

Indulge Them Less, Enjoy Them More: Finding a Balance Between Giving More and Saying No to Your Children

TECHNICAL APPENDIX

Methodology and Selected Results from the Overindulgence Project¹

Introduction

The overindulgence project began in 1996 with the mission of studying the relationship between childhood overindulgence and subsequent adult problems and parenting practices. To date, we (David Bredehoft, Jean Illsley Clarke, Connie Dawson and our research assistants) have conducted three studies investigating overindulgence involving a combined 1,195 participants (Bredehoft, Mennicke, Potter & Clarke, 1998; Bredehoft, Clarke & Dawson, 2001; Bredehoft, Clarke, Dawson & Morgart, 2002, Bredehoft, Dawson & Clarke, 2002). These studies provide the scientific basis for this book. We are convinced that the results add to the body of knowledge on overindulgence and give us new insights into the parenting problems associated with this issue. The purpose of this technical appendix is to present our methodology and selected results from these three studies:

Study I: *“Perceptions Attributed by Adults to Parental Overindulgence During Childhood”*;

Study II: *“Relationships Between Childhood Overindulgence, Family Cohesion and Adaptability, Self-Esteem, Self-Efficacy, Self-Righteousness, Satisfaction with Life, Dysfunctional Attitudes and Life Distress in Late Adolescence and Young Adulthood”*; and

Study III: *“Relationships Between Childhood Overindulgence, Family Cohesion and Adaptability, Self-Esteem, Dysfunctional Attitudes and Locus of Control in Parents.”*

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David J. Bredehoft is Professor of Psychology and Family Studies and chairs the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Concordia University, St. Paul, MN. Jean Illsley Clarke is Director of the Self-Esteem and Transactional Analysis Center, Minneapolis, MN. Connie Dawson is a therapist who uses an attachment-oriented perspective in her work with adoptees and adoptive families. She sees clients at the Attachment Center Northwest in Kirkland, Washington.

Study I
Perceptions Attributed by Adults to Parental Overindulgence
During Childhood
(Bredehoft, Mennicke, Potter & Clarke, 1998)

Purpose of the Study

We had four main purposes in mind when we conducted **Study I**. First, we wanted to know who were the primary contributors to the overindulgence (e.g., mom, dad, both parents, grandparents, or others) and why it occurred. Second, we wanted to identify the areas of overindulgence. Was the overindulgence just about “too many things” or did the overindulgence occur in other areas of the parent – child relationship? Third, we wanted to see if there were any distinctive characteristics in adulthood that were associated with being overindulged as a child and if being overindulged had any negative effects. Fourth, we were interested in making comparisons between the adults who were overindulged as children and to those who were not.

Method and Data Collection

We constructed our own questionnaire for this study using feedback from in-depth interviews with self-identified adult children of overindulgers (ACO's). The questionnaire gathered both quantitative and qualitative data. The 730 participants (85.5% female and 14.5% male) for **Study I** came from four groups: people attending our workshops; trained parent facilitators; parents attending parenting classes; and students in psychology classes at a local private university. After reading a definition of overindulgence (00) each respondent answered the question; “Did you experience overindulgence as a child?” One hundred twenty four of our 730 participants said “yes.” The ACOs ranged from 19 to 80 years of age (average = 42.2 years) and were mostly female (87.7%), consistent with the whole sample (See Table 1).

Statistical Analysis and Results

Who was responsible for the overindulgence (mom, dad, both parents, grandparents, and others)? ACO's most frequently reported that both parents overindulged them (43.4%). This was followed closely by the percent of ACO's who attributed their overindulgence to their mothers alone (41.6%). Far fewer said that they were overindulged by only their fathers (10.6%), grandmothers (3.5%) or grandfathers (0.9%).

Why did the overindulgence occur? More than half of the ACO's (57%) told us that it was related to some life event. When asked to specify what life event, most (48%) said it was an issue stemming from the parents' experience such as growing up in poverty, feeling guilty, or working all of the time (See Table 2).

Table 1 – Study 1 Demographic Characteristics

Characteristic	Total Sample (n=730) Percentage	Overindulged (n=124) Percentage
Sex		
Male	14.4	12.1
Female	84.5	86.3
Missing	1.1	1.6
Age		
17-20	3.6	2.4
21-30	8.8	7.3
31-40	27.0	29.0
41-50	37.2	44.4
51-60	14.4	8.9
61-70	5.9	5.6
71-83	1.1	1.6
Missing	1.8	0.8
Education		
≤ 12 th Grade	5.2	4.8
Some college, no degree	17.7	21.8
BA	34.0	37.9
MA	34.2	29.0
Doctoral Degree	4.2	2.4
Trade School	3.3	3.2
Missing	1.4	0.8
Parents' income compared to others when child		
Lot more money	1.6	6.5
More money	16.4	26.6
Same amount	46.6	42.7
Less money	27.5	16.1
Lot less money	6.2	4.8
Missing	1.6	3.2

Table 2 – Study 1 Life Events Related to Overindulgence

Percentage	Events
48.4%	Issue stemming from parent (e.g., poverty, guilt, an addiction, family violence, worked all of the time etc.)
17.8%	Death of a loved one (sibling, parent etc.)
14.5%	Illness
9.7%	Birth order
4.8%	Holidays
3.2%	A reward for when I was good
1.6%	Lack of communication

n=62

Was the overindulgence just about too many things? The answer to this question is clearly no (See Table 3). The ACO's identified seventeen different areas in which overindulgence happened. Certainly too many things like *clothes* (41%) and *toys* (35%) were high on the list, but the areas cited most frequently were *having things done for me that I could do or should do for myself* (53%), and *no consistent chores expected* (53%).

Table 3 – Study 1 Areas of Overindulgence

Percentage	Areas
53%	Having things done for me that I could or should do for myself
53%	No consistent chores expected
41%	Clothes
36%	Privileges
35%	Toys
32%	Freedom
32%	Being allowed to take the lead or dominate the family
32%	Not having to learn skills that were expected of other children
23%	Love
23%	Not having to follow rules
22%	Lessons
18%	Entertainment
17%	Holidays
14%	Summer camps
12%	Time with parents
10%	Sports
8%	Drugs

n=124. Subjects could select more than one response.

Intuitively these seventeen areas of overindulgence can be classified into three categories: Material Overindulgence (Too Many Things), Structural Overindulgence (Lack of Rules, Soft Structure), and Relational Overindulgence (Over-Nurture).

Are there any negative personality traits in adulthood that are associated with childhood overindulgence? Overindulgence seems to affect people well into adulthood. The great majority (71%) of overindulged subjects reported having difficulty knowing what is enough, or what is normal as adults. Participants' written comments reveal their pain: "I have extreme difficulty making decisions." "I need praise and material rewards to feel worthy." "I don't have to grow up because other people will take care of me." "I feel like I need lots of things to feel good about myself." "I'm unlovable." "I have to buy gifts to be loved." "I constantly need outside affirmation from my friends." When we asked what feelings occurred when they were overindulged they said a mixture of positive and negative, but mostly negative (See Table 4). ACOs who had trouble "knowing what is enough" told us that they had the most difficulty in the areas of food (21%), followed by spending money and buying gifts (17%), parenting/child rearing (17%), feelings of what's normal (14%), conflict with interpersonal boundaries and relationships (12%), decision making (11%), and excessive activities such as working, going to school,

exercising, playing and having fun (9%). Further, ACOs lacked skills in the following areas: communication, interpersonal, and relationship skills (31%), domestic and home skills (13%), mental and personal health skills (12%), decision making skills (11%), money and time management skills (10%), and the ability to be responsible (8%).

Table 4 – Study 1 Feelings Resulting From Overindulgence

Percentage	Areas
48%	I felt loved
44%	I felt confused because it didn't feel right but couldn't complain because how can I fault someone who does so much for me
40%	I felt embarrassed because at times I was expected to know some skills that I never had to learn
31%	I felt guilty, bad, sad
29%	I felt good at the time but later I felt ashamed
28%	I felt good because I got everything I wanted
27%	I felt embarrassed because I knew it wasn't right
23%	I felt bad because other kids didn't get what I did
19%	No matter how much I got I never got enough so I felt sad
15%	I felt good because I got to decide about everything
15%	I felt bad because the other kids made fun of me
14%	I felt embarrassed because other kids didn't have stuff
13%	I felt ignored
13%	I felt confused
11%	I felt embarrassed because other kids teased me
11%	No matter how much I got I never got enough, so I felt mad

n=124. Subjects could select more than one response.

How do adults who were overindulged as children compare to adults who were not?

They are different in a number of ways. ACOs are more likely to overindulge their own children ($\chi^2 (3) = 40.92, p = < .001$) as well as overindulge themselves ($\chi^2 (3) = 39.1, p = < .001$). This self-indulgence resulted in gaining weight, feeling guilty, and experiencing lower self-esteem, poor health, and loneliness.

Study II

Relationships Between Childhood Overindulgence, Family Cohesion and Adaptability, Self-Esteem, Self-Efficacy, Self-Righteousness, Satisfaction with Life, Dysfunctional Attitudes and Life Distress in Late Adolescence and Young Adulthood **(Bredehoft, Clarke & Dawson, & Morgart, 2002)**

Purpose of Study

Our clinical work, feedback from workshops on overindulgence, and results from **Study I** prompted us to ask more questions about overindulgence, and led us to conduct Studies 2 and 3. We had two main purposes in mind when we conducted **Study II**. First, we wanted to know if overindulgence occurred more often in a specific type of family system. Second, we wanted to see if there was a relationship between childhood overindulgence and the following concepts: lower self-esteem, a lower sense of self-efficacy, a higher degree of self-righteousness, higher levels of dysfunctional attitudes and greater life distress in post adolescence/young adulthood.

Method and Data Collection

We collected data from 74 participants (43 female/31 male; age 18-25) enrolled at a private midwestern university during November 2000 (See Table 5). We recruited participants from psychology classes and gave them bonus points for their participation. We told participants to bring their laptop computers to one of seven lab periods held in a network-accessible classroom. Research assistants met the participants and gave them both written and verbal instructions on how to log onto the university computer network and locate the study's web page.

After reading and agreeing to the consent form participants answered a 147-item web-based questionnaire made up of demographic data and all items from eight inventories: FACES – the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales (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 (See Figure 1).

For this study we chose instruments that had established reliability and validity (see Fischer & Corcoran, 1994a and 1994b for a discussion on the reliability and validity for each instrument) with the exception of the fourteen indicators of overindulgence which were selected based on our findings from **Study I** (See Figure 1 and Table 3). Participants submitted their data electronically for analysis.

Table 5 – Study 2 Demographic Characteristics*

Characteristic	Percentage
Sex	
Male	41.9
Female	58.1
Age	
≤ 17	1.4
18-25	87.8
26-35	9.5
36-45	1.4
Education	
≤ 12 th Grade	24.4
Some college, no degree	62.2
AA	10.8
BA	2.7
Parents' household income	
Under \$29,999	12.2
\$30-49,999	20.3
\$50-69,999	32.4
\$70-89,999	21.6
\$90-99,999	4.1
Above \$100,000	9.5
Marital Status	
Never been married	86.5
Married	9.5
Divorced	4.1
Race	
Caucasian	89.2
African American	4.1
Asian or Pacific Islander	5.4
Hispanic	1.4
Religious Preference	
Protestant	60.8
Catholic	8.1
No religious identification	2.7
Other	28.4

*n=74.

Figure 1 – Indicators of Overindulgence (◆◆)

1. Do you think you were overindulged as a child?
2. When I was growing up, my parents did things for me that I could or should do for myself.
3. When I was growing up, my parents expected me to do chores. (R)
4. When I was growing up, I was allowed to have any clothes I wanted.
5. When I was growing up, I was allowed lots of privileges.
6. When I was growing up, my parents gave me lots of toys.
7. When I was growing up, my parents gave me too much freedom.
8. When I was growing up, my parents allowed me to take the lead or dominate the family.
9. When I was growing up, I was expected to learn the same skills that other children learned. (R)
10. When I was growing up, my parents were over-loving and gave me too much attention.
11. When I was growing up, my parents had rules that I was expected to follow. (R)
12. When I was growing up, my parents enforced their rules. (R)
13. When I was growing up, my parents scheduled me for activities, lessons, sports and camps.
14. When I was growing up, my parents made sure I was entertained.

Scale: never or almost never = 1; seldom = 2; sometimes, sometimes not = 3; frequently = 4; always or almost always = 5; (R) Item is reversed scored. (◆◆) Author developed items based on data from Study 1 presented in Table 3.

Statistical Analysis and Results

The Indicators of Overindulgence. The literature search conducted at that time failed to reveal a measure of overindulgence. Therefore, we constructed and pre-tested 14 likert-type items (see Figure 1) based on the Areas of Overindulgence from **Study I** (see Table 3).

We correlated each of the Indicators of Overindulgence scores with a single item “Do you think you were overindulged as a child?” to determine if our indicators of overindulgence were related to individuals’ self-reported overindulgence. The correlations among these overindulgence items from **Study II** are presented in Table 6. We found statistical significance between the item “Do you think you were overindulged as a child?” and the following: chores ($r = .403, p < .001$), clothes ($r = .261, p < .05$), toys ($r = .325, p < .01$), freedom ($r = .325, p < .01$), parents were over-loving and gave too much attention ($r = .467, p < .001$), rules ($r = .334, p < .001$), enforced the rules ($r = .417, p < .001$), and entertained me ($r = .274, p < .05$).

Table 6 – Study 2 Correlations Among Indicators of Overindulgence

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Overindulged (♦♦)	-													
2. Did things for me	.207													
3. Chores	.403***	.352**												
4. Clothes	.261*	.360**	.276*											
5. Privileges	.182	.213	.345**	.378**										
6. Toys	.325**	.345	.250*	.607**	.399**									
7. Freedom	.325**	-.030	.322**	.189	.560***	.183								
8. Dominate Family	.215	.075	.098	.316**	.330*	.205	.384**							
9. Skills	.079	.190	.394**	.079	.063	.022	.071	.106						
10. Parents over-loving	.467***	.083	.148	.089	.165	.059	.158	.264*	-.069					
11. Rules	.334**	-.028	.466***	.145	.267*	.130	.470***	.214	.095	.239*				
12. Enforce Rules	.417***	.094	.355**	.088	.216	.178	.418***	.320**	.068	.284*	.615***			
13. Activities	-.162	.114	-.002	-.005	.120	-.006	-.224	-.214	-.184	.024	-.194	-.346**		
14. Entertained me	.274*	.201	.119	.154	.321**	.324**	.166	.145	-.026	.071	-.055	-.034	.336*	

n = 74, Note: *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001, (♦♦) See Figure 1 for complete wording of items.

Figure 2 – Study 2 Overindulgence Scores By Circumplex Family Type

Family Adaptability and Cohesion Scales (FACES)

Cohesion

Adaptability

Chaotically Disengaged UHOI = 1	Chaotically Separated LOI = 1 ULOI = 1	Chaotically Connected UHOI = 3 HOI = 1 LOI = 1 ULOI = 2	Chaotically Enmeshed UHOI = 2 LOI = 1 ULOI = 1
Flexibly Disengaged UHOI = 4 HOI = 2 LOI = 2 ULOI = 2	Flexibly Separated HOI = 4 LOI = 1	Flexibly Connected UHOI = 2 HOI = 6 LOI = 2 ULOI = 1	Flexibly Enmeshed UHOI = 1 HOI = 1
Structurally Disengaged UHOI = 3 HOI = 2 LOI = 3 ULOI = 1	Structurally Separated UHOI = 2 ULOI = 2	Structurally Connected HOI = 2 LOI = 1 ULOI = 2	Structurally Enmeshed LOI = 2 ULOI = 2
Rigidly Disengaged UHOI = 2 HOI = 1	Rigidly Separated HOI = 1 ULOI = 1	Rigidly Connected UHOI = 1 LOI = 2 ULOI = 1	Rigidly Enmeshed LOI = 1

n=74		Score	Quartile
Ultra High Overindulgence	(UHOI)	37-55	4
High Overindulgence	(HOI)	34-36	3
Low Overindulgence	(LOI)	31-33	2
Ultra Low Overindulgence	(ULOI)	21-30	1

Does overindulgence occur in a specific type of family system? The answer to this question appears to be no. We created an overindulgence score by summing subjects' responses from the fourteen Indicators of Overindulgence (See Figure 1) and then plotted the overindulgence scores from FACES on the Circumplex Model (See Figure 2) according to their sixteen family types (for more about the Circumplex Model see Olson, 2000). A visual inspection shows that overindulgence occurs in all family types. This finding was also statistically supported using an ANOVA ($F = .389$; $df = 2$; $p = .679$) comparing overindulgence in balanced, extreme and midrange families (**balanced families** = flexibly separated, flexibly connected, structurally separated, structurally connected; **extreme families** = chaotically disengaged, chaotically enmeshed, rigidly disengaged, rigidly enmeshed, and **midrange families** = chaotically separated, chaotically connected, flexibly enmeshed, structurally enmeshed, rigidly connected, rigidly separated, structurally disengaged, flexibly disengaged). A statistically non-significant ANOVA suggests that overindulgence occurs equally across family types.

Is there a relationship between childhood overindulgence and self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-righteousness, dysfunctional attitudes and life distress in late adolescence/young adulthood? To answer this question we correlated our subjects' summative and subscale scores from the inventories used in this study with their response to the item: "Do you think you were overindulged as a child?" The results from these analyses appear in Table 7. The more young adults in our study were overindulged as children the less effective they saw themselves (e.g., "I give up easily" ($r = -.242$, $p < .05$); "I do not seem capable of dealing with most problems that come up in my life" ($r = -.269$, $p < .05$), the more self-righteous they believed themselves to be (e.g., "I can benefit other people by telling them the right way to live" ($r = -.277$, $p < .05$), and they held greater number of dysfunctional attitudes (e.g., "I cannot be happy unless most people I know admire me" ($r = -.234$, $p < .05$); "It is best to give up on your own interests in order to please other people" ($r = -.305$, $p < .01$). We found no statistically significant relationships between childhood overindulgence and the summative scores on family adaptability, family cohesion, self-esteem, satisfaction with life, and life distress.

Table 7: Study 2 Overindulged as a Child Correlated With Scale Sum Scores

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Overindulged as child (♦♦)-											
2. Family Cohesion	-.151	-									
3. Family Adaptability	.169	.267*	-								
4. Rosenberg Self-Esteem	.089	.248*	.495***	-							
5. Self-Efficacy	-.237*	.119	.273*	.423***	-						
6. General Self-Efficacy	-.305**	.176	.263*	.449***	.941***	-					
7. Social Self-Efficacy	-.029	-.027	.200	.232*	.773***	.513***	-				
8. Self-Righteous	-.248*	.222	.023	.120	.339**	.327**	.246*	-			
9. Satisfaction with Life	-.107	.346**	.413***	.695***	.494***	.492***	.332**	.157	-		
10. Dysfunctional attitude	-.244*	.226	.353**	.530***	.531***	.528***	.356**	.436***	.514***	-	
11. Life Distress Inventory	-.170	.298*	.154	.429***	.382**	.418***	.186	.170	.602***	.415***	-

n = 74. Note: *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p.001, (♦♦) = Do you think you were overindulged as a child?

Study III

Relationships Between Childhood Overindulgence, Family Cohesion and Adaptability, Self-Esteem, Dysfunctional Attitudes and Locus of Control in Parents

(Bredehoft, Dawson, & Clarke, 2002).

Purpose of the Study

We had two purposes in mind when we conducted **Study III**. First, we wanted to see if there were any relationships between childhood overindulgence and a lower self-esteem, higher levels of dysfunctional attitudes, and lower levels of parental locus of control in adulthood. Second, we wanted to empirically test our hypothesis that there are three types of overindulgence: Material Overindulgence (Too Many Things), Structural Overindulgence (Lack of Rules, Soft Structure), and Relational Overindulgence (Over-Nurture).

Method and Data Collection

Using a web-based system, we collected data from 391 participants who came from 39 states and 12 additional countries from December 2000 to April 2001 (See Table 8 for sample demographics). We recruited participants for our study in the following ways: participants attending workshops; trained parent facilitators; parents attending parenting classes; a list serve for certified family life educators, and word of mouth. Participants logged onto the study's web page. Once participants read and agreed to the consent form they answered a questionnaire consisting of demographic data, a 14-item author developed likert-style inventory on overindulgence "Indicators of Overindulgence" (See Figure 1), and a series of normed and validated psychological inventories: Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales (FACES), Olson (1986); Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), Rosenberg (1979); Dysfunctional Attitude Scale (DAS), Weissman (1979 & 1980); and the Parental Locus of Control Scale (PLOC), Campis, Lyman, & Prentice-Dunn (1986). With the exception of the author-developed overindulgence items, all instruments had established reliability and validity (see Fischer & Corcoran, 1994a and 1994b for a discussion on the reliability and validity for each instrument). Participants submitted their data electronically for analysis.

Statistical Analysis and Results

Is there a relationship between childhood overindulgence, family adaptability, family cohesion, self-esteem and dysfunctional attitudes in adulthood? The answer to this question is yes and no (See Table 9). To analyze this we created a weighted overindulgence sum score by multiplying the correlation coefficient from each of the respective Indicators of Overindulgence (See Table 11) by the respondents' raw score. Following this we correlated the weighted overindulgence sum score with the sum score from FACES and the DAS. We found that childhood overindulgence is statistically related to family adaptability ($r = .129$, $p < .05$), self-esteem ($r = -.101$, $p < .05$) and dysfunctional attitudes ($r = -.227$, $p < .001$). The greater the overindulgence, the more chaotic were our subjects' families. In addition, more overindulgence in childhood was

Table 8 – Study 3 Demographic Characteristics*

Characteristic	Entire Sample (n=391) Percentage	Parent Sub-Sample (n=348) Percentage
Sex		
Male	11.0	10.3
Female	89.0	89.7
Age		
18-25	0.3	0.0
26-35	10.0	4.6
36-45	21.5	20.1
46-55	30.4	33.3
56-65	28.1	31.3
66-75	7.4	8.0
76-85	2.0	2.3
86-95	0.3	0.3
Education		
≤ 12 th Grade	4.6	4.6
Some college, no degree	15.9	12.9
Vocational Tech degree	3.1	3.4
AA	4.6	4.6
BA	38.4	39.4
MA	26.3	27.0
Doctoral Degree	7.2	8.0
Household income		
Under \$29,999	8.6	6.3
\$30-49,999	18.1	17.8
\$50-69,999	20.5	22.1
\$70-89,999	20.2	20.1
\$90-99,999	8.7	9.2
Above \$100,000	23.8	24.4
Marital Status		
Never been married	9.7	3.4
Married	80.1	85.6
Divorced	8.7	9.2
Widowed	1.5	1.7
Race		
Caucasian	93.9	94.5
African American	1.8	1.4
Native American, Eskimo, or Aleut	0.5	0.6
Asian	1.3	0.9
Hispanic	1.3	1.1
Others	1.3	1.4
Religious Preference		
Protestant	52.2	52.9
Catholic	18.7	19.0
Jewish	1.5	1.4
Muslim	0.5	0.6
Buddhist	0.5	0.6
No religious identification	14.3	12.9
Other	12.3	12.6

associated with lower self-esteem and increased likelihood of dysfunctional attitudes in adulthood. This is an interesting finding because the DAS was designed to identify cognitive distortions especially those that underlie or cause depression. We did not find childhood overindulgence related to family cohesion.

Table 9: Study 3 Weighted Overindulgence Sum Score Correlated With Scale Sum Score

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Overindulgence Sum Score (♦♦)-					
2. Family Adaptability	.129*	-			
3. Family Cohesion	-.095	.193***	-		
4. Rosenberg Self-Esteem	-.101*	.102*	.277***	-	
5. Dysfunctional Attitude Scale	-.227***	.070	.184***	.611***	-

n = 391. Note: *p<. 05, **p<. 01, ***p.001, (♦♦) = 14 item weighted overindulgence sum score.

Is there a relationship between childhood overindulgence and later adulthood parental locus of control? The answer to this question is yes (See Table 10). The more our subjects were overindulged as children the more likely they were to hold ineffective parenting beliefs (r = .244, p < .001). Further, they believed they were not effective parents (r = .206, p < .001), they thought that their child controlled their lives (r = .295, p < .001), they believed they had little control over their children (r = .144, p < .01), and they believed in fate or chance when it comes to parenting (r = .200, p < .001). As predicted they also did not believe they were responsible for their children’s behavior (r = .008, p< .879).

Are there three types of overindulgence: Overindulgence (Too Many Things), Structural Overindulgence (Lack of Rules, Soft Structure), and Relational Overindulgence (Over-nurture)? The answer to this question is clearly yes. To find our answer, we first correlated the “Indicators of Overindulgence” with the single item “Do you think you were overindulged as a child?” The correlations among the fourteen overindulgence items from **Study III** are presented in Table 11. **We found statistically significant correlations between the responses to “Do you think you were overindulged as a child?” and every one of the thirteen Indicators of Overindulgence.** We can confidently say that all of these items are related and are measuring overindulgence.

Table 10: Study 3 Weighted Overindulgence Sum Score Correlated with PLOC Sum Scores and Sub Scores

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Overindulgence Sum Score (◆◆)	-						
2. PLOC Sum Score	.244***	-					
3. Parental Efficacy	.206***	.681**	-				
4. Parental Responsibility	.008	.547***	.266***	-			
5. Child Control of Parent's Life	.295***	.623***	.428***	.079	-		
6. Parent Belief in Fate	.200***	.658***	.355***	.114*	.372***	-	
7. Parent Control of Child's Behavior	.144**	.769***	.377***	.289***	.352***	.324***	-

n = 348. Note: *p<. 05, **p<. 01, ***p.001, (◆◆) = 14 item weighted overindulgence sum score.

Table 11 – Study 3 Correlations Among Indicators of Overindulgence

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Overindulged (◆◆)	-													
2. Did things for me	.430***	-												
3. Chores	.322***	.381***	-											
4. Clothes	.443***	.264***	.201***	-										
5. Privileges	.443***	.270***	.253***	.572***	-									
6. Toys	.544***	.298***	.211***	.513***	.448***	-								
7. Freedom	.370***	.210***	.254***	.250***	.496***	.253***	-							
8. Dominate Family	.469***	.261***	.299***	.281***	.363***	.254***	.367***	-						
9. Skills	.151**	.117*	.291***	.047	-.004	.080	.243***	.122*	-					
10. Parents over-loving	.488***	.374***	.137*	.181**	.162**	.250***	.206***	.275***	.088	-				
11. Rules	.254***	.148**	.487***	.139**	.306***	.149**	.506***	.300***	.360***	.082	-			
12. Enforce Rules	.259***	.174**	.422***	.121*	.279***	.164**	.505***	.313***	.333***	.096	.857***	-		
13. Activities	.273***	.169**	.015	.260***	.227***	.362***	.058	.084	-.071	.130*	-.146**	-.135*	-	
14. Entertained me	.469***	.222***	.088	.387***	.315***	.405***	.166**	.179**	.084	.333***	.045	.028	.465***	-

n = 348, Note: *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001, (◆◆) See Figure 1 for complete wording of items.

Table 12 – Study 3 Factor Loadings for Indicators of Overindulgence

Factor	Indicator of Overindulgence	Factor Loading
Factor 1 Material Overindulgence (Too Many Things)	When I was growing up, I was allowed to have any clothes I wanted.	.746
	When I was growing up, my parents gave me lots of toys.	.718
	When I was growing up, I was allowed lots of privileges.	.767
	When I was growing up, my parents made sure I was entertained.	.638
	When I was growing up, my parents scheduled me for activities, lessons, sports and camps.	.593
Factor 2 Structural Overindulgence (Soft Structure)	When I was growing up, my parents had rules that I was expected to follow. (R)	.901
	When I was growing up, my parents enforced their rules. (R)	.874
	When I was growing up, my parents expected me to do chores. (R)	.588
	When I was growing up, my parents gave me too much freedom.	.637
	When I was growing up, my parents allowed me to take the lead or dominate the family.	.389
	When I was growing up, I was expected to learn the same skills that other children learned. (R)	.499
Factor 3 Relational Overindulgence (Over-Nurture)	When I was growing up, my parents were over-loving and gave me too much attention	.745
	When I was growing up, my parents did things for me that I could or should do for myself.	.707

Note: n= 390. (R) denotes items recoded so that a higher score reflected greater overindulgence.

Second, we factor analyzed the Indicators of Overindulgence items (See Table 12) to see if there were indeed three types of overindulgence, and if so, which items measured each type. The factor analysis verified our hypothesis by loading the Indicators of Overindulgence on three factors - Factor 1: Material Overindulgence, Factor 2: Structural Overindulgence, and Factor 3 Relationship Overindulgence.

Figure 3 - Conclusions and Summary Findings

Study	Conclusions and Summary of Findings
<p>Study I: <i>Perceptions Attributed by Adults to Parental Overindulgence During Childhood</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parents are responsible for the majority of overindulgence. 2. The overindulgence was most often related to some issue from the parents’ experience (e.g., growing up in poverty, or working all of the time). 3. Overindulgence is complex. In addition to too many things, it involves lack soft structure and over-nurture. 4. Adults who were overindulged as children grow up with negative personality traits such as: feeling unlovable, needing constant outside affirmation, having a lack of skills, and not knowing how to take care of themselves. 5. Adults who were overindulged as children are more likely to continue the cycle of overindulgence by overindulging their own children. 6. Adults who were overindulged as children are more self-indulgent adults resulting in gaining weight, feeling guilty, lower self-esteem, poor health, and loneliness
<p>Study II: <i>Relationships Between Childhood Overindulgence, Family Cohesion and Adaptability, Self-Esteem, Self-Efficacy, Self-Righteousness, Satisfaction with Life, Dysfunctional Attitudes and Life Distress in Late Adolescence and Young Adulthood</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Overindulgence is complex. It is related to too many things (clothes, toys, being entertained), soft structure (didn’t have rules, did not enforce rules), and over-nurture (too much attention). 2. Overindulgence occurs in all family types (balanced, midrange and extreme). 3. Childhood overindulgence is related to adolescent/young adulthood dysfunctional thinking, feelings of ineffectiveness, and self-righteousness. 4. Childhood overindulgence does not appear to be associated with late adolescent/young adulthood self-esteem, life satisfaction, or life distress.
<p>Study III: <i>Relationships Between Childhood Overindulgence, Family Cohesion and Adaptability, Self-Esteem, Dysfunctional Attitudes and Locus of Control in Parents</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Childhood overindulgence is related to self-esteem (adult parent), family adaptability (family of procreation) and dysfunctional attitudes. 2. Childhood overindulgence is related to ineffective parenting beliefs such as: “My child controls my life.” “I have little control over my child.” and “I am not responsible for my child’s behavior.” 3. There are three types of overindulgence: Material Overindulgence (Too Many Things), Structural Overindulgence (Soft Structure), and Relational Overindulgence (Over-Nurture).

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