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Competition and Academic Entitlement

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Walden University

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Walden University
2017

Abstract

Competition and Academic Entitlement

by

Linda L. Parker

MS, Walden University, 2013

BA, Grand View University, 2009

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Psychology

Walden University

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Abstract

In a university or college setting, academic entitlement occurs when a student thinks that he or she may deserve an acknowledgement that has not been earned. By understanding the potential contributions, negative effects on the student, faculty, and administration can be avoided. Using the social learning theory and cognitive evaluation theory as the framework, the purpose of this research was to examine the relationship between competition, an activity in which only one or several will win a contest or accolade. Amazon's Mechanical Turk was used for the recruitment of 552 students residing in the United States, from freshman to doctorate level. Academic entitlement was the dependent variable, while competition was the independent variable. Gender, year in school and ethnicity were covariates and a multiple regression was used to analyze the data. The results of the study showed a positive relationship between competition and academic entitlement. There was a negative relationship between the year in school and academic entitlement, while there was no significant relationship between year in school and competition. There was no significant gender difference in the level of academic entitlement or competition by gender. Finally, there was no significant difference in level of academic entitlement, competition, and ethnicity. This study contributes to positive social change by helping faculty, administration, and parents to assist students in avoiding academic entitlement behaviors, which on a long-term level can have a negative impact on the all stakeholders. Faculty, administration, parents, and students can use this study as a way to discuss specific ideas for helping the student avoid academic entitlement.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Psychological entitlement can be seen on many levels and in multiple organizations; however, academic entitlement is specific to academics and includes the belief by students that they should expect academic success without putting in the work for that success (Boswell, 2012; Ciani, Summers, & Easter, 2008; Jeffries, Barclay, & Stolte, 2014; Kopp & Finney, 2013). Academic Entitlement has just recently become a focus of research, although psychological entitlement has been studied more in depth. The purpose of this study was to determine if there is a relationship between academic entitlement and competition in a beginning effort to understand some potential correlations for future research and change.

Entitlement has been described as a perception of deservingness that may not be justified (Fisk, 2010). There are some serious implications with academic entitlement, including overly assertive student behaviors; compromising university policies; higher rates of grade inflation; and dissatisfaction with the university by other students, staff, faculty, and administrators (Boswell, 2012; Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Kopp & Finney, 2013). Previous research has not touched on the financial costs of academic entitlement, but there have been some statistics reported as to the negative impact of the practice. For example, Caplan and Gilbert (2010) found that in some scenarios, by reducing grade inflation, universities could recoup as much as \$4,600 per student. Also, because some faculty may fear bad reviews from students on course evaluations, faculty

may feel inclined to *give* a grade, which can cause universities money as the reputation of the university becomes one known for an easy A (Caruth & Caruth, 2013).

Another factor in academic entitlement is that students who suffer with it will not put in the necessary work to earn a good grade and will expect to be given the answers (Spark, 2012). These same students with an expectation of giving, rather than earning, may carry this expectation into the workplace. As a result, the university could potentially lose out in terms of reputation and financial benefit in tuition reimbursement from employers. Furthermore, incivility can provide a negative environment in the classroom and encourage students to go directly to a dean or vice president, inciting frustration between faculty and administration and allowing for students to believe any decision they do not agree with can be overridden by another authority figure, which will then be carried over into a workplace environment (Cain, Romanelli, & Smith, 2012).

Overall, it is important to understand what drives academic entitlement in order to prevent the behavior from causing a negative effect in academic life. Additionally, by researching academic entitlement and finding correlations, other positive changes in student behavior outside of academic functions may occur (Twenge & Campbell, 2010). Studies on academic entitlement may also create a positive impact by decreasing depression (Twenge & Campbell, 2010) and increasing the internal locus of control in the students (Boswell, 2012; Cain, et al., 2012).

Academic entitlement creates an unequal distribution of resources as it relates to university/college campus interactions. As students contest the earned grade and continue to push up the chain of command, university faculty, administration, and staff are forced

to deal with entitled students and parents, pulling them away from necessary job duties such as curriculum development and counseling other students truly in crisis (Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Twenge & Campbell, 2010). As the problem becomes more prevalent, administrators who need to be concentrating on fundraising may be pulled away to deal with unruly students, thus neglecting the other parts of their job (Twenge & Campbell, 2010). On a very basic level, academic entitlement is a disruption to the larger learning environment and creates frustration and tension between students, faculty, staff, and administration (Boswell, 2012; Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Kopp & Finney, 2013).

Early studies on academic entitlement were focused on the connection between narcissism and entitlement, treating the two as being intertwined (Boswell, 2012; Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Greenberger, Lessard, Chen, & Faruggia, 2008). However, more recent studies have looked at academic entitlement as its' own component (Chowning & Campbell, 2009). There has not been enough validated research as to the connection between narcissism and academic entitlement.

Background

Academic Entitlement

Previous research on academic entitlement focused primarily on current relationships and did not address possible contributory factors related to academic entitlement. The purpose of this study was to address this gap in the knowledge by focusing on competition. Since little is known about demographic factors in academic

entitlement, this study also included gender, ethnicity, and year in school as potential factors related to academic entitlement.

More recent research has also included gender as a factor in academic entitlement (Ciani et al., 2008; Greenberger et al., 2008) and how social media, self-efficacy, and demographics may affect academic entitlement (Boswell, 2012). One of the few studies to incorporate early factors as a potential relationship between early variables was Greenberger et al.'s (2008) study that reviewed personality and the role of parental relationships as motivation for academic entitlement. In a series of four studies, Greenberger et al. examined academic entitlement as a separate entity of psychological entitlement. In the second study, the researchers examined how much parent's achievement expectations contributed to academic entitlement, whether those parenting practices were tied to students' motivation, and if parental rewards were also a contributing factor (Greenberger, et al, 2008). As a part of the second study, the researchers also hypothesized that academic dishonesty may be higher with those students who had a higher GPA and were pressured by parental expectations (Greenberger et al., 2008).

The Greenberger et al. (2008) four studies found that family role contributes to academic entitlement and those students identified as being higher in academic entitlement also had a higher level of anxiety about grades (Greenberger et al., 2008). The one factor that seemed to be most closely tied to academic entitlement as it relates to the parental/student relationship was when parents use social pressure to make the

students perform at a higher academic level (Greenberger et al., 2008). Greenberger et al. (2008) is one of the only studies to look at parental influence.

Additionally, in the Greenberger et al.(2008) study, the role gender has in academic entitlement, is in relation to achievement. Whereas, previous studies compared gender differences in academic entitlement, Greenberger et al. examined gender in relation to achievement and intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation. They found that gender was not significant as it related to the level of extrinsic or intrinsic motivation.

Because of the limited expanse of research on the influences on academic entitlement, little is known about the factors that are most likely to contribute to academic entitlement. Consequently, there is little direction concerning how to best address academic entitlement behaviors at college and universities. By understanding these potential influences, universities and the staff working within them may be more prepared to deal with academic entitlement. Understanding how to prepare for the expectations that can occur in college will alleviate anxiety for the student. Societally, many of the academically entitled students may be inclined to go into the workforce with this same sense and may find trouble in the form of frustrated leadership and potential job loss. Having an understanding of these influential factors may even help prevent the development of academic entitlement. One potential influence on academic entitlement is the effect of competition.

Competition

The research on competition is expansive and includes many directions and fields of study. Most research has focused on competition and how it can affect secondary

education students (Flett, Moore, Pfeiffer, Belonga, & Navarre, 2010; Nesdale, Griffiths, & Maass, 2007; Rhodes & Brickman, 2011). For the sake of this study, competition was defined as an activity in which only one or several people will win the contest or accolade (Nichols & Sullivan, 2009).

Faculty, administration, parents, and coaches, who understand the connection between positive rewards, accolades, and achievements and how competition can increase that connection, may be more likely to promote competition as a factor in earning grades (Vallerand, Gauvin, & Halliwell, 1986). Instead of expecting a grade based on little to no effort, students could treat education similarly to a competitive academic or sporting event and strive to earn a grade rather than have it bestowed upon them. In addition, competition can have positive effects on behaviors. Some of the observed effects of competition include an extra motivation to perform above and beyond and an increase in intrinsic motivation (Vallerand, Gauvin, & Halliwell, 1986). By exploring the link between the two factors (competition and academic entitlement), future researchers can use this baseline to explore other critical factors that may be affected later in life as a result of competition, both positive and negative.

Problem Statement

Ultimately, the purpose of this research study was to determine if there is a relationship between competition and academic entitlement. In addition, in this study, I attempted to determine if gender, year in school, and ethnicity were important factors related to competition and academic entitlement. Gender has been studied as it relates to academic entitlement in the past; the findings of this study further validate those studies'

findings. Year in school has only been briefly discussed as a factor in academic entitlement, and as students' progress through college, it is important to document if the level of academic entitlement changes as well. Ethnicity is important in any research study, as the world is a diverse place and understanding the far-reaching length of culture and how it places a role in decision-making and experiences is paramount for valid research.

Twenge and Campbell (2010) pointed out that as we have moved into a society in which accolades are given and not earned through the use of hard work, we created a society where everybody wins. The idea that everyone should receive the same award or medal can lead young adults to feel as if work effort does not matter and that these accolades and rewards are given for merely showing up and being present. As other researchers have focused on the topic of academic entitlement by gender, or to exclude other factors as potential relationship factors in academic entitlement, in this research I sought to add to the larger body of knowledge on academic entitlement research by also focusing on year in school and ethnicity.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this quantitative correlational research was to examine the possible influence of competition on academic entitlement. In this study, I also reviewed additional demographic factors to see if they contributed to academic entitlement. The findings of this study contribute to the larger body of knowledge on academic entitlement by expanding on some of the earlier research that had been explored, including research on gender, early motivation, and parental involvement (Boswell, 2012; Ciani et al., 2008;

Greenberger et al., 2008). In addition, this research may contribute to larger conversations relating to critical factors with children in order to prevent negative behaviors from occurring that may lead to academic entitlement or other entitlement beliefs. This research was needed to help reduce the loss of revenue by universities due to academic entitlement. Surprisingly, previous studies have not addressed demographic factors, such as ethnicity, as they pertain to academic entitlement. Cultural variables have been shown to be important when examining personality traits or motivational factors.

Research Questions

The following research questions (RQs) and hypotheses guided this study:

RQ1: Is there a relationship between competition and academic entitlement in college students?

H₀1 There is no relationship between competition and academic entitlement in college students.

H₁1: There is a significant positive relationship between competition and academic entitlement in college students.

RQ2: Is there a gender difference in the relationship between early competition and academic entitlement in college students?

H₀2 There is no gender difference in the relationship between competition and academic entitlement in college students.

H₁2: There is a significant gender difference in the relationship between early competition and academic entitlement.

RQ3: Is there a relationship between competition and academic entitlement as it

relates to year in college.

H₀₃: There is no relationship between competition and academic entitlement according to year in college.

H₁₃: There is a significant relationship between competition and academic entitlement according to year in college.

RQ4: Is there a relationship between competition and academic entitlement as it relates to ethnicity in college students.

H₀₄: There is no relationship between competition and academic entitlement according to ethnicity in college students.

H₁₄: There is a significant relationship between competition and academic entitlement according to ethnicity in college students.

Relevant Frameworks for the Study

Social Learning Theory

I chose social learning theory (Bandura, 1963) as one of the frameworks for this particular study because it theorizes that there is a combination of functions that contribute to the learning process, including both the environment and cognitive abilities. In this study, I sought to determine how a potential external factor might have an effect on a cognitive function and social learning theory helped establish the basis for this. Additionally, academic entitlement is found to be both environmental and cognitive in nature, which further exemplified the need for social learning theory to be a framework of this study (Boswell, 2012; Ciani et al., 2008; Greenberger et al., 2008).

Early theorists believed that behavior came from an area in the brain where there was little control over what was going on, creating the idea animalistic factions of the human population were mindlessly working toward psychological wellness (Bandura, 1963). Over time, the changes in theories and the understanding of human development, motivation, and cognitive functioning made it necessary to adjust theory as it relates to learning and social outcomes. Social learning theory has grown to encompass personality as one of the tenants (Bandura, 1986). Specifically, social learning theory has four specific tenants: differential association, differential reinforcement, modeling, and definitions (Brauer & Charles, 2012). In addition, as it relates to learning, social learning theory takes the approach that learning is multilayer and comes from both observing behaviors and by interacting in the world (Bandura, 1963). Part of the interaction as it relates to learning can be observed by watching the way in which another person's behavior is reinforced (Bandura, 1963). Behavior is a combination of psychological process, behavior, personality, and environment (Bandura, 1986).

Because part of social learning theory is the idea that external stimuli can play a role in the learning environment, this theory is foundational as it relates to competition. Competition is an interactive external stimulus. In this study, competition is a potential external factor that may contribute to academic entitlement.

Cognitive Evaluation Theory

While social learning emphasizes learning through observation, environment, and cognitive processes, cognitive evaluation theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) contends outside influences play a role in the motivation of others. There are essentially three potential

ways in which an external force (consequence) can produce its effects on an activity or a specific event (with the potential to have longer term effects). One way in which external factors can have an impact on internal motivation is belief based, whereas if a person believes that they are competent in the activity, internal motivation is likely to be higher (Deci & Ryan, 1985). The way in which information is given is a factor in internal motivation as well, and rewards have a level of effect on the way an activity is perceived (Deci & Ryan, 1985). For the sake of this study, I used cognitive evaluation theory to assess the role of external forces on academic entitlement. As the full extent of causation for academic entitlement is now known, external forces may play a role.

Nature of the Study

This quantitative correlational study contributes to knowledge about academic entitlement, and additionally, how early competition may have longer reaching implications. Correlational research was the most appropriate method for this research study because it seeks to understand if one variable has an effect on another, either positive or negative (Creswell, 2013). There was no manipulation of variables, so no other study method would have been valid.

Very few researchers have examined how early motivational factors may contribute to academic entitlement. Previous researchers have focused on gender (Ciani et al., 2008), how students learn (Andrey et al., 2008), and parenting as factors of motivations and personality (Greenberger et al., 2008). None of the previous research has looked at competition or how competition may be an important factor in growth and

development. Previous studies related to competition and learning has focused on self-efficacy and vicarious learning (Chan & Lam, 2008) or on how competition affects self-efficacy (Allen, Jones, & Sheffield, 2009). In this study, I used competition as the dependent variable, while ethnicity, year in school, and genders were covariates.

Academic entitlement was the independent variable. Students from across the United States that were enrolled in college at the time of the study were the participants in this study. The importance of this study lies in the ability to recognize that there may be a potential relationship between external factors as they relate to students with low levels of entitlement toward academics.

Definitions

Academic entitlement: Previous research has defined academic entitlement as being specific to academics and including the belief by students that they should expect academic success without putting in the work to earn that success (Boswell, 2012; Ciani et al., 2008; Jeffries et al., 2014; Kopp & Finney, 2013).

Competition: For the sake of this study, competition is defined as an activity in which only one or several people will win the contest or accolade (Nichols & Sullivan, 2009). Examples of competition could include playing a team or individual sport. Competition could also include an individual or team academic contest.

Assumptions and Limitations

I made several assumptions related to this particular study. The first assumption I made is that the Academic Entitlement Scale (Chowning & Campbell, 2009) is a valid scale that has been vetted through several channels including being used in other studies.

Additionally, I assumed that the Competitiveness Index (Smither & Houston, 1992) is a valid scale and has been validated on many studies previous to this research. I also assumed that the participants for this study accurately represented populations of other institutions of the same size. The final assumption I made was that the participants of this study who took the survey answered all of the questions honestly.

In addition to the assumptions, there were several limitations for this study. This study used a questionnaire, which could be subject to response bias. The study questions were focused on one potential correlation of academic entitlement; however, there may be other factors not reviewed in this study. Also, this was a correlational study, which only seeks to show if a relationship exists between variables represented in this study; therefore, cause and effect could not be established.

Scope and Delimitations

My choice to review competition and academic entitlement was specific because of the shifting nature in societal influence on making everyone seem equal as it relates to competing (or the relationship between receiving rewards for unequal effort). I incorporated gender into this study, as this has been a standard inclusion through much of the past research as it related to academic entitlement, and its inclusion adds validity to both this study and previous research. The inclusion of ethnicity as a dependent variable allowed for a discussion on whether ethnicity is a factor in academic entitlement, and the United States is quite diverse. Finally, I chose year in school because not much research has been conducted as it relates to the year in college and academic entitlement. There

may be a relationship to higher or lower levels of academic entitlement as students are further along the path to graduation.

Significance

One potential contribution of this study is to further validate the Academic Entitlement Questionnaire. This questionnaire measures if students have a higher sense of academic entitlement (Chowning & Campbell, 2009). In addition, the findings from this study could provide more current information about using the Competitiveness Index as a valid index to measure current student competitiveness. With this study, I also aimed to open up a dialogue about academic entitlement and potentially look toward other ways in which certain motivational factors may have an impact on academic entitlement. Correlational studies do not represent causation; however, with the help of further studies on the topic, interventions related to current studies may decrease academic entitlement over time.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to review the relationship (if any) between early competition and academic entitlement by using the Academic Entitlement Scale and the Competitive Index. In this chapter, I examined the definitions of academic entitlement and competition and presented the importance of the study. I also included, as part of the importance and significance of the study, the study's implications for positive social change. In addition, the relevant frameworks of the study were examined as well as the potential limitations and delimitations. All of these sections are important to understand the foundation of this particular study.

In Chapter 2, I will review previous research as it relates to exploring academic entitlement and competition. The literature I review will look at what is known about academic entitlement and what is still unknown. I will present the research design and concept in Chapter 3, followed by analyzing of the data and the interpretation of findings.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

In this chapter, I will provide a comprehensive overview of the literature on academic entitlement and literature as it relates to the study of competition. In this chapter, I will also look at literature in which the target variables of gender, year in school and ethnicity are included. The first section of the chapter includes a review of the construct of entitlement where I will present a timeline of early studies on entitlement, leading to the current research on academic entitlement.

Psychological entitlement is multifaceted and reaches many levels of industry, from the corporate office to universities and corporations. Academic entitlement is specific to the entitlement in academics and is a belief by students that they should receive a grade or accolade in which the requisite academic work does not meet success (Boswell, 2012; Ciani et al., 2008; Jeffries et al., 2014; Kopp & Finney, 2013). Early studies on entitlement focused on the relationship between entitlement and narcissism (Lasch, 1978; Nelson, 1977). In those studies, the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) was often used as the subscale to register narcissism. There are some issues with validity when using the NPI, as the questions range from true narcissism to domination (Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, & Bushman, 2004).

As the progression of entitlement studies continued over time, and although narcissism was thought to be a component, academic entitlement became a sub-focus (Ciani et al., 2008). Campbell et al. (2004) pointed out the perception in society is that entitlement has increased steadily from the 1970s until now. The perception is that

psychological entitlement is increasing in nature; however, entitlement as it relates to academia is not psychological in the classic sense of entitlement. Academic entitlement is part of a specific situation (during the academic process).

As I noted in the previous chapter, there are many components that play a role in academic entitlement. Academic entitlement is the belief that students deserve academic success or accolades that has not been earned because the work necessary has not been done (Boswell, 2012; Ciani, et al., 2008; Jeffries, et al., 2014; Kopp & Finney, 2013). In past studies, contributions by gender (Ciani, et al., 2008) and real time motivational factors have been explored (Boswell, 2012); however, motivational factors or experiences have not been studied at length. In the following review of the literature, I will focus on academic entitlement as a branch of entitlement, narcissism, and self-esteem.

It is important for the study of academic entitlement to potentially explore how early experiences may relate to academic entitlement because this could lead to a deeper understanding and ultimately play a role in potentially addressing interventions. This study can be used as the foundational block to begin looking at contributing behaviors so as students progress through school, teachers, parents, and educators can encourage the importance of hard work, which should reduce the likelihood of academic entitlement occurring. Also, faculty may find new and useful ways to encourage students in the classroom.

Following the overview of both entitlement and more specifically, academic entitlement, I will provide a review of competition as it relates to development. As this section will reveal, there are various opinions on competition, which is why the

clarification of the term, competition, I provide is so distinctive in nature. In this chapter, I will review related literature after an in-depth review of previous research both surrounding academic entitlement and competition. In this chapter, I will also present the theoretical frameworks--social learning theory and cognitive evaluation theory--that are foundational to this study. Finally, this chapter will include definitions of terms important to this study.

Literature Search Strategy

For a total of 2 years, I used the Walden University Library and Google Scholar to find previous research as it relates to the current study. EBSCOhost was used to access the following databases: Academic Search Premier, PsychARTICLES, PsychINFO, ERIC, Education Research Complete, Teacher Reference Center, SociINDEX with full text, and PsychBOOKS. The keyword search terms I used included: *academic entitlement, entitlement, competition, competition in children, motivation in academic entitlement, narcissism and entitlement, Social Learning theory and Social Cognitive theory, entitlement in education, competition and motivation, and psychological entitlement*. In addition to the previous search terms listed, examples of general correlational studies were also reviewed on the subject matter and from the business, education, and medical fields and were used as a reference for both formatting and research model assistance.

Theoretical Foundations

Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory has evolved from the original ideologies put forth by Sears (1971) Grusec (1992), and Bandura (1971). Early learning theories focused on the behaviorist aspect of learning and put little stock in the learner's ability to cognitively approach a learning environment and have any input on that experience (Bandura, 1999). Social learning theory begins by recognizing that learning is socially based and has multiple layers including observing behavior or by observing the reward and punishment of others (Bandura, 1971). Observation of the reward/punishment of others has a factor in the learning process and is known as vicarious reinforcement (Bandura, 1971).

Sears is often attributed to early research as it relates to learning and behavior, with the focus of this particular brand of social learning theory being more directly aligned with psychoanalytic theory (Grusec, 1992). Bandura's version of social learning theory evolved from the same psychoanalytical undertones in which drive of early adolescents came from early experiences put into place by parental involvement and dependence (Grusec, 1992). Though Bandura was ever evolving, there were some differences that have come out of psychoanalytical theory.

It was not until the early 1960s that Bandura and colleagues began to tease out the behavior of the social being as contributing to the larger theory of learning theories (as cited in Grusec, 1992). As Bandura and colleagues looked to explanations and theories of learning, they found that imitation was of central importance to learning and postulated that the observation of learning was of paramount to learning (Grusec, 1992). Over time, social learning theory has become the theoretical foundation for many studies as the

social experience has a direct effect on cognitive functioning, and therefore, how learning occurs and ultimately affects development and a person's behavior (Grusec, 1992). This mental representation guides how students could potentially interpret their own need to be given grades, rather than earning them, a staple of academic entitlement.

Many previous studies have used social learning theory as a guiding or foundational principle. For example, Erlich and Russ-Eft (2013) used social learning theory to see if it could be applied to the outcomes for student learning in an academic advising environment. What the researchers found was that there was enough evidence to conclude that social learning theory was an applicable theoretical basis for academic advising and student learning outcomes (Erlich & Russ-Eft, 2013). Durkin, Wolfe, and Clark (2005) studied binge drinking in college students using social learning theory as the theoretical construct and found that there was support for social learning theory as a possible contributing factor to behavior that promoted the college students' binge drinking.

Social learning theory has not previously been used as a theoretical construct to look at academic entitlement, but it does lend itself to this particular study because of the connection between self-efficacy, observational behaviors, and social connections. Reinforcement of behavior whether by actual reward or vicarious learning plays a large role in social learning theory (Brauer & Charles, 2012). Competition can have a reward component in learning.

Cognitive Evaluation Theory

Cognitive evaluation theory developed from early studies in self-determination theory and has evolved over time (Deci, 1975). Cognitive evaluation theory is the idea that external rewards and/or punishments can change the locus of control of individuals (Ryan, 1982). Additionally, external stimuli are viewed as an important factor in cognitive evaluation theory, as those individuals who find external stimuli to be motivating will find that their internal locus of control is increased, while the opposite is true for external stimuli that are de-motivating (Ryan, 1982). There are essentially three aspects of the external stimulus: One is due to controlling factors, another is due to informational, and the third is amotivating (Ryan, 1982). Controlling aspects are those that compel the person to produce an outcome that is favorable or an outcome that is forced upon the person and can change the intrinsic motivation factor (either positive or negative; Ryan, 1982). Informational stimuli provide no pressure but instead allow for explanation and information to be provided, which directs the person's behavior (Ryan, 1982) Amotivating aspects are connected to the person having a sense of incompetence, which allows for the person to become de-motivated (Deci, 1975). It is important to note that all of these aspects are truly dependent on the type of event the person is involved in (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Because my focus in this study was on how competition may affect academic entitlement, cognitive evaluation theory was a pertinent theoretical construct to use. In addition, there is a connection between intrinsic motivation and academic entitlement;

however, the focus of this study did not explicitly cover motivation as a factor.

Competition does not necessarily have a connection to motivation.

Matosic, Cox, and Amorose, (2014) used the theoretical construct of cognitive evaluation theory to analyze the role a controlling coach has on the intrinsic motivation of college athlete swimmers. These researchers also found support for the use of cognitive evaluation theory to support the social aspect of sports. In other studies in which cognitive evaluation theory was used as a foundational concept, the theory was connected to the feedback received by employees on behalf of their boss or someone in the organization who was higher up than the employee (Jussim, Soffin, Brown, Ley, & Kohlhepp, 1992). This connects to my current study by examining how a potential variable (in this case, competition) may have an affect on academic entitlement, similar to how feedback was a factor in a behavior for Jussim et al. (1992).

As I outlined in the previous chapter, there are many contributing factors to what is considered academic entitlement. Narcissism and an inflated ego are two of the traits most frequently linked to academic entitlement (Boswell, 2012; Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Jeffries, et al., 2014). The construct of competition has not yet been studied as a component of academic entitlement, even with accepting that competition can have a profound effect on the way in which people view earned and reward behavior (Burke & Kleiber, 1975). Though other studies in academic entitlement may not have used the previous theoretical framework in social learning theory, it is relevant in this study, as the connection to learning and student outcomes. Cognitive evaluation theory has been used in studies similar to mine, but in the work sphere.

Academic Entitlement

In previous research, general psychological entitlement has been studied much more in depth than academic entitlement (Trzesniewski, Donellan, & Robins, 2008). General entitlement is often described as believing that a specific outcome should be given because the person receiving that outcome deserves it based on a perceived inherent right (Jeffries, et al., 2014). Academic entitlement is the idea that a student should receive a grade or accolade that may not be deserved or earned (Boswell, 2012; Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Greenberger et al., 2008; Jeffries, et al., 2014). In general, entitlement is not the same as academic entitlement, as general entitlement has been previously tied in the research to narcissism, while there has been no previous study tying academic entitlement to narcissism (Jeffries, et al., 2014). Although the research on psychological entitlement has been more expansive than other subcategories of

entitlement, researchers have just now begun to parcel out some of the underlying causes of academic entitlement.

Previous researchers have looked at the problem of academic entitlement from several perspectives. Achacoso (2002) was the first to attempt to quantify academic entitlement through the use of an academic entitlement questionnaire. The aforementioned study had 312 college students complete a survey and additionally, a few were interviewed for a total of 45 minutes. Achacoso also found that higher levels of academic entitlement were related to external contributions (such as the professor's involvement in grading or other external factors), while having a lower sense of internal contributions (such as a sense of personal achievement). Additionally, in the Achacoso study, students who scored higher on academic entitlement were more likely to believe that they would be able to influence the faculty member about a grade issue through the use of control. Achacoso was an early study, but did not signify any of the academic entitlement through the factor of gender; however, future researchers did begin to look at academic entitlement by gender.

Ciani, et al. (2008) were among the first researchers to look at gender as a potential determinant in academic entitlement. Ciani, et al. (2008) published two studies to examine the extent to which classroom context, gender, and year in school played a role in academic entitlement. In the first study, 18 classrooms were included and the researchers hypothesized that men would report a higher level of academic entitlement and that academic entitlement would increase with the time spent in school (for instance

students with senior status were more likely to engage in academic entitlement) (Ciani, et al., 2008).

The instrument for this particular study was the original Academic Entitlement Scale (Achacoso, 2002). The first study was administered to 1,229 students, 52% were men and a large proportion of the participants were White students (87%) (Ciani, et al., 2008). Ultimately, men were found to have reported more academic entitlement than women and classroom context had no impact on that at all (Ciani, et al., 2008). Should multiple studies on academic entitlement bear out that men are more likely to show higher levels of academic entitlement, future studies could focus on that factor. The fact that classroom context was not shown to have an impact on academic entitlement is not a true surprise as each academic entitlement seems to work on the individual as opposed to contributed by group dynamic. Group dynamic could be a future focus of academic entitlement.

In a second study Ciani, et al. (2008), looked at time as a factor (specifically one semester of a career planning class) for academic entitlement. The results of this study showed there were not any significant differences in entitlement, based on the semester in class (Ciani, et al., 2008).

Greenberger, et al. (2008) looked at personality and academic entitlement, the effect of some parenting factors and finally, to see if students' motivation and/or parenting would be associated with GPA and academic dishonesty. The first study was to analyze if academic entitlement was associated with other potential personality variables (Greenberger, et al., 2008).

The first study incorporated 466 undergraduate students, (364 women and 102 men) (Greenberger, et al., 2008). Because this study reviewed parental factors, demographic information was gathered about the parents as well as the students. Several scales were used in gathering data, including the Academic Entitlement Scale, the Narcissism Scale, Self-Esteem Scale, Work Orientation Scale, and Psychosocial Maturity Inventory (Greenberger, et al., 2008).

The researchers found that academic entitlement was positively correlated with psychological entitlement, and narcissism (Greenberger, et al., 2008). This study also validated earlier studies showing that men showed a higher level of academic entitlement than women (Greenberger, et al., 2008).

The second study looked at whether parenting was associated with academic entitlement, whether or not that parenting could be linked to motivational factors as it related to academic entitlement, and finally, if this relationship increased the likelihood for academic dishonesty (Greenberger, et al., 2008). The level of entitlement was similar in both studies, however students that showed a higher level of academic entitlement (.16) and higher levels of extrinsic motivation (.13) were more likely to engage in dishonest behavior (Greenberger, et al., 2008). Another important factor for this study was that parental practices were positively correlated to academic entitlement in students, and specifically to expectations of achievement (Greenberger, et al., 2008). Parental practices included setting expectations regarding achievement and negative repercussions for poor grades (Greenberger, et al., 2008). This study is unique in examining parental roles (if any) for academic entitlement).

In another study of college students, Singleton-Jackson, Jackson, and Reinhardt (2010) used a phenomenological approach with focus groups of first year students. This study built on previous studies, but took the approach that students may treat education as a consumer process (Singleton-Jackson, et al., 2010). From the focus groups, there were six consistent themes: product value of education, social promotion, the role a professor plays, the implication of teaching assistants, the role of administration and the difference between being a shopper and being a scholar (Singleton-Jackson, et al., 2010). All of these factors are potential contributory to academic entitlement.

Other studies that have looked at entitlement have found a combination of factors may contribute to academic entitlement, including inflated self-esteem from parents and secondary educators, self-centered behaviors on a part of the student and overemphasis on certain expected contributions from a University have also resulted in academic behavior (Campbell et al., 2004; Foster et al. 2003; Hoover, 2007; Twenge, 2006).

This research study will build on the past research (by validating academic entitlement as it relates to gender), but it will also add to our understanding of the impact of a potential early contributory factor (positive competition). One study looked at ethnicity as a variable (Ciani et al., 2008). Very few, if any, other studies included ethnicity as a variable, therefore the current research will be contributing to a smaller body as it relates to academic entitlement. In addition, year in school as it relates to academic entitlement has not been used as a variable in relation to previous research. The academic entitlement research is thin in nature, as academic entitlement is a relatively new concept as it relates to students. The Academic Entitlement Scale was just recently

validated (Chowning, & Campbell, 2009; Singleton-Jackson, et al., 2011). Previous to the current validated Academic Entitlement Scale, researchers used a portion (Entitlement/Exploitiveness (E/E) of the (NPI: Raskin & Hall, 1979, 1981) to measure the behaviors that are the most self-serving or related to an external locus of control (Chowning & Campbell, 2009). While the research on academic entitlement is limited to a few studies, research on competition is more widespread.

Competition

Studies related to competition have run the gambit on subject, variables and outcomes. For this study, competition is any activity that promotes to gain or get something or tests ability within a specific person (Ahlgren, 1983). Studies are split on the effect on competition for children, adolescents and college students (Ahlgren, 1983). Additionally, there is some evidence that age plays a role in the overall outcome for those who have previously studied competition and the effects of such on students (Ahlgren, 1983).

One of the first studies on competition as it relates to children was in the early part of the 1930s (Greenberg, 1932). Greenberg's (1932) study included children in Vienna from the ages between 2 and 7 years old. Greenberg was attempting to determine when competition begins in small children, when a child feels they are competing, if the level of competition is the same per incidence, how the child shows that they are in competition and what the factors are that may cause an increase or decrease in competition among the children being studied (Greenberg, 1932).

Greenberg (1932) discovered that much was dependent on the age of the children, which is not a surprise to those who study development. Greenberg did notice an inclination in the children to be more effective at the task they had been given if they were either praised or disciplined, rather than just perpetually showing the way in which to do something. Greenberg believed that there were fundamental factors that affected competition; how much the child understood excelling, the pure ability of the child to the given task, the education that was given (i.e., reinforcement) and finally, the child's overall disposition from the beginning of the study (which cannot be manipulated). This study was one of the first to delve into competition in young children and the factors that contribute to it. Additional researchers examined competition in children.

Burke and Kleiber (1975) further explored the role of competition on psychological development based on the belief that competition is a part of the development process in the Ego. In their review of literature, they found that boys put into social competitive situations fared better later in life because of the long lasting understanding of peer relationships as they relate to competition (Burke & Kleiber, 1975).

There were several factors the researchers observed including that success is a positive motivator for children later in life, if they compete now, high levels of competition may be a detriment but the general competition that comes from social activities or average sports are positive to children (Burke & Kleiber, 1975). Burke and Kleiber (1975) also found that the type of event had a different impact on longer lasting

psychological functions and that if children were exposed to competition early enough to certain sports, a level of maturity was injected into their daily lives and interactions.

Additionally, some early researchers studied the relationship between gender and competition (Algren, 1983; Meara & Day, 1993). In terms of gender, the studies seem to support what the academic entitlement studies were finding, including that men and women differ in the way they view competition and how that view affects their classroom interaction (Meara & Day, 1993). These findings of gender differences support the need for additional studies, such as the present one, as there are distinct differences in the way the sexes view competition and consequently how that may manifest in the classroom.

There have been many studies on the relationship between competition and a myriad of other factors, the relationship between competition and the potential (if any) relationship between competition and academic entitlement have never been explored. Because the earlier research is inconclusive as whether competition is positive or negative for academics, this current study will add to the scholarly research already done and will determine if there is a difference in gender attributed to competitiveness (Baumann & Hamin, 2011; Shimotsu-Dariol et al., 2012).

Gender

As it relates to academic entitlement, gender has been a variable in several studies. Ciani, et al. (2008) found that males were more likely to show higher levels of academic entitlement than female students. Greenberger, et al. (2008) also used gender as a variable in their study as it related to motivation, however there was a large disparity in the number of women and men that completed that study, potentially having an impact on

the validity of the information as it related to gender. In terms of competition and gender, as stated from above, several studies have attempted to discover the differences in gender as it relates to competition. This study used gender as a covariate.

Ethnicity

In many of the previously mentioned studies, ethnicity was either used for demographic reasons, but not a variable, or the previous research did not have a representative sample. For this study ethnicity was used as a variable and an attempt was made to get as close to the demographics reported for college students. I am using ethnicity as a covariate because culture may have an influence on learning and on competition.

Year in College

There is little to no information about factors of academic entitlement of competition as it relates to either academic entitlement or competition. This research study was a good opportunity to review potential changes in thinking about academic entitlement as it relates to students moving through college. Year in college will be explored from freshman to doctoral student.

Interpretation of Findings

The literature search as it relates to the subject of competition and academic entitlement shows a gap in the literature in that competition has never been a factor studied as a potential contributing factor to academic entitlement. Academic entitlement studies have just scratched the surface on the implications and causations. As stated above, the early studies on academic entitlement have been more focused on the

demographics or in validating the scale. This study will fill a gap in that it focuses on potential factors or causes that could affect a psychological condition.

Summary

Overall, the previous literature leaves a gap when reviewing year in college, ethnicity and gender as a component of academic entitlement and competition. Also, previous research has failed to uncover some the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that could be looked at as a potential factor in academic entitlement. This findings from this study will fill this gap. The research on competition is not consistent; many of the studies are still connected through the use of the cognitive evaluation theory (Baumann & Hamin, 2011; Shimotsu-Dariol, et al., 2012). By using the same theoretical construct in this study, the results continued to support the validity of the theory, adding to the scholarly literature already in place. Additionally, although the Academic Entitlement Scale and Competitiveness Index have been previously validated through other studies, neither has been used to gather information in the same study, which could be considered a gap in the literature, as there is some evidence that competition may play a role in academic performance (Baumann & Hamin, 2011; Shimotsu-Dariol, et al., 2012).

In Chapter 3, I will focus on the design of the study and the rationale. Additionally, in Chapter 3, I will review the ethical considerations and methodology of the study. Following chapter 3 will be results and the implications for further research.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction: Purpose for the Study

The purpose of this correlational study was to determine whether there is any significant relationship between competition and academic entitlement by gender, year in college, and ethnicity. As mentioned in Chapter 1, previous studies have failed to look at potential contributory factors to academic entitlement. Additionally, previous research has included gender as a potential quasi-independent variable. In this study, I also included gender, ethnicity, and year in school as covariates.

As discussed in Chapter 1, I used surveys to gather data from participants on competition and academic entitlement. This study was not experimental in nature, so therefore, there was not be a control group. In this chapter, I will review the methodology and discuss the research design, sample size, research setting, instrumentation, data analysis and collection, as well as ethical considerations.

Research Design and Rationale

The research design for this study was quantitative in nature, and specifically, I used a correlational survey design. I chose the quantitative survey design to examine any potential positive relationships among competition and academic entitlement. Correlational studies examine the relationship among variables in a way that the answers lead to numerical data that can be analyzed statistically (Creswell, 2013). An experimental design would not have been appropriate for this study as none of variables are being manipulated and no randomized tests or control groups will be used, as is necessary in an experimental design (Creswell, 2013).

Correlational research can be used for predicting relationships, as it relates to variables (Shaugnessy, Zechmeister, & Zechmeister, 2008). In addition, correlational designs do not make a connection that is causal; however, using a correlational design will show if there is a directional relationship among all variables. This directional relationship is represented in the RQs.

There were very little time and resource constraints related to this research design. One potential time constraint was that it could have been difficult to get the required sample size if there were not many college students available on Amazon's Mechanical Turk. The cost involved in survey distribution was the only other potential constraint.

Early research studies on academic entitlement have focused on validating the Academic Entitlement Scale, gender, and other relational factors (Singleton-Jackson, Jackson, & Reinhardt, 2011). In order to conduct further research in this area, it is important to understand potential directional relationships between academic entitlement and competition and further validate already published research.

Methodology

Population

In this study, the target population was comprised of college students from first year to graduate school recruited through Amazon's Mechanical Turk. Students had to be from the United States, but there were no restrictions otherwise on location. Mechanical Turk is a crowdsourcing website that allows people to sign up to participate in surveys for the purpose of research both by universities and businesses and allows workers to complete Human Intelligence tasks (HITS; Mechanical Turk, 2016).

Sampling and Sampling Procedure

I used a convenience sample and the students were recruited from announcements in recruiting posts for the survey in Mechanical Turk. Every student on Mechanical Turk had an opportunity to be included in the study and the only exclusions to the study were those members of Mechanical Turk not currently enrolled in college classes. By taking the survey and index, students certified that they were currently enrolled in classes.

Because Mechanical Turk is a crowdsourcing website, there were many types of participants available for taking surveys. Of those available in a limited number were current students. Mechanical Turk does not collect demographic information, so there was only a general notion of number of students (Mechanical Turk, 2016).

Procedures

As previously stated, students were recruited through Mechanical Turk. I provided the students with informed consent as a part of the survey and they were notified that they could exit the study at any point without penalty. The students completed the survey electronically through Mechanical Turk and I converted all data collected into SPSS to be analyzed. Students were given the option to be debriefed after the survey to discuss any potential psychological issues that may have occurred with the study. Students also had the ability to review the study after it was completed, as I provided my contact information to the participants. No students contacted me to be debriefed.

Instrumentation

I used both an index and scale used for this study. The Competitiveness Index is used to signify competitiveness in students (Smither & Houston, 1992). The index was created in 1992 and is composed of 14 questions set on a 5-point rating scale (Smither & Houston, 1992). There have been a few studies that have looked at competitiveness as a personality trait; however, Houston, McIntire, Kinnie and Terry (2002) found through a factorial analysis that the Competitiveness Index is valid. Additionally, Harris and Houston (2010) conducted one of the most recent validations of the Competitiveness Index in 2010. In that research study, the researchers found the index had test-retest reliability ($r = .85$), and a stable factor structure, based on 280 respondents.

In this study, I used the Academic Entitlement Scale to measure academic entitlement in the college students. The Academic Entitlement Scale is composed of a 15-item *externalized* responsibility subscale and a 5-item entitled expectations subscale (Chowning & Campbell, 2009). Chowning and Campbell (2009) used four studies to validate the Academic Entitlement Scale. The scale was found to have a two-factor structure deemed to be reliable as it relates to students' externalized responsibility in relation to education and faculty expectations ($r(884) = .25$; $p < .001$; Chowning & Campbell, 2009). Additionally, several other studies have validated this research with further studies. Baer and Cher (2011) also validated the Academic Entitlement Scale through their study on entitlement or coping.

Data Analysis Plan

The survey was administered through Mechanical Turk, a crowdsourcing website

that allows for participants to sign up to take surveys (Mechanical Turk, 2016). Once the survey was completed, I imported the data into SPSS (Version 21.0) software. I used the SPSS software to analyze the data collected.

I measured the linear relationship between academic entitlement and competition using a correlational coefficient test. Following the correlational coefficient, I conducted a multiple regression analysis so that each variable could be tested relative to the dependent variable (Laird Statistics, 2013). There are eight assumptions related to regression analysis, including that the dependent variable must be continuous and so must two of the independent variables (Laird Statistics, 2013). I also used the Durbin-Watson test to examine independence of observations and scatter plots were used to check for a linear relationship (Laird Statistics, 2013). There needs to be homoscedasticity and not multicollinearity (Laird Statistics, 2013). Finally, there should be no outliers of any significance and a histogram and P-P plot was used to check for residual errors (Laird Statistics, 2013).

Research Questions

The following RQs and hypotheses guided this study:

RQ1: Is there a relationship between competition and academic entitlement in college students?

H_0 1: There is no relationship between competition and academic entitlement in college students.

H_1 1: There is a significant positive relationship between competition and academic entitlement in college students.

RQ2: Is there a gender difference in the relationship between early competition and academic entitlement in college students?

H₀₂: There is no gender difference in the relationship between early competition and academic entitlement in college students.

H₁₂: There is a significant gender difference in the relationship between early competition and academic entitlement in college students.

RQ3: Is there a relationship between competition and academic entitlement as it relates to year in college.

H₀₃: There is no relationship between competition and academic entitlement according to year in college.

H₁₃: There is a significant relationship between competition and academic entitlement according to year in college.

RQ4: Is there a relationship between competition and academic entitlement as it relates to ethnicity in college students.

H₀₄: There is no relationship between competition and academic entitlement according to ethnicity in college students.

H₁₄: There is a significant relationship between competition and academic entitlement according to ethnicity in college students.

Threats to Validity

In this study, there were several threats to validity. The students self-selected to participate and that could mean students may not have been completely honest during the survey. Students may have also chosen to not be honest because of a concern about the

information being shared. One way the validity was protected was to assure the students that their responses would not be shared with any member of their university and also to explain that not being honest may skew the results.

In addition, I explained the survey and asked for volunteers. This may have influenced the way the students took the test or had an effect on the scores. In order to keep me from potentially influencing the survey, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed the information given to students and gave permission for the wording used. Finally, the United States is very diverse, and as students were self-selecting to participate in the study, there was an opportunity for one ethnicity to be underrepresented. Internal threats to validity may have also included relationships to the dependent variable that may not be accounted for in the study (although I was not aware of any).

Ethical Procedures

After proper consideration and submission of information, Walden University IRB gave me approval for the study (Approval Number 05-20-16-0367651; see Appendix C). Data were collected and stored electronically and I was the only person with access. Informed consent was given by participants as a part of completing the survey and was included in recruitment. The informed consent document was contained within the survey itself. The survey was anonymous in nature, so confidentiality was not an issue.

Where Research was Conducted

I conducted the research at one specific location, but in locations around the United States. With Mechanical Turk being an online component, participants were able

to take the survey anywhere.

Summary

In this quantitative correlational study, I sought to determine if there was any correlation between early competition and academic entitlement in college students. The student participants were recruited from Mechanical Turk, a crowdsourcing website focused on research. Year in college, ethnicity, and gender were the covariates in the study to validate previous research and to allow for new conversations regarding culture and academic entitlement.

All student participants were provided with informed consent and I, as the researcher, analyzed the resulting data. All attempts were made to make the participants feel as comfortable as possible in the study. This study included regression analysis to analyze the relationships among the variables. The results will follow in chapter 4 and implications for further study will conclude in chapter 5.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to contribute to the larger body of knowledge as it relates to academic entitlement. In this study, I examined the relationship between academic entitlement and competition according to gender, year in school, and ethnicity. Previous research on the topic has focused on academic entitlement as it relates to specific programs and gender as well as motivation (Ciani, et al., 2008; Greenberger, et al., 2008). In this study, I hypothesized that there would be a correlation (either positive or negative) between competition and academic entitlement.

I used a regression analysis to examine the relationship between academic entitlement and competition. Additionally, gender, year in school, and ethnicity were used as covariates. Prior to the regression analysis, I conducted normality testing to ensure a regression analysis could be performed. In this chapter, I will review the data collection procedures and the results of the study. Also included will be the demographics of the participants as well as the statistical analysis of the data.

Data Collection

I recruited study participants using Amazon's Mechanical Turk. Mechanical Turk is a crowdsourcing service that allows for workers to complete HITS (Mechanical Turk, 2016). In Mechanical Turk, participants (workers) log into a programming interface to review potential HITS and select the HITS they are qualified for (Mechanical Turk, 2016). Mechanical Turk has been used with many previous studies in the behavioral sciences and its validity has been examined in several studies as well. Behrend, Sharek,

Meade, and Wiebe (2011) found that in comparison to the more traditional pool of university participants for research, Mechanical Turk provided a greater level of diversity. Another set of researchers also reported that the participants found on the Mechanical Turk website to be more diverse than other internet participant pools and also found that payment does not affect the quality of data (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). Crump, McDonnell, and Gureckis (2013) conducted multiple studies and found that Mechanical Turk can receive responses to surveys in a timely fashion, while being able to provide a more diverse sample of the population.

Previous to uploading the survey, I created the HIT using the questions from the Academic Entitlement Scale (Chowning & Campbell, 2009) and the Competiveness Index (Smither & Houston, 1992). After reading the informed consent, participants were asked to complete the HIT if they were current college students. For this study, college students could represent any age from 18 and above. Students self-disclosed their year in college based on their knowledge of what year they were currently taking classes. Year in college can be different as universities generally use credit number to denote the classification and not actual years spent at the institution.

Informed consent was acknowledged by completing the survey. Participants were able to retain a copy of the informed consent for records if there were any potential psychological issue resulting from completing the survey and index. Participants were told that they should expect the HIT to take no more than 1 hour, and in fact the total average time for participants was approximately 10 minutes. The study was posted for

either a total of 14 days or until the threshold of 600 respondents was reached. The number of participants was reached in approximately 90 hours.

I entered the data gathered into SPSS and measured the internal consistency of the scale and index using Cronbach's alpha. The Academic Entitlement Scale consisted of 15 items, while the Competitiveness Index had 14 items. Cronbach's alpha for the Academic Entitlement Scale was .845, while the Competitiveness Index was .511 (see appendix A-Table A1).

Normality Testing of the Variables

Before conducting the multiple linear regressions and examining demographics, I conducted normality testing of the variables. One of the required assumptions of nonparametric testing is that the data follows a normal distribution (Kline, 2005). Skewness and kurtosis values were used to test for normality and the Shapiro-Wilkes was also used. Additionally, I created histogram graphs to assess the normality of distribution.

I used SPSS to test for skewness and kurtosis. Normal distribution occurs when skewness is less than three, while nonnormality would show for kurtosis statistics between 10 and 20 (Kline, 2005). Table 1 in the appendix shows the skewness and kurtosis statistics. The bell curves for the histogram of all variables for this study were not perfect; however, the skewness and kurtosis statistics show a normal assumption. Normality for both the Academic Entitlement Scale and the Competitive Index were statistically significant at $p < .05$ (.000).

Test for Linearity and Outlier Investigation

In addition to testing for normality, another assumption of parametric statistical

testing is that the data should have linearity and there should be no multivariate outliers (Kline, 2005). To test for linearity and to look at outliers, I generated scatter plots separately for academic entitlement and competition (see Figures 1 and 2 in Appendix). Multicollinearity was tested using multiple regression analysis. If tolerance is below .1 and VIF is higher than 10, multicollinearity exists (Kline, 2005). In the case of academic entitlement and competition, the numbers were larger than .1 and VIF was lower than 10.

Demographics

A total of 618 participants completed the survey and index. Of the 618, 66 (9.36%) of those did not complete the survey, and were excluded from the sample. The demographic summary is based on that revised number ($n = 552$). There were a total of 264 female (47.8%) and a total of 288 male (52.2%) participants.

In terms of year in college, 29 (5.3%) students self-identified as freshmen, 94 (17%) students self-identified as being sophomores, 123 (22.3%) self-identified as being juniors, 151 (27.4%) self-identified as being seniors, 134 (24.3%) self-identified as being in a graduate program, and 21 (3.8%) self-identified as being in a doctoral program.

Data on ethnicity were also collected in the study, with 388 (70.3%) identifying as White/Caucasian, 55 (9.8%) participants identified as Hispanic/Latino, 44 (8.0%) identified as Black/African American, 48 (8.9%) identified as Asian/Pacific Islander, 5 (.9%) of the participants self-identified as Native American/American Indian, and 12 (2.2%) self-identified as "Other." Demographics are listed in Table 2.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES; 2015), Caucasians represent the largest ethnic group in college in the United States at 58.3%,

which the data gathered in this study agreed with. Hispanic students represent 14.5% of the population (NCES, 2015). Pacific Islanders represent 0.3%, African Americans represent 14.5%, and American Indian students represent .08% of currently enrolled higher education students (NCES, 2015). This study had a larger percentage of Caucasian students, and other ethnicities were lower than the national average, except for American Indian and Pacific Islander, which were slightly higher. In terms of gender, 44% of college students were male with 7.6 million in total, while women made up 56% of the student population for a total of 9.7 million (NCES, 2015). In terms of gender differences for this study, it was the opposite; men made up a larger percentage than women. This could be explained through the collection technique, as there may be more men signed up for Mechanical Turk or the use of technology might not be the preferred way for women to answer the survey. It is difficult to quantify the number of students enrolled and coded as Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior, Graduate, and Doctoral because of the way each university codes those students. The ranking by year in school was declared by the student and self-disclosed based on what they have been told or suspect at their higher educational institution.

Table 2

Gender by Year in College

Gender	Year in College						Total
	Fresh	Soph	Jun	Sen	Grad	Doctoral	
Male	15	52	69	76	67	9	288
Female	14	42	54	75	67	12	264
Total	29	94	123	151	134	21	552

Table 3

Minimum, Maximum, and Mean Scores for the Academic Entitlement Scale and the Competitive Index

	<i>N</i>	Min	Max	<i>M</i>	SD
Academic Entitlement Scale	552	14.07	85.40	39.07	12.19
Competitiveness Index	552	20.14	85.50	54.80	7.45

Results of Regression Analysis

I performed a multivariable linear regression analysis to determine if there was any statistical significance among the predictor variables of gender, year in college, ethnicity, or competition and the criterion variable of academic entitlement (see Appendix A, table A3). Multivariable regression is used when there are multiple predictor variables and one dependent variable (Kline, 20015). All assumptions were met prior to testing. Significance was conducted with α set at $p < .05$. A significant regression

equation was found ($F(4, 548) = 8.987, p < .000$) with R^2 of .062. Participants' predicted academic entitlement was equal to $27.857 - 1.593$ (year in college) $+ 1.836$ (gender) $+ .667$ (ethnicity) $+ .238$ (competition). Year in college was coded as 1 = freshman, 2 = sophomore, 3 = junior, 4 = senior, 5 = graduate, and 6 = doctoral. Gender was coded as 1 = female and 2 = male. Ethnicity was coded as 1 = White/Caucasian, 2 = Hispanic/Latino, 3 = Black/African American, 4 = Asian/Pacific Islander, 5 = Native American/American Indian, and 6 = Other.

To test RQ1 related to the relationship between academic entitlement and competition, the result showed that competition was found ($t(552) = 3.486, p < .005$) to be statistically significant. For RQ2, as to the relationship between gender, competition, and academic entitlement, the results showed that gender was not statistically significant to academic entitlement ($t(552) = 1.796, p = .073$) and also not statistically significant to competition ($t(552) = -1.73, p = .082$). RQ3 was focused on the relationship between academic entitlement and year in college, and year in college was found to be significant ($t(552) = -3.980, p < .005$) to academic entitlement; however, it was not statistically significant to competition ($t(552) = -1.272, p = .204$). As for RQ4 and year in college, year in college and academic entitlement were statistically significant ($t(552) = -3.980, p < .005$), while year in college and competition were not statistically significant ($t(552) = .436, p = .663$). The independent variable year in college predicted the dependent variable of academic entitlement, $F(5, 548) = 8.987$. The model fit for the R^2 of the linear regression model (0.62). This indicated the variables of gender, year in school, ethnicity, and competition collectively account for 62% of the variance in academic entitlement.

As seen in the previous paragraph, there were two independent variables that were not statistically significant in predicting academic entitlement. Those two variables were gender ($t(552) = 1.796, p = .073$) and ethnicity ($t(552) = 1.606, p = .109$). After analyzing the significance level of the variables, I examined the beta coefficient to check for the individual contributory value of each variable. The unstandardized coefficient value of competition was .237 with a standard error of .068. This suggested a positive influence between competition and academic entitlement. Those students who had higher levels of competition had a higher level of academic entitlement. Each time the score value of competition increased by one standard deviation, academic entitlement would increase by .145. The beta coefficient for year in college was examined as well. The unstandardized coefficient value of year in college was -1.588 with a standard error of .399. This suggested a negative influence between year in college and academic entitlement. As with year in college, each time the score value of year in college goes up, academic entitlement would go down by .166 standard deviation units.

RQ1 asked if there was a relationship between academic entitlement and competition and I rejected the null hypothesis, as there was a positive relationship between competition and academic entitlement. For RQ3, concerning the year in school and academic entitlement, I rejected the null hypothesis, as there was a negative relationship between the year in school and academic entitlement, while there was no significant relationship between year in school and competition. In terms of gender, there was no significant difference in the level of academic entitlement or competition by gender, so I accepted the null hypothesis for RQ2. Finally, the null hypothesis was

accepted for RQ4 because there was no significant difference in the level of academic entitlement, competition, and ethnicity.

Summary

The purpose of this correlational, quantitative study was to examine the relationship, if any, among the categorical variables of gender, year in school, ethnicity, and a measure of competition as they relate to academic entitlement. In this chapter, I specifically presented the regression analysis and calculations as they related to the study. These calculations were generated using SPSS software from IBM.

The results of the regression analysis show that year in school and competition were both significant predictors of academic entitlement, while gender and ethnicity did not predict academic entitlement. Competition had a positive relationship to academic entitlement, while year in school had a negative relationship as it related to academic entitlement. In Chapter 5, I will review the findings of the study, connect the results to previous research, and discuss the implications for positive social change as well as provide my recommendations for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

This correlational quantitative study was intended to determine if there was any relationship among gender, year in school, ethnicity, and competition as they relate to academic entitlement. In this study, I used the Academic Entitlement Scale (Chowning & Campbell, 2009) and the Competitiveness Index (Smither & Houston, 1992) to gather data from college student participants. Demographic questions were added for the remaining three predictor variables of gender, year in school, and ethnicity. The scale and index were entered into Mechanical Turk (an Amazon crowdsourcing product) and 618 students completed the survey. After review, there were students that did not fully complete the survey, whose data was removed, bringing the total of respondents to 552. The 552 were the respondents used for the data analysis. After testing for normality, I completed a multiple linear regression to examine the RQs. The summary and discussion will continue on in the chapter 5.

Summary of Findings

The results of the study showed that of the influence of the independent variables, only the year in college and competition had significance to academic entitlement. Gender and ethnicity were not significant predictors of academic entitlement. Competition was found to have a positive correlation to academic entitlement, so when competition increases, so does the level of academic entitlement. Year in school was shown to have a negative relationship to academic entitlement. As students progress through college, they report lowers levels of academic entitlement.

Discussion of Findings

While competition has not been a factor in previous research on gender, year in college and ethnicity had been previously studied. In those previous research studies, men reported higher levels of academic entitlement than women (Boswell, 2012; Ciani, et al., 2008). In this study, there was no difference in the effect of academic entitlement by gender, although in one of the previous two studies, gender was compared exclusively (it was the only demographic measured for that study; Ciani, et al., 2008). Another previous study looked at college class, but not year in college (Boswell, 2012). One reason for the difference between these previous studies and the current one was due to the students measured. In Ciani et al.'s (2008) study focused on gender, the sample was taken exclusively from one particular university, as opposed to from a number of universities across the United States. In another study, the percentage of men completing the survey was significantly lower than women (78.4% were women) (Greenberger, et al., 2008). The large disparity in percentages of men to women can have an effect on results. This study had students potentially from many types of colleges, and students from private colleges could have a different mindset than those taking classes at a public university. Another potential reason for the difference from previous research as it relates to gender was that the number of students included in this study was smaller than those previous studies. In this study, women and men were nearly equally represented, which could account for the lack of effect of gender on academic entitlement.

The relationship between ethnicity and academic entitlement has been previously studied and ethnicity was found to have significance to academic entitlement; however,

in this study, ethnicity was found to have no significant factor as it relates to academic entitlement. In a previous study by Witsman (2013), ethnicity was explored as a factor with nationality. In that study, significance was found. There were some significant differences in that study, one difference being that in that study only undergraduate students were used (Witsman, 2013). There were also a smaller number of students used and all students came from one institution and one type of major (psychology; Witsman, 2013). Greenberger, et al., (2008) also looked at ethnicity as a variable; however, the ethnicity ratio in that study was not representative of this current study and that study's participants did not match the demographics as reported by the NCES.

There is a lack of understanding of potential contributing factors to academic entitlement as studies have looked at parents and motivation (Greenberger, et al., 2008). None of the previous research looked at competition or how competition may be an important factor in the learning environment as it relates to academic entitlement though. The findings of this study show that as competition increases, academic entitlement increases as well. Boos, Franiel, and Belz (2015) found that short term gains occur when competition is used as a motivating factor, and in fact, long term competitiveness in academics can cause stress and overall dissatisfaction. In another study by Firmin, Lucius, and Evens (2009) students expressed that in situations in which they did not believe they could have success, they would not compete. These two studies could be used to show the cause of the perception that entitlement increases with competition. As students become more stressed as they are forced to compete academically, they may feel

underprepared for the course work, or the level of stress increases an external locus of control, causing the student to reach for entitlement as a protective measure.

Social learning theory and cognitive evaluation theory provided the theoretical frameworks for this study. Social learning theory postulates that there are a variety of ways in which learning is achieved, including through the environment as well as through the intellectual ability of the individual (Bandura, 1986). This theory lends credence to this study as it relates to competition. As competition increases with students, academic entitlement increases as well, validating that an external force can have a direct impact on the view of the student's ability to learn or get a grade as perceived by the student. Competition could be perceived as the competition between peers, which may allow for an additional pressure on a student, affecting the way a student learns or providing internal competition. Should the instructor increase competition inside the classroom, students may feel the need to receive a grade versus earning the grade. All of these potential factors that related to competition further validate that learning takes place in the social environment. Cognitive evaluation theory was also a foundational concept used for this study, and as Firmin, et al. (2009) found, competition in the classroom can have a negative impact as the stress of the student increases, giving the students a different perception of how to get the grade they need to move forward academically and promoting a sense of entitlement in the classroom as a coping mechanism. Cognitive evaluation theory specifically targets factors that may be related to the idea of an external force on the motivation of a specific entity (Ryan, 1982).

The findings of this study seem to support the idea that students who feel compelled to compete, or in cases where competition is a necessary part of the academic dynamic, may find that they have higher levels of entitlement to something not earned, as the definition of academic entitlement implies. Previous studies related to competition and learning have focused on self-efficacy and vicarious learning (Chan & Lam, 2008) or on how competition affects self-efficacy (Allen, et al., 2009). While the Ciani, et al.,(2008) study initially showed a difference in academic entitlement as it relates to year in school, once gender was included, those results were changed and there was no variance after all. Or in other words, year in school was not found to be a factor in their study. The results of this study showed that year in school was significant as it relates to academic entitlement, and in fact, as students progress through levels their academic entitlement decreases. No other study that I reviewed could find information on all levels of year in school or significance by year in school. Most of those studies did not include such a diverse group as this study did, nor did they recruit students with the same methodology as I did.

Limitations

I identified several limitations to this study. The scope of this study was only related to gender, year in college, competition, and ethnicity as they related to academic entitlement. While significance was found between competition and year in college, it cannot be emphatically asserted that competition and year in school are a causation of academic entitlement, either positive or negative, as correlation does not imply causation. Only the association between variables was examined. Another explanation for the

significance could be related to the number of students that took the test. A smaller population may have changed the significance of the study. In terms of the recruitment of participants, there was an expectation that students would know what year they were in school; however, if the university they attend was not clear with their year level, they may have guessed, which would have skewed that particular variable. As I stated in Chapter 4, the ethnicity of the students was lower for all groups except Caucasians, which also was a limitation as it is a little smaller than the representation of college students across the United States.

It was assumed that the students would be honest in their responses; however, as a self-reporting survey, there is always the opportunity that students may not be honest in the answers given affecting the results and providing for another limitation of the study. There is no way to guarantee in a self-reporting survey that the participants are being honest. Additionally, the study only included college students from the United States. The students volunteered to take the study based on signing up for a crowdsourcing website, which is a relatively new concept. The participation of the student respondent was based on their access to the crowdsourcing website. This type of participation allowed for randomization but only as much as the crowdsourcing website had available. Finally, the study was delimited to a correlational quantitative study between the independent variables of gender, year in college, ethnicity, and competition and the dependent variable of academic entitlement.

Recommendations

There are many factors to consider when recommending further research on this topic. For this study in general, an expansion of academic entitlement and the potential types of competition or when competition occurs may be useful. Using a different methodology might be able to dig deeper into participants' responses and expand on the findings of this study. A qualitative study could be conducted to understand how participants perceive competition or if types of competition may have an effect on the way they perceived the questions. This type of study would be a good follow up as the resulting qualitative information would also add a lived experience factor to the study's findings.

In terms of academic entitlement, there are many possible directions to go in further research. There is little research on the factors in the classroom that contribute to academic entitlement. The focus has always been on the student and what that brings to the learning environment; however, further studies related to faculty and the administration's effect on academic entitlement could be an important direction. Faculty play a large role in the learning environment for students, so what types of learning environments play a larger role in academic entitlement. Subsequent responses to grade issues by administration also affect student academic entitlement. Another possible study could focus on a university with a history of grade inflation and how much of an impact that has on the academic entitlement issue for a student.

Finally, if competition has a positive correlation to academic entitlement, another study could examine if there is a difference in the types of competition. The study could

look at students involved in sports in a university setting and whether that has a different impact than academic competition. These are all avenues for future research.

Implications for Positive Social Change

The results of this study open the door for further discussion as to how competition can have an impact on academic entitlement. Classroom management can be adapted to allow for other ideas to motivate students rather than using competition to do so. Also, the ability to understand how students change throughout their progress through school as it revolves around academic entitlement may allow for earlier interventions on the behalf of undergraduates, so that students may be impacted in a positive way.

Institutions can also use this information to talk to faculty and administration about how classes can best be designed for student engagement. Faculty and administration may also begin to understand how academic entitlement is experienced across the years.

Conclusion

In Chapter 5, I explored the findings of this study as they compared to those of previous literature. Previous studies have shown a positive correlation between men and academic entitlement (Boswell, 2012; Ciani, et al., 2008). Though this study did not specifically target the difference in gender, there was not any significance found between gender and academic entitlement. Previous research also looked at some motivation factors, but those were mainly due to parental and self-efficacy (Greenberger, et al., 2008). In this chapter, I also discussed the limitations of the study and provided

recommendations for further research and the study's implications on positive social change.

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Appendix A-Appendix of Tables

Table A1

Skewness and Kurtosis Statistics of index and scale

		N		Skewness		Kurtosis	
		Statistic	Statistic	Std.Error	Statistic	St. Error	
AE	552	.556	.104	.482			.208
CI	552	-.126	.104	1.492			.208

Table A2

Cronbach's Alpha for All Scales

Scale	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
AE Scale	15	.845
CI Index	14	.511

Table A1

Regression Results of Gender, Year in School, Ethnicity, and Competition on Academic Entitlement

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients Beta	t	Sig	95.0% confidence for B	
	B	Std. Error				Upper	Lower
I (constant)	41.550	2.387		17.406	.000	36.680	46.239
CI	.237	.068	.145	3.486	.001	.103	.371
Gender	1.824	1.106	.075	1.796	.073	-.171	3.819
Year in College	-1.588	.399	-.165	-3.980	.000	-2.371	-.804
Ethnicity	.672	.419	.067	1.606	.109	-.150	1.495

Table A2

Coefficient (Gender)

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients Beta	t	Sig
	B	Std. error			
I(constant)	54.485	1.016			
Gender	-1.106	.634	-.074	-1.743	.082

Table A5

Coefficient (Year in College)

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig
	B	Std. error	Beta		
I(constant)	55.946	.954		58.661	.000
Year in college	-.318	.250	-.054	-1.272	.204

Table A6

Coefficient (Ethnicity)

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig
	B	Std. error	Beta		
I(constant)	54.611	.542		100.786	.000
Ethnicity	.115	.263	-.019	.436	.663

Appendix B: Figures

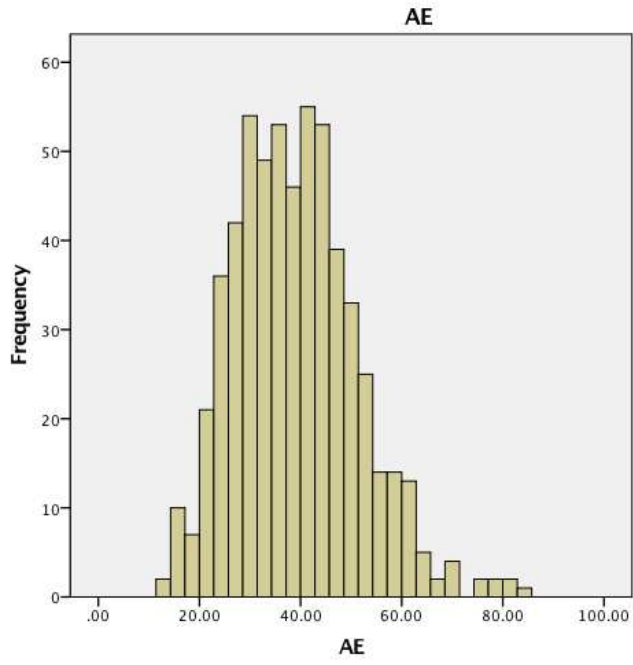


Figure 1. Histogram of academic entitlement.

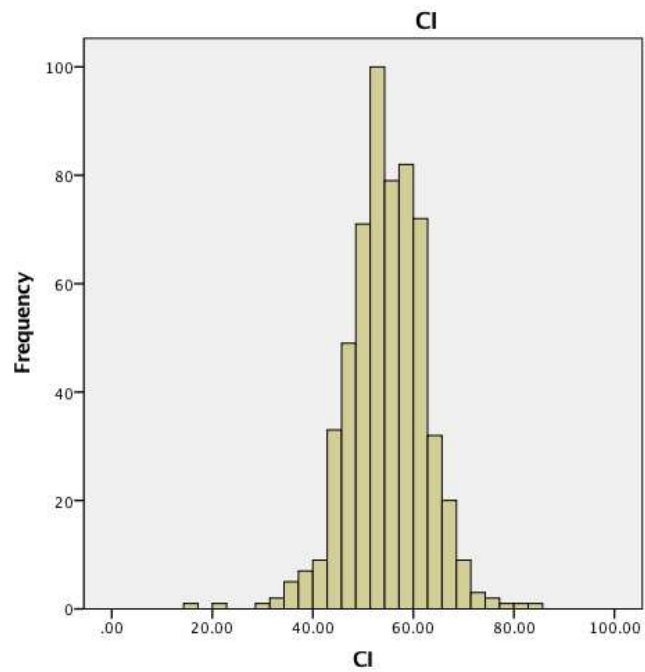


Figure 2. Histogram of competitiveness index.

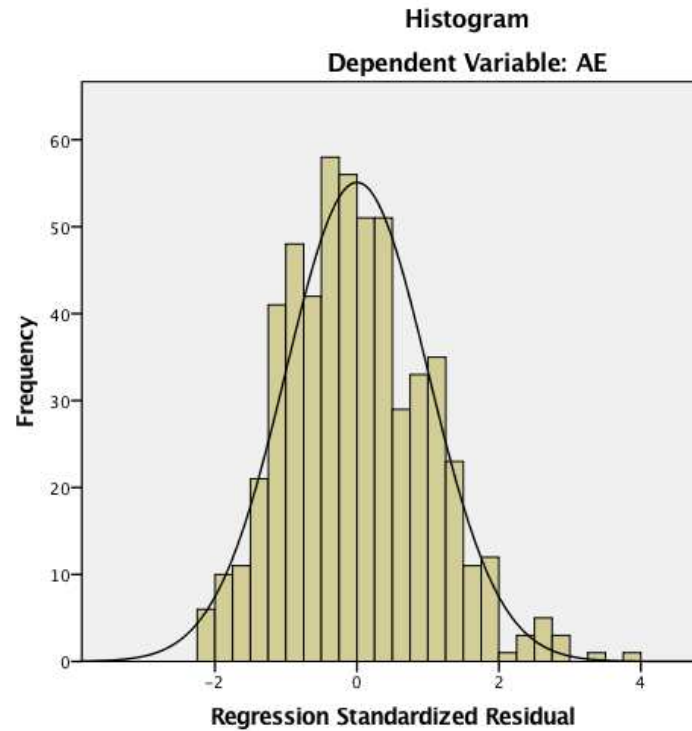


Figure 3. Histogram of regression.

Appendix C: Academic Entitlement Scale

Items Externalized Responsibility subscale

1. It is unnecessary for me to participate in class when the professor is paid for teaching, not for asking questions.
2. If I miss class, it is my responsibility to get the notes. (Reverse)
3. I am not motivated to put a lot of effort into group work, because another group member will end up doing it.
6. I believe that the university does not provide me with the resources I need to succeed in college.
7. Most professors do not really know what they are talking about.
10. If I do poorly in a course and I could not make my professor's office hours, the fault lies with my professor.
11. I believe that it is my responsibility to seek out the resources to succeed in college. (Reverse)
12. For group assignments, it is acceptable to take a back seat and let others do most of the work if I am busy.
13. For group work, I should receive the same grade as the other group members regardless of my level of effort.
15. Professors are just employees who get money for teaching.

Entitled Expectations subscale

1. 4. My professors are obligated to help me prepare for exams.
2. 5. Professors must be entertaining to be good.

3. 8. My professors should reconsider my grade if I am close to the grade I want.
4. 9. I should never receive a zero on an assignment that I turned in.
5. 14. My professors should curve my grade if I am close to the next letter grade.

Note. Participants rate each item on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The first 10 items compose the first subscale, Externalized Responsibility, which captures an entitled lack of responsibility for one's education. The last five items compose the second subscale, Entitled Expectations, which captures students' entitled expectations about professors and their course policies.

Appendix D: Competitiveness Index

Attitude Questionnaire

Instructions: Use the following response scale in answering the items below. Make sure to read each item carefully and circle the number that best represents your answer.

- 1 = Strongly Disagree**
2 = Slightly Disagree
3 = Neither Disagree Nor Agree
4 = Slightly Agree
5 = Strongly Agree

1. I get satisfaction from competing with others.
1 2 3 4 5
2. I am a competitive individual.
1 2 3 4 5
3. I will do almost anything to avoid an argument.
1 2 3 4 5
4. I try to avoid competing with others.
1 2 3 4 5
5. I often remain quiet rather than risk hurting another person.
1 2 3 4 5
6. I find competitive situations unpleasant.
1 2 3 4 5
7. I try to avoid arguments.
1 2 3 4 5
8. In general, I will go along with the group rather than create conflict.
1 2 3 4 5
9. I don't like competing against other people.
1 2 3 4 5
10. I dread competing against other people.
1 2 3 4 5

11. I enjoy competing against an opponent.

1 2 3 4 5

12. I often try to out perform others.

1 2 3 4 5

13. I like competition.

1 2 3 4 5

14. I don't enjoy challenging others even when I
think they are wrong.

1 2 3 4 5

Appendix E-Permission for AE scale

Hi Linda,

Absolutely — we would be delighted to have you use the scale! I hope it works well for you. Best wishes with your research and dissertation. Congratulations on making it to this point. Please don't hesitate to contact me if I can be of any further assistance.

**My best,
Nicole**

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Appendix F-Permission for CI Index

Hi Linda,

Thank you for the email. The Competitiveness Index was developed to encourage research in the area of competitiveness so I am happy to grant you permission to use the measure in your research. Please note that there is a revised version of the measure which is a bit shorter than the original and uses a 5-point Likert-type response scale. I am attaching some information on the Revised Competitiveness Index which you might find useful. Please let me know if you have any questions about the measure.

Best regards,

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