies, $r = .168$ ($p < .0001$) Yes

Directiveness, $r = .112$ No

Sample items:

Verbal/Hostility

I yell or shout when our child misbehaves.

I argue with our child.

Non-reasoning/punitive strategies

I punish by taking privileges away from our child with little if any explanation.

I use threats as punishment with little or no justification.

Is there a relationship between parental overindulgence and the Permissiveness Parenting Style?

Permissive, $r = .556$ ($p < .0001$) Yes

Lack of follow-through, $r = .565$ ($p < .0001$) Yes

Ignoring misbehavior, $r = .261$ ($p < .0001$) Yes

Lack of parental self-confidence, $r = .484$ ($p < .0001$) Yes

Sample items:

Lack of follow through

I state punishments to our child and do not actually do them.

I give in to our child when the child causes a commotion about something.

Ignoring misbehavior

I allow our child to annoy someone else.

I allow our child to interrupt others.

Lack of parental self-confidence

I am afraid that disciplining our child for misbehavior will cause the child to not like his/her parents.

I appear unsure of how to solve our child's misbehavior.

Is there a relationship between parental overindulgence and the Authoritative Parenting Style?

Authoritative, $r = -.046$ No

Warmth and involvement, $r = .013$ No

Reasoning/induction, $r = -.169$ ($p < .0001$) Yes

Democratic Participation, $r = .114$ ($p < .01$) Yes

Good natured/Easygoing, $r = -.068$ No

Is there a relationship between parental overindulgence and Parent Sense of Competence?

Global Sense of Competence, $r = .246$ ($p < .0001$) Yes

Parenting Efficacy, $r = .102$ ($p < .05$) Yes

Lack of Parenting Satisfaction, $r = .321$ ($p < .0001$) Yes

Is there a link between being overindulged as a child and overindulging your own children?

Yes, $r = .195$ ($p < .0001$)

Primary areas of the research literature support and inform this study: Parenting Styles; Parenting Self Efficacy & Satisfaction; and Overindulgence

Parenting Styles

Parenting style is a pattern of attitudes that parents express toward their children. Parenting Styles are defined using the Baumrind's definitions (1989, 1991).

Authoritative. Parents respect individuality, have high expectations, and attend to being consistent, affectionate, responsive, and supportive. Other characteristics include: warmth and involvement, reasoning and induction, democratic participation, and good natured/easy going. (Baumrind, 1989; Robinson, Mandelco, Olsen & Hart, 1995).

Authoritarian. Parents exercise firm control over their children and set strict standards of conduct. Other characteristics include: verbal/hostility, corporal punishment, non-reasoning punitive strategies, and directiveness. (Baumrind, 1989; Robinson, Mandelco, Olsen & Hart, 1995).

Permissive. Parents demonstrate minimal authority and control over their children and fail to define appropriate limits and standards of acceptable behavior. Other characteristics include: lack of follow through, ignoring misbehavior, and lack of parental self confidence. (Baumrind, 1989; Robinson, Mandelco, Olsen & Hart, 1995).

Parenting Senses of Competence

Parenting self-esteem encompasses both perceived self efficacy as a parent and the satisfaction derived from parenting (Johnston & Mash, 1989).

Efficacy – an instrumental dimension of parenting – reflecting the degree to which the parent feels competent, capable of problem solving, and familiar with parenting.

Satisfaction – an affective dimension of parenting – reflects the degree to which the parent feels frustrated, anxious, and poorly motivated in the parenting role.

Types of Overindulgence

Three concepts encompass the definition of overindulgence:

Material Overindulgence (Too Much)

Structural Overindulgence (Soft Structure)

Relational Overindulgence (Over-nurture)



Method and Data Collection

The sample consisted of 528 parents (54.2% female, 45.8% male; ages 20-79; Mean age 42) from 46 states and seven additional countries outside of the United States. Participants entered the study by logging onto the study's web page (Bredehoft, Clarke, & Dawson, 2006). Once participants read and agreed to the consent form they answered a questionnaire consisting of demographic data, *OVERINDULGENCE: Parental Overindulgence Assessment Scale* (Bredehoft, Clarke, Dawson, & Walcheski, 2004) a 30 item author developed likert-style inventory, and a series of normed, validated psychological inventories: the *Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire PSDQ* (Robinson, Mandelco, Olsen, & Hart, 1995); and the *Parenting Sense of Competence Scale PSCS* (Gibaud-Wallston & Wandersman, 1978). Participants submitted their data electronically for analysis.

Implications for Parent Educators:

Identifying overindulgence and the parenting styles associated with it.

Remain attentive to normative and non-normative life transitions and stressors.

Provide information and alternatives to corporal punishment through a variety of sources.

Observe for chemical or substance abuse.

Guiding parents toward authoritative parenting styles: Balance of responsiveness and demandingness / nurture and structure.

Examples might include:

I tell child our expectations regarding behavior before the child engages in an activity.

I give our child reasons why rules should be obeyed.

I help our child to understand the impact of behavior by encouraging our child to talk about the consequences of our own actions.

I talk it over and reason with our child when the child misbehaves.

I explain to our child how we feel about the child's good and bad behavior.

I explain the consequences of the child's behavior.

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