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“WHAT DO YOU MEAN MY GRADE IS NOT AN A?”

AN INVESTIGATION OF ACADEMIC ENTITLEMENT, CAUSAL
ATTRIBUTIONS, AND SELF-REGULATION IN COLLEGE STUDENTS

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by

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This dissertation is dedicated to the love of my life, Joey Achacoso.

*I am so richly blessed to know you and
privileged to call you my husband.*

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This study examined the relationship between academic entitlement, causal attributions and academic self-regulation. Researchers have conceptualized entitlement as the relationship between a person and an outcome that an individual assumes should occur (Lerner, 1987; Singer, 1987). Entitlement has the sense of moral imperative that one *ought* to receive something (Major, 1994). All individuals have entitlement beliefs, most of which come from and are generally shared by the culture (Lerner, 1987). Because all individuals have entitlement attitudes, it is important to understand how these attitudes function in an academic context. Academic achievement researchers have established that the process of self-regulation is linked to academic success (Zimmerman & Risemberg, 1997). This study examined two central questions: 1) How is an attitude of entitlement toward a

grade related to a student's academic self-regulation?; and 2) How is an attitude of entitlement related to a student's formation of causal attributions?

Participants were 312 college students who completed a series of self-report measures on academic entitlement, exaggerated deservingness, self-regulated learning, causal attributions, and various demographic items during the fall of 2001. Eight participants also took part in a 45-minute interview. Confirmatory factor analyses supported a two-factor model of academic entitlement consisting of beliefs and actions. Entitlement beliefs and actions were positively related to external attributions and negatively related to internal attributions. Pearson correlation methods revealed that entitlement beliefs were negatively related to the following measures of self-regulation: use of metacognitive strategies, use of time and study environment, and effort regulation. Entitlement actions were found to be positively related to the following: use of rehearsal and elaboration strategies, critical thinking, use of metacognitive strategies, use of time and study environment, and peer learning. Based on regression analyses, scores on a superiority scale explained more variance in entitlement beliefs and actions than scores on effort regulation scale. Qualitative analyses revealed that participants who scored higher on entitlement subscales appeared to be more politically savvy and assumed that they had more control in influencing the change of a grade. Implications for research and practice are discussed.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Don't go around saying the world owes you a living. The world owes you nothing. It was here first.

-Mark Twain

As a second-year graduate student, I had the opportunity to try my hand at teaching at the university level. I taught a developmental learning course designed to help undergraduate students manage their own learning in a university setting. Students learned about improving academic performance through the use of learning strategies, time-management tools, comprehension monitoring skills, and self-motivation strategies.

Young, enthusiastic, and naïve, I walked into the classroom unprepared for the semester-long experience that awaited me. I had the normal struggles of learning how to manage classroom routines such as delivering an engaging lecture and planning activities that were captivating enough to maintain the attention of my students, all the while fitting these into the appropriate amount of time allotted for the class. I struggled with grading and delivering feedback that was meaningful and helpful to my students. In essence, I experienced what many new teachers experience as they attempt to bridge the gap between classroom knowledge and practical application. This learning process is sometimes referred to in the education literature as “transition shock” (Corocan, 1981). Although this transition was challenging, it

was not entirely unexpected. Learning to teach is a honed skill like many other skills I have learned in my educational process.

However, one aspect of the experience that did surprise me was the attitudes and behaviors of some of my students inside and outside the classroom. Some students felt that because they sat in my classroom and did the minimal amount of work for the course three days a week, I was duty bound to give them an A. When I did not follow through with this unspoken contract, I was met with some shocking behavior such as wadding up a paper I returned and throwing it back at me, arguing about a grade during class discussion, or point-blank asking me if they actually had to do an assignment. Other students were much more tactful and attempted to get me to modify grades or course requirements during my office hours. For example, a student might tell me that he or she had worked so hard on an assignment and would request I change the grade based on his or her reported effort. Other students would try to appeal to me on a humanitarian level and tell me the details of their complicated emotional lives asking me to cut them a deal.

As I encountered these entitlement attitudes of my students, I recognized some of the same entitlement attitudes in myself, although I might not have had the forthrightness to express them quite so vividly to my own instructors. This recognition of my own and others' entitlement beliefs caused me to wonder how entitlement might be related to self-regulation. For instance, if a student believed that he or she was entitled to a grade, why work for it? Or, is it possible that a student would fail to achieve a desired goal because he or she had used an inappropriate

learning strategy, and subsequently felt entitled to a higher grade because the student believed that he or she had “worked hard” ? Is it possible that an attitude of entitlement toward a grade might hamper the processes needed in order to meet self-chosen educational goals? By logical extension, is an attitude of exaggerated entitlement related to causal attributions of success and failure in academic goal-strivings? This dissertation explored the link between entitlement and self-regulation as well as the link between entitlement and causal attributions.

Entitlement

Entitlement as a psychological construct first appeared in the literature around the time of Sigmund Freud’s early writings on narcissism (as cited in Solomon & Leven, 1975). The DSM-IV lists the following as the fifth diagnostic criteria for Narcissistic Personality Disorder: “has a sense of entitlement, i.e. unreasonable expectations of especially favorable treatment or automatic compliance with his or her expectations” (DSM-IV-TR 2000 Fourth Edition). Throughout the clinical psychological literature, entitlement has been associated with narcissism or excessive self-love to the detriment of others.

However, entitlement is not always a pathological symptom of a personality disorder. All individuals have entitlement beliefs, most of which come from and are shared by the culture generally (Lerner, 1987). Entitlement is concerned with an outcome that an individual assumes should occur (Singer, 1981). Entitlement is differentiated from desire or expectation by the sense that one *ought* to receive

something. It has the sense of moral imperative such that when violated, an individual will experience an intense emotion such as anger as opposed to guilt or disappointment (Major, 1994). For example, an individual with normal entitlement beliefs understands that things do not always work out as planned and will experience disappointment and frustration when expectations are not met (Kelln, 1997). In contrast, an individual who possesses excessive entitlement attitudes believes that he or she deserves only the best outcome and will become angered when implicit and explicit demands are not met (Kelln, 1997). Lerner (1987) described the construct as the relationship between a person and certain outcomes that has affective and motivational implications. Entitlement judgments are based upon personal attributes or perceived effort (Kelln, 1997). In an academic setting this might translate into a student believing he or she is entitled to a grade because of the perception of superiority to other students or the perception of having worked harder than other students. Researchers have linked the construct of excessive entitlement with other similar constructs such as exaggerated deservingness. For example, Kelln (1997) noted that individuals with exaggerated deservingness are less concerned with issues of conscience or social desirability, thus are more willing to act in ways that society would reject, i.e., lie, cheat, make a scene. Thus, exaggerated deservingness can be identified through behavior or interactions with others (Kelln, 1997).

There is a debate within the literature about the difference between the constructs of deservingness and entitlement. Steil (1997) asserted that the two constructs are distinct. Deservingness is based on beliefs that one has earned a

specific outcome through efforts or accomplishments, whereas entitlement is concerned with being meritorious of an outcome because of personal qualities. However, most researchers consider the constructs to be synonymous. Major (1994) argued that because the psychological implications for deservingness and entitlement are similar, it is appropriate to treat the constructs as interchangeable. Thus, for purposes of this dissertation, I made the assumption for now that deservingness and entitlement are the same.

Within the literature, entitlement has been conceptualized as being on a continuum with normal entitlement beliefs in the center and excessive and restricted beliefs at the two extremes (Solomon & Leven, 1975; Kriegman, 1983). Restricted entitlement beliefs have also been referred to as “under entitlement” (Grey, 1987), “nonentitlement” (Kriegman, 1983), or “repressed entitlement” (Kriegman, 1983; Moses & Moses-Hrushovski, 1990). Excessive entitlement beliefs have also been called “exaggerated entitlement” (Kriegman, 1983); “over entitlement” (Grey, 1987), and “misguided entitlement” (Kerr, 1985).

Entitlement researchers have yet to define precisely normal entitlement attitudes. Because deservingness is culturally defined (Lerner, 1980), decisions about deservingness take place in a relative context (Moses & Moses-Hrshovski, 1990) and are not necessarily universal. Thus, expectations of normal deservingness vary from person to person (Kelln, 1997). Kriegman (1983) proposed that in a healthy family, a child develops certain rights or expectations that are “appropriate,” that is, not excessive, to his or her age and level of development. For instance, a five-year-old

child might have the expectation of being able to stay up until a specific hour, or being able to watch a certain television show. Likewise, an adult in the United States would generally believe that he or she is entitled to clean air and potable drinking water; most people would generally argue this to be so. Further, Kelln (1997) noted that individuals with normal entitlement beliefs are more capable than individuals with excessive entitlement beliefs of accepting variations in outcomes.

At one end of the entitlement continuum are restricted entitlement attitudes. These are described by Kriegman (1983) as a limited sense of rights or satisfactions when compared to a similar other. In other words, an individual with restricted entitlement beliefs may not think that he or she deserves the same fair treatment given to another person. Someone may believe that he or she does not have a right to speak up or question authority when basic human rights are violated (Kriegman, 1983). In an academic setting, a student with restricted entitlement beliefs may not raise his or her hand in class to ask a question because he or she does not believe that the instructor should focus class time on his or her concerns compared with that of fellow classmates.

In contrast, excessive entitlement is described in the literature as desiring only the best outcomes and wishing never to have to suffer undesirable outcomes resulting from personal attributes, situation, or actions (Kelln, 1997). For example, an individual with excessive entitlement attitudes may believe that he or she should not have to wait in a long line because he or she is superior to the others who are also waiting. In an academic setting, a student with an attitude of excessive entitlement

may believe that he or she should automatically deserve an extension of a due date because he or she is special compared to fellow classmates. Or, a student may believe that he or she deserves a higher grade on a project because of the amount of time invested in the task. Entitlement researchers would generally view the previous example as entitlement exactly in line with other researchers who view this example as deservingness.

It has been hypothesized in the clinical literature that in order to justify exaggerated entitlement, individuals arrive at their entitlement beliefs via one of two different routes: compensatory or privileged (Kelln, 1997). The compensatory route to excessive entitlement posits that a person is different in that he or she has been somehow unfairly deprived and it is up to an outside agent to make up for this deprivation (Solomon & Leven, 1975; Kriegman, 1983). In contrast, the privileged route to excessive entitlement assumes that deservingness is based on perceived superiority (Solomon & Leven, 1975; Kelln, 1997). If someone perceives that he or she is smarter, faster, stronger, better-looking, or simply superior to another, he or she may expect special treatment from others (Solomon & Leven, 1975; Kelln, 1997). In either case, privileged or compensatory, the individual sees himself or herself as special, not like most other people. This uniqueness is an implicit assumption that positions an individual into a perceived special status or recognition that can result in exaggerated entitlement attitudes (Solomon & Leven, 1975; Kelln, 1997). Most entitlement researchers would posit that the manifestation of entitlement attitudes

would look the same regardless of the route, privileged or compensatory (Major, 1994).

Attributions

One aspect of entitlement that should be emphasized here is the tacit or explicit expectation of a person who holds an exaggerated entitlement attitude with regards to who or what is responsible for the outcome. Again, entitlement researchers have framed entitlement in terms of the relationship between a person and certain outcomes that has affective and motivational implications (Lerner, 1987). Implicit in this conceptualization is the idea that some entity outside the individual person is responsible for the outcome (Major, 1994). For example, in an academic setting, a person with an exaggerated entitlement belief would see the instructor as having the main responsibility for an outcome, such as a grade, because an instructor makes the final decision about a grade, rather than the student. This assignment of external responsibility is very much reflected in statements commonly made by students such as, “She (the instructor) gave me an A” or “He gave me a D.” In psychological terms, assigning the cause of an everyday event, such as why a student received a grade, is known as making an attribution of success or failure (Försterling, 2001).

Attribution theory emerged in social psychology during the 1950’s with Heider’s distinction between outcomes based on personal qualities or environmental qualities (Heider, 1958). Rotter (1966) added to attribution theory a classification of locus referring to the cause of an outcome as internal or external. Since the early

beginnings of attribution theory, there have been thousands of research studies examining the construct (Försterling, 2001). Researchers have sought to integrate attribution theory in various fields of psychology such as experimental, personality, motivation, clinical, and organizational psychology (Försterling, 2001). Indeed, attribution theory has become a household construct in educational psychology. Educational psychologists have examined the relationship between causal attributions and academic achievement motivation focusing primarily on the dimensions of locus, stability, and controllability (Weiner, 1986). Because entitlement researchers have theoretically linked the construct of entitlement to external attributions, this dissertation focused solely on the relationship between entitlement and the locus dimension of attributions.

Self-Regulation

In the 1970's, the field of learning psychology experienced a paradigm shift from behaviorism to information processing. As a result, a large number of studies were published that examined how humans take in and process information. Learning was no longer viewed as just a series of stimulus-response connections. Essentially, the human being was brought into the learning process. Previously, individuals were portrayed as passive recipients in learning situations. With this change in thinking, individuals were now considered active participants in the learning process. As the field of learning made this paradigm shift, researchers became focused on what learners did cognitively and behaviorally to facilitate

learning, thus giving birth to the general construct of metacognition. Metacognition is defined as knowledge or awareness of one's own cognitive states or abilities (Paris & Winograd, 1990). An example of metacognition applied to an academic setting would be a student becoming aware of his or her thinking as the student reads, writes, and works on academic tasks (Paris & Winograd, 1990). Metacognition takes place when a student makes a self-appraisal about his or her knowledge such as "Do I know the formula to calculate a standard deviation?" and then exercises self-management to develop a plan to fill the gap in knowledge (Paris & Winograd, 1990).

One outgrowth of the metacognitive era in learning has been the field of self-regulated learning. As a pioneer in this field beginning in the mid 1980's, Zimmerman (1986, 1989, 1998) explained that a student is self-regulated to the degree he or she is "metacognitively, motivationally, and behaviorally (an) active participant in their own learning process" (p. 308). Essentially, the self-regulated student takes on the responsibility of acquiring knowledge or skill in an academic setting without relying on another, such as a parent or a teacher, to guide the process (Zimmerman, 1989). A student who is self-regulated will plan, organize, monitor, instruct, and evaluate his or her own behavior during the learning process (metacognitive participation). A student who is self-regulated will perceive himself or herself as competent, autonomous, and self-efficacious (motivational participation). Finally, a student who is self-regulated will select, create, and structure his or her environment to facilitate the learning process (Zimmerman, 1986). Moreover, self-regulated learning also includes students' thoughts, emotions, and

actions that are all systematically oriented toward the attainment of self-chosen goals (Zimmerman & Schunk, 1997). To this end, self-regulated learners will systematically employ various learning strategies to help achieve academic goals because they are keenly aware of the connection between self-regulatory processes and learning outcomes (Zimmerman, 1990). In addition, self-regulated learners also use a feedback loop to monitor the effectiveness of selected strategies and make modifications in order to meet self-chosen goals.

Based on a social cognitive framework, Zimmerman (1996) noted that self-regulation is a skill that develops in four phases: observation, imitation, self-control, and self-regulation. Through the process of watching a skilled model, a student will imitate performance and receive feedback on skill acquisition. Through self-controlled practice, a student will gain control over a skill to the point of automaticity, thereby allowing the student to adapt the skill in a different context (Zimmerman, 1996).

Self-regulation is especially important in relationship to academic settings as it can make the difference in successfully meeting self-chosen goals. Self-regulated learners manage academic tasks confidently and diligently (Zimmerman, 1990). They take responsibility for the learning process and view knowledge acquisition as a controllable, systematic process. They are proactive about seeking out information and when they encounter an obstacle in the environment they find a way to succeed.

The Study

As stated previously, all individuals have entitlement beliefs that are generally culturally defined (Lerner, 1987). Indeed, our nation was founded on the incorporation of entitlement beliefs into our national identity with the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776. As Americans we hold dear that we have “inalienable rights” such as “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” Public policy makers have even legislated entitlement beliefs as exemplified by the passing of the Social Security Act of 1935 (Kriegman, 1983). Furthermore, a body of entitlement research has grown in a variety of fields such as public policy, clinical psychology, and social psychology. However, researchers have not explored the link between entitlement attitudes and academic self-regulation nor the link between entitlement attitudes and causal attributions. Because it is normal for students to possess entitlement attitudes, it is logical to question how these attitudes affect important processes involved in academic goal-striving such as self-regulation or the formation of causal attributions. To this end, the following main research questions were addressed in this study:

- 1) What is the underlying structure of academic entitlement?
- 2) Is there a relationship between general entitlement beliefs and academic entitlement beliefs and/or entitlement actions?
- 3) Is there a relationship between academic entitlement beliefs or actions and measures of academic self-regulation?

- 4) Is there a relationship between academic entitlement beliefs or actions and causal attributions?
- 5) Is there a relationship between academic entitlement beliefs or actions and measures of academic achievement?
- 6) Is there a relationship between academic entitlement beliefs or actions to various demographic variables?
- 7) How are superiority beliefs and effort exerted on academic tasks related to academic entitlement beliefs and actions?
- 8) What is the nature of students' entitlement beliefs or actions as it occurs in academic situations?

To address these research questions I designed and conducted an empirical study with college students as participants. Participants responded to six self-report questionnaires as well as demographic questions. Eight participants also took part in a 45-minute interview. Descriptive and inferential statistics as well as interpretive methods were used to answer the various research questions.

The following chapters will detail the results of this study. Chapter 2 will present a review of the relevant literature concerning entitlement, attributions, and academic self-regulation. Chapter 3 will present the methodology used to answer my research questions. Chapter 4 will present the results of the study. Chapter 5 will discuss the implications, limitations, and future directions for research based on the results of this study.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

This chapter presents a review of the literature on entitlement, self-regulation, and attribution theory, respectively. The first section will portray the current context of college students and how this environment relates to entitlement attitudes. The second section will examine entitlement in light of clinical research followed by social justice research. The third section will examine attribution theory. In the fourth section, the construct of self-regulation will be explored in relationship to academic achievement. The final section will link entitlement, attributions and self-regulation in educational settings.

Current Views of American Education

Current cultural beliefs about American education and American students abound. There is no shortage of anecdotal evidence of problems with today's students. In an analysis of how education is often portrayed in the media, Berliner and Biddle (1985) reported on common cultural myths: American students are spoiled and lazy... American students will not be prepared to compete in a global economy... American schools are failing miserably and going to hell in a hand basket... Are these problems real or imagined? The next section will explore some of the more relevant cultural beliefs about American students and American schools. First, views about the success or failure of American schools will be presented.

Second, generational effects of the “baby boom” generation will be explored.

Finally, a bias towards consumerism will be discussed.

In her treatise, *The Feel-Good Curriculum*, Maureen Stout (2000) chronicled the many perceived ills within the American educational system, such as the lack of student motivation, the achievement gap between American students and students of other industrialized nations, the continuation of social promotion, and the lack of teacher and/or student accountability. Stout linked these “societal ills” to educators adopting goals to foster the self-esteem in American students in lieu of subjecting students to critical academic evaluation. Essentially, students are only provided positive feedback in order to create positive feelings about the self; negative feedback is withheld. Stout further argued that withholding negative feedback resulted in the creation of a generation of self-righteous, self-absorbed, and underachieving students, much to the demise of classic liberal educational philosophical ideals. Stout defined self-esteem in an “entitlement” framework: “feeling good about oneself irrespective of individual or social attributes or characteristics” (2000, p. 12). Thus, in her view, one problem of American students is that they do not have to perform at a prescribed level in order to receive positive feedback on performance.

Baumeister, Heatherton, and Tice (1994) also described similar self-discipline problems in the American public school system in their book *Losing Control: How and Why People Fail at Self-Regulation*. Baumeister et al. (1994) listed problems such as students’ cutting class, failing to complete homework assignments, disrupting

classrooms with misbehavior, and dropping out altogether. The authors further noted the following observation:

Even the most talented students often seem to think that the route to success is less a matter of hard work, good study habits, and meeting deadlines than of doing extra-credit projects, being creative, and circumventing authoritarian rules with clever excuses and well-phrased requests for special treatment (Baumeister et al. 1994, p. 5).

Like Stout (2000), Baumeister et al. (1994) did not provide a scientific study to support their hypotheses related to academic behavior. Their main argument was that Americans as individuals have great difficulty in managing their own lives resulting in problems with drugs, money, weight, emotions, and drinking, just to name a few. To their credit, they presented studies that supported their hypotheses related to alcohol consumption, overeating, smoking, and gambling.

Contrasting to the abundant messages of critics, Berliner and Biddle (1995) offered a different perspective to this perceived crisis in American education today. In their work, *The Manufactured Crisis*, they outlined how Americans have been duped into believing that our public schools are failing miserably, especially in comparison to other nations' educational models. The authors presented compelling evidence to dispel myths such as that American schools fail in comparative studies on student achievement. For example, Berliner and Biddle cited analyses conducted by Westbury (1992). The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) did a comparative study of mathematics performance of

American students and students from many other countries. The IEA found that American students lagged far behind other students of other industrialized nations, most notably Japan. However, education researchers have reanalyzed the data to show a different finding (Westbury, 1992). In the original study, the IEA aggregated the data in such a way that students who had not been exposed to algebra, were included in the analysis and subsequently compared to students in Japan, all of whom had exposure to algebra. In essence, the study was based on inappropriate comparisons. Westbury (1992) showed that when the data was disaggregated and American students who had exposure to Algebra were compared to the Japanese students, American students came out on top (as cited in Berliner & Biddle, 1995). The authors admitted there are, of course, serious problems within American schools; but it is simplistic to try and solve the complex problems with inappropriate solutions such as offering government-sponsored private school vouchers or forcing all schools into accountability programs, as favored by educational reformists like Stout (2000).

Some social science researchers speculate that being raised by baby boomer parents is responsible for the attitudes of today's students (Jones, 1980). The baby boom population has been broadly defined as those born to post-World War II parents in the United States between the years 1946 and 1964. During this period, the birthrate in the United States reached unparalleled proportions. Many generational researchers have proposed that the birth rate was a result of post-World War II euphoria, but the trend continued for years (Jones, 1980). After the war, there was a rise in affluence in the United States, so much so that a quarter century after the War,

parents saw their income double in real purchasing power, affording their families many of the best life had to offer (Jones, 1980). No longer did parents have to scrimp along as they did during the depression and then the wartime years; parents could now afford to feed their children steaks, milk, and Wonder Bread so they would grow up strong and healthy (Jones, 1980). As a result, parents could afford to give their children much more than they ever had during their youth. No longer forced to struggle for basic necessities as people did during the Great Depression, the children of the baby boom came to expect material possessions as a right, rather than a privilege (Jones, 1980; Mowesian, 1986).

Levine and Cureton (1998) offered an updated portrait of today's college student in a report that detailed the results of several studies they conducted between 1992 and 1997, involving 9,100 undergraduate students on 28 campuses. Results showed that students are bringing the same consumer expectations from other commercial establishments into the educational sphere. Students want college to be close and to be open at a time convenient to them. They want accessible parking, no lines, and polite, helpful, efficient staff. They desire a high quality education at a low cost and are willing to comparison shop. Students are also focused on utilitarian career goals. Generally, Levine and Cureton (1998) found that students reported wanting to do only what is necessary to fulfill their degree requirements so that they could start a lucrative career when they finished. Over half of the participants surveyed in 1993 believed that the main benefit of college was to increase one's earning power. Personal enrichment goals such as learning how to get along with

people or formulating values and goals for one's life ranked at the bottom of the list, well below economic goals.

It is important to examine current American cultural beliefs about education as a backdrop to this study. Many would believe that America's children are lazy and arrogant and our schools are failing miserably because parents or educators are so permissive and indulging. Although there are problems within our educational system, researchers like Levine and Cureton (1998) have proposed instead that American students are strategic and motivated by economic gain. It could be that because American students behave as astute consumers in educational settings, they may appear to be excessively entitled to their perceived return on their investment. The reality is that social scientists may never be able to pinpoint reasons a person may have for excessive entitlement beliefs. However, it is time for an empirical research study to shed light on the whirlwind of anecdotal evidence.

Entitlement

The following section will explore two main lines of research on entitlement: one within the field of psychology and the other within the field of social justice. Although entitlement has been studied in other important fields, such as public policy and sociology, the fields of psychology and social justice offer particular antecedents to the development of current views of entitlement beliefs. The sections that follow will detail how each school of thought traces the roots of entitlement.

Clinical views of entitlement. Freudian psychologists have generally used clinical case illustrations of psychoanalytic therapy to describe entitlement and how it develops. The Freudian school of thought traces the underpinnings of entitlement to the successful negotiation of pre- and post-oedipal phases of psychosexual development (Apprey, 1988). Moreover, some Freudian theorists trace the beginnings of entitlement views even earlier in development, starting with an infant's right to nurse (Spiegel, 1987). Freudian theorists cite the narcissism in the mother as playing a major role in the development of excessive or restricted entitlement beliefs. Numerous clinical case studies have been used to illustrate how the process of development within a family can contribute to the development of excessive entitlement beliefs (Kerr, 1985; Meyer, 1991; Solomon & Leven, 1975; Volkan & Rogers, 1988).

Other research from this school of thought has addressed the consequences of entitlement beliefs. Excessive entitlement develops under parental influence and can have destructive effects on cognition, character, identity, and a sense of self-worth (Kriegman, 1983; Solomon & Leven, 1975). Two different types of parents are discussed in the Freudian literature: 1) those who are rigid, intolerant of differences, and domineering; and 2) those who are doubt-ridden and uncertain. In either case, a child can identify or fail to identify with the parent and strive to make up for perceived overbearing or acquiescent treatment (Dorn, 1988; Kriegman, 1983; Solomon & Leven, 1975).

Freudian therapists also discuss entitlement in relationship to the therapeutic process. They have argued that attitudes of excessive or restricted entitlement can complicate therapeutic transference due to the way in which a patient may view the self and the world (Kriegman, 1983). For example, someone with a restricted sense of entitlement may believe that he or she is not deserving of help from a therapist, making it difficult for transference to take place. In contrast, someone with an exaggerated sense of his or her rights may see the therapist as an equal and question the therapist's right to set appointments when it is convenient for the therapist or the right of the therapist to withhold his or her home telephone number (Volkan & Rogers, 1988).

Other clinical researchers discuss the behavioral manifestations of misguided entitlement. Kerr (1985) reported the results of her extensive clinical study of pathological entitlement. Based on the interviews in her study, she offered seven attributes of misguided entitlement. First, a person will act with an inflated sense of self-importance. Second, a person will assert a right to special treatment that is unwarranted. Third, a person will explode in an angry outburst when claims of entitlement are hindered. Fourth, a person will act and think irrationally. Fifth, a person will seem egocentric. Sixth, a person with misguided entitlement will lack self-initiative because of a belief that he or she should get what is desired without effort. Finally, someone with misguided entitlement will seek revenge toward those who hinder claims to entitlement. It is important to note that Kerr worked with a clinical population and that in a normal population, individuals with excessive

entitlement beliefs may not behave in such an irrational manner. It is, however, at the same time helpful to have a picture of the extreme end of the continuum to recognize shades of entitlement in nonclinical populations. Kerr (1985) also noted that the antecedent factors involved in entitlement are the development of an idealized self-image to protect against core feelings of anxiety, rejection, and abandonment developed during childhood. An individual with misguided entitlement will express this idealized self in the real world through the search for personal glory.

Justice research: Theoretical underpinnings. Justice researchers are concerned with decisions of deservingness of outcome allocations among individuals and groups. Lerner (1980) detailed an extensive description of social justice theory in his book, *The Belief in a Just World*. He defined a just world as “one in which people get what they deserve” (Lerner, 1980, p.11). Essentially, he outlined how individuals justify outcomes for themselves or others. The judgment of whether someone is deserving of an outcome is based upon what someone is entitled to receive either by virtue of personal attributes or behavior. He summed up the thrust of the theory of a just world in the following manner:

A Person ‘P’ deserves outcome ‘X’ if P has met the appropriate preconditions for obtaining X. What is implied, also, is that P desires X. If P does not get X, or receives something of less value than X, then P has not received all he or she deserves. (p. 11)

Lerner admitted that there is a varying degree in the belief in a just world, but the belief is “natural or inevitable” (p. 12). Borrowing from cognitive psychology, Piaget

more specifically, Lerner explained that humans code and assimilate information into existing schemata or “cognitive templates” (p. 12) because these provide the foundation for the person’s system of beliefs. He offered three possible explanatory mechanisms for cognitive construction. First, humans tend to generalize from past experience to make sense of current events. Second, the human mind seeks to achieve balance when processing cognitions; thus, good things are associated with other good things and bad things are associated with other bad things. Third, this simplification allows a person to function in a world in which one is relatively helpless. These cognitive mechanisms allow for simplification and meaning construction in a world that sometimes does not make immediate sense.

Lerner (1987) as well as other entitlement researchers (e.g., Blechner, 1987) argued that the determination of deservingness looks somewhat straightforward on the surface, but is a complex process that is culturally derived and reflects cultural norms. Two cultural norms discussed by Major (1994) that are crucial to mention in relationship to entitlement are the rule of equity in deciding who gets what outcome and the bias toward internal attributions. First, the rule of equity states that the person who does the most work is entitled to the most reward or most fulfilling outcome (Walster, Walster, & Berscheid, 1978). Second, a bias toward internal attributions argues that people generally have control of their own outcomes, especially in the case of positive outcomes (Major, 1987). Both these beliefs have contributed to what is often portrayed as the dominant ideology of North Americans that people deserve what they get (Major, 1994). This kind of cultural myth, like all such myths, is an

over simplification but it has been cited by various researchers. Kluegel and Smith (1986) noted, for example, three general sets of beliefs about income inequality in the United States. First, there is widespread opportunity for economic advancement. Second, Americans, as individuals, are personally responsible for their position in society. And third, the system of overall economic distributions in the United States may be unequal, but it is equitable and fair (as cited in Major, 1994).

Major (1994) explained that there are numerous factors that influence an individual's beliefs about entitlement. Some of these factors include the presence of laws, early experiences between preconditions and outcomes, bargaining power, and an individual's goals (Major 1994). Major also offered two relevant antecedents to beliefs about entitlements: comparisons with reference standards and legitimacy appraisals.

In terms of comparison with reference standards, Major argued that social comparisons give us information so that we can make judgments about who can legitimately expect to receive outcomes. First, social comparisons give us the types of outcomes that are possible for an individual. Second, social comparisons give us the relevant preconditions for obtaining a specific possible outcome. Third, social comparisons give us information about the relationship between preconditions and outcomes. In addition, proximity (Major, 1987, 1989; Singer, 1981) and perceived similarity with others (Adams, 1965) also help individuals to make judgments about deserved outcomes. Thus, if one perceives that an outcome is possible and has met

the precondition and knows of a friend, or coworker who also received the same outcome, one is more likely to believe one is deserving of that same outcome.

Entitlement beliefs are also influenced by how a person assesses the legitimacy of an outcome. Major (1994) posited that perceptions of legitimacy are derived from three mechanisms: 1) distributive justice; 2) procedural justice; and 3) attributions of responsibility.

First, distributive justice is defined as “the fairness of the allocation of rewards across individuals” (Major, 1989, p. 100). The most well-known theories of distributive justice come from either of two theoretical perspectives: relative deprivation theory or equity theory (Major, 1987). Relative deprivation theory, conceived by Crosby (1976), is defined as the feeling of resentment or a sense of grievance (Bernstein & Crosby, 1979). Crosby hypothesized that an individual will feel resentment under the following conditions:

- 1) want X,
- 2) perceive that another has X,
- 3) feels entitled to X,
- 4) think it is feasible to attain X, and
- 5) do not see their current failure to possess X as their own fault (Crosby, 1976, p. 444).

For example, in an academic sphere, a student who believes he or she has the ability to earn the same grade that others have earned and feels entitled to the grade, is most

likely to feel deprived relative to his or her classmates if the instructor does not recognize this “fact.”

Equity theory (Adams, 1965) states that individuals judge the fairness of an outcome by comparing the ratio of their own inputs and outputs with the ratio of others’ inputs and outputs. Thus, one might consider a distributive justice decision as unfair if one perceives that one did more work than others, and received less in terms of outcome. In an academic sphere, a student might interpret a grade as unjust if he or she perceives that she or he did more work than other students and yet, received a lower grade.

Both relative deprivation theory and equity theory posit that when outcomes are perceived to be unjust, cognitive, affective, and behavioral reactions will follow that can range from psychological justifications for the outcome to behavioral attempts to remedy the perceived injustice (Major, 1989).

Second, the legitimacy of outcome decisions is also made by rules of procedural justice. This concept is generally understood as “the fairness of procedures by which reward allocation decisions are made” (Major, 1989, p.100). In general terms, procedural justice examines if there is perceived bias in making distribution decisions. For example, if a student thinks that grades are assigned in a biased manner, he or she will think that the distribution was illegitimate.

Third, legitimacy appraisals are also made in relationship to the attributions of responsibility for an outcome. Someone who holds himself or herself responsible for an outcome that he or she does not currently possess is not likely to feel entitled to

that outcome. In contrast, if someone believes that a lack of an outcome is the result of someone else's decision, he or she is more likely to feel entitled to the outcome (Major, 1994).

Empirical studies associated with social justice. One area of entitlement research is within marital equality and division of household labor. One robust finding within the field of gender research is that of American wives, whether employed or unemployed outside the home, will bear the responsibility for doing at least twice as much domestic work as husbands and yet, see the division of labor as fair (Steil, 1997; Pyke & Coltrane, 1996). Moreover, women are unlikely to see the division of labor as unjust unless they see, want, and feel entitled to other alternatives (Steil, 1997; Crosby, 1982). As social comparison theory would predict, women generally compare their marriages to other similar women and tend to believe that they fare better than most (Steil, 1997). However, Steil (1997) noted that a change in a woman's perception would require a shift in choice of comparison to the cross-sex other, thus revealing male entitlement within marriage. Similarly, Pyke and Coltrane (1996) found that women in their second marriages who worked outside the home felt that their contribution to family income entitled them to more help than they received from their husbands. In this situation, Steil (1997) argued that a woman employed outside the home might feel that her efforts *earn* her a sense of deservingness of increased help from her husband, but it is not the same as a sense of entitlement that a man possesses. As an example, Steil offered the scenario of a married man who

returns home after work and sits down to relax, regardless of uncompleted household tasks.

A second area of entitlement research has been conducted in regards to wages and gender in the field of social psychology. Most studies have been experimental in nature and have involved college students. This experimental research has been conducted in the light of robust statistics of full time workers in the United States and Canada that demonstrate that full-time working women have earned between 60 and 70% of what their male counterparts have earned over the past few decades; moreover, older women and women of color have earned as little as 50% of what men earned during the same period (Desmariais & Curtis, 1997). Pertinent findings of experimental research have shown that women allocate less pay to themselves than do men, even if a woman outperforms a coworker (Stake, 1985). Moreover, women pay themselves less than do men when working alone and allocating money to themselves (Major, McFarlin, & Gagnon, 1984). In addition, when controlling for allocation of pay, women work longer, produce more work, and work more efficiently than men (Major, McFarlin, & Gagnon, 1984). Researchers on gender and wages have also sought to explain why these differences exist. Researchers cite social comparison processes (Major, 1994; Bylsma, & Major, 1992; Major, & Testa, 1989; Major, McFarlin, & Gagnon, 1984), legitimacy appraisals (Bylsma, Major, & Cozzarelli, 1995), past history of wages (Desmarais & Curtis, 1997), and socialization processes (Moore, 1991; Major, 1989). This research continues to inform social justice theory development.

Research in the areas of wages and division of household labor are related to entitlement in that women have been shown to feel underentitled to higher wages and or relaxation in the household when compared to men.

Attributions

Having reviewed current views of American education as well as entitlement theory, I turn now to a consideration of the attribution literature. This area of research is relevant because entitlement theorists have posited a theoretical relationship between causal attributions and entitlement attitudes (Major 1994). Specifically, the strength of an individual's entitlement attitude is associated with specific types of causal attributions. The following paragraphs will explore this relationship.

Researchers conceptualize attributions as causes to "everyday" events that are either made consciously or unconsciously by individuals (Fösterling, 2001). Attribution theory states that humans explain the causes of outcomes in a simplistic manner so that we can make sense of an otherwise complicated world (Graham & Weiner, 1996). In essence, many attribution theorists see human beings as naïve scientists that seek to bring order to chaos by making simple explanations for various outcomes (Fösterling, 2001). Attribution theory has its roots with the work of Heider (1958) who first distinguished between outcomes that are caused by personal qualities or environmental qualities. As attribution theory evolved, Rotter (1966) developed a classification of the internal/external dimension of attributions known as locus.

Since these early beginnings, other researchers have sought to refine attribution theory in various domains. Specifically, Weiner (1985) has offered the most comprehensive theory of attribution in relationship to achievement motivation. According to Weiner's theory of motivation, students make causal attributions about their academic performance in order to make sense of their success or failure (Graham & Weiner, 1996). Three dimensions of causality have been identified: locus, stability, and controllability (Weiner, 1986). Locus refers to the location of the outcome's cause as internal or external to the student. For example, a student with an external locus of causality may blame failure on the difficulty of an exam or poor lighting conditions during the test. By contrast, a student with an internal locus of causality may make attributions that are related to personal characteristics, such as ability or effort. The stability dimension considers whether or not the basis for performance is stable or unstable. A stable cause, such as aptitude, could result in expectation for future success if a student believes he or she has aptitude and succeeds at an academic task. The controllability dimension considers whether or not the basis for success or failure is within the student's control and is associated with emotions that have motivational implications (Graham, 1991; Weiner, 1986).

Attribution researchers have examined the connection between causal attributions and academic performance, specifically which attributions cause students to give up more on learning. For example, Peterson and Barrett (1987) found that students who explained academic failures with internal, stable, and global causes received lower grades during their freshman year than students who explained

failures with external, unstable, and specific causes. Thus, a specific type of pattern of attribution (internal, stable, global causes) can lead to feelings of helplessness in students and subsequently cause students to give up on academic goal-strivings (Peterson & Barrett, 1987).

A second area of attribution research examines the connection between attributions and protection of self-worth. For instance, research on self-worth theory reveals that students will go to great lengths to protect their own perception of their level of ability (Covington, 1992; Graham & Weiner, 1996). Thus, a student might use various attributional strategies such as setting unrealistically high goals, using self-handicapping techniques, or giving excuses to explain a failure in performance (Covington, 1984).

Attributions made by students in achievement situations are important because they influence expectancy and affect, which, in turn, influence motivational variables (Graham & Weiner, 1996). Although the central focus of this dissertation is not motivation, it is important to consider how attributions might be related to entitlement. Entitlement researchers such as Major (1994) theorized that someone who holds himself or herself responsible for an outcome that he or she does not currently possess is not likely to feel entitled to that outcome. In contrast, if someone believes that a lack of an outcome is the result of someone else's decision, he or she is more likely to feel entitled to the outcome. Because motivation researchers have established the importance of the relationship among attributions and other academic

variables, it appears there could be also be an important connection between attributions and entitlement attitudes.

Self-Regulation

As introduced earlier, current views of learning portray it as an active process in which a student participates so that he or she can meet self-chosen goals, whether it is memorizing a short list to answer a multiple choice exam question or integrating complex information with prior knowledge to write an essay or a research paper. In order to accomplish any of these tasks, a student must put the necessary information into memory. To facilitate memory creation, students make use of learning and self-regulation strategies. Various researchers have posited models to describe the process of self-regulation. The subsequent section will first detail some current theoretical frameworks for conceptualizing self-regulation and self-regulated learning. Second, the importance of self-regulated learning in academic achievement will be discussed. Third, possible reasons for the breakdown in the self-regulation process will be examined.

Self-regulation theoretical framework. It is widely accepted in the field of self-regulation that as psychology made a shift from behaviorism to more cognitive views of learning, the learner's mental activity became the central focus of understanding of self-regulated learning. However, researchers do not yet agree on the nomenclature or definitions of self-regulation (Pintrich, 2000). In terms of defining the construct, researchers argue that it includes multidimensional criteria that

incorporate “metacognitive, motivational, behavioral, and environmental, behavioral and environmental processes used to enhance academic achievement (Zimmerman & Risemberg, 1997). Schunk and Zimmerman (1997) noted that academic self-regulation includes processes such as “planning and managing time; attending to and concentrating on instruction; organizing rehearsing, and coding information strategically; establishing a productive work environment; and using resources effectively” (p. 195).

Researchers also do not agree on the essential components or processes of self-regulation (Pintrich, 2000). As a consequence, there are many different theoretical perspectives of the self-regulation of learning such as operant, phenomenological, information processing, social cognitive, volitional, Vygotskian, and constructivist (for a in-depth discussion, see Zimmerman, 2001). Each perspective contains important elements central to defining and breaking down the subprocesses the construct. For the purposes of this dissertation, I will discuss the construct through a social-cognitive framework. Zimmerman (1996) noted that self-regulation is a set of skills that develop in four phases: observation, imitation, self-control, and self-regulation. Through the process of watching a skilled model, such as a teacher or peer, a student will imitate performance, receive feedback, practice, and gain control over a skill to the point of automaticity, thereby allowing the student to adapt the skill in a different context (Zimmerman, 1996).

Several models of self-regulated learning have been developed by researchers. The following paragraphs will detail pertinent models developed by Zimmerman (1986), Weinstein (1986; 1994) and Pintrich and Garcia (1993).

Zimmerman (1998) proposed that self-regulation in learning occurs in a three-phased, open-ended, cyclical process. The *forethought* phase is made up of processes and beliefs that set the stage for learning. Researchers in the field of academic self-regulation have studied five processes or beliefs: goal setting, self-efficacy, goal-orientation, intrinsic interest, and strategic planning (Zimmerman, 1998). The *performance or volitional control* phase of self-regulated learning involves processes and actions that take place during learning tasks that affect performance and concentration such as attention focusing, self-instruction, and self-monitoring. The *self-reflection* phase of self-regulation takes place after the learning task is complete and subsequently influences the *forethought* phase of self-regulation. The four types of self-reflection processes that have been studied to date are self-evaluations, attributions, self-reactions, and adaption (Zimmerman, 1998).

Other researchers have proposed useful frameworks for understanding self-regulated learning. Weinstein (1994) proposed the Model of Strategic Learning integrating four important components: skill, will, self-regulation, and the academic environment. The skill component consists of various types of knowledge such as knowledge about learning strategies or prior knowledge in a in a specific domain. The will component of this model consists of motivational and affective variables integral to the learning process. The self-regulation component consists of variables

such as time management and metacognitive control. The skill, will, and self-regulation components were seen as embedded within the learner's academic environment. It is important to note that each of the components of this model were not considered independent as they interact with each other and contribute to the emergent properties that characterized a learner in a given learning situation.

Pintrich and Garcia (1993) offered more specific descriptions of self-regulatory processes in academic settings. They proposed that there are three general categories of students' learning and self-regulation strategies: cognitive, metacognitive, and resource management (Pintrich & Garcia, 1993). Cognitive strategies make up the first category and these include rehearsal, elaboration, and organizational strategies. These types of strategies are used by students to learn and/or understand information from their courses (Pintrich & Garcia, 1991). These strategies coincide with two different types of academic information processing: surface processing and deep processing (Marton & Salgo, 1976). Students perform surface processing when they use simple memorization techniques (rehearsal strategies) like repetition or mnemonics to remember facts or details (Weinstein & Mayer, 1986). Students perform deep processing when they use more complex learning techniques (elaboration or organizational strategies) like paraphrasing or outlining, which help students create meaning and connect current information to prior knowledge (Weinstein & Mayer, 1986).

Metacognitive strategies make up the second category and these include planning and self-monitoring strategies. Students use metacognitive strategies to

plan, monitor, and regulate their learning (Pintrich & Garcia, 1993). Planning strategies include setting goals and monitoring performance. Monitoring activities include comprehension monitoring techniques such as tracking attention while reading or studying. Prior research has demonstrated that students who use metacognitive strategies perform better on academic tasks than those who do not use these strategies (Pintrich & Garcia, 1991; McKeachie, Pintrich, Lin, & Smith, 1986; Pressley, 1986).

Resource management strategies make up the third category and these include controlling study environment, effort management, and help-seeking. Students use these strategies to maintain control over their time, effort, and learning environment (Pintrich & Garcia, 1993). These strategies might not be directly related to processing information, but they are important strategies to help students persevere in academic tasks.

The models proposed this far by Zimmerman, Weinstein, Pintrich and Garcia, have various properties in common such as developing awareness of one's progress in learning and exercising control over the process. Regardless of how researchers choose to conceptualize the process, it is important for students to gain control over their own learning. To this end, the next section explains how self-regulation has been shown to be linked to academic achievement.

Importance of self-regulation. Researchers in the field of learning and self-regulation have established the connection between self-regulation and academic achievement. Measures of self-regulation attributes have been shown to be

significantly correlated with grade point average, standardized tests, and task-specific measures (Zimmerman & Risemberg, 1997; Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1986, 1988)

Despite the importance of self-regulated learning for academic achievement researchers have noted that a proportion of American students use very few if any self-regulation strategies for learning (Zimmerman & Risemberg, 1997). Zimmerman and Resiemberg (1997) reported that based on a study conducted by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (1990), 71% of American children spent less than an hour a day on studying and 25% of American students reported a complete lack of studying (as cited in Zimmerman & Risemberg, 1997). The bad news here is that it appears that self-regulated learning skills are not practiced by a subgroup of students in American schools and this could be carried on into a college setting. The good news here is that these are skills that can be learned (Weinstein & Mayer, 1986; Zimmerman & Risemberg, 1997).

Learning and using self-regulation skills are very important to achieving success in the academic arena and can make the difference between achieving and underachieving. Zimmerman and Risemberg (1997) juxtaposed the self-regulatory processes of underachievers and achievers. Based on their own research and review of existing literature, there is a clear demarcation of the differences between these two groups of students. Achievers managed and used their study time well. They set higher specific and proximal goals for themselves. Achievers monitored their progress more frequently and accurately. They also set higher standards for

satisfaction in relationship to progress and outcome. Achievers were also more self-efficacious and persisted despite obstacles. In contrast, underachievers were more impulsive in terms of the use of their time. They set lower academic goals and monitored their progress less frequently and less accurately. Underachievers were more self-critical, less self-efficacious, and gave up more readily.

Because self-regulation is so important for students to achieve self-chosen academic goals, it would be useful to understand what might go awry in the process of self-regulated learning. The next section examines how a student might fail to self-regulate.

Self-regulation failure. There are various problems that can occur and cause a breakdown in the self-regulation process. Problems can occur when there is a lack of declarative, procedural, or conditional knowledge about learning strategies (Zimmerman, 1989). If a student does not know about a certain strategy, it is difficult to use it to help with studying. Similarly, if a student knows of a strategy but does not know how to use it properly, it does little good to facilitate the learning process. Finally, if a student knows about a strategy and knows how to use a strategy, but does not know when to implement the strategy, self-regulated learning can break down (Zimmerman, 1989). To this end, many colleges and universities have created successful interventions to help students become more strategic learners (Weinstein & Meyer, 1986; Weinstein, 1994).

Other researchers have investigated failure in the self-regulation process. Baumeister, Heatherton, and Tice (1994) offered an extensive examination of self-

regulation failure in nonacademic settings; however their analysis is still applicable to human learning. They defined self-regulation as any effort made by a human being to alter its own responses. Self-regulation assumes that multiple processes take place simultaneously within a complex creature, the human being. These processes are organized in a hierarchical fashion and compete for time and attention. Essentially, the basic components of their model include having a standard, monitoring oneself in relationship to the standard, and altering responses to conform to the standard.

Failures in self-regulation can occur in any of the three components. First, a person can have conflicting standards or a complete lack of standards. Second, self-regulation can break down when there is a cessation of self-monitoring. Third, one might not be able to alter a response to conform to a standard due to inadequate strength (will power). Baumeister et al. (1994) also mentioned other possibilities for self-regulation failure: inertia (inability to override a behavior already in progress), transcendence failure (loss of capacity to see beyond the present), underregulation (failure to self-regulate enough in relationship to the situation), or misregulation (engagement in counterproductive self-regulation).

Conclusion

Although there exists anecdotal evidence about the connection among the constructs of academic entitlement, attributions of success and failure, academic self-regulation, and academic achievement, to date, there has been no systematic examination of these links. Because self-regulation is so important to success in

learning, it is logical to expect that an attitude of entitlement toward a grade might short-circuit the process necessary to earn the grade thus affecting academic performance. The following chapters will present an empirical study that begins to explore the relationship between entitlement and self-regulated learning, and the relationship between entitlement and causal attributions.

Chapter 3

Method

Participants

Participants for the study were recruited from the Educational Psychology subject pool at a large southwestern university. Of the 318 undergraduate students who participated, six cases were deleted from the analysis because of suspected response bias. The sample was comprised of 7 freshman, 45 sophomores, 117 juniors, and 143 seniors with 212 men and 100 women participating. Participants had to have completed at least one semester of university instruction to be allowed in the study and, thus, freshman in the study had enrolled in the university over the summer 2001 session. The following races/ethnicities were represented in the sample: Caucasian (66.3%), African American (4.8%), Hispanic (10.3%), Native American (.1%), and other (3.5%). Ninety-eight percent of the participants were traditional-aged college students: 18-22. Students were enrolled in either a Human Sexuality or an Introductory Statistics course and participation in this study fulfilled a course requirement during the Fall Semester 2001. Students were requested to attend one of several 1 hour and 15 minute sessions during the months of September, October, and November.

Procedure

Participants were asked to respond to a number of self-report measures (described below) that requested information about how they saw themselves as a learner and how entitled they felt both in everyday life and in academic situations. Participants also responded to demographic questions about their major, year in school, race/ethnicity, age, and socioeconomic status. Participants received a consent form (See Appendix I) explaining the study and requesting permission to use their data in future publication of the study. Participants who scored at various levels on the entitlement scales (one standard deviation above, below, and at the mean) were selected for interview and were contacted mid-semester. The first eight students who responded agreed to participate. Participants were provided a small financial reward (\$10). The interviews were audio taped, transcribed and lasted no longer than 45 minutes (see Appendix H for protocol).

Measures

Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (Pintrich, Smith, Garcia, & McKeachie, 1991) (Appendix E). This self-report instrument is designed to assess motivational orientations and use of different learning strategies of college students in a particular course. The questionnaire contains 81 items and is divided into two subsections: motivation and learning strategies. The motivation section has 31 items that assess student goals, perceptions of the value of the course, perceptions of ability

to succeed in the course, and tendency to experience test anxiety. The learning strategy section has 50 items that assess three facets of academic self-regulation: information-processing, metacognitive control, and resource management. Information-processing strategies include cognitive learning strategies that measure use of rehearsal, elaboration, and organizational learning strategies. Metacognitive control strategies measure planning tasks for monitoring understanding. Resource management strategies measure management of study time and environment as well as involvement of peers in the learning process. An example of a motivation item is, “In a class like this, I prefer course material that really challenges me so I can learn new things.” An example of an item from the learning strategies subscale is, “When I study the readings for this course, I outline the material to help me organize my thoughts.” Students rated themselves on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = “not at all true of me” to 7 = “very true of me”).

In terms of the psychometric properties of the MSLQ, Alpha coefficients for subscales in the motivation section have ranged from .62 to .93. Alpha coefficients for the subscales in the learning section have ranged from .52 to .80. Confirmatory factor analysis showed the MSLQ to distinguish among the subscales that make up the components of learning strategy use and motivation from a conceptual and empirical basis (Pintich, Smith, Garcia, & McKeachie, 1993). Finally, the MSLQ has been shown to have predictive validity as motivational scales were related to academic performance in expected directions and the learning strategies scales were positively related to course grades.

XD21: Exaggerated Deservingness Scale (Kelln, 1997) (Appendix F). This self-report instrument was designed to measure general exaggerated deservingness or general exaggerated entitlement beliefs. The questionnaire contains 21 items that are scored on a 5-point Likert scale (1="strongly disagree" to 5="strongly agree"). In the current study, items were scored on a 7-point Likert scale (1="strongly disagree" to 7="strongly agree") in order to increase the variability of responses across subjects and also to match the scaling used on other scales selected for the study. An example of an item is, "Generally, I deserve to have all things work out well for me."

In terms of the psychometric properties of the scale, Cronbach's alpha was reported as ranging from .82 to .87. The test-retest coefficient after a 14 day lapse was .81. Principal components analysis revealed a unidimensional structure based on the Scree plot. The first factor accounted for 24.6% of the common variance. In terms of convergent validity, the XD21 correlated positively with feelings of superiority, Machiavellian attitudes, and need for uniqueness. In terms of divergent validity, the XD21 correlated negatively with willingness to engage in self-sacrificing behavior and the ability to delay gratification. Cronbach's alpha for the rescaled instrument (7-point Likert scale) used in this study was .84.

AES: Academic Entitlement Scale (Achacoso, unpublished) (Appendix G). The Academic Entitlement Scale is a self-report instrument designed to measure entitlement beliefs in an academic context. The questionnaire contains 12 items that are scored on a 7-point Likert scale (1="strongly disagree" to 7="strongly agree"). An example of an item on the scale is, "Instructors should bend the rules for me."

In terms of psychometric properties of the scale, an exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis revealed two factors: entitlement beliefs and entitlement actions. Cronbach's Alpha for the belief subscale was .83 and .91 for the action subscale, demonstrating a satisfactory degree of reliability for a new scale. Below I describe how the scale was developed.

Initial development of scale items. First, open-ended interviews were conducted with five university instructors who ranged in teaching experience from one to three years. Conversations evolved by asking the instructors to describe experiences with students in which student attitudes and behaviors were revealed. The term entitlement was not mentioned until the very end of the interview. The content of the interviews led to the construction of an initial 50-item questionnaire.

Second, the initial questionnaire was administered to students as a first step in a focus group discussion. There were six focus groups ranging in size from two to nine students. Having filled out the preliminary version of the questionnaire, the students discussed the merits of the scale and made suggestions about additional items that might be useful and ways to clarify the wording of items. The second version of the questionnaire contained 75 items.

Third, the second version of the questionnaire was administered to undergraduate students who were enrolled in a business statistics class and were asked to fill out the second version of the questionnaire in exchange for class credit. There were 769 usable booklets returned.

Next, exploratory factor analysis was conducted using SPSS (2000) on the 75-item scale. Various factor structures were examined. In a principal axis factor analysis, I extracted two factors using the criterion of an eigenvalue greater than 1. Because I hypothesized that the two factors were intercorrelated, I then used a Promax rotation (Kappa = 4) with Kaiser Normalization. Items that did not meet a criterion of .50 loading or higher were discarded. Following this criterion resulted in the reduction of the instrument to 15 items organized in two factors. Because an oblique rotation was used, the total variance explained by the factors, approximately 39%, could only be estimated. In terms of a scale in development, this amount of variance explained by the factors would be considered a moderate amount and therefore promising.

A confirmatory factor analysis was then conducted using EQS (Bentler & Wu, 1995) to test the fit of the model. The 15 items were loaded onto two intercorrelated factors ($r_{12} = .349, p < .05$). Items 1 through 9 were hypothesized to belong to an Entitlement Beliefs factor and Items 10 through 15 were hypothesized as part of the Entitlement Actions factor. Maximum likelihood estimation was used to estimate the model. Factor variances and error paths were set to 1 and Factor 1 was correlated with Factor 2. Goodness of fit statistics (χ^2 , NFI, NNFI, CFI) were computed. The model $\chi^2 (87, n=769) = 369.16, p < 0.05$ was significant indicating a lack of fit. However, it is acceptable to go on to consider the other indices as the χ^2 statistic is very sensitive to sample size and the sample was large. Other indices showed a moderate degree of

fit. The normed fit index (NFI) was .894, the nonnormed fit index (NNFI) was .900, and the comparative fit index (CFI) was .917. A modification index (LM test) as well as theoretical considerations were used to modify the model. Based on these modifications, two items were shown to load on both Factors. Taking all indices into consideration, the scale was modified again for the final analysis used in the dissertation. The items that cross-loaded were modified and six additional items were added in hopes of improving the scales and approximate simple structure. It is desirable to have items load on one factor rather than cross-load on two or more factors so that the items measure one construct. In preparation for the my dissertation study, I added 6 items to the existing 15 items based on results from a focus group in hopes of improving reliability and model fit. Final results of the scales are reported in Chapter 4.

Multidimensional-Multiattributonal Causality Scale (MMCS) (Lefcourt, Baeyer, Ware, & Cox, 1979) (Appendix H). This self-report instrument was designed to assess the locus of control for achievement with items representing each quadrant of Weiner's (1972) locus and stability of causal attribution model. The 24-item scale measures locus of causality among four attributions: ability, effort, context, and luck. The items are divided equally between experiences of success and failure. An example of a success ability item is, "I feel that my good grades reflect directly on my academic ability" and an example of an unsuccessful context item is, "Often my poorer grades are obtained in courses that the professor has failed to make interesting." Items were originally scored on 5-point Likert scale (0="disagree" to

4="agree"). In the current study, items were presented along with a 7-point Likert scale (1="strongly disagree" to 7="strongly agree") in order to increase the variability of responses across subjects and also to match the scaling used on other scales selected for the study.

In terms of the psychometric properties of the MMCS, Cronbach alphas were found to range between .58 and .80 for the scale (Lefcourt et al., 1979). Alphas for achievement internality (ability and effort) ranged from .50 to .77 and alphas for achievement externality (context and luck) ranged from .66 to .88. Corrected Spearman-Brown split half correlations ranged from .67 to .77. The scale has been shown to have factorial validity (Powers, Douglas, & Choroszy, 1983) and to be stable across five cultures (Chandler, Shama, Wolf, & Planchard, 1981). Cronbach's alphas for the rescaled instrument (7-point Likert scale) used in this study were .77 for the scale, .67 for achievement internality (ability and effort), and .82 for achievement externality.

Superiority Scale (Robbins & Patton, 1985) (Appendix I). This self-report instrument was designed to assess general superiority beliefs. The original questionnaire contains 10 items that are scored on 6-point Likert scale (1="strongly disagree" to 6="strongly disagree"). In the current study, items were scored on a 7-point Likert scale (1="strongly disagree" to 7="strongly agree") in order to increase the variability of responses across subjects and also to match the scaling used on other scales selected for the study. An example of an item is, "I could show up my friends if I wanted to."

In terms of the psychometric properties of the Superiority Scale, the Alpha coefficient was .76 and the test-retest reliability coefficient was .80 (Robbins & Patton, 1985). In terms of concurrent validity, the Superiority Scale was shown to be significantly correlated with the Narcissism Personality Inventory ($r = .54$). Cronbach's alpha for the rescaled instrument (7-point Likert scale) used in this study was .79.

Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Short Form) (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960) (Appendix J). This self-report instrument was designed to assess social desirability as a response tendency. The questionnaire contains 13 items that are dichotomously scored in a True-False format. Scores on items were summed to produce a subscale score that ranged from 0 to 13. A high subscale score would indicate that an individual responded in a socially desirable manner in order to appear more positive in the eyes of the researcher. It is important that survey responses not be contaminated by bias as data will not accurately reflect the measurement of the construct. An example of an item is, "There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone."

In terms of the psychometric properties of the scale, this version of the short form has demonstrated an acceptable level of reliability ($r_{KR-20} = .76$) and has correlated strongly with the standard Marlowe-Crowne 33-item scale ($r = .93$) (Reynolds, 1982). In a study of six versions of the short form, the form that was selected for this study was recommended by researchers because of its brevity and psychometric similarity to the original version of the instrument (Reynolds, 1982).

Main Hypotheses

Research Question 1

What is the underlying structure of the Academic Entitlement Scale?

Hypothesis 1. Based on results from the pilot study, it was predicted that items on Academic Entitlement Scale (AES) would form two distinct factors when analyzed using confirmatory factor analysis, one factor representing entitlement beliefs and the other representing entitlement actions.

Rationale. Based on preliminary exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, it appeared that items on the AES would fall into two separate, but positively correlated factors: beliefs and actions. This seemed consistent with entitlement research that defined entitlement as a relationship between a person and outcomes that has affective and motivational implications (Lerner, 1987). Moreover, Kelln (1997) argued that individuals with exaggerated deservingness beliefs are more willing to act in ways society would reject. Thus, exaggerated deservingness, or entitlement, can be identified through the behavior or interactions with others.

Statistical analysis. This hypothesis was tested with the full data set using confirmatory factor analysis.

Research Question 2

Was there a relationship between general entitlement beliefs and academic entitlement beliefs and/or entitlement actions?

Hypothesis 2a. It was predicted that there would be a significant positive relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **beliefs** subscale and scores on the **exaggerated deservingness** scale (XD21).

Hypothesis 2b: It was predicted that there would be a significant positive relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **actions** subscale and scores on the **exaggerated deservingness** scale (XD21).

Rationale. If a student has general exaggerated deservingness beliefs, it follows logically that he or she may have exaggerated entitlement beliefs in academic settings as well as act on these exaggerated beliefs. Researchers have yet to establish a relationship between general entitlement beliefs and entitlement beliefs or actions related to a specific domain.

Statistical analysis. These hypotheses were tested using the Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient. The critical value for the test of significance of the correlations was set at $p < .05$.

Research Question 3

Is there a relationship between academic entitlement beliefs or actions and measures of academic self-regulation?

Entitlement beliefs and self-regulation hypotheses.

Hypothesis 3a. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **beliefs** subscale and scores on the **rehearsal strategies** subscale on the MSLQ.

Hypothesis 3b. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **beliefs**

subscale and scores on the **elaboration strategies** subscale on the MSLQ.

Hypothesis 3c. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **beliefs** subscale and scores on the **organizational strategies** subscale on the MSLQ.

Hypothesis 3d. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **beliefs** subscale and scores on the **critical thinking strategies** subscale on the MSLQ.

Hypothesis 3e. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **beliefs** subscale and scores on the **metacognitive strategies** subscale on the MSLQ.

Hypothesis 3f. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **beliefs** subscale and scores on the **time and study environment** subscale on the MSLQ.

Hypothesis 3g. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **beliefs** subscale and scores on the **effort regulation** subscale on the MSLQ.

Hypothesis 3h. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **beliefs** subscale and scores on the **peer learning** subscale on the MSLQ.

Hypothesis 3i. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **beliefs** subscale and scores on the **help seeking subscale** on the MSLQ.

Entitlement actions and self-regulation hypotheses.

Hypothesis 3j. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **actions** subscale and scores on the **rehearsal strategies** subscale on the MSLQ.

Hypothesis 3k. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **actions** subscale and scores on the **elaboration strategies** subscale on the MSLQ.

Hypothesis 3l. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **actions** subscale and scores on the **organizational strategies subscale** on the MSLQ.

Hypothesis 3m. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **actions** subscale and scores on the **critical thinking strategies** subscale on the MSLQ.

Hypothesis 3n. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **actions** subscale and scores on the **metacognitive strategies** subscale on the MSLQ.

Hypothesis 3o. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **actions** subscale and scores on the **time and study environment** subscale on the MSLQ.

Hypothesis 3p. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **actions** subscale and scores on the **effort regulation** subscale on the MSLQ.

Hypothesis 3q. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **actions** subscale and scores on the **peer learning** subscale on the MSLQ.

Hypothesis 3r. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **actions** subscale and scores on the **help seeking** subscale on the MSLQ.

Rationale. It seemed plausible that students with high academic entitlement beliefs and/or actions might fundamentally believe that a grade is given to them rather than believing they must work for a good grade. Because of this belief, students may not self regulate to meet self-chosen academic goals.

Statistical analysis. These hypotheses were tested using the Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient. The critical value for the test of significance of the correlation was set at $p < .05$.

Research Question 4

Is there a relationship between academic entitlement beliefs or actions and causal attributions?

Hypothesis 4a. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **beliefs** subscale and scores on the **internal** attributions subscale on the MMCS.

Hypothesis 4a. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **beliefs** subscale and scores on the **external** attributions subscale on the MMCS.

Hypothesis 4c. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **actions** subscale and scores on the **internal** attributions subscale on the MMCS.

Hypothesis 4d. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **actions** subscale and scores on the **external** attributions subscale on the MMCS.

Rationale. It has been hypothesized by researchers that people who have external attributions about an outcome will generally feel entitled to that outcome (Major, 1994). By contrast, it is logical to hypothesize that people who make internal attributions about an outcome will not feel entitled to that outcome. To explore these relationships in an academic setting, external attributions for success and failure (context and luck combined) and internal attributions for success and failure (effort and ability combined) were correlated with academic entitlement beliefs.

Statistical analysis. These hypotheses were tested using the Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient. The critical value for the test of significance of the correlations was set at $p < .05$.

Exploratory Hypotheses

Research Question 5

Is there a relationship between academic entitlement beliefs or actions and measures of academic achievement?

Hypothesis 5a. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **beliefs** subscale and a **grade** for a particular course.

Hypothesis 5b. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **beliefs** subscale and a student's **grade point average**.

Hypothesis 5a. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **actions** subscale and a **grade** for a particular course.

Hypothesis 5b. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **actions** subscale and a student's **grade point average**.

Rationale. It was unclear theoretically how academic entitlement may be related to measures of academic achievement as indicated by either students' grade point average or their course grade. In terms of entitlement beliefs, on the one hand, it would seem logical that students with high academic entitlement beliefs might make the effort to attempt to negotiate scores with professors, thus achieving higher grades. On the other hand, it is possible that students with high academic entitlement beliefs may not self-regulate to achieve high grades simply because they do not think self-regulation is necessary. In terms of entitlement actions, students who are forceful about contesting grades or asking for special treatment could achieve either higher or lower grades. A higher grade could be the result if the student simply takes the time

to see the professor. A lower grade could be the result because the student does not see the need to self-regulate. This analysis should shed some light on the relationship between entitlement and academic achievement.

Statistical analysis. These hypotheses were tested using the Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient. The critical value for the test of significance of the correlations was set at $p < 0.05$.

Research Question 6

Is there a relationship between academic entitlement beliefs or actions to various demographic variables?

Hypothesis 6. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement scale (beliefs and actions) and various demographic variables.

Rationale. This hypothesis was exploratory in nature. There is little to no evidence available that identifies a relationship between academic entitlement and various demographic variables such as gender, race/ethnicity, membership in Greek organizations, participation in student athletics, socioeconomic status, or birth order. Because there is little to no evidence available about the nature of the relationship between academic entitlement and various demographic variables, interactions among variables was not investigated at this time. The testing of this hypothesis was intended to shed some light on how any of these variables might be related to academic entitlement, and to provide future directions for possible research questions.

Statistical analysis. These hypotheses were tested using independent sample t-tests and one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) techniques. The critical value for the test of significance of the tests was set at $p < .05$.

Research Question 7

How are superiority beliefs and effort exerted on academic tasks related to academic entitlement beliefs and actions?

Hypothesis 7a. It was predicted that effort and/or superiority beliefs would explain academic entitlement beliefs.

Hypothesis 7b. It was predicted that effort and/or superiority beliefs would explain academic entitlement actions.

Rationale. There is a debate within the entitlement literature about the conceptual difference between deservingness and entitlement (Major, 1994). Some researchers have posited that they are the same construct while others have argued they are distinct (Major, 1994; Steil, 1997). Steil (1997) argued that deservingness is based on a sense of earning an outcome, whereas entitlement is based on personal attributes. This research question is an attempt to try to separate out deservingness and entitlement. Because I did not have a true measure of effort exerted in a specific course, I used a measure of effort regulation from the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (Pintrich, et al., 1991). In essence, a measure of effort regulation and superiority were used to determine if effort or personal attributes predict academic entitlement beliefs or actions.

Statistical Analysis. These hypotheses were tested in the null form using hierarchical regression. The R^2 and the F Change statistics were used to determine if effort or superiority would explain more of the construct of academic entitlement. Effort was entered into the regression equation first, followed by superiority.

Research Question 8

What is the nature of students' entitlement beliefs or actions as it occurs in academic situations?

Rationale. This hypothesis was also explorative and was analyzed using qualitative techniques. Eight participants agreed to take part in an individual 45 minute interview. I interviewed three individuals who scored one standard deviation above and three who scored one standard deviation below the mean on the initial subscales for entitlement beliefs and entitlement actions. I also interviewed two individuals who scored right at the mean for each subscale.

Analysis. Participants were asked five general questions during the interview:

- 1) Tell me about what it was like growing up for you.
- 2) Describe your relationship with your professors.
- 3) Has there ever been a time during your college career that you received a grade you felt you didn't deserve? What did you do about it?
- 4) Do you find it easy to get your way in most situations?
- 5) How do you go about getting your way?

Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. Transcripts from the interviews were analyzed using generic qualitative techniques in which general themes were extracted from the interviews. This thematic analysis provided a basis for interpretation of the qualitative data with the goal of finding directions for future research in this field.

CHAPTER 4

Results

Main Research Questions

Research Question 1

What is the underlying structure of the Academic Entitlement Scale?

Hypothesis 1: Based on results from the pilot study, it was predicted that items on the Academic Entitlement Scale (AES) would form two distinct factors when analyzed using confirmatory factor analysis, one factor representing entitlement beliefs and the other representing entitlement actions.

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted in EQS (Bentler & Wu, 1995). For this analysis, 311 cases were used as one case was dropped due to missing data. All items were used in the analysis. Items 1 through 13 were hypothesized to belong to an Entitlement Beliefs subscale and Items 14 through 20 were hypothesized as part of the Entitlement Actions subscale. Maximum likelihood estimation was used to estimate the model. Factor variances and error paths were set to 1; Factor 1 was modeled as correlated with Factor 2. Standardized factor loadings for the initial model are reported in Table 1. Goodness of fit statistics (χ^2 , NFI, NNFI, CFI) were calculated and are reported in Table 2.

Based on results of the CFA with 21 items, the modification index of the Lagrange Multiplier test indicated that item 20 “I would demand that an instructor make an exception for me” cross-loaded on to the other factor. In order to approach simple structure, I loaded the item on the other factor instead of cross-loading the item on to both factors. The model fit improved.

Table 1

Standardized Loadings for the Initial 21-Item Scale

Item	Loading	
	Belief	Action
1. Instructors should bend the rules for me.	.661	
2. An instructor should modify course requirements to help me.	.562	
3. I shouldn't have to think too hard to learn the material for a class.	.534	
4. I should put in minimal effort to learn the material for a class.	.543	
5. It's all right to lie to an instructor to get the grade I deserve.	.587	
6. I should only be required to do a minimal amount of thinking to get an A in a class.	.703	
7. I should get special treatment in my courses.	.647	
8. I get irate when an instructor will not take my work even though it is late.	.551	
9. When I get a bad grade it is because the instructor gave it to me	.688	
10. It is the instructor's fault if I get a bad grade.	.587	
11. Doing well in school should not take too much effort on my part.	.566	
12. I cannot tolerate it when an instructor does not accommodate my personal situation.	.535	
13. I would confront an instructor to argue about my grade.		.774
14. If I thought a test/assignment was unfair, I would tell the instructor.		.725
15. I would attempt to negotiate my grade with my instructor.		.796
16. I would argue with the instructor to get more points on a test.		.796
17. If I felt an instructor's grading was unfair, I would tell the instructor.		.786
18. If I felt I deserved a higher grade, I would tell the instructor.		.854
19. I would complain to the dean or higher level of authority to get the grade I deserve.		.638
20. I would demand that an instructor make an exception for me.		.339
21. I would tell an instructor to give me extra credit		.509

Table 2

Results from Confirmatory factor Analysis of Initial 21-Item Scale

Statistic	Result
χ^2	802.749
df	188
NFI	.749
NNFI	.770
CFI	.794

The model was then trimmed by deleting items based on the lowest squared loadings in the standardized solution in order to achieve model fit. The final item deleted had the second lowest squared loading. This was selected in order to keep the same number of indicators on each factor. In total, nine items were deleted from the instrument resulting in a 12-item instrument, with two subscales with an equal number of items. Table 3 shows the standardized loadings of the final solution as well as the actual items.

Goodness of fit statistics (χ^2 , NFI, NNFI, CFI) were conducted for the 12-item instrument (see Table 4). The model $\chi^2 (53, n=311) = 200.66, p < 0.05$, was significant indicating a lack of fit. However, it is acceptable to go on to consider the other indices as χ^2 is very sensitive sample size and the sample was large. Other indices showed a moderate degree of fit. The normed fit index (NFI) was .893, the nonnormed fit index (NNFI) was .898, and the comparative fit index (CFI) was .918. A CFI of greater than .90 is indicative of adequate model fit (Tanaka, 1993; Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). The estimated correlation between the two factors was .343 ($p < .05$).

Table 3

Standardized Loadings for the 12-Item Scale

Item	Loading	
	Belief	Action
1. Instructors should bend the rules for me.	.714	
2. An instructor should modify course requirements to help me.	.683	
3. I should only be required to do a minimal amount of thinking to get an A in a class.	.542	
4. I should get special treatment in my courses.	.720	
5. I would demand that an instructor make an exception for me.	.693	
6. I cannot tolerate it when an instructor does not accommodate my personal situation.	.636	
7. I would confront an instructor to argue about my grade.		.780
8. If I thought a test/assignment was unfair, I would tell the instructor.		.727
9. I would attempt to negotiate my grade with my instructor.		.792
10. I would argue with the instructor to get more points on a test.		.795
11. If I felt an instructor's grading was unfair, I would tell the instructor.		.788
12. If I felt I deserved a higher grade, I would tell the instructor.		.853

Table 4

Goodness of Fit Statistics for the 12-Item Scale

Statistic	Result
χ^2	200.657
df	53
NFI	.893
NNFI	.898
CFI	.918
r_{12}	.334

Based on the confirmatory factor analyses, it appeared that items on the AES did fall into two separate, but positively correlated factors: beliefs and actions. This

is consistent with entitlement research that defines entitlement as a relationship between a person and outcomes that has affective and motivational implications (Lerner, 1987). Kelln (1997) argued that individuals with exaggerated deservingness beliefs are more willing to act in ways society would reject. Thus, exaggerated deservingness can be identified through behavior or interactions with others. However, given that the correlation between the factors was only moderate, it appeared that not all students with exaggerated academic entitlement beliefs would act on them. Conversely, it also seemed that students who endorsed entitlement actions did not necessarily have exaggerated entitlement beliefs. To understand better how entitlement actions and entitlement beliefs were related, a χ^2 analysis was conducted. First, a frequency table was constructed based on observations one standard deviation above and below the mean on the variables of entitlement beliefs and entitlement actions. Observations that fell one standard deviation above the mean were considered high and observations that fell one standard deviation below the mean were considered low. The results are reported in Table 5.

The χ^2 analysis yielded a statistically significant result, $\chi^2(3)=14.42, p<.01$. Although there were observations in which a participant scored one standard deviation above the mean on one variable and not the other, the χ^2 results demonstrated that the observations were not significantly independent. If someone scored high on entitlement beliefs, they generally scored high on entitlement actions. Conversely, if someone scored low on entitlement beliefs, they generally scored low on entitlement actions.

Table 5

Frequency of Observations Entitlement Beliefs and Actions

		Entitlement Actions	
		High	Low
Entitlement Beliefs	High	19	3
	Low	7	16

Research Question 2

Was there a relationship between general entitlement beliefs and academic entitlement beliefs and/or entitlement actions?

Hypothesis 2a. It was predicted that there would be a significant positive relationship between scores on the Academic Entitlement Beliefs Subscale and scores on the Exaggerated Deservingness scale (XD21).

Hypothesis 2b: It was predicted that there would be a significant positive relationship between scores on the Academic Entitlement Actions Subscale and scores on the Exaggerated Deservingness scale (XD21).

These hypotheses were tested using the Pearson’s Product Moment correlation coefficient. The critical value for the test of significance of the correlations was set at $p < .05$. As expected there was a significant moderate positive correlation between entitlement beliefs and exaggerated deservingness ($r = 0.47, p < .01$). There was also a significant positive correlation between exaggerated deservingness and academic entitlement actions ($r = 0.23, p < .01$); however, this relationship was not as strong as

the relationship between beliefs and exaggerated deservingness. Thus, if a student had general exaggerated deservingness beliefs, it would seem logical that he or she would have exaggerated entitlement beliefs in academic settings. These results demonstrated that there is a relationship between general entitlement beliefs and entitlement beliefs related to a specific domain.

Research Question 3

Is there a relationship between academic entitlement beliefs or actions and measures of academic self-regulation?

Entitlement Beliefs and Self-Regulation Hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3a. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **beliefs** subscale and scores on the **rehearsal strategies** subscale on the MSLQ.

Hypothesis 3b. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **beliefs** subscale and scores on the **elaboration strategies** subscale on the MSLQ.

Hypothesis 3c. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **beliefs** subscale and scores on the **organizational strategies** subscale on the MSLQ.

Hypothesis 3d. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **beliefs** subscale and scores on the **critical thinking strategies** subscale on the MSLQ.

Hypothesis 3e. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **beliefs** subscale and scores on the **metacognitive strategies** subscale on the MSLQ.

Hypothesis 3f. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **beliefs**

subscale and scores on the **time and study environment** subscale on the MSLQ.

Hypothesis 3g. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **beliefs** subscale and scores on the **effort regulation** subscale on the MSLQ.

Hypothesis 3h. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **beliefs** subscale and scores on the **peer learning** subscale on the MSLQ.

Hypothesis 3i. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **beliefs** subscale and scores on the **help seeking subscale** on the MSLQ.

Entitlement Actions and Self-Regulation Hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3j. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **actions** subscale and scores on the **rehearsal strategies** subscale on the MSLQ.

Hypothesis 3k. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **actions** subscale and scores on the **elaboration strategies** subscale on the MSLQ.

Hypothesis 3l. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **actions** subscale and scores on the **organizational strategies subscale** on the MSLQ.

Hypothesis 3m. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **actions** subscale and scores on the **critical thinking strategies** subscale on the MSLQ.

Hypothesis 3n. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **actions** subscale and scores on the **metacognitive strategies** subscale on the MSLQ.

Hypothesis 3o. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **actions** subscale and scores on the **time and study environment** subscale on the MSLQ.

Hypothesis 3p. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **actions** subscale and scores on the **effort regulation** subscale on the MSLQ.

Hypothesis 3q. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **actions**

subscale and scores on the **peer learning** subscale on the MSLQ. Hypothesis 3r. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **actions** subscale and scores on the **help seeking** subscale on the MSLQ.

Pearson’s Product Moment correlation coefficients were calculated to measure the strength and direction of the relationship among the variables. The critical value for the test of significance of the correlation was $p < .05$. The results supported all but the following hypotheses: 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, 3h, and 3p. Correlations appear in Table 6. It should be noted here that these results should be interpreted cautiously as multiple significance tests were conducted and there was no control for Type I error because of the exploratory nature of the entire study.

Table 6

Correlations Between Academic Entitlement Beliefs, Entitlement Actions and Measures of Self-Regulation

<u>Self Regulation Subscale</u>	<u>Entitlement beliefs</u>	<u>Entitlement Actions</u>
Rehearsal strategies	-.02	.17**
Elaboration strategies	-.05	.19**
Organizational strategies	-.02	.12*
Critical thinking	.06	.24**
Metacognitive strategies	-.12*	.19**
Time and study environment	-.15**	.13*
Effort regulation	-.23**	.09
Peer learning	.11	.14**
<u>Help seeking</u>	.18**	.28**

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

The results indicated that there were statistically significant relationships between entitlement beliefs and the self-regulatory variables such as the regulation of

effort, control of time and study environment, the use of metacognitive strategies, and help seeking behavior which was related positively to entitlement beliefs.

The results also indicated that there were statistically significant relationships between entitlement actions and self-regulatory variables such as help seeking, critical thinking skills, the use of metacognitive strategies, the use of elaboration strategies, the use of rehearsal strategies, the use of peer learning strategies, control over time and study environment, and use of organizational strategies.

It appears that students with high academic entitlement beliefs were less likely to use the self-regulation strategies of metacognitive monitoring, control over time/study environment, and effort regulation to meet self-chosen academic goals. However, students who displayed entitlement actions were more likely to use a variety of academic self-regulation strategies.

Research Question 4

Is there a relationship between academic entitlement beliefs or actions and causal attributions?

Entitlement Beliefs and Causal Attributions Hypotheses:

Hypothesis 4a. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **beliefs** subscale and scores on the **internal** attributions subscale on the MMCS.

Hypothesis 4b. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **beliefs** subscale and scores on the **external** attributions subscale on the MMCS.

Entitlement Beliefs and Causal Attributions Hypotheses:

Hypothesis 4c. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **actions** subscale and scores on the **internal** attributions subscale on the MMCS.

Hypothesis 4d. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **actions** subscale and scores on the **external** attributions subscale on the MMCS.

As reported in Table 7, the results supported hypotheses 4a, 4b, and 4d and indicated that the stronger the entitlement beliefs of the student, the more likely the student would make external attributions and the less likely to make internal attributions about success or failure in academic settings. Attributions related to external factors, such as luck and context, were positively correlated with entitlement beliefs. In addition, internal attributions of effort were negative correlated with entitlement beliefs. Similar trends were found for entitlement actions. Entitlement actions were positively correlated with external attributions such as luck and context.

It has been hypothesized by researchers that people who have external attributions about an outcome would generally feel entitled to that outcome (Major, 1994). The analysis conducted here supported this position. Both entitlement actions and beliefs were significantly correlated positively to external attributions and not related to or inversely related to internal attributions. Again, these results should be interpreted cautiously due to as multiple significance tests without control for Type I error because of the exploratory nature of the study.

Table 7

Correlations Between Academic Entitlement Beliefs, Entitlement Actions and Measures of Causal Attributions

Causal Attribution Subscale	Entitlement Beliefs	Entitlement Actions
Luck	.45**	.24**
Context	.31**	.28**
Effort	-.27**	-.04
Ability	.10	.01
Internal	-.12*	-.02
External	.43***	.29***

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

Exploratory Research Questions

Research Question 5

Is there a relationship between academic entitlement beliefs or actions and measures of academic achievement?

Entitlement Beliefs and Academic Achievement Hypotheses:

Hypothesis 5a. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **beliefs** subscale and a **grade** for a particular course.

Hypothesis 5b. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **beliefs** subscale and a student's **grade point average**.

Entitlement Actions and Academic Achievement Hypotheses:

Hypothesis 5c. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **actions** subscale and a **grade** for a particular course.

Hypothesis 5d. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement **actions** subscale and a student's **grade point average**.

These hypotheses were tested using the Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient. The critical value for the test of significance of each correlation was set at $p < .05$. The results supported Hypotheses 5c and 5d. Correlations are reported in Table 8. Due to the exploratory nature of this hypothesis, results should be interpreted with caution as multiple significance tests were conducted without controlling for Type I error.

Table 8

Correlations Between Academic Entitlement Beliefs, Entitlement Actions and Measures of Academic Achievement.

Academic Achievement	Entitlement Beliefs	Entitlement Actions
Course grade	-.01	.16**
Grade point average	-.10	.13*

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

It appeared that there was no relationship between measures of academic achievement and entitlement beliefs. Thus, entitlement attitudes did not seem to be associated with how a student performed in school. However, there was a significant positive relationship between measures of academic achievement and entitlement actions. Thus, actions related to trying to influence a grade were, in fact, related to higher grades and higher grade point averages.

Research Question 6

Is there a relationship between academic entitlement beliefs or actions to various demographic variables?

Hypothesis 6. It was predicted that there would be a significant relationship between scores on the academic entitlement scale (beliefs and actions) and various demographic variables.

There appears to be a relationship between specific demographic variables and academic entitlement. The means and standard deviations are reported in Table 9. Again, caution must be exercised in interpreting results because of possible creeping Type I error. Numerous significance tests were conducted for this exploratory hypothesis.

The results of this exploratory part of the study indicated that women tended to score higher than men on entitlement beliefs ($t(309) = 2.69, p < .01$) and actions ($t(310) = 2.81, p < .01$). Students who did not give permission to me to access their course grade and grade point average scored higher on entitlement beliefs than those who did give me permission ($t(24.10) = 2.35, p < .05$). Students enrolled in the Human Sexuality course scored higher on entitlement actions than those enrolled in the Statistics course ($t(310) = 2.11, p < .05$). Non-citizens scored lower on entitlement beliefs than American citizens ($t(309) = -2.17, p < .05$). Members of Greek organizations (sororities and fraternities) system scored higher on both entitlement beliefs ($t(309) = 2.29, p < .05$) and actions ($t(310) = 2.35, p < .05$) than non-members. Members of intercollegiate athletic teams scored higher on

entitlement actions than non-members ($t(310) = 2.48, p < .05$). Although many comparisons were statistically significant, the differences between the means were small.

Table 9

Means and Standard Deviations of Demographic Groups on Entitlement Beliefs and Entitlement Actions

Demographic Variable	Entitlement Beliefs <i>Mean(sd)</i>	Entitlement Actions <i>Mean(sd)</i>
Women	16.79(5.80)	28.85(7.90)
Men	15.00(5.36)	26.19(7.74)
Permission to access GPA	15.31(5.36)	26.95(7.88)
No permission to access GPA	18.86(7.00)	28.22(7.95)
Human Sexuality Course	15.78(5.60)	27.61(7.95)
Intro Statistics Course	15.01(5.44)	25.49(7.51)
U.S. Citizen	15.46(5.48)	27.06(7.85)
Non U.S. Citizen	19.75(7.25)	26.50(9.40)
Greek Member	16.73(6.07)	28.73(8.25)
Non Greek Member	15.13(5.30)	26.40(7.65)
Student Athlete	18.20(5.60)	31.93(5.99)
Non Student Athlete	15.44(5.53)	26.80(7.89)

Finally, results from the ANOVA with type of intended graduate school as the independent variable and entitlement beliefs for the dependent variable indicated a statistically significant difference ($F(4,233)=3.47, p<.01$). The ANOVA with type of intended graduate school as the independent variable and entitlement beliefs as the dependent variable was statistically significant, ($F(4,233) = 3.47, p <.01$). Post-hoc tests using Tukey's HSD to control for Type I error across pairwise comparisons revealed that students who intended to go to Law school scored significantly higher

on the entitlement subscales than students who intended to go to graduate school (See Table 10). The ANOVA with type of intended graduate school as the independent variable and entitlement actions for the dependent variable were statistically significant, $F(4,234)=3.02$, $p<.05$. Post-hoc tests using Tukey's HSD test revealed that students who intended to go to Law school scored significantly higher on the entitlement scales than students who intended to go to graduate school (See Table 10). The Tukey test also revealed that students who intended to go to law school scored significantly higher than students who intended to go to medical school (See Table 10). Finally, it should be mentioned that many univariate t -tests and ANOVAS were conducted without controlling for Type I error and results should be interpreted with caution due to possible inflated Type I error rate.

Table 10

Means and Standard Deviations for Type of Graduate School

Type	Law <i>Mean(sd)</i>	Medical <i>Mean(sd)</i>	Dental <i>Mean(sd)</i>	Business <i>Mean(sd)</i>	Graduate <i>Mean(sd)</i>
Ent. Beliefs	18.03(6.18)	16.00(5.91)	19.00(5.60)	15.78(5.55)	14.48(5.22)
Ent. Actions	31.19(7.32)	25.39(8.51)	28.75(9.07)	27.64(8.95)	6.24(27.21)

Research Question 7

How are superiority beliefs and effort exerted on academic tasks related to academic entitlement beliefs and actions?

Hypothesis 7a. It was predicted that effort and/or superiority beliefs would explain academic entitlement beliefs.

Hypothesis 7b. It was predicted that effort and/or superiority beliefs would explain academic entitlement actions.

There is some debate among social justice researchers about whether deservingness and entitlement are synonymous. Although most have treated the constructs as the same (Major, 1994), some researchers consider the constructs to be distinct (Steil, 1997). Steil (1997) noted that an important theoretical distinction between the two is that deservingness is more related to “earning” a particular outcome while entitlement is more related to feeling meritorious of an outcome simply because of personal attributes. In an academic setting, “earning” a grade is most closely related to effort exerted by a particular student. However, in this study I did not have a measure of effort exerted in a particular class. Instead, I used the variable of effort-regulation to approximate effort exerted by a student. A personal attribute that is relevant here is how superior one feels compared to his or her classmates.

To shed light on this theoretical debate within the entitlement literature, hierarchical regression was used. The variable of effort regulation was regressed on the criterion of entitlement beliefs and then the variable of superiority was added into the equation to see which predictor would explain more of the criterion. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 11.

Based on the results of this analysis, it appears that effort regulation did not predict entitlement beliefs ($F(1,309)=2.68, n.s.$ However, the addition of the variable of superiority significantly increased the amount of variance in the criterion explained by the predictors ($F(2,308)=18.926, p<.001$). Thus, it appears feelings of

superiority did explain more of their entitlement beliefs than did effort regulation.

Table 11

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Entitlement Beliefs with Effort Regulation and Superiority Beliefs

Step and predictor variable	R ²	ΔR ²	B	SE B	β	FΔ
Step 1: Effort Regulation	.009	.009	.197	.12	.093	2.68
Step 2: Effort Regulation and Superiority	.109	.101	.307	.052	.318	34.88***

****p*<.001

To examine further the theoretical debate between deservingness and entitlement, the variable of effort regulation was regressed on the criterion of entitlement actions and then the variable of superiority was added into the equation to see which predictor would explain more of the criterion. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 12.

Table 12

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Entitlement Actions with Effort Regulation and Superiority Beliefs

Step and predictor variable	R ²	ΔR ²	B	SE B	β	FΔ
Step 1: Effort Regulation	.052	.052	-.340	.083	-.228	16.81***
Step 2: Effort Regulation and Superiority	.109	.101	.307	.052	.318	34.88***

****p*<.001

Based on the results of this analysis, it appears that lack of effort regulation did explain entitlement beliefs as the Beta weight for this predictor was negative

$F(1,308)=16.81, p<.001$. Notice that step 1 of this analysis confirmed my earlier hypothesis that entitlement and lack of effort regulation were related. However, here my interest was in determining if entitlement was due to effort regulation by a student or due to a student's perception of superiority. The fact that the beta weight was negative indicated a lack of effort regulation. Moreover, the addition of the variable of superiority significantly increased the amount of variance in the criterion explained by the predictors $F(2,307)=42.492, p<.001$). Thus, it appears that lack of effort regulation on the part of students explained their entitlement actions and the addition of feelings of superiority further explained students' entitlement actions.

Research Question 8

What is the nature of students' entitlement beliefs or actions as it occurs in academic situations?

As a part of a deeper exploration into the construct of academic entitlement, eight participants agreed to take part in an individual hour-long interview. I interviewed three individuals who scored one standard deviation above the mean on the subscales for entitlement beliefs and entitlement actions. I also interviewed two individuals who scored closer to the mean on each subscale. Finally, I interviewed three individuals who scored very close to one standard deviation below the mean on the subscales. I made the decision to begin interviewing participants without final knowledge of the subscales due to time constraints. As such, two of the participants' total scores did not fall exactly one standard deviation below the mean. Table 13

details each participant’s total scores on each subscale as well as each subscale mean and standard deviation (All names and majors have been changed to protect the identities of the participants):

Participants were asked five general questions during the interview:

- 1) Tell me about what it was like growing up for you.
- 2) Describe your relationship with your professors.
- 3) Has there ever been a time during your college career that you received a grade you felt you didn’t deserve? What did you do about it?
- 4) Do you find it easy to get your way (get what you want) in most situations?
- 5) How do you go about getting your way (getting what you want)?

In the following, I will synthesize some of the more relevant patterns that emerged from the interviews.

Table 13

Entitlement Beliefs and Actions Subscales Scores for Interview Participants

Participant	Belief Score	Action Score	Group Belief Mean(sd)	Group Action Mean(sd)
Low				
Victoria	11.00*	22.00*	15.57 (5.56)	27.04 (7.88)
Andrea	6.00	6.00		
Steve	10.00	20.00*		
Moderate				
Mary	15.00	24.00		
Mark	19.00	25.00		
High				
Gina	26.00	35.00		
Karen	29.00	42.00		
Mike	25.00	35.00		

*Individual score was not 1 standard deviation below mean

Interacting with professors. In terms of relationships with professors, participants mentioned two broad categories of reasons for communicating with or having relationships with their instructors, if they did at all. First, students talked with instructors to understand why they received a grade, to try to get a professor to change a grade, or to work out a deal with an instructor to help make up for a lower or missing grade. Second, some participants mentioned talking with their instructors because they viewed them as a valuable resource whether it was about class material or otherwise. The following sections will detail some examples.

Not all participants tried to establish a relationship with their instructors. One participant who scored low on the Academic Entitlement Scale (AES) felt that there was such a large power differential between herself and her professors, she had no wish to make a relationship with them:

I don't want to bother them or waste their time, cause I know they're really busy. I'm like I don't want to bother them with my stupid questions, and I know there's no such thing as a stupid question, but they're like up here and I'm just a little student... I put them on such a high pedestal..."

This student relied mostly on the Internet to help her navigate difficult course material rather than asking her instructors. Other participants formed working relationships with some of their instructors for various reasons, such as the instructor taught an important class in the participant's major.

Karen, a participant who scored high on the AES also commented that she did not need to establish relationships with her professors because her grades were always up to her own standards: "But I've always made good grades, so I've never needed to

like go and beg for an A, or go and try to make a relationship so they see that I'm trying, because I was always making a grade satisfactory to me."

Another student who scored high on the AES, Mike, commented that he always made it a point to get to know his instructors: "I always get to know my professors. For provisional, I did.... Both my freshman year and the second semester, I made an effort. In general, I've liked all my professors. There's been a couple that I haven't liked. Two, actually. But in general I've gotten to know them and I think the professors here are really good..." Mike generally liked to meet his professors, especially if by the end of the semester he was on the brink between two grades. Going to see his professors "to cut a deal" occurred a number of times for Mike.

Gina, who scored high on the AES, was very pragmatic about why she formed relationships with an instructor: "Honestly, unless it's going to get me an A, I don't even try... Like the ones that are like, oh, I know you're working hard, I know you're trying, the 88, really, I'll give you the A. I meet professors like that."

Participants also mentioned they established relationships with their instructors because they saw them as valuable resources. Andrea, a student who scored low on the AES commented about also liking to get to know her professors because they helped her figure out what to study: "Well, I guess my freshman year the professors were very encouraging. I loved my professors. I don't know, I felt like they helped me out a lot, and they encouraged me to, if you just study this, they'd tell me points, because I'd bring my notes, and they'd say study this, study that... So I

brought up all my grades.” For Andrea, getting to know her professors served as a motivating tool.

Mary, a junior at UT, described how she used her professors to help her professional development: “I think I have a tendency to go up to my professors, and they are my smaller classes... And I think it works even more now because of all the economics classes I’m taking all have to do with helping me find a job, and so real helpful, real good source for helping me find a job.”

Mary also mentioned that one of her professors helped her make a decision to drop a difficult class: “(I told him) no I’m not doing so well, like he knew there was really no hope...And so he said it’s just not for everybody, don’t feel bad, I’m willing to let you drop the class.” This professor helped Mary make a difficult decision and reassured her that dropping a course was a good decision. Mary further expanded on appreciating the good advice she received from some of her other professors:

So a lot of good advice has helped me a lot, not so much like textbook information, but here’s what I like about UT, is that it’s more you learn to utilize your resources a lot more and listen to advice professors have to give you and see how that applies and somehow you can apply it just by being a student here and you don’t wait til you get old to figure it out...I’ve been fortunate in that aspect, I have been able to have a lot of good professors.

Contesting grades. The one area in which all participants interacted with their instructors was when they received a grade they perceived as undeserved. All participants experienced this situation at least once. Their responses ranged from asking the professor to explain what they did wrong to trying to influence the

situation. Some were more concerned about their learning, others were more concerned about the number of points gained/lost in the situation.

Some students mentioned not wanting to anger their instructors by asking them about their grade. For example, a student who scored low on the AES only had one instance when she did not receive the grade she expected on an exam. She described what happened when she spoke with her professors: “I did ask her how come I got this wrong, and I wasn’t mean or rude about it, or like you know, what a crappy test this is, I said I’m sorry, I didn’t understand this question, you know, and she told me...” This participant seemed to show that she was aware of what you “should” and “should not” say to a professor when asking about a grade. Mark, a student who scored at the mean of the AES also talked about the danger of contesting grades:

Yeah, I’ve had teachers—I’ve gone and like—I don’t go to contest grades to questions their knowledge or their authority, and I’ve had teachers in the past who have been kind of—if I go ask them it’s like a threat. And that’s like the least thing I’m doing. That makes me uncomfortable...I sometimes figure it’s not even worth going because I don’t know how the teacher is going to be.

In contrast, Mike, a student who scored high on the AES, angered a teacher by comparing his paper to another student’s paper and discussed the grading with the professor: “My friend...had put the exact same answers I had, she counted his. So I went back and I pointed that out to her and then she got really upset at me for looking at his test to compare.”

As stated previously, another student who scored low on the AES mentioned that she felt that contesting grades served to improve her relationship with her professors:

I think it'll actually improve our relationship, because I think she'll actually, because she understands that I care...Because every time you go there it shows them that you care, even more and that you are worried about what they are doing and that you are concerned for them counting off for something you don't believe they should be count off for...

One observation I noticed about participants who scored high on the AES was that they believed that they had the ability to influence their grades if they chose to talk to the instructor. Karen summed it up in the following manner: "So I think most of the time they will if you take the time and if you have a valid argument, they will change it." Gina also made a similar comment: "I'm sure if I went in to talk to her about it, we'd get an A, but like this late in the game, yes I cared, love to get it changed, but it's not occupying my life to where I'd have to go back and get it changed.

Students who scored high in the AES also seemed very savvy about which instructors would make modifications in grading. Gina was very observant of which professors were more likely to help her out when she needed more points: "Like I was watching one of my professors, I tried to see her yesterday, and she's really a sweet lady, who I can tell, you know. She was like, oh I understand how you got that, and she changed a girl's grade. So I'm going in to see her tomorrow and see if she'll add some points." Mike who also scored high on the AES, expressed his savvy knowledge about long-time professors increasing grades: "Well, the people that have

been here a long time, they'll say, "Yeah, you can retake it whenever," or they can bump you up a grade... I think the younger professors just like to go exactly by what happens and don't want to change the rules because they're not used to stuff like that."

Some students questioned the fairness of asking for higher grades, even though they had tried a few times during their academic career. A participant who scored low in the AES commented: "A lot of times, like I know people that have gone and talked to their professors and begged for a higher grade. I haven't really done that. There's been a few instances, maybe like two or three times that I've gone and I've said, "Can you help me out? You know and if they don't they don't, and if they do, they do. I try not to like beg for a grade because I don't really think that's fair."

Mark, a participant who scored at the mean of the AES commented that he did not generally contest his grades:

I've never been one to complain about a grade, because I kind of think it's what I deserved. And most of the times those tests, it's because I haven't studied enough, and I understand that's my fault; it's not the teacher's fault, whatever factors are involved.

Mark generally believed that if he received a lower grade on something, he was responsible. Moreover, Mark appreciated the learning that took place even in those situations when the grade did not come back as expected:

Even though most classes I wouldn't really mind, but that—it seemed like when I turned in the paper and got the B instead of the A I thought I deserved, I had really gained a lot of knowledge from research on the subject and I thought I did a really good job.

Mary, a student who scored at the mean on the AES felt there were times that she was justified in asking for a higher grade. In one specific class, I asked her why she felt this way and she replied: “Because I worked like hell... I actually went to his office hours, and tried to understand the concepts... and I had a study buddy and we’d study all the time, and went to office hours, always read the speeches before class, like never fell asleep in his class, and I always fall asleep.”

Based on the interviews, it appeared that all students had contested a grade at least once. Participants who scored low or closer to the mean of the AES subscales expressed concern about angering their instructors and also mentioned the fairness of asking for a higher grade. Participants who scored high on the AES subscales purposefully sought out their instructors to increase a grade.

Getting your way. As a researcher, the main difference I saw in the groups of participants was that students in the high entitlement category tended to respond that they usually got their way or what they wanted in most situations. Participants who scored in low or at the mean of the initial AES remarked that they did not always get their way or get what they wanted. Most participants believed in the efficacy of their own effort in most situations. Most felt that if they just worked hard enough, they could have what they wanted.

Participants who scored low in the AES communicated awareness that they did not always get what they want and that they had to work very hard for what they did have. Victoria commented “I’m used to not getting what I want so ..because I

work hard, and if I want a good grade, I just go to the library and study and I'll get it..."

Steve talked about how his parents raised him: "I mean, there's always times when you don't get things the way you'd like to have them...but I just try to go with the flow, you know. I guess that's kind of the way my parents raised me. You know, don't sweat the small stuff." These two participants understood that desired outcomes generally come through hard work and even then, sometimes it is not enough.

Mary, who scored at the mean of the AES, when asked if she generally gets what she wants answered "Sometimes." Later on during the interview she also mentioned the following: "Like, ninety nine percent of the people have this, and you could be that one percent that doesn't have that, I could possibly be in that one percent." She seemed to have the awareness that not everything always worked out in her favor. She also mentioned how her parents raised her: "When I was growing up...if I want that really really nice jacket, or something, but my parents have made me aware of what's more important, a fifty dollar jacket, or doing something nice for somebody, or something like that." Mary communicated that things did not always work out in her favor. Moreover, her parents raised her with the value of thinking of others.

As stated previously, the participants who scored high on the AES, generally felt that they get what they want, especially through hard work. Gina commented, "I probably always get what I want. Either by trying, or by like giving up something

else. Like if I truly, truly want something, I'll get it..." Karen further reiterated this sentiment:

Actually, usually throughout my whole life, things have been pretty easy. Like materially pretty much, I mean you can always get bigger and better than what you have, but generally I've always gotten what I wanted, grades, I usually have always gotten what I wanted, or what I expected from myself... You know, it's never been hard, it's never been that much of a struggle to get what I wanted... I mean I have worked for what I've gotten, but I've never felt like I've had to work really hard."

Mike also answered the question in a similar vein:

So I think I've always gotten by, and I would think pretty balanced, and I've always gotten my way pretty much, I guess, in stuff like that. Has it been easy? I would say it's been easier for me than most just because I've had a lot of opportunities that others haven't. So I would say that I usually get my way and it's been fairly easy.

Participants who scored high on the AES subscales did not remark that everything they wanted was handed to them without struggle. However, they did mention that they did not have to work overly hard to get what they wanted and that they had a fairly easy time in getting their way.

Strategies for getting one's way. All groups of participants had strategies for getting their way. Most participants mentioned working hard to get what they wanted. However, participants in the high entitlement group were the ones to mention using their personality to get what they wanted.

Victoria, who scored low on the AES, pointed out that she took how others felt about her into consideration when trying to get her way: "I want other people to feel good too when they are around me. I don't want them to think I am spoiled, so I compromise."

Andrea and Steve, who also scored low on the AES, talked about working hard to get their way. Andrea said, “I guess I just work harder at it.” Steve told a story from childhood about wanting an expensive toy:

Like I remember I wanted to get this monorail space Lego thing, which was like \$100. He said, I can’t afford that, but you can come in and you can work for it. I’m like, “All right” so I went and worked for it and made enough money to buy it myself and put it on layaway.

Steve also had a similar experience with buying his first car:

I worked really hard to get my own car, to pay for that, which I know a lot of kids don’t usually do. I really worked hard. I wanted to buy my own car myself, you know? Kind of show my independence. My dad was like, “I could buy this car for you, but I want to teach you something better. Teach you to grow up and take care of yourself, take responsibility.

Steve seemed to make the connection between working hard and achieving a goal as he reflected back on his childhood experiences. It seemed that Steve’s parents were concerned about Steve developing a work ethic that would serve him later in life.

Mary, who scored at the mean on the AES, talked about working hard and utilizing her resources:

I think that I just have to utilize the resources, and take advantage of them, I think that’s what I do, like in certain situations, you utilize your resources and use your whole network circle to see where it can get you...I set such high goals I make them intangible and I think that’s what makes me work harder. Yeah, I think that’s what it is. (It doesn’t always work out) but in the end you learn a lot of stuff on your way up, heading for it. I think that’s more important, like learning.

For Mary, utilizing her resource base was important to help her get what she wanted.

She was also realistic about the fact that even though one does not always get what one wants, there is value in whatever learning takes place during the striving process.

Participants who scored high on the AES subscales explained how they went about getting their way. Gina admitted that once she had used her personality to get what she wanted. In this instance, she avoided standing in a very long line of people to pick up concert tickets:

...and I said I'm not standing in this line, so I walked up to the front, got my way in front of the line, went up to the ticket office, got our tickets and then left. I couldn't tell someone to go do it, you know, I just do it, and ...I just talk to people and make up some story about how I was here five minutes ago, and then I left and then realized that I needed to come back. I was like I had to go get the credit card. And they're like OK, I mean I'm nice to people. I just use my personality and I usually get what I want."

Similarly, Mike reported influencing his grades by taking the time to interact with his instructors:

I think there have been grades that I might not have maybe deserved that my teachers have bumped me up just because they knew me and saw the effort I put into the class. Going out to talk to them, and stuff like that...And I'm always on the borderline, it seems like, so I'm always trying to talk to my teachers to bump me up to that next level.

Based on the interviews, personal influence seemed to be an important factor for participants who scored high on the AES subscales as Gina and Mike managed to change an unfavorable situation.

Conclusion

The main differences I would delineate between the groups were that students who scored high on the entitlement subscales compared to the other two groups,

seemed to be politically savvy when it comes to “working the system.” They also had a spoken/unspoken assumption that professors will change their grade if they went to talk to them. They seemed to see themselves as having more control in the situation. They also felt they generally got their way in most instances.

In general, I noticed that students who did not fall on the cusp between grades do not feel it necessary to chat with the professor, especially if they are pleased with their own performance. Learning was important to all participants especially in terms of their respective majors. Most students wanted to understand why they earned low grades on occasion and wanted to strive to do better. On some level, all participants saw their instructors as instrumental in their learning process. They felt their professors were, for the most part, good resources and someone from whom to learn important information.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

What do we know after completing this study about entitlement, self-regulation, and attributions? In this chapter, I will describe the most important findings of the study, synthesize these findings with the wider literature, and evaluate them based on limitations that applied in this study. Finally, implications for research and practice will be discussed.

Important Findings

Measurement of academic entitlement. First, entitlement in the domain of academics seems to be measurable. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis of the Academic Entitlement Scale (AES) supported a 2-factor model, beliefs and actions, with adequate fit according to the fit indices. This particular two-factor model is congruent with entitlement theory in that Lerner (1987) described the construct as the relationship between a person and outcomes that has affective and motivational implications. Thus, an entitled student who believes he or she has not been given due consideration from an instructor would act in a specific way.

In terms of other psychometric properties, initial reliability estimates looked promising as well. Coefficient alpha for the beliefs subscale was .83 and for the actions subscale was .91. In terms of convergent validity, scores from the AES were

positively correlated with scores from the Exaggerated Deservingness Scale (XD21, Kelln, 1997) and the Superiority Scale (Robbins & Patton, 1985).

There are limitations that should be noted here. While the model looks promising, the fit was only adequate. There could be a number of reasons for less than excellent model fit. First, a student may have very legitimate concern about a grade and behave in what looks like an “entitled” manner. Conscientiousness could be mistaken for entitlement. Second, students may or may not believe they have the authority to question a professor. This opinion emerged very clearly in the qualitative interviews: some students felt it was perfectly fine to question a professor’s grading while others avoided the confrontation completely. This also may be related to the level of assertiveness on the student’s part. Some students may or may not be comfortable with being assertive. Third, a student may also be more “performance-oriented” (Ames & Archer, 1988) and focus on grades rather than learning the material. A performance orientation could be mistaken for entitlement, especially in terms of behavior. Fourth, students may be “work-avoidant” (Duda & Nicholls, 1982) and try to put forth the least amount of effort to achieve a grade. Work avoidance may also be related to students bringing the same consumer expectations from other commercial establishments into the educational sphere (Levine & Cureton, 1998), as discussed in the literature review. It is possible that a work-avoidant student may want the very best “product,” or grade, for the lowest “price,” or least amount of effort. Fifth, a student’s set of epistemological beliefs may influence appearances of entitlement. If a student believes that knowledge is imparted to

students by professors, and that all a student has to do is soak in the information, then the student may appear entitled when he or she may be operating out of a system of epistemological beliefs. Any of the above constructs could be confounded with entitlement and perhaps contribute to lesser model fit. Future research on the scale should focus on disentangling some of these constructs from academic entitlement.

Relationship between academic entitlement and self-regulation. There appeared to be a relationship between academic entitlement and academic self-regulation. Scores from the beliefs subscale were negatively correlated with the subscales on the MSLQ of metacognitive strategies, time and study environment, and effort regulation. The correlations were not very large and ranged from -0.12 to -0.23, but it remains that the more a student held entitlement beliefs the less likely the student was to manage his or her own learning. Conversely, the scores on the actions subscale were positively correlated with scores on the following self-regulation subscales of the MSLQ: rehearsal strategies, elaboration strategies, critical thinking, metacognitive strategies, time and study environment, peer learning, and help-seeking. Again the correlations were not large and ranged from 0.14 to 0.28. Nevertheless, it does appear that behaving in an entitled manner is positively related to academic self-regulation. It may seem strange for scores from the separate subscales to be related to self-regulation scores in an opposite manner. However, as discussed previously, this result may derive from the fact that students may be behaving as “conscientious consumers” and try to get the greatest return for the least investment (Levine & Cureton, 1998).

This leads to the question of how was academic achievement related to entitlement beliefs and actions. There was no relationship between entitlement beliefs and course grade or GPA. However, there was a positive relationship between entitlement actions and course grade/GPA. Again, the correlations were not very strong (0.16 and 0.13, respectively), and I would not expect a higher correlation because course grades, and consequently GPAs, are not generally negotiated by instructor and student. However, it does appear that the willingness to seek out the professor and argue the specifics of a situation is positively related to a student's GPA or course grade. Logically speaking, this may result from, as the old adage goes, "The squeaky wheel gets the oil." The qualitative analysis revealed that students were well aware that talking with their professor could positively influence their grades as this was one reason why they went to see their professors.

There are two limitations I would mention. First, there was a statistically significant difference between the means on the entitlement subscales students who gave me permission to access their grade point averages and those who did not give me permission. Thus, many students who scored high on the entitlement subscales were not included in the analysis. Perhaps if these were included in the analysis, I would be better able to make an interpretation of how academic performance is related to entitlement beliefs and actions. However, any generalization about these relationships should be made with this limitation in mind.

A second limitation I would note here is that there are instances when a student does have a legitimate concern about a grade. Not all students who question

their professors about their performance are doing so out of a feeling of entitlement. Instructors are only human, of course, and sometimes the assessments designed to measure learning in a course are not perfect. It is strategic on a student's part to maintain a relationship with an instructor and to question knowledgeably how he or she is assessed in a given situation. A responsible student will check to make sure his or her grades make sense in the same way a responsible consumer would check to make sure his or her checkbook balances with what the bank says. Thus, the positive correlation between grades and achievement, given that the students not agreeing to let me have their course grade or GPA were high on the entitlement scale, may have reflected what good students do when they receive grades that do not seem to make sense.

Relationship between academic entitlement and attributions. There appears to be a relationship between academic entitlement and causal attributions. Major (1994) theorized that people who make external attributions about an outcome will generally feel entitled to that outcome. The results of this study are perhaps the first to offer empirical support for this theoretical assertion. External attributions about academic performance were positively related to entitlement beliefs ($r = .43$) and to entitlement actions ($r = .29$). Conversely, internal attributions about academic performance were negatively related to entitlement beliefs ($r = -.12$) and entitlement actions ($r = -.18$).

This analysis established a link between the motivational variables of internal/external attributions and entitlement. Because academic entitlement is positively correlated with external attributions, it is possible that academic

entitlement could also be related to a student's persistence in academic goal-striving. Future research should further explore the important connection between entitlement and other motivational variables such as goal orientation, self-efficacy, and control of learning.

Relationship between academic entitlement and demographic variables.

There appears to be a relationship between specific demographic variables and academic entitlement. The results of this exploratory part of the study indicated the following: Women tended to score higher than men on entitlement beliefs and actions; non-citizens scored higher on entitlement beliefs than American citizens; members of Greek organizations (sororities and fraternities) system scored higher on both entitlement beliefs and actions than non-members; members of intercollegiate athletic teams scored higher on entitlement actions than non-members; and students who intended to go to law school scored higher on entitlement beliefs and actions than those students who intended to pursue an academic advanced degree. Although I was able to find these differences in the study, unfortunately the data I collected do not explain why these differences exist. Future research would need to discover why these differences exist. In addition, it would be useful to gain an understanding of how entitlement develops and which factors are most related to the development of entitlement attitudes.

A limitation I should note was that the sample in the study was 67% men and 33% women. This may limit the generalizability of my results. Perhaps I would have captured a greater effect if I had more women in the sample. A second limitation I

would mention was that the quantitative data were collected through self-report measures. Although there were no significant relationships between entitlement beliefs/actions and the Marlowe-Crown Social Desirability scale indicating that there was no response set towards social desirability; still, the normal problems of using self-report measures most likely occurred as responses from six students were deleted from the analysis because they chose the same response for every question. Students also may have not answered in an honest manner.

Future research might also consider if academic entitlement is global in nature or course-specific. I assumed that it was global in nature, but it is possible that a student's entitlement attitudes might vary from course to course. Similarly, it would also be useful to know if the sex of the instructor is related to level of entitlement. Research on gender bias in the classroom revealed that female professors had more negative experiences in the classroom than male professors (Kite, Russo, Brehm, Fouad, Hall, Hyde & Keita, 2001). Studies reported that women more often experienced direct questioning of credentials, not being taken seriously by students, and rude or hostile responses from students (Hall & Sandler, 1982; Sandler, 1993; Kite, et al., 2001).

Entitlement vs. deservingness. Within the entitlement literature, there is a question of entitlement and deservingness as being the same or distinct constructs. Most researchers treat them as the same (Major, 1994). At the heart of the debate is the issue of "earning" an outcome as opposed to meriting an outcome based on personal attributes. In the academic realm, "earning" an outcome could be likened to

deserving a grade because of effort put in on a task. By comparison, a personal attribute that might be relevant here is feeling superior to others. In the current study, I did not have a measure of the effort exerted in a class by a student. As a substitute, the variable of effort regulation was used. The variables of effort regulation and feelings of superiority were measured and regressed on two different criterion variables: entitlement beliefs and entitlement actions. In terms of entitlement beliefs, the feelings of superiority variable was more explanatory of students' entitlement beliefs compared to the effort regulation variable. Thus, it appears that effort regulation on the part of students did not explain their entitlement beliefs but feelings of superiority did. In terms of entitlement actions, effort regulation was negatively related to entitlement actions and the addition of superiority beliefs further increased the variance explained by the predictors. Thus, it appears that lack of effort regulation on the part of students explained their entitlement actions and the addition of feelings of superiority further explained students' entitlement actions.

Based on my results, Steil (1997) may be correct in claiming that deservingness and entitlement might be distinct constructs. Effort regulation was not predictive of entitlement beliefs and it was negatively related to entitlement actions. However, there are some limitations that should be noted. In the current analysis, the variables used only approximated the constructs being considered in the theoretical debate. Effort regulation does not explain how much effort a student put into an individual academic task. Rather, effort regulation measured how a student managed his or her effort in a specific class. In addition, there could be other personal

attributes besides feelings of superiority at work here. More work needs to be done in disentangling deservingness and entitlement. The results reported here were a rough attempt to gain some empirical clarity on an theoretical debate. Perhaps in the future, researchers might juxtapose scores from a measure of deservingness and scores from a measure of entitlement. However, researchers must also establish more theoretical clarity for the nature of the difference between the constructs, as there is no common agreement on this issue.

Nature of the experience of entitlement. The qualitative analysis in this study was conducted to elucidate the experience of academic entitlement of students who scored at various levels on the AES. Recall that two participants in the low entitlement group did not fall exactly one standard deviation below the mean. However, they were very close and I considered them to be a part of the low entitled group. Although many of the students' experiences were very similar, I did notice some differences between students who scored high on the entitlement subscales and the other groups of students. The three highly-entitled students seemed to be more politically savvy and understood better how to "work the system" unlike the other two groups. They also had a spoken/unspoken assumption that professors would change their grade if they went to talk to them unlike the other two groups. They seemed to see themselves as having more control in the situation. They also felt they generally got their way in most instances.

Future research must look more at the upbringing of individuals at various points on the entitlement continuum to help discover how some of these attitudes

might develop as I was unable to ascertain a clear picture of this through the course of the interviews due to time limitations. However, I noticed that some participants alluded to how their parents raised them, and that these seemed promising in indicating how entitlement develops. Moreover, future qualitative research might focus on a grounded theory approach to the development of entitlement attitudes to elucidate what factors contribute to the formation of how students see themselves in the world.

Implications for Research

Future research on academic entitlement should focus on theoretical clarification of the construct. It might be possible that construct measured by the Academic Entitlement Scale is two constructs as hinted by the fact that the subscales correlated differently with other constructs such as self-regulation.

Future research on academic entitlement should also focus on further validation of the Academic Entitlement Scale by examining other important constructs like narcissism, or delay of gratification. Cross validation of the scale will also be necessary to offer more evidence of construct validity. As mentioned previously, it will also be important to examine entitlement with other related constructs such as assertiveness, performance/mastery goal orientations, work-avoidance, and epistemological beliefs. It will also be useful to understand how the construct of entitlement is related to other motivational variables such as persistence, self-efficacy beliefs, and control of learning.

One interesting area that should be examined is the instructor's experience with entitlement in the classroom. Professors may react to the presence of entitled students in their classroom differently and may have a wide range of responses. It would also be interesting to compare the experience of new and seasoned instructors. Moreover, the sex of the instructor may be an important variable that interacts with level of entitlement. Gaining knowledge about the affective responses of instructors as well as how their teaching is affected would also add valuable information to the field of higher education.

Examining academic entitlement at the lower grades will also be an important contribution to the field. Do attitudes of entitlement evolve during grade school and high school? Is there a developmental aspect to the construct? Does entitlement change over the years? Future research should focus on examining children and following through their schooling to see how these attitudes progress on a longitudinal basis.

One last important link that should be examined is that of the affective component of entitlement. It stands to reason that if a student who feels entitled to a grade does not receive that grade, the student may experience anger. By logical extension, could a student turn this anger on a teacher or his or her fellow students? Does entitlement play a role in students who act aggressively and become involved in school violence? Some researchers posit that students who commit violence in schools do so out of extreme self-love rather than low self-esteem (Baumeister,

2001). Entitlement attitudes may play an important role in how students behave when their expectations are not met by their teachers.

Implications for Practice

Based on the results of this study, I would not suggest a university-wide program aimed at decreasing the entitlement attitudes of undergraduate students. Only 6% of my sample scored high on both entitlement beliefs and entitlement actions. For example, in a class of 30 students, this would mean that two students may score high on both subscales. However, in a class of 500, 30 students may score high on both subscales. For some instructors, dealing with entitled students may not pose any problems. For other instructors, dealing with entitled students may ruin a class or entire semester. As course enrollments increase, perhaps instructors would benefit from additional training on how to handle the concerns and behavior of highly entitled students. The same could also be true for new instructors. It may be useful for instructors to develop policies for how students can challenge grades or ask for extensions. These policies could become a part of an instructor's syllabus and become part of the regular expectations that are discussed with students each semester.

Appendix A

Demographic Information

- 1) Name (Requested on the scantron)
- 2) Birthdate (Requested on the scantron)
- 3) Social Security Number (Requested on the scantron)
- 4) Sex (Requested on the scantron)
- 5) Years of education (Requested on the scantron)

- 6) Race/Ethnicity
 - A. White/Caucasian
 - B. African American
 - C. Hispanic
 - D. Asian/Pacific Islander
 - E. Native American
 - F. Other

- 7) What college are you enrolled in at the University of Texas? (If you do not see your college, go to question #8.)
 - A. School of Architecture
 - B. McCombs School of Business
 - C. College of Communication
 - D. College of Education
 - E. College of Engineering
 - F. College of Fine Arts

- 8) (Select your college continued)
 - A. College of Liberal Arts
 - B. College of Natural Sciences
 - C. School of Nursing
 - D. College of Pharmacy
 - E. School of Social Work

- 9) Citizenship
 - A. U.S. citizen
 - B. Other

- 10) Did you grow up primarily in the United States?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No

- 11) Are you a member of the Greek system (sorority or fraternity) at the University of Texas?
- A. Yes
 - B. No
- 12) Are you a member of an intercollegiate athletic team at the University of Texas?
- A. Yes
 - B. No
- 13) Which range most closely resembles the current annual income of your parent(s)/caretaker(s)?
- A. under \$25,000
 - B. \$25,000-49,999
 - C. \$50,000-74,999
 - D. \$75,000-99,999
 - E. \$100,000-124,999
 - F. \$125,000-149,999
 - G. \$150,000-174,999
 - H. \$175,000-199,999
 - I. \$200,000 and above
 - J. Do not know
- 14) How would you best describe the socioeconomic status of your parent(s)/caretaker(s)?
- A. Upper
 - B. Middle
 - C. Lower
- 15) How is your education financed? (Bubble in all responses that apply)
- A. Parents/caretakers/relatives
 - B. Scholarships/grants
 - C. Financial aid (loans)
 - D. Self
- 16) In terms of birth order, where do you fall among your siblings?
- A. Oldest
 - B. Youngest
 - C. Middle
 - D. Only

- 17) Have you ever attended private school.
A. Yes
B. No
- 18) If yes, how many years did you attend private school?
A. less than one year
B. 1-2 years
C. 3-5 years
D. 6-8 years
E. 9-12 years
- 19) Are you currently employed?
A. Yes
B. No
- 20) If yes, how many hours do you work per week?
A. 1-10 hours
B. 11-20 hours
C. 21-30 hours
D. 31-40 hours
E. more than 40 hours
- 21) Are you the first person in your family to attend college?
A. Yes
B. No
- 22) Do you plan on continuing your education after college?
A) Yes
B) No
- 23) If yes, what type of post baccalaureate program do you hope to attend?
A. Law school
B. Medical school
C. Dental school
D. Veterinary school
E. Business school
F. Graduate school

The following questions refer to the course you are enrolled in that requires subject pool participation:

- 24) Which course are you enrolled in that requires you to participate in the subject pool?
- A. EDP 310 Individual Learning Skills
 - B. EDP 363 Human Sexuality
 - C. EDP 371 Introduction to Statistics
- 25) On average, how many hours do you spend studying/working on this course outside of class each week?
- A. 1-2 hours
 - B. 3-4 hours
 - C. 5-6 hours
 - D. 7 or more hours
- 26) Compared to other courses, I spend _____ time preparing for this course outside of class.
- A. more
 - B. less
 - C. about the same amount of
- 27) Compared to other courses, I put in _____ effort preparing for this course outside of class.
- A. more
 - B. less
 - C. about the same amount of
- 28) Compared to other courses, this course is _____ difficult.
- A. not at all
 - B. slightly
 - C. moderately
 - D. very
- 29) This course is
- A. required of my major.
 - B. an elective.
- 30) I am taking this course for...
- A. a grade (ex: A, B, C, D, F)
 - B. credit/no credit (pass/fail)

- 31) If you are taking this course for a grade, are you considering switching to credit/no credit (pass/fail) basis?
- A. Yes
 - B. No
- 32) If you are taking this course credit/no credit, are you considering switching to letter grade basis?
- A. Yes
 - B. No

Appendix B

Consent Form for Quantitative Data Collection

Title of Study:

An investigation of undergraduate students' academic expectations, self-regulation, and attributions.

I would like to invite you to participate in a research study about academic expectations. You were selected for this study because you are enrolled in a course that requires research participation. This research is a part of my dissertation project for the Department of Educational Psychology. Diane Schallert, Ph.D., is my supervising professor. Through this research, I hope to gain a better understanding about student's expectations towards academics.

If you decide to participate, you will answer some questions about your expectations about your courses and professors as well as how you prepare for a specific course. It should take no longer than one hour and fifteen minutes to complete the surveys. There are no known risks or possible discomforts associated with participating in this study. You have the right to refuse to participate in this study at any time. Your refusal will in no way affect your grade in the course that requires research participation, your standing with the University of Texas at Austin, your relationship with your professor, your teaching assistants, or the researchers. You may also withdraw your participation at any time after beginning the questionnaire without any penalty.

I would like to assure you that responses that can be associated with you personally will be kept confidential. Answers to individual questionnaires will not be reported and all results will be reported in group form. If you agree to participate, please sign the form.

Signature

Date

Print name

Social Security Number

I would also like to obtain your course grade from your instructor and your grade point average from the registrar's office. In addition, I would also like you to provide your telephone number in case I would like to contact you for an one-hour interview. Although this interview will not be a part of the subject pool participation, if you are selected for an interview and you participate, you will be compensated \$10.00 for your time.

I agree to allow Michelle Achacoso to have access to my course grade and my grade point average.

Signature

Date

You may call me to ask if I have time for a short interview (less than one hour). Here is my phone number _____.

I thank you kindly for your consideration. If you have any questions please feel free to email or call me or my supervising professor at the following addresses and phone numbers.

Contact Information:

Michelle Achacoso
mvachacoso@mail.utexas.edu
(512)989-1183

Diane Schallert, Ph.D.
dschallert@mail.utexas.edu
(512)471-2749

Appendix C

Consent Form for Qualitative Data Collection

Title of Study:

An investigation of undergraduate students' academic expectations, self-regulation, and attributions.

I would like to invite you to participate in a research study about academic expectations. You were selected for this study because you are enrolled in a course that requires research participation and you participated in the first part of this study. This research is a part of my dissertation project for the Department of Educational Psychology. Diane Schallert, Ph.D., is my supervising professor. Through this research, I hope to gain a better understanding about student's expectations towards academics.

If you decide to participate, I will ask you some questions about your expectations about school and life in general. The interview will take one hour or less. If you decide to participate, I will compensate you \$10.00 for your time. There are no known risks or possible discomforts associated with participating in this study. You have the right to refuse to participate in this study at any time. Your refusal will in no way affect your grade in the course that requires research participation, your standing with the University of Texas at Austin, your relationship with your professor, your teaching assistants, or the researchers. You may also withdraw your participation at any time after beginning the interview without any penalty. Simply tell me that you would like to stop and the interview will end immediately

I would like to assure you that your responses will be kept confidential. Any identifying information about you will be changed such as your name, gender, year in school, etc. The interview will be audio taped and transcribed. After the study is complete, the audio tape will be destroyed. If you agree to participate, please sign the form.

Signature

Date

Print name

Social Security Number

I thank you kindly for your consideration. If you have any questions please feel free to email or call me or my supervising professor at the following addresses and phone numbers.

Contact Information:

Michelle Achacoso
mvachacoso@mail.utexas.edu
(512)989-1183

Diane Schallert, Ph.D.
dschallert@mail.utexas.edu
(512)471-2749

Appendix D

Interview Protocol

- 1) Tell me about a situation where you did not receive the grade you felt you deserved...
 - A) What are some important background details?
 - B) How did you feel about the situation? Your professor?
 - C) What did you do about it?
 - D) Were there other situations you might like to mention?

- 2) Tell me about your relationship with your instructors at UT?
 - A) How do you see their role in your life?
 - B) Have you had an easy time getting along with them?

- 3) In general, do you find it easy to get the things you want to have or do you have to work hard for them?
 - A) Why do you think this is?
 - B) Do you have examples you might like to share?

- 4) Do you generally find that you get your way in most instances?
 - A) Tell me more about a specific instance...
 - B) How do you go about getting your way?

- 5) Tell me a little bit about your childhood...
 - A) How were you treated by your parents/caretakers?
 - B) Did you find it easy or difficult to get what you wanted from them in terms of material things?

Appendix E

Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire

(Pintrich, et al., 1991)

(This questionnaire asks students to rate their motivation, attitudes, and use of learning strategies and study skills for a particular class. Ratings range from "very true of me" {7} to "not at all true of me". {1}).

Part A. Motivation

1. In a class like this, I prefer course material that really challenges me so I can learn new things.
2. If I study in appropriate ways, then I will be able to learn the material in this course.
3. When I take a test, I think about how poorly I am doing compared with other students.
4. I think I will be able to use what I learn in this course in other courses.
5. I believe I will receive excellent grade in this class.
6. I'm certain I can understand the most difficult material presented in the readings for this course.
7. Getting a good grade in this class is the most satisfying thing for me right now.
8. When I take a test, I think about items on other parts of the test I can't answer.
9. It is my own fault if I don't learn the material in this course.
10. It is important for me to learn the course material in this class.
11. The most important thing for me right now is improving my overall grade point average, so my main concern in this class is getting a good grade.
12. I'm confident I can learn the basic concepts taught in this course.

13. If I can, I want to get better grades in this class than most of the other students.
14. When I take tests I think of the consequences of failing.
15. I'm confident I can understand the most complex material presented by the instructor in this course.
16. In a class like this, I prefer course material that arouses my curiosity, even if it is difficult to learn.
17. I am very interested in the content area of this course.
18. If I try hard enough, then I will understand the course material.
19. I have an uneasy, upset feeling when I take an exam.
20. I'm confident I can do an excellent job on the assignments and tests in this course.
21. I expect to do well in this class.
22. The most satisfying thing for me in this course is trying to understand the content as thoroughly as possible.
23. I think the course material in this class is useful for me to learn.
24. When I have the opportunity in this class, I choose course assignments that I can learn from even if they don't guarantee a good grade.
25. If I don't understand the course material, it is because I didn't try hard enough.
26. I like the subject matter of this course.
27. Understanding the subject matter of this course is very important to me.
28. I feel my heart beating fast when I take an exam.
29. I'm certain I can master the skills being taught in this class.
30. I want to do well in this class because it is important to show my ability to my family, friends, employer, or others.
31. Considering the difficulty of this course, the teacher, and my skills, I think I will do well in this class.

Part B. Learning Strategies

32. When I study the readings for this course, I outline the material to help me organize my thoughts.
33. During class time I often miss important points because I'm thinking of other things.
34. When studying for this course, I often try to explain the material to a classmate or friend.
35. I usually study in a place where I can concentrate on my course work.
36. When reading for my courses, I make up questions to help focus my reading.
37. I often feel so lazy or bored when I study for this class that I quit before I finish what I planned to do.
38. I often find myself questioning things I hear or read in this course to decide if I find them convincing.
39. When I study for this class, I practice saying the material to myself over and over.
40. Even if I have trouble learning the material in this class, I try to do the work on my own, without help from anyone.
41. When I become confused about something I'm reading for this class, I go back and try to figure it out.
42. When I study for this course, I go through the readings and my class notes and try to find the most important ideas.
43. I make good use of my study time for this course.
44. If course readings are difficult to understand, I change the way I read the material.
45. I try to work with other students from this class to complete the course assignments.
46. When studying for this course, I read my class notes and the course readings over and over again.

47. When a theory, interpretation, or conclusion is presented in class or in the readings, I try to decide if there is good supporting evidence.
48. I work hard to do well in this class even if I don't like what we are doing.
49. I make simple charts, diagrams, or tables to help me organize course material.
50. When studying for this course, I often set aside time to discuss course material with a group of students from the class.
51. I treat the course material as a starting point and try to develop my own ideas about it.
52. I find it hard to stick to a study schedule.
53. When I study for this class, I pull together information from different sources, such as lectures, readings, and discussions.
54. Before I study new course material thoroughly, I often skim it to see how it is organized.
55. I ask myself questions to make sure I understand the material I have been studying in this class.
56. I try to change the way I study in order to fit the course requirements and the instructors teaching style.
57. I often find that I have been reading for this class but don't know what it was all about.
58. I ask the instructor to clarify concepts I don't understand well.
59. I memorize key words to remind me of important concepts in this class.
60. When course work is difficult, I either give up or only study the easy parts.
61. I try to think through a topic and decide what I am supposed to learn from it rather than just reading it over when studying for my courses.
62. I try to relate ideas in this subject to those in other courses whenever possible.
63. When I study for this course, I go over my class notes and make an outline of important concepts.
64. When reading for this class, I try to relate the material to what I already know.
65. I have a regular place set aside for studying.

66. I try to play around with ideas of my own related to what I am learning in this course.
67. When I study for this course, I write brief summaries of the main ideas from the readings and my class notes.
68. When I can't understand the material in this course, I ask another student in this class for help.
69. I try to understand the material in this class by making connections between the readings and the concepts from the lectures.
70. I make sure that I keep up with the weekly readings and assignments for this course.
71. Whenever I read or hear an assertion or conclusion in this class, I think about possible alternatives.
72. I make lists of important items for this course and memorize the lists.
73. I attend this class regularly.
74. Even when course materials are dull and uninteresting, I manage to keep working until I finish.
75. I try to identify students in this class whom I can ask for help if necessary.
76. When studying for this course I try to determine which concepts I don't understand well.
77. I often find that I don't spend very much time on this course because of other activities.
78. When I study for this class, I set goals for myself in order to direct my activities in each study period.
79. If I get confused taking notes in class, I make sure I sort it out afterwards.
80. I rarely find time to review my notes or readings before an exam.
81. I try to apply ideas from course readings in other class activities such as lecture and discussion.

Appendix F

XD 21: Exaggerated Deservingness 21 (Kelln, 1997)

(This questionnaire asks students to rate their general attitudes of deservingness or entitlement. Ratings range from "strongly agree" {7} to "strongly disagree" {1}).

1. It's okay if I don't get what I want.
2. I shouldn't have to deal with as many problems as other people
3. Once I get something right it should stay that way.
4. Generally, I deserve to have all things work out well for me.
5. I have come to expect that any of my efforts should be rewarded.
6. I should not be kept from doing what I want.
7. I shouldn't have to deal with other people's failings/shortcomings.
8. I shouldn't have to "make do" with anything.
9. My desires and needs are the most important things in life.
10. My actions should not be questioned.
11. I shouldn't have to sit in traffic.
12. People shouldn't waste my time.
13. There is no excuse for bad service in a restaurant.
14. Something that upsets me is always wrong.
15. It's okay if I lose sometimes.
16. If I'm the customer, I expect to be the #1 priority of the staff.
17. I shouldn't be interrupted.

18. It's my right to do what I want no matter what.
19. No one has the right to do something that upsets me.
20. I feel as though I ought to be the first person in line.
21. When I really want something, I can't tolerate when people say "No".

Appendix G

Academic Entitlement Scale (Achacoso, unpublished)

(This questionnaire asks students to rate their attitudes of entitlement in an academic setting. Ratings range from "strongly agree" {7} to "strongly disagree" {1}. Items that have an asterisk (*) were used in the final model).

Entitlement beliefs

1. Instructors should bend the rules for me.*
2. An instructor should modify course requirements to help me.*
3. I shouldn't have to think too hard to learn the material for a class.
4. I should put in minimal effort to learn the material for a class.
5. It's all right to lie to an instructor to get the grade I deserve.
6. I should only be required to do a minimal amount of thinking to get an A in a class.*
7. I should get special treatment in my courses.*
8. I get irate when an instructor will not take my work even though it is late.
9. When I get a bad grade it is because the instructor gave it to me
10. It is the instructor's fault if I get a bad grade.
11. Doing well in school should not take too much effort on my part.
12. I cannot tolerate it when an instructor does not accommodate my personal situation.*

Entitlement Actions

13. I would confront an instructor to argue about my grade.*
14. If I thought a test/assignment was unfair, I would tell the instructor.*

15. I would attempt to negotiate my grade with my instructor.*
16. I would argue with the instructor to get more points on a test.*
17. If I felt an instructor's grading was unfair, I would tell the instructor.*
18. If I felt I deserved a higher grade, I would tell the instructor.*
19. I would complain to the dean or higher level of authority to get the grade I deserve.
20. I would demand that an instructor make an exception for me.*
21. I would tell an instructor to give me extra credit

Appendix H

Multidimensional-Multiattributinal Causality Scale-Achievement Subscale (Lefcourt, Baeyer, Ware & Cox, 1979)

(This questionnaire asks students to rate their general attributions in academic settings. Ratings range from "strongly agree" {7} to "strongly disagree" {1}).

Ability

1. The most important ingredient in getting good grades is my academic ability.
2. I feel that my good grades reflect directly on my academic ability.
3. When I get good grades, it is because of my academic competence.
4. If I were to receive low marks I would cause me to question my academic ability.
5. If I were to fail a course it would probably be because I lacked skill in that area.
6. If I were to get poor grades I would assume that I lacked ability to succeed in those courses.

Effort

7. In my case, the good grades I receive are always the direct result of my efforts.
8. Whenever I receive good grades, it is because I have studied hard for that course.
9. I can overcome all obstacles in the path of academic success if I work hard enough.
10. When I receive a poor grade, I usually feel that the main reason is that I haven't studied enough for that course.
11. When I fail to do as well as expected in school, it is often due to a lack of effort on my part.
12. Poor grades inform me that I haven't worked hard enough.

Context

13. Some of the times I have gotten a good grade in a course, it was due to the teacher's easy grading scheme.
14. Some of my good grades may simply reflect that these were easier courses than most.
15. Sometimes I get good grades only because the course material was easy to learn.
16. In my experience, once a professor gets the idea you're a poor student, our work is much more likely to receive poor grades than if someone else handed it in.
17. Often my poorer grades are obtained in courses that the professor has failed to make interesting
18. Some low grades I've received seem to me to reflect the fact that some teachers are just stingy with marks.

Luck

19. Sometimes my success on exams depends on some luck.
20. I feel that some of my good grades depend to a considerable extent on chance factors, such as having the right questions show up on an exam.
21. Sometimes I feel that I have to consider myself lucky for the good grades I get.
22. Some of my lower grades have seemed to be partially due to bad breaks.
23. My academic low points sometimes make me think I was just unlucky.
24. Some of my bad grades may have been a function of bad luck, being in the wrong course at the wrong time.

Appendix I

Superiority Scale (Robbins & Patton, 1985)

(This questionnaire asks students to rate their general attitudes of superiority. Ratings range from "strongly agree" {7} to "strongly disagree" {1}).

1. My friends follow my lead.
2. I deserve favors from others.
3. I'm witty and charming with others.
4. My looks are one of the things that attract others to me.
5. I could show up my friends if I wanted to.
6. Running the show means a lot to me.
7. Being admired by others makes me feel fantastic.
8. Achieving out of the ordinary accomplishments would make me feel complete.
9. I catch myself wanting to be a hero.
10. I know I have more natural talent than most.

Appendix J

Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Short Form) (Crowne & Marlow, 1960)

(This questionnaire assesses the degree to which a participant responds to questions with a socially desirable bias. The scale is dichotomously scored with respondent answering “True” or “False” to items.

1. It is sometimes hard for me to go on with my work if I am not encouraged. (R)
2. I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way. (R)
3. On a few occasion, I have given up doing something because I thought too little of my ability. (R)
4. There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right. (R)
5. No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener.
6. There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone. (R)
7. I'm always willing to admit when I make a mistake.
8. I sometimes try to get even, rather than forgive and forget. (R)
9. I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable.
10. I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own.
11. There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others. (R)
12. I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favors of me. (R)
13. I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings.

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VITA

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