Report of a Measure of Academic Entitlement

Dennis L. Jackson
Jill A. Singleton-Jackson
Marc P. Frey

University of Windsor
Canada

Abstract

There have been at least three attempts to measure academic entitlement. The definitions used to construct these measures vary somewhat and in some instances definitions were not offered by authors. In the current study, we review the existing measures and definitions and offer a tentative definition of academic entitlement. We also report on an ongoing effort to develop a measure of academic entitlement, providing preliminary results for a two-factor and four-factor version of the measure and provide correlation coefficients between academic entitlement and learning orientation styles. We recommend that since academic entitlement is a relatively new construct with attempts to measure the construct still in their infancy, frequent communication of efforts to define and measure academic entitlement should be the norm.

Keywords: Academic Entitlement; Student Entitlement; Measurement; Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Introduction

Since Morrow (1994) wrote about the incompatibility of entitlement and academic achievement, interest in studying academic entitlement has grown. At least three different measures of academic entitlement have appeared in the literature along with some construct, concurrent and predictive validation evidence. Some authors have offered definitions of academic entitlement, for instance Singleton-Jackson, Jackson and Reinhardt (in press) define it as students believing "... they are entitled to or deserving of certain goods and services to be provided by their institutions and professors that is outside of the students' actual performance or responsibilities inside the classroom." Chowning and Campbell (2009) defined academic entitlement as "…the tendency to possess an expectation of academic success without taking personal responsibility for achieving that success…" (p. 982). Thus in this developing body of research, the phrase academic entitlement has a negative connotation, as opposed to a more positive use of the word entitlement. An example of a more positive use might reflect an opinion that engaging in the pursuit of a degree in higher education entitles the student to competent teaching.

This paper deals with the developing literature where the implication is that entitlement is undesirable, we merely make the point above to inform the reader that, in our view, there are valid entitlements. Thus for our purposes a critical component to defining entitlement is that of the expectation of something undeserved. An example could be a service level from the university or faculty that is incommensurate with higher education (e.g., a money-back guarantee of some sort), or a guarantee of a passing grade, regardless of student achievement. As discussed by Morrow (1994) and Singleton-Jackson et al. (in press), the concern over students' academic entitlement attitudes is its potential to damage the value of the university education. Specifically, it is worrisome that academic entitlement attitudes can erode the value of the achievement of obtaining a post-secondary degree through various mechanisms, such as over-simplifying course content or awarding points for non-achievement outcomes such as attendance, thereby making the reward of a university degree more accessible to a broader set of students, some of whom may not be deserving.

Past research on academic entitlement has helped us to begin to understand some of the possible antecedents and consequences of academic entitlement however our understanding and measurement of the construct is likely still in its infancy. The purpose of the current study is to report on efforts to construct a measure of academic entitlement and generally explore the domain of the construct. When new areas of investigation emerge the development and validation of measures of the construct are important activities, as is frequent communication around such activities. Frequent communication regarding construct measurement serves to help researchers in the area comprehend different conceptualizations of the construct and facilitate the efficient development of measures. We feel this should be the case with academic entitlement.

The Domain of Academic Entitlement

Defining Academic Entitlement. Table 1 summarizes some definitions of academic entitlement, entitlement, and psychological entitlement. We believe this is important in the early stages of emerging research areas to ensure that proper consideration is given to the definition of a construct, which then can translate to better measures of the construct. Not all authors who have developed measures of academic entitlement or have generally studied the construct have offered explicit definitions of it. Rather some have discussed academic entitlement in terms of its measurement structure, such as being composed of beliefs and actions (Achacoso, 2002) or by providing examples, such as Greenberger, Lessard, Chen, and Farruggia (2008). Based on definitions included in Table 1, and from readings in the area, the notion of academic entitlement would seem to contain a critical component in the belief that some reward should be obtained where that award is not judged to be warranted based on a student's actual academic achievement.

Consistent with Morrow (1994) we distinguish between educational and academic achievement where the latter does not imply consideration of development, but is judged relative to how well someone has engaged in the academic practice. Put another way, a student with a high sense of academic entitlement might believe that they deserve the reward even though they failed to achieve some pre-determined criteria, perhaps because they devoted great effort. Campbell et al. (2004) indicate that their definition of psychological entitlement does not include social contracts for specific situations, such as an entitlement to some service deserved because of past tax payments. Applying their argument here implies that beliefs about access to education or the above-mentioned belief about being entitled to competent teaching would not fall within the realm of academic entitlement.

A second component of academic entitlement contains some notion of responsibility. This is mentioned explicitly in Chowning and Campbell's (2009) definition and is consistent with Morrow's (1994) discussion of the culture of entitlement. Presumably the entitled student not only feels he or she deserves something they did not achieve, but that they fail to comprehend their role in, or accept responsibility for falling short of, the academic achievement. Finally, a third facet of the definitions appears to be a behavioral dimension. For instance Greenberger et al.'s example includes "demanding attitudes toward teachers" and Jackson-Singleton et al.'s definition includes "certain goods and services … outside the students' actual performance." Chowning and Campbell do not include such an aspect, but do discuss student incivility as a potential outcome of academic entitlement. Singleton-Jackson et al. (in press) used a phenomenological approach to understanding academic entitlement. Based on focus groups with 52 undergraduate students, the authors defined six themes to academic entitlement: 1) product value of education; 2) social promotion; 3) the role of professors; 4) the role of teaching assistants; 5) the role of administrators; and 6) shoppers as scholars.

An underlying thread was identified, that of control. Concerning the last point, this underlying thread was that students feel that they should have more control over their educational experience, such as in determining the number of assignments and the nature of evaluations. Some of Singleton-Jackson et al.'s themes appear to map onto previous definitions of academic entitlement. Others are interesting because they may offer insight into the formation of attitudes about academic entitlement. For instance, the theme involving university students seeing their education as a means to an end – to achieve a career or help them to get a job is not consistent with previous definitions of academic entitlement. However, it reveals that students may define academic achievement differently than faculty and university administrators. If students see academic achievement as the diploma, whereas faculty observe academic achievement as the practices of education or a discipline, such as comprehension of and the ability to apply an important disciplinary theory, then the two definitions are not necessarily compatible. It is even conceivable that students would see their inability to meet an educational goal put forth by an instructor as obstructing them from obtaining academic achievement as they have defined it.

A theme that bears directly on academic entitlement has to do with the role of instructors. Singleton-Jackson et al. (in press) reported that expectations about the role of the professor had little to do with characteristics of a good educator, but more to do with seemingly unrealistic expectations about professor availability and responsiveness. Presumably this reflects a desire to seek additional accommodations from professors in order to improve students' chances of academic achievement (as they define it). Additional insight can be gleaned regarding entitlement by examining their theme of shoppers or scholars. Academic entitlement may vary along with the extent to which students see themselves as customers paying for a degree, rather than students paying for an opportunity to achieve academically.

Measures of Academic Entitlement. In order to better describe the domain of academic entitlement, we examined the content of the different measures which have been proposed. To begin, Achacoso (2002) developed a measure by generating some 50 items, based on interviews with four faculty members. In subsequent analyses, using both exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, Achacoso arrived at a 12-item measure with two factors: Entitlement Beliefs and Entitlement Actions. Items identifying entitlement beliefs included "an instructor should bend the rules for me" and "I should only be required to do a minimal amount of thinking to get an A in a class." Entitlement actions was comprised of items that mostly had to do with grades and assessments, such as "I would confront an instructor to argue about my grade" or "If I felt an instructor's grading was unfair, I would tell the instructor." While items on the entitlement beliefs subscale appear to be largely consistent with definitions of academic entitlement, i.e., obtaining some result that is not warranted based on academic achievement, some of the items on the entitlement actions subscale do not appear to be as clearly linked to academic entitlement definitions. For instance, one item which reads "I would demand that an instructor make an exception for me" does appear to be consistent with academic entitlement definitions however another item "If I thought a test/assignment was unfair, I would tell the instructor" is less clear. This latter item and some other similar items on this scale may reflect an appropriate type of assertiveness on behalf of the student. Students sometimes do view assignments or exams as unfair, and they should be encouraged to voice that concern. Such discussions with students should be welcomed and can serve as an opportunity to highlight problems with an assignment that the professor did not recognize, or to educate the student as to why the assignment was indeed fair.

Greenberger et al. (2008) used a 15 item academic entitlement survey. In their study, they treated the 15 items as unidimensional, thus it is unclear whether subscales might exist in data collected from their instrument. Further, it is unclear how Greenberger et al. developed their questionnaire. Example items from their instrument include "If I have explained to my professor that I am trying hard, I think he/she should give me some consideration with respect to my course grade;" "Professors who won't let me take an exam at a different time because of my personal plans (e.g. a vacation or other trip that is important to me) are too strict;" and "Professors have no right to be annoyed with me if I tend to come late to class or tend to leave early." Some of their items appear to reflect the proposition that some students may be confusing effort with achievement, leading entitled students to feel as though their effort, irrespective of their level of achievement, should count for something, such as a grade of B. Other items in their scale appear to reflect an assumption that students should be afforded some level of accommodation.

Finally, there are other items in their scale that potentially reflect either a general sense of entitlement, such as the feeling of receiving lower grades than are deserved, and lack of etiquette or maturity, such as feeling that it is okay to answer cell phones during class, or to come and go from class as it suits them. Some of the latter items, such as "Professors have no right to be annoyed with me if I tend to come late to class or tend to leave early" may not reflect academic entitlement as has been previously defined, but the majority of the Greenberger at al. items do seem to reflect the definition of the construct. However, general items, such as feeling that the grades received were not as high as they should have been are difficult to interpret. It is unclear whether such responses reflect a sense of entitlement or a true injustice. For instance, some universities, in an effort to curtail grade inflation, reserve the right to curve grades downward in classes where the average is too high. In this case, students have legitimate complaints as they achieved academically, based on criteria set forth by the instructor, but were not awarded the recognition (grade) for that achievement.

Finally, Chowning and Campbell (2009) developed a measure of academic entitlement and conducted several analyses to demonstrate the psychometric properties of their instrument. Their instrument contains 15 items, paired down from a much larger number. The items were generated through conversations in lab meetings where faculty and students were present. They found two factors for their instrument: Externalized Responsibility and Entitled Expectations. The first dimension contains items such as "It is unnecessary for me to participate in class when the professor is paid for teaching, not for asking questions;" "I believe the university does not provide me with the resources I need to succeed in college;" "I believe that it is my responsibility to seek out the resources to succeed in college." The second dimension contains items such as "My professors are obligated to help me prepare for exams;" "I should never receive a zero on an assignment that I turned in;" and "My professors should curve my grade if I am close to the next letter grade." The externalized responsibility scale is longer than the second scale (10 of the 15 items define the first subscale), and is more heterogeneous.

For instance, the item "Most professors do not really know what they are talking about" may reflect more of an anti-intellectual disposition, and some of their group-work items, while meeting the definition of academic entitlement, appear to also be confounded with social loafing (e.g., Karau & Williams, 1993). Many of the items on the entitled expectations subscale appear to reflect academic entitlement in a much more straight-forward way, for instance "I should never receive a zero on an assignment that I turn in" reflects an underlying belief that effort should be rewarded apart from achievement. However, there is at least one problematic item on this scale, that being that "Professors must be entertaining to be good" as it does not appear to be consistent with existing definitions of academic entitlement. In general, their definition and the measure they have developed, aside from some criticisms offered above, appear consistent with existing definitions of academic entitlement.

A Definition of Academic Entitlement

After reviewing existing measures and definitions, we feel that a definition of academic entitlement should contain the following facets: 1) that academic entitlement reflects a belief that some reward is deserved that is not justified based on academic achievement (as defined by Morrow, 1993); 2) that academic entitlement beliefs imply a diminished role for personal responsibility in academic achievement; and, 3) that academic entitlement beliefs also implies unrealistic expectations about the role of instructors and demanding attitudes and behaviors on the behalf of students. Thus, examples of the first facet might be the expectation of a passing grade for attendance, or an even higher grade for effort. Other less obvious expectations might be that the entitled student might feel that he or she should not be faced with the prospect of failing a required course or a course in their major area of study. The second facet suggests that students fail to recognize their own role as agent in achieving academically and that a failure to perform well academically is a reflection of the quality of teaching or resources.

The academically entitled student might view it as the instructor's responsibility to shepherd them through the class, constantly make them aware of upcoming due-dates or even track down people who missed class to offer extra assistance. Examples of the third facet might include expectations that instructors should answer email and respond to phone messages quickly, or that instructors should make special accommodations for students, such as allowing flexible deadlines due to non-emergency situations (such as family vacations). There is clearly some overlap with regard to these three facets. The latter two especially appear to be different aspects of a failure to establish clear roles, responsibilities, and boundaries in the educational environment. This may be why some researchers have found two factors when exploring academic entitlement and no one has yet found three or more.

Correlates of Academic Entitlement

A handful of studies have been completed and in general these studies help to demonstrate that the construct of academic entitlement relates to variables of theoretical interest. For instance, Ciani, Summers and Easter (2008) reported that males have higher levels of academic entitlement than females, but that there appeared to be no context effect with respect to the classroom – i.e., there wasn't significant variability of academic entitlement between different classes. Greenberger et al. (2008) found that academic entitlement was related to exploitive attitudes toward other students, overall entitlement and narcissism. Furthermore, Greenberger et al. found a relationship between academic entitlement and student reports of parenting styles, namely students with higher levels of academic entitlement reported that their parents were more likely to exert pressure on them to achieve academically.

With regard to educational behaviors, the most compelling work so far has come from Chowning and Campbell (2009). Over a series of studies, these authors investigated the relationship between their measure of academic entitlement and several educationally oriented variables as well as personality variables. Their externalized responsibility scale correlated with many other measures, including narcissism, exploitiveness, agreeableness (negatively) and conscientiousness (negatively). Their measure of entitled expectations did not correlate with as many other measures, but did correlate significantly with narcissism, psychological entitlement, exploititiveness, and grandiosity. Perhaps more importantly than the correlates listed above, Chowning and Campbell presented evidence to suggest that academic entitlement may be predictive of student incivility, through relating academic entitlement scores to judgments about appropriate and inappropriate student responses to vignettes. Finally, in an experimental manipulation, they showed that higher academic entitlement scores related to ratings of an experimenter. Past research has demonstrated the potential utility of the academic entitlement construct. So far it has been shown to relate to variables that are theoretically related to it, and has been shown to be distinct from other related constructs such as psychological entitlement and narcissism.

Furthermore, measures of academic entitlement thus far appear to yield data that is adequately reliable. Finally, two of the instruments have a two-factor structure, and the factor structure of the third measure has not been explored.

The Current Study

In the current study we report on progress to date in developing a measure of academic entitlement. The first question of interest to us has to do with whether the items used by Greenberger et al. (2008) are unidimensional or not and, if not, how many factors are present. The second purpose is to examine a set of pilot items developed from the work of Singleton-Jackson et al. (in press) to see whether these new items map onto the factor structure of the Greenberger et al. items, or whether they define different subscales. Next, in an effort to build on previous work in placing academic entitlement into a nomothetic network, we examine its relationship to a measure of Emotional Intelligence and learning orientation styles. Finally, in an effort to begin to understand the effects of academic entitlement, we assess the relationship between academic entitlement attitudes and self-reported behaviors, as well as student-reported behaviors of professors.

Study 1

Overview and Purpose

In study 1 we analyzed data from 250 mostly first-year students. The purpose of the first study was to first examine the 15 items used by Greenberger et al. to understand whether their scale had just one factor, or more. Secondly, it was our purpose to create a new scale or scales from their items based on exploratory factor analysis and item wording content pursuant to our definition of academic entitlement. In this study we also included some pilot academic entitlement items, which were based on the work of Singleton-Jackson et al. (in press) and examine the relationship of a tentative new measure of academic entitlement with emotional intelligence, learning orientation, and perceptions of faculty behaviors relative to academic entitlement.

Study 1 Method

Participants

Participants were from a large course designed to teach first-year students the fundamentals of academic writing, such as grammar, expression of ideas, etc. A total of 275 students participated in the study by completing several questionnaires online. Participants were offered a bonus point toward their writing course for participating in the study. All data were collected so that the participant names could not be matched with their responses to the questionnaires and all materials and procedures were approved by the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board. The majority of respondents who revealed their gender were female (52.7%) as well, the majority of participants were first-year students (54.5%). Finally, the median age was 21 with the majority of respondents were 18 to 22 years of age (66.9%).

Instruments

A total of 116 questions across 7 questionnaires were administered in an online format. The questionnaires are as follows.

The Academic Entitlement Questionnaire used by Greenberger et al. (2008) contains 15 items dealing with various aspects of academic entitlement, such as how quickly professors should respond to inquiries (via phone or email), expectations around accommodations, and questions about rounding up on grades. This questionnaire was discussed more thoroughly in the introduction. The response scale for these questions was 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 6 (Strongly Agree). Greenberger et al. reported Chronbach's alpha for the entire scale of .87.

Academic Entitlement Pilot Questions were a set of 11 questions developed by the first two authors, based on findings from Singleton-Jackson et al. (in press). These questions included items about general attitudes toward education, such as whether students feel they are paying for an opportunity to obtain an education, or whether the purpose of an education is to obtain a job. Additionally, there were questions dealing with whether they felt professors should ensure they pass as well as questions about the role of the professor. The questions were based on student focus group comments and a complete list of the questions is available from the first author. The response scale for these questions was 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 6 (Strongly Agree).

Academic Entitlement Behaviors Scale contain 19 items, the first 15 of which mirrored Greenberger et al.'s (2008) items, except that they focused on behaviors.

For instance, instead of asking "If I have explained to my professor that I am trying hard, I think he/she should give me some consideration with respect to my course grade," which is the way it is phrased on the Greenberger et al. scale, we asked "How often have you asked a professor to consider your effort (i.e., that you are trying hard) when he or she is determining your course grade." The additional items were pilot items based on focus group responses. These questions were asked on a scale of 1 (Not At All) to 6 (Very Often).

Academic Entitlement Perceived Faculty Behaviors Scale contains 19 items that mirrors the Academic Entitlement Behaviors Scale, except the referent is faculty. In other words, these items were designed to assess participants' perceptions of how often faculty accommodated their entitled requests. To use the same example as above, the first question for this scale was "How often do you think your professors have taken into consideration your effort (i.e., that you are trying hard) when considering your grade."

The Emotional Intelligence Self-Report Scale (Schutte et al., 1998) is a 33 item scale designed to assess four components of emotional intelligence: optimism/mood regulation; emotion appraisal; emotion utilization; and, social skills. Participants respond on a five point scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). This scale has been used as a unidimensional scale, with reported reliability coefficients being relatively high (e.g., α=.87, Schutte et al.) and a multidimensional scale has also been suggested (Petrides & Furnham, 2000). In the multidimensional scoring of the scale, reported reliability coefficients for data have been shown to be acceptable for the first two dimensions and less so for the second two dimensions. For instance, Chapman and Hayslip (2005) reported reliability of α=.76 for optimism/mood regulation, α=.75 for emotion appraisal, and α=.59 for both emotion utilization and social skills. In the current study we obtained generally acceptable reliability coefficients for overall (α=.89), optimism/mood regulation (α=.83), emotion appraisal (α=.77), emotion utilization (α=.64), and social skills (α=.73).

Learning Orientation was measured by adapting three scales from Midgley et al. (1998) and Bong (2004). There were three subscales measuring Mastery, Performance, and Performance Avoidance learning orientation. Mastery orientation reflects a style whereby someone high on this scale would be most interested in gaining mastery over some knowledge or skill. Someone high on performance orientation tends to be more likely to engage in social comparison and place greater emphasis on grades. Someone high on performance avoidance orientation tends to be motivated to learn in order to not feel inadequate in the instructor's eyes, or to avoid failure. There were nine questions total measuring learning orientation, three for each subscale. Response scales for the nine items ranged from 1 (Not at all True), to 5 (Very True). We found the following reliability coefficients for these scales: mastery (α=.66), performance (α=.77) and performance avoidance (α=.74).

Data Analysis

All data were screened for outliers and normality. Because of the use of a 6-point Likert scale, the univariate distributions failed tests of normality, however there was no excessive skewness or kurtosis. Missing data was a minimal problem and appeared to be completely random (Little's MCAR test $\chi^2_{(434)}$=420.9, $p > .05$). For the Academic Entitlement Scale (AES) none of the items had more than 4 missing data points. For the questions pertaining to the EFA, most items had only 3 or 5 missing responses. Furthermore, multivariate outliers were removed by identifying any observations with a squared Mahalanobis' distance that departed significantly ($p < .001$) from the centroid. We also removed any responses that did not contain any variability – i.e., where someone checked the same answer for all questions. A total of 10 out of 275 participants were removed from analyses due to the reasons outlined above. Furthermore, for this portion of the study, we used list-wise deletion for missing data, resulting in the elimination of an additional 42 participants for a final sample size of 223. We compared our final solution with another solution using pair-wise deletion, which resulted in a larger sample size and found very similar results. Furthermore, while our method for dealing with missing data was less than ideal, in the second study we utilized confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using a full information maximum likelihood treatment of missing data.

Statistical Analysis System (SAS) for Windows was used for most analyses, including the exploratory factor analyses. Additionally, routines for conducting analyses for the number of factors, developed by O'Connor (2000) were used to conduct parallel tests and Velicer's minimum average partial test (MAP; Velicer, 1976). Versions of these routines were utilized that do not assume normality of the variables. Some subsequent analyses were conducted in PASW statistical program.

Results

Number of Factors

In the introduction to this paper we argued that there are three facets to defining academic entitlement. However, we were unsure about whether the three facets of the definition would necessarily be recovered in an exploratory factor analysis. Thus we relied on the parallel test (Horn, 1960) the MAP test, an examination of the scree plot (Cattell, 1966) and a general examination of Eigenvalues. Furthermore, given that this was an exploratory analysis, we also pursued multiple factor solutions in an effort to find the solution that was most interpretable.

First we analyzed the fifteen items from the Greenberger et al. (2008) study. The parallel and MAP tests suggested five factors, whereas the scree plot suggested two factors. Furthermore, we chose to examine a three and four factor solution, three because of the previous discussion in the introduction and four because an examination of the five factor solution suggested an over-factoring. Ultimately the two factor solution provided the most interpretable solution. A three factor solution seemed possible, but the third factor was weakly defined. We conducted two analyses, one with the full set of 15 items and one with a reduced set, where some items were removed due to poor communality or high cross-loadings. In the interest of space we have not included any tables of loading coefficients for the exploratory factor analyses conducted in study 1. However we did include factor pattern coefficients for the subsequent cross-validation which is described in study 2. The interested reader can contact the first author for factor matrices associated with study 1.

Principle axis factoring with Varimax followed by a Promax rotations were utilized. Different governing values (power coefficients) were used for the Promax rotation in order to try to locate the best simple structure rotation. The different power coefficients tended to yield a solution that was no better than the default value chosen by SAS. Next we re-factored the Greenberger et al. (2008) items and included 11 additional pilot items developed based on focus groups with students (Singleton-Jackson et al., in press). Using the same criteria for establishing the number of factors, we found a four-factor model to have the best interpretation. Again we factored the items twice, once with all items and again with a reduced set based on removing items with low communalities or high cross-loadings.

Interpretation of the Two Factor Solutions

The first factor in the two factor solution largely contains items querying how students would feel if a professor didn't respond quickly to messages or failed to accommodate the student in some way. A tentative label for this factor would be accommodation, however it may relate to the personal responsibility factor found by Chowning and Campbell (2009) because some of these items appear to reflect a general attitude of low personal responsibility. The second factor relates more clearly with academic entitlement as it contains items dealing with deserving some award apart from academic achievement, notably some recognition of effort expended. The two factors for this solution were moderately positively correlated (.461).

The four factor solution, which includes the additional pilot items based on Singleton-Jackson et al.'s (in press) work, contains two factors that are the same as those just described from the two-factor solution. In addition, it contains a factor that appears to measure the extent to which the educational experience should be tailored to individual needs, an underlying thread Singleton-Jackson et al. described as control. The other additional factor from this analysis is somewhat more difficult to interpret, but seems to relate most closely to the themes Singleton-Jackson et al. termed as the product value of education and shoppers or scholars. This dimension contains items dealing with whether students see themselves as customers and whether they feel the purpose of a university degree is to obtain a job when finished.

Correlations with Other Measures

Table 2 contains correlations between the factor scores for the two-factor solution and the four-factor solution with other measures collected. Most notably, we collected data for three measures of learning orientation, a measure of emotional intelligence, and questions that mimic the 15 items used by Greenberger et al. (2008), but referring to actual behaviors instead of opinions or beliefs as well as perceived faculty behaviors. The two subscales for the behaviors and perceived faculty behaviors items parallel the subscales derived from the two-factor solution and thus high correlations reflect consistency between academic entitlement subscales and self-reported academic entitlement behaviors as well as perceptions of faculty behaviors that reinforce academic entitlement.

As a concrete example, the fourth item from the academic entitlement survey reads "If I have attended most classes for a course, I deserve at least a grade of B." The corresponding self-report behavior item reads "How often have you asked your professors to give you a higher grade based on good attendance," and the corresponding perceptions of faculty behavior item reads "How often have your professors given you a higher grade based on good attendance." Scores on the accommodation factor correlated negatively with mastery learning orientation scores as well as emotional intelligence scales. Scores on the reward for effort factor correlated positively with performance learning orientation and performance avoidance learning orientation as well as academic entitlement reward for effort behaviors and perceived faculty reward for effort behaviors. Scores from the control factor correlated positively with performance and performance avoidance learning orientation. Finally, scores from the product value factor correlated positively with emotional intelligence and negatively with academic entitlement reward for effort behaviors and perceived faculty reward for effort behaviors.

Discussion for Study 1

Using the original 15 Greenberger et al. (2008) items, we found two factors and when including pilot items based on Singleton-Jackson et al. (in press) findings, we found an additional two factors, or a four-factor model. In general, the correlations with other measures make sense. We would expect accommodations, which has elements of low personal responsibility, to correlate negatively with mastery learning orientation. Furthermore, it makes sense that reward for effort correlates positively with performance orientation because of the entitlement aspect of this subscale – which one should obtain something (e.g., a better grade) for reasons that are outside of academic achievement. Finally, the positive correlation between performance and performance avoidance learning orientations and scores on the control factor appears consistent as well. The reason is that we would presume that the function of desired control is to tailor the educational experience to maximize chances of obtaining good grades. It should be noted that the lack of any significant correlation with mastery learning orientation implies that the function of control is not to maximize the chances of learning material well. More detailed discussion will be deferred until findings from study 2 are presented.

Study 2

Overview and Purpose of Study 2

The measures used in study 2 were identical to those used in study 1 and the procedures were also identical except that participants were recruited from a psychology department participant pool rather than the large online writing course. The purpose of study 2 was to gather a second independent sample of data in order to cross-validate findings from the exploratory phase described in study 1. A total of 159 people participated in study 2, and based on those who revealed demographic information, most were first-year students (80.3%) and female (77.1%). Further, the median age was 21 years and most were between 18 and 22 years of age (57%).

Expectations for Study 2

Because study 2 had a greater percentage of females than study 1, we anticipated that correlations between entitlement scores and other variables would be attenuated due to a restriction of range – females tend to score lower on academic entitlement (Ciani et al. 2008). Further, because of the exploratory nature of study 1, it is conceivable that some over-fitting of the factor models could have occurred. Thus fit measures may fall short of adequate fit.

Results

Data Analysis

The same methods were used for data screening as were used in study 1. Being that the items were measured on a six-point Likert-type scale, tests of normality revealed all measured variables were not normally distributed. However, there was no excessive skewness or kurtosis. The Satorra-Bentler correction to the normal theory Maximum Likelihood χ^2 values (Satorra & Bentler, 1994) are reported below. Furthermore, we also report the Swain (1975) correction to the χ^2 as this has been found to help correct for bias in the χ^2 values due to small sample size (Herzog & Boomsma, 2009). Finally we examined responses for multivariate outliers and did not find any.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

We used MPlus to conduct a confirmatory factor analysis on the four-factor model, based on the loading pattern for the reduced set of items from study 1. The fit of the model was somewhat modest ($\chi^2_{(98)} = 236.33$, $p < .001$; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation = .094; Comparative Fit Index = .87; Standardized Root Mean Square Residual = .065) based on using full information maximum likelihood treatment of missing data. Using listwise deletion (n=148) and applying the Sattorra-Bentler correction to the chi square value resulted in similar fit (S-B $\chi 2(98)=206.35$; Comparative Fit Index = .87; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation = .086; Standardized Root Mean Square Residual .066). After applying the Swain (1975) chi-square correction to the maximum likelihood χ^2 value, the fit was still modest (Swain-$\chi^2_{(98)} = 226.62$, $p < .001$; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation = .091; Comparative Fit Index = .88). The latent variable correlations and loading values were within acceptable ranges. The factor loadings were all significant and the R^2 values ranged from .25 to .95. The lowest R^2 value was for the item "If I have explained to my professor that I am trying hard, I think he/she should give me some consideration with respect to my course grade," which also had a low loading in the exploratory factor analysis, and also had a sizeable cross-loading. The two-factor model, which was based on a different number of measured variables, was also examined and had worse fit than the four factor model ($\chi^2_{(34)} = 120.49$, $p < .001$; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation = .126; Comparative Fit Index = .89; Standardized Root Mean Square Residual = .060). The Swain (1975) correction had little effect on the fit measures. Standardized factor loadings for the four factor model are presented in Table 3, along with factor correlations and maximal reliability estimates for the factors (Hancock & Mueller, 2001).

Correlation of Academic Entitlement with Other Measures

As with study 1, we examined the relationship between scores on academic entitlement subscales and other measures (the same measures used in study 1). These correlations can be found in Table 4 and there are many consistencies between the pattern of correlations between Table 2 and Table 4. For instance, scores on the accommodation factor correlated negatively with mastery learning orientation and correlated positively with self-reported measures of academic entitlement behaviors. Furthermore, reward for effort correlated positively with performance and performance avoidance learning orientations. Some interesting differences include the fact that some correlations from study 2 were actually higher than from study 1. The correlations between learning orientations and accommodation and reward for effort tended to be higher, as well accommodation correlated significantly (positively) with performance and performance avoidance learning orientations.

Discussion

In the current study we explored the factor structure of the academic entitlement items used by Greenberger et al. (2008) and separately explored the structure of the same items with the addition of pilot items based on Singleton-Jackson et al.'s (in press) themes of academic entitlement, gleaned from focus groups with students. The purpose of the study was to examine the factor structure of these items as well as the relationship between academic entitlement and other measures of interest. Among these other measures were measures of learning orientation, self-report measures of entitlement behavior, as well as students' perceptions of the extent to which faculty reward entitlement behaviors. Finally, we examined the relationship between academic entitlement and a measure of emotional intelligence. The purpose of including this latter measure as well as others was to help situate academic entitlement more broadly into a nomothetic network.

Our results thus far suggest that the original items reported by Greenberger et al. (2008) are not unidimensional. Furthermore, when more items are included, namely the pilot items described earlier, the number of factors appears to be four. Our preference is toward treating academic entitlement as a multidimensional and, given the early stages of research in this area, it seems appropriate to further explore the larger (four factor) model. Toward this end, more work is necessary to develop an adequate measure that covers the four dimensions described in this paper and more discussion with respect to the definition of academic entitlement is necessary. Results from our study suggest that academic entitlement bears a relationship to learning orientation and to emotional intelligence. Furthermore, to the extent that self-report about behaviors and perceptions of faculty behaviors pertaining to academic entitlement reflect reality, our data suggest that students who have a greater tendency to feel that special accommodations should be afforded them in the learning process, and that they should receive rewards for effort, are more likely to act on those beliefs by pressing their instructors for accommodations and for rewards for their effort. There is less evidence that these beliefs relate to faculty accommodating any requests.

However, more work needs to be done in this area as self-reports about entitlement behaviors do correlate positively with perceptions about faculty accommodating those behaviors, suggesting a causal chain of entitlement attitudes leading to behaviors resulting in a greater likelihood that instructors adjust their behavior to, at least sometimes, yield to those behaviors. The findings on learning orientation are intriguing. Most instructors would likely prefer students to have a mastery orientation, meaning that those students are interested in mastering material, presumably being less interested in actual performance, which naturally follows from their learning orientation (in our sample mastery did not correlate with performance orientation). Students with high levels of academic entitlement, however, are less likely to have higher levels of mastery learning. The finding that the academic entitlement accommodation scores correlated negatively with performance and performance avoidance learning orientations is to be expected based on Greenberger et al.'s (2008) findings that students higher in academic entitlement were more likely to have parents who pressured them for academic performance.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

An important emphasis of this paper was to discuss the meaning of academic entitlement. While measures of academic entitlement have been developed, we feel that not enough effort has been dedicated to clearly defining the construct. Lack of a clear definition necessarily introduces variability into the measures and potentially hinders investigations into academic entitlement. We argue that frequent communication in the early stages of investigation of a new construct, especially around the development of measures of the construct, are important for research progress. Toward this end, we encourage other researchers to explicitly define academic entitlement. Future research should focus on improving the measurement of academic entitlement, working from a well-articulated definition. We are currently developing a broader set of academic entitlement measures and obtaining larger samples in order to strengthen the dimensions that are defined by fewer items, such as the accommodation dimension. A limitation of the current study is having a small sample size for study 2, as well as having a relatively small initial pool of items. Furthermore, a limitation of the current work is that thus far we have not conducted any manipulations to determine whether academic entitlement is predictive in an experimental context, as was done by Chowning and Campbell (2009).

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Table 1: Definitions of Academic Entitlement

	Definition	Source
1)	entitled to or deserving of certain goods and services to be provided by their institutions and professors that is outside of the students' actual performance or responsibilities inside the classroom	Jackson-Singleton, Jackson, & Reinhardt (in press)
2)	the tendency to possess an expectation of academic success without taking personal responsibility for achieving that success	Chowning & Campbell (2009)
3)	"a construct that includes expectations of high grades for modest effort and demanding attitudes toward teachers" (p. 1193)	Greenberger, Lessard, Chen, & Farruggia (2008)
4)	Psychological entitlement is a "…stable and pervasive sense that one deserves more and is entitled to more than others." (p. 31)	Campbell et al. (2004).

Table 2: Study 1 Correlations for Academic Entitlement Factors with Other Measures

	Two-Factor Solution		Four-Factor Solution			
	Accommodation	Reward for Effort	Accommodation	Control	Reward for Effort	Product Value
Mastery Learning Orientation	*-0.205*	-0.030	*-0.194*	0.020	-0.030	0.032
Performance Learning Orientation	0.083	*0.152*	0.110	*0.142*	*0.165*	0.073
Performance Avoidance Learning Orientation	0.092	*0.147*	0.086	*0.188*	*0.148*	0.088
Emotional Intelligence Overall	*-0.256*	-0.039	*-0.260*	*0.137*	-0.039	*0.266*
Optimism/Mood Regulation	*-0.181*	0.013	*-0.184*	0.067	0.012	*0.221*
Appraisal of Emotions	*-0.238*	-0.079	*-0.245*	0.119	-0.074	*0.174*
Social Skills	*-0.224*	-0.059	*-0.217*	*0.135*	-0.050	*0.286*
Utilization of Emotions	-0.118	0.062	-0.130	0.104	0.052	*0.198*
AE: Accommodation Behaviors	*0.638*	*0.328*	*0.635*	0.088	*0.325*	*-0.233*
AE: Reward for Effort Behaviors	*0.577*	*0.396*	*0.573*	0.040	*0.389*	*-0.291*
AEPF: Accommodation Behaviors	*0.202*	0.042	*0.208*	0.096	0.036	-0.075
AEPF: Reward for Effort Behaviors	*0.324*	*0.247*	*0.325*	-0.012	*0.248*	*-0.245*

Note: Italicized values indicate two-tailed significance ($p < .05$). Indented labels for scales underneath Emotional Intelligence Overall reflect Emotional Intelligence subscales. AE stands for Academic Entitlement and AEPF stands for Academic Entitlement Perceived Faculty.

Table 3
Factor Loadings for Study 2 CFA Four Factor Solution

Entitlement Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Professors who won't let me take an exam at a different time because of my personal plans (e.g. a vacation or other trip that is important to me) are too strict	0.643			
I would think poorly of a professor who didn't respond the same day to an e-mail I sent	0.697			
Professors have no right to be annoyed with me if I tend to come late to class or tend to leave early	0.571			
A professor should not be annoyed with me if I receive an important call during class	0.625			
I would think poorly of a professor who didn't respond quickly to a phone message I left him or her	0.719			
A professor should be willing to meet with me at a time that works best for me, even if inconvenient for the professor	0.75			
A professor should let me arrange to turn in an assignment late if the due date interferes with my vacation plans	0.829			
If I have explained to my professor that I am trying hard, I think he/she should give me some consideration with respect to my course grade.		0.496		
If I have completed most of the reading for a class, I deserve a B in that course		0.871		
If I have attended most classes for a course, I deserve at least a grade of B		0.976		
I deserve to have more of a say in how my classes are organized			0.592	
Courses should be taught that take into account students' individual learning styles			0.868	
Courses should be designed to take into account student needs?			0.744	
I am paying for the opportunity to obtain an education				0.669
The purpose of obtaining a university degree is to get a job when you are finished				0.668
I am a customer of this university				0.706
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Factor 1	*0.733*			
Factor 2	0.410	*0.958*		
Factor 3	0.299	0.208	*0.708*	
Factor 4	-0.111	-0.042	0.339	*0.534*

Note: The top portion of this table contains standardized factor pattern loadings from the CFA for study 2, based on full information maximum likelihood treatment of missing data. The bottom portion of the table contains factor correlations and maximal reliability estimates for the factors on the diagonal.

Table 4
Study 2 Correlations for Academic Entitlement Factors with Other Measures

	Accommodation	Reward for Effort	Control	Product Value
Mastery Learning Orientation	*-0.258*	-0.064	-0.114	-0.070
Performance Learning Orientation	*0.242*	*0.306*	0.083	*0.201*
Performance Avoidance Learning Orientation	*0.297*	*0.359*	0.149	0.084
Emotional Intelligence Overall	-0.133	*0.188*	0.148	*0.234*
Optimism/Mood Regulation	-0.137	*0.167*	*0.157*	*0.208*
Appraisal of Emotions	-0.048	0.108	*0.175*	*0.246*
Social Skills	*-0.218*	0.082	0.095	*0.270*
Utilization of Emotions	-0.075	0.140	0.022	0.042
AE: Accommodation Behaviors	*0.569*	*0.322*	*0.263*	-0.120
AE: Reward for Effort Behaviors	*0.350*	*0.358*	0.117	-0.066
AEPF: Accommodation Behaviors	0.053	0.096	0.077	0.038
AEPF: Reward for Effort Behaviors	*0.195*	0.162	0.051	0.015

Note: Italicized values indicate two-tailed significance ($p < .05$). Indented labels for scales underneath Emotional Intelligence Overall reflect Emotional Intelligence subscales. AE stands for Academic Entitlement and AEPF stands for Academic Entitlement Perceived Faculty.