Abstract

The identification of determinants and correlates of academic entitlement is of particular interest for researchers and (academic) tutors alike. Whilst personality traits have been linked to academic entitlement in the past, the relative importance of familial influence remains unclear. Hence, to address this deficit, this study utilizes a sample of business and psychology undergraduates (N = 170) in the United Arab Emirates. Additionally, the impact of academic entitlement on students' misestimation of coursework grades was assessed in a subsample of psychology undergraduates (N = 92). Multiple regression analyses revealed honesty-humility as the strongest predictor of academic entitlement, indicating lower entitlement of more honest students. In contrast, familial influences were unrelated to academic entitlement. Interestingly, higher entitled expectations were associated with larger overestimation of grades. Our findings indicate honesty-humility as an important driver of academic entitlement, whilst entitled expectations appear to be associated with misperceptions of students own academic performance.

Keywords: academic entitlement, academic outcomes, grade estimation, personality, family influence

1. Introduction

Higher education (HE) has experienced a notable landscape transformation over recent decades including changes in funding that force universities to compensate the waning capital through higher tuition fees. This, in turn, affects various characteristics of students entering tertiary education. The steady decline in HE funding, particularly in the UK (e.g., Greenaway and Haynes, 2003), the US (e.g., Mitchell, Leachman, and Masterson, 2016), or Australia (e.g., Kniest, 2018), has resulted in staff redundancies in numerous universities and the opening of overseas branch campuses (Varghese, 2013). Furthermore, the compensatory inflation of tuition fees increases exposure to commercial demands such as customer satisfaction, efficiency, and competitiveness (Bunzel, 2007; Lesnik-Oberstein, 2015). This new direction in education inevitably pressures academic staff to develop 'easier' courses in the interest of better student feedback and higher satisfaction rates, which jeopardizes academic standards at large (Bunce, Baird, and Jones, 2017; Emery, Kramer, and Tian, 2001). This encompasses a shift of powers between HE institutions and students - with the first increasingly resembling service-providers and the latter displaying diverse motivations and skills (Altbach, Reisberg, and Rumbley, 2009; Biggs and Tang, 2011) as well as consumeristic thinking and behaviours (Cain, Romanelli, and Smith, 2012; Gokcen, 2014; Tomlinson, 2014). Intellectual engagement (Williams, 2013) and active educational involvement (Finney and Finney, 2010; Tomlinson, 2014) are at risk in the presence of such consumer attitudes.

The student-as-consumer (SAC) approach has been found to create feelings of entitlement among university students (Delucchi and Korgen, 2002; Finney and Finney, 2010). With increasing participation in a changing higher education landscape, it seems important to gain a better understanding of the influencing factors and effects of academic entitlement in tertiary students. It has been suggested that academic entitlement (AE) influences students' attitudes towards academic achievements. Students who report high levels of academic entitlement consider academic success their right, without taking responsibility for it (Boswell, 2012; Chowning and Campbell, 2009). This often results in various maladaptive behaviors that considerably impact academic outcomes. For example, students might voice dissatisfaction with their grades, using the argument that they pay to perform well (Bellah, 1999), or they may consider their lecturers responsible for their poor results (Twenge and Campbell, 2009). It has also been suggested that uncivil and disruptive behaviors (Kopp and Finney, 2013; Taylor, Bailey, and Barber, 2015), dissent towards instructors

(Frisby, Goodboy, and Buckner, 2015), and impaired learning and poorer student performance (Barton and Hirsch, 2016) are other corollaries of entitled and consumerist attitudes in education. However, much remains to be understood in terms of the correlates and consequences associated with academic entitlement. Understanding these factors related to AE will consequently allow for the development of strategies to support students in taking more ownership over their academic progress which, in turn, can potentially correct the decline in intellectual engagement, and foster active learning.

1.1 Academic Entitlement

Entitlement, by its psychological definition, describes the concept that oneself deserves more than others. While psychological and academic entitlement are theoretically close it is important to note that the latter is not as ubiquitous as it is restricted to academic situations (Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, and Bushman, 2004). Given this conceptual difference, academic entitlement can be understood as a largely distinct phenomenon which prevails in academic settings (Chowning and Campbell, 2009; Kopp, Zinn, Finney, and Jurich, 2011). While most research on this topic has been conducted in the US, the construct of academic entitlement is not limited to universities in Western countries (McLellan and Jackson, 2017). Different conceptualizations of academic entitlement have been proposed, however, Chowning and Campbell's (2009) AE model remains the most widely used. In their model, Chowning and Campbell dichotomize academic entitlement into the domains of *externalized responsibility* and *entitled expectations.* The domain of *externalized responsibility* encompasses the extent to which students attribute their own successes or failures to the performance and behavior of their instructors and classmates. *Entitled expectations*, on the other hand, involves feeling that one deserves good grades without having to exert (much) effort (Chowning and Campbell, 2009). Tests of convergent and discriminate validity identify positive relationships with narcissism and general entitlement, and negative relationships with self-esteem, personal control, and the personality traits of agreeableness and conscientiousness (Chowning and Campbell, 2009). AE has previously been found to negatively affect students' grades (Bonaccio et al., 2016), but is yet to be studied in relation to students' family life. As general entitlement has been found to be influenced by parental and family factors (Wetzel and Robins 2016), it is imperative that AE is researched in relation to family influences.

1.2 Academic Entitlement and Personality

Much attention has been dedicated to exploring possible links between psychological entitlement and personality traits (e.g., Grubbs and Exline, 2016). It is conceivable that a similar relationship exists between academic entitlement and personality dimensions. Empirically, however, mapping AE onto facets of various personality models has thus far yielded inconsistent results. Academic entitlement research utilizing the established Big 5 model has found that externalized responsibility is negatively related to conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion, and neuroticism, but no such relationships were found for entitled expectations (Chowning and Campbell, 2009). Furthermore, Bonaccio, Reeve, and Lyerly (2016) reported links between entitled expectations and lower levels of conscientiousness, openness, and agreeableness, whereas no significant correlations were found for externalized responsibility.

While the conventional five-factor model (FFM) is one of the most widely used concepts to assess dispositional aspects of personality, the more contemporary six-factor HEXACO personality model experiences increased attention. In their model, Ashton and Lee (2007) have extended the traditional five-factor model through an addition of a sixth domain termed *honesty-humility* which they reason provides a predictive advantage for variances that the FFM cannot fully accommodate. Though the concepts and domain labels of conscientiousness, openness to experience, neuroticism, and extraversion of the Big 5 and the HEXACO are closely related, it is useful to heed to the slight differences in regard to the content of agreeableness. While the FFM does not account explicitly for honesty or humility, its agreeableness domain includes facets that relate to this concept. By taking these aspects and adding them to the domain of honesty-humility, the HEXACO agreeableness facet is not as strongly linked to the Big 5 as the other traits (Ashton and Lee, 2009).

Being a relatively new model, the literature utilizing the HEXACO in exploring academic entitlement is rather meager. Though others have used the HEXACO to investigate academic aptitudes and performance (e.g. Noftle and Robins, 2007), only one study has examined the HEXACO traits in relation to academic entitlement so far. Taylor et al. (2015) found that only one factor (i.e., honesty-humility) was significantly negatively correlated with both academic entitlement factors. Building on these insights, it can be reasoned that someone high in honesty and humility would exhibit lower entitled expectations and externalized responsibilities. Participants scoring high on honesty-humility tend to be more genuine in interpersonal relationships, are fairer, more modest, and are less interested in social status, whereas low

honesty-humility is characterized by greedy, pretentious, hypocritical, boastful, and pompous tendencies (Ashton and Lee, 2007). However, there is a dearth of studies comparing the HEXACO and the Big Five frameworks when it comes to academic entitlement. Yet, some traits related to general entitlement, such as narcissism, have been found to have stronger relations with the HEXACO subscale of honesty-humility than with any of the Big Five subscales (Lee and Ashton, 2005).

1.3 Academic Entitlement and Family Influences

The extent to which parenting practices can impact the psychological and behavioral makeup of children has been well-established (Anaya and Pérez-Edgar, 2019; Symeou and Georgiou, 2017; Van den Akker, Deković, Asscher, and Prinzie, 2014). Parental achievement pressures, control, over-protective parenting (Greenberger, Lessard, Chen, and Farruggia, 2008), and permissive parenting (Barton and Hirsch, 2016; Greenberger et al., 2008) have been consistently connected with AE. In their review, Givertz and Segrin (2014) examine the detrimental effects of overly controlling parent-child dyads on self-development, ego development, and self-efficacy. They, and others (e.g., Wetzel and Robins, 2016), additionally suggest a relationship between over-involvement or insufficient parental control as well as parental hostility and the development of narcissism and entitlement at large. Moreover, families are not only highly involved in decisions regarding social activities and academic performance, but they also influence career exploration and decision making of their children (Keller and Whiston, 2008; Whiston and Keller, 2004). Parental-influenced career paths may entail academic and programme choices that conflict with a student's own career interests. Fouad, Cotter, Fitzpatrick, Kantamneni, and Bernfeld (2010) investigated domains of family influence on career choices and conceptualized four subscales in their *family influence scale* (FIS) including *family expectation*, *financial support*, *information support*, and *values and beliefs*. It is yet to be clarified whether parental-influenced career choices relate to the prevalence of academic entitlement.

1.4 Current Study

With increasing participation in higher education, it is important to gain a better understanding of the influencing factors of academic entitlement and the entailing potential academic consequences of these beliefs. Previous evidence consistently showed that academically entitled students performed poorer on academic assessments than non-entitled students (Bonaccio et al. 2016, Wasieleski, Whatley, Briihl, and Branscome, 2014). Furthermore, Taylor et al. (2015) have linked academic entitlement to counterproductive

research behavior in undergraduate Psychology students. However, other studies have failed to demonstrate a significant relationship between academic entitlement and academic performance (Houchins, 2016). So far studies on academic entitlement and academic performance have almost exclusively assessed academic performance in the context of final grade outcomes. When comparing the two academic entitlement subscales in terms of final course grades, externalized responsibility has been reported to be more influential than entitled expectations (Bonaccio et al., 2016). It has not yet been determined, though, how academic entitlement relates to the difference between the expected grade of the students and their actual grade. The current study aims to fill this gap by investigating student's grade estimation related to two different types of assignments, namely (i) a research-based lab report and (ii) an exam/essay. These contrasting assignment types have been chosen to determine if entitlement will manifest itself differently depending on the assessment's nature. For the purpose of this study, grades in exams and essays have been analyzed together, as these assessments are comparatively less structured than a research-based lab report. It may be the case that academic entitlement is contingent upon the type of assignment, rather than pervasive across all types.

Given the findings that general entitlement traits map stronger onto the *honesty-humility* domain of the HEXACO and the evident paucity of research attempting to link this model to academic entitlement, the present study aims to make an empirical contribution by investigating this relationship. Furthermore, research using the established Big 5 model has yielded contradictory results. Chowning and Campbell (2009) revealed a negative link between externalized responsibility and the traits conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion, and neuroticism, whereas Bonaccio, Reeve, and Lyerly (2016) could not establish these links. On the other hand, Chowning and Campbell (2009) did not reveal significant correlations between the Big 5 and entitled expectations, whereas Bonaccio, Reeve, and Lyerly (2016) reported negative correlations between entitled expectations and the traits conscientiousness, openness, and agreeableness. Hence, the present study aims to shed light on these contradictory findings using the more recently developed HEXACO model. Presently, we consider the HEXACO personality variables to be psychological traits that are hard to change and comparatively stable over time.

To our knowledge, no prior work has established an empirical link between family influences on AE. This is particularly striking as parenting styles exert a large influence on children's development (e.g., Anaya and Pérez-Edgar, 2019). As laid out earlier, certain parental techniques such as permissive or over-protective

parenting have been found to be related to trait and academic entitlement (e.g. Greenberger et al., 2008). Moreover, it is well established that parents have an influence on career exploration and decision making of their children (e.g. Keller and Whiston, 2008). It is relevant to explore career-related familial influence on AE in higher education since parental attitudes might influence academic attitudes in their children.

In summary, in order to address the aforementioned gaps in the literature, this study explores (i) the role of academic entitlement in regard to students' misestimation of grades in two different academic assignments, (ii) the relationship between the six dimensions of the HEXACO and AE, as well as (iii) the extent to which family influence contributes to academic entitlement when accounting for personality traits.

2. Method

2.1 Participants

Students enrolled in undergraduate psychology (54%) and business (46%) Bachelor programmes at a private university located in Dubai (United Arab Emirates) were recruited in person by the researchers. From a total population of 642 enrolled students in these programmes (377 first year psychology and business programmes, and 265 second year psychology and business programmes), 170 participants agreed to participate in this study. Participants consisted of 76% first-year students (n = 130) and 24% second-year students (n = 40). The sample was predominantly female (69%), and the sample age ranged from 17 to 25 years (mean age = 19.2, SD = 1.7). The majority of participants self-reported having South-East-Asian nationality (65% were from India, 17% from other Asian countries, 9% from Europe, 5% from Africa, 4% from North and Latin America). All participants were expatriates, residing in Dubai. Estimated grades were only accessible from psychology students, resulting in a subsample of 92 participants.

2.2 Materials

2.2.1 Academic Entitlement Scale (Chowning and Campbell, 2009)

The academic entitlement scale consists of two subscales: *entitled expectations* (5 items) and *externalized responsibility* (10 items). Responses are given on a 7-point Likert-typed scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Higher scores indicate more entitled attitudes. Sample items for the *externalized responsibility* subscale include 'I am not motivated to put a lot of effort into group work, because another group member will end up doing it' and reversed items such as 'I believe that it is my responsibility to seek out the resources to succeed in college. Entitled expectations were assessed through

items such as 'My professors are obligated to help me prepare for exams'. The academic entitlement scale has been shown to possess good construct and predictive validity (Chowning and Campbell, 2009). In this study, Cronbach's alpha values were .68 for externalized responsibility and .73 for entitled expectations. Although the externalized responsibility subscale fell somewhat short of the typically assumed acceptable value of .70 (e.g., Nunnally, 1978), in the light of the scale lengths both internal consistency estimates seem adequate.

2.2.2 HEXACO-PI-R (Ashton and Lee, 2009)

The HEXACO-PI-R is a widely used measure of personality which includes the traits *agreeableness* (I rarely feel anger, even when people treat me quite badly), *openness to experience* (I like people who have unconventional views), *extraversion* (I enjoy having lots of people around to talk with), *emotionality* (When I suffer from a painful experience, I need someone to make me feel comfortable), *conscientiousness* (When working on something, I don't pay much attention to small details), and *honesty-humility* (Having a lot of money is not especially important to me). It consists of 60 items with 10 items allocated for each trait. Responses are given on a 5-point Likert-typed scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The HEXACO-PI-R has been demonstrated to possess good convergent, discriminant, and factorial validity (e.g., Lee and Ashton, 2004). In the present study, Cronbach's alpha values were .66 for honesty-humility, .72 for emotionality, .77 for extraversion, .56 for agreeableness, .65 for conscientiousness, and .68 for openness, indicating somewhat suboptimal internal consistencies for honesty-humility and conscientiousness and comparatively low internal consistency for agreeableness.

2.2.3 Family Influence Scale (Fouad et al., 2010)

The family influence scale measures the influence of the family on career-related decisions. It consists of 22 items: 7 items measure *information support* (My family shared information with me about how to obtain a job), 6 items measure *family expectations* (My family expects me to select a career that has a certain status), 4 items measure *financial support* (Because my family supports me financially, I can focus on my career development), and 3 items measure *values and beliefs* (My family expects my career to match our family's values/beliefs). Items are scored on a 5-point Likert-typed scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The family influence scale has been shown to possess satisfactory convergent and construct validity (Fouad et al., 2010). In the current study, Cronbach αs were .87 for informational support, .84 for

family expectations, .64 for financial support, and .84 for values and beliefs, thus indicating predominantly good internal consistencies.

2.3 Procedure

First and second-year psychology and first-year Business students were approached opportunistically and invited for participation in this study. They were informed that participation was voluntary, data would be treated with confidentially, they could withdraw at any time during the study, and that refusal to participate would not influence their attained grades. Participation was not compensated in any form. All participants provided written informed consent and were debriefed after participation. Administration of all instruments was done in a pen-and-paper format and followed standardized instructions. Psychology students were asked to estimate their expected grade on two assignments that they had formally submitted, but for which they had not yet received a grade. One assignment was a structured lab report for both first- and second-year students, and the other was either an in-class exam or an essay. The lab report involved applying statistical methods to a provided data set, following a typical report structure, and demonstrating APA (American Psychological Association) style. Both the essay and exam required the students to write a critical work supported by relevant findings from the academic literature. The in-class exam and essay were less structured than the lab report, and students received comparatively less direction from faculty on the completion of the former two assessments.

3. Results

Means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations are provided in Table 1. Skewness and kurtosis of all variable distributions of interest showed absolute values < 1.1 and < 1.7, respectively, thus indicating no substantial deviation from normality according to well-established thresholds (West, Finch, and Curran, 1995). We conducted a theory-guided hierarchical multiple regression to examine the impact of personality and family influence on academic entitlement. The HEXACO personality variables were entered in the first step, followed by the family influence variables in the second step. Personality variables were entered first because past research suggests an association with academic entitlement (e.g. Chowning and Campbell, 2009), whereas there is a lack of evidence for the significant effect of family influence on career choices in relation to entitlement. For entitled expectations (Table 2), the HEXACO scores explained 12.8% of variance in entitled expectations ($F(6, 128) = 3.140$, $p < .01$). Out of the HEXACO scores, honesty-

humility was the strongest predictor (β = -.338). Emotionality also significantly predicted entitled expectations (β = .169). Adding family influence variables did not significantly improve the model fit $\Delta F(4, 124) = 2.440$, $p = .05$, $R^2 = .19$, indicating no effects of the family influence variables.

For externalized responsibility, the personality variables explained 21.2% of variance in a first step $F(6, 124) = 5.545$, $p < .001$. Again, honesty-humility was the strongest predictor (β = -.409*).* Extraversion also significantly predicted externalized responsibility (β = -.169). However, once more family influence did not explain significantly more variance ($\Delta F(4, 120) = 0.647$, $p = .630$).

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

To clarify the effects of family influence, multiple regressions with only the family influence variables as predictors of entitled expectations and externalized responsibility were calculated. The regression on externalized responsibility was not significant ($F(4,129) = 1.226$, $p = .30$). However, family influence variables significantly predicted entitled expectations ($F(4,133) = 2.594$, $p < .05$); specifically, only the subscale family expectations showed a significant influence ($t(137) = 1.999$, $p < .05$). Taking these results into consideration, personality traits seem to explain more variation in academic entitlement when compared to family influence.

To examine the influence of academic entitlement on the difference between students' estimated and actual grades, multiple regressions were conducted. These differences were calculated by subtracting the actual grade from the expected grades as provided by students (i.e., negative results indicate grade under- and positive one's grade overestimation). Results of regression analyses are reported separately for exam/essay and lab report (Table 3). There was a moderate positive (albeit non-significant) effect of entitled expectations on the overestimation of the exam/essay grades ($\eta_p^2 = .122$), but no effect on lab report grades overestimation (effect strength was interpreted according to Cohen, 1988). Externalized responsibility did not show non-trivial associations in any analysis. As expected, there were no meaningful influences of entitled expectation or externalized responsibility on grade underestimation, excepting a small positive association between entitled expectations for lab reports ($\eta_p^2 = .024$).

However, there was a moderate positive effect for the influence of entitled expectations on the overestimation of the exam/essay grades ($\eta_p^2 = .122$). Because personality showed a significant influence on the academic entitlement variables, it was expected that the relationship between entitled expectations and overestimation of grades would change when accounting for personality. Therefore, we controlled for HEXACO scores by calculating residuals of academic entitlement variables in a multiple regression. The resulting residuals of academic entitlement as predicted by the HEXACO scores were used as predictors for grade overestimation in another regression. Again, neither of the academic entitlement variables showed nominally significant influences on the exam/essay grades overestimations (Table 4). However, effect sizes were non-trivial yielding a moderate positive effect ($\eta_p^2 = .129$) for entitled expectations and a small positive effect ($\eta_p^2 = .058$) for externalized responsibility.

INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

INSERT TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

4.Discussion

The aim of this study was to examine associations between personality traits, family influence, and academic entitlement. Furthermore, we investigated the link between students' academic entitlement and the misestimation of their grades. It should be noted, that due to our correlational design, causality cannot be inferred from our results. Only personality traits showed a significant influence on both entitled expectation and externalized responsibility. Our study revealed significant associations of family influence variables with academic entitlement which is consistent with past studies that emphasised the importance of parenting and career expectations when it comes to academic entitlement (e.g., Greenberger et al., 2008). However, these associations are not present when controlling for personality traits. Therefore, personality traits seem to be more important drivers of academic entitlement than family influence. These findings are not necessarily inconsistent with developmental perspectives, because parents are bound to influence the development of certain personality traits (Anaya and Pérez-Edgar, 2019). There has been little research conducted in regard to direct associations between parenting and the Big 5, however, past research has identified direct links between parenting styles and children's temperament (Kitamura et al., 2009) and older adolescents' personality, specifically agreeableness, openness to experiences and neuroticism (Weiss & Schwarz, 1996). However, more research comparatively has been done on the effect of parenting style on academic traits, including self-regulation (Abar, Carter, and Winsler, 2009), grit (Howard, Nicholson, and Chesnut, 2019) and academic engagement (Waterman and Lefkowitz, 2017). To the best of our knowledge, there is no previous research using the HEXACO framework. Hence, further research is warranted to look at if, and how, the personality traits assessed by the HEXACO can influence the relation between parenting and academic entitlement.

Out of the HEXACO personality domains, only honesty-humility negatively predicted both entitled expectations and externalized responsibility in our study. This may mean that more honest individuals feel greater responsibility for their own education. Students possibly create an internal representation of their efforts which could reduce their entitled expectations. In contrast to previous findings (Bonaccio et al., 2016; Chowning and Campbell, 2009), we did not observe meaningful relationships between agreeableness and academic entitlement. Importantly, both agreeableness and honesty-humility are considered to reflect altruistic traits, though they seem to represent distinct constructs. For example, individuals that are high in

honesty-humility were less likely to exploit others, whereas agreeableness does not preclude willingness to work with exploitative individuals (Ashton, Lee, and DeVries, 2014). Consequently, it seems likely that honesty-humility is more important in relation to less entitled attitudes in academic settings. In a similar vein, honesty-humility has been shown to be more strongly associated with narcissistic entitlement than agreeableness (e.g., Gaughan, Miller, and Lynam, 2012; Lee and Ashton, 2005). These findings are in line with our observations in relation to academic entitlement.

Beyond honesty-humility and agreeableness, other personality traits significantly contributed to the explained variance in academic entitlement, although effect sizes for these were smaller and the patterns were less consistent. Extraversion negatively predicted externalized responsibility but was not associated with entitled expectations. These results are consistent with findings of Chowning and Campbell (2009) who observed significant associations between extraversion and entitlement, but contrast with others who did not identify such a link (Ackerman et al., 2010; Pryor, Miller, and Gaughan, 2008). As per the HEXACO definition of extraversion, people scoring high on this trait possess more social self-esteem, are more sociable and are livelier (Ashton and Lee, 2009), leading to increased social skills and social responsibility. It has been established that enhanced social responsibility leads to more positive learning experiences in school settings and to more responsibility towards one's own academic achievements (Wentzel, 1991). Hence, increased extraversion in a Higher Education setting, with a tendency to heightened social skills, could result in less externalized responsibility that would be otherwise placed on instructors. Furthermore, extraversion has been linked to prosocial behavior and value motives which could also explain these findings (Carlo, Okun, Knight, and de Guzman, 2005).

The positive significant association of emotionality with entitled expectations is in line with previous research on personality and narcissistic entitlement (Ackerman et al., 2010). Therefore, the current study's findings suggest that emotionally less stable students may be characterized by higher academic entitlement, which could be a result of greater anxiety and dependence on faculty. Students might shift the responsibility onto faculty as a means to decrease anxiety related to their own failures (i.e., in the sense of external attribution).

When considering the implications of high academic entitlement for estimated grade outcomes, only entitled expectations seemed to have an influence on overestimations of exam/essay (but not lab report)

grades, whereas externalized responsibility did not. Even when controlling for personality traits, this influence remained robust, indicating a substantial influence of expectations on self-perceived academic performance. Because essays and exams have fewer guidelines than lab reports, this might cause more uncertainty in terms of the prospective outcome for the students. Therefore, to reduce uncertainty, students might blame lower than expected grade outcomes on the faculty member, or other external causes. Particularly in a private university setting, where students pay for their education, it might be more intuitive for students to hold university staff responsible for their failures. This could be interpreted as a coping mechanism to protect students' self-esteem, which may be a function of external attribution mechanisms (Patel, Tarrant, Bonas, Yates, and Sandars, 2015).

Considering the above findings, it appears that academic entitlement is, to some extent, driven by certain personality traits. Since personality traits are comparatively stable across the lifespan, some entitled attitudes might persist, even if interventions that are tailored to reduce academic entitlement are introduced. However, based on the observation that honesty-humility is the strongest predictor of academic entitlement, activities supporting kind, modest, and generous behaviors, such as volunteer work, could possibly reduce entitlement. This may be a worthwhile avenue of investigation in future research.

Some implications for faculty should be considered in this vein. Our results indicate that academic entitlement might not manifest itself in an identical manner across different assignments. Assignments which increase feelings of uncertainty due to a relative lack of structure might warrant students to rely on entitled attitudes to decrease anxiety. Hence, academic entitlement seems to also possess situational components. Communicating realistic expectations towards the work that needs to be involved in different types of assignments might decrease feelings of uncertainty in students.

Limitations and future research

First, the sample size used to predict overestimation and underestimation of grades by means of entitlement was comparatively small, which resulted in low power to detect significant effects. However, to deal with this limitation, we focused on the interpretation of effect sizes instead of results from formal null hypothesis tests.

Second, the estimated grades were only collected from psychology students, thus limiting generalizability. For future research, it would be desirable to collect data from students of different disciplines and multiple assignment types to clarify the influence of entitlement on grade misestimation.

Third, particularly the agreeableness subscale showed suboptimal internal consistencies, thus limiting the possibility to detect meaningful influences. Therefore, the results regarding the predictive value of agreeableness in the present study should be understood within this context, and are worth investigation in future studies.

Fourth, although data on nationality were collected to contextualize the sample, we did not assess the influences of student demographics such as sex or culture in our study. Future researchers may wish to investigate these potential moderators in further studies because differences in parenting style are most likely to be largely dependent upon cultural norms and offspring sex.

Finally, although confidentiality was ensured, it cannot be entirely ruled out that some students may have responded in a socially desirable manner on our entitlement subscales. However, the systematic covariation of our entitlement variables with personality measures in general and honesty-humility, in particular, indicates salience of the measured latent constructs.

Conclusion

This study adds to the body of research around academic entitlement by providing information on the relative influence of family variables when personality traits are accounted for. Furthermore, we add on to the research investigating the academic outcomes of academic entitlement by shedding light on the influence of academic entitlement on subjective over-and underestimation of grades. We demonstrate that personality traits, specifically honesty-humility, are more important than family influence, as predictors of academic entitlement in students. Furthermore, our results indicate that entitled expectations, but not externalized responsibility, lead to overestimation in grades in unstructured assignments. Faculty and stakeholders may wish to consider if targeted interventions might support the development of realistic expectations in students enrolling in university.

Compliance with Ethical Standards: The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest. All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards

of Middlesex University Dubai Ethics Committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards. Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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Table 1. Means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations for academic entitlement, personality, and family influence variables

		M	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	Honesty-humility	31.28	6.41											
2	Extraversion	32.04	6.59	-.088										
3	Openness	31.64	5.76	.061	.033									
4	Agreeableness	32.22	5.66	.157*	-.009	.051								
5	Conscientiousness	34.59	6.25	-.012	.246**	.260**	-.057							
6	Emotionality	34.21	6.48	.178*	-.123	.045	-070	-.086						
7	Entitled expectations	21.67	7.00	-.251**	.027	-.054	-.028	-.064	.118					
8	Externalized responsibility	22.01	7.41	-.388**	-.157	-.099	-.134	-.154	-.041	.444**				
9	Information support	35.75	7.85	.077	.216**	.066	-.078	.063	.067	.005	-.091			
10	Family expectation	17.46	7.38	-.223**	.085	.084	-.096	-.027	-.085	.234**	.179*	-.190*		
11	Financial support	23.71	4.39	.031	-.014	.015	.036	.161*	.157*	-.062	-.099	.249**	-.297**	
12	Values & beliefs	10.48	4.52	.049	.076	.016	.034	-.091	.058	.215**	.016	-.051	.454**	-.031

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

Table 2. Hierarchical regression of HEXACO and family influence variables on academic entitlement

Predictors	Externalized responsibility					Entitled expectations				
	Model fit	B	*SE*	*T*	η_p^2	Model fit	β	*SE*	*t*	η_p^2
Step 1										
Honesty-humility	N = 131	-.409***	.091	-4.926	.155	N = 135	-.338***	.090	-3.938	.079
Emotionality	R^2 =.173	-.017	.097	-0.207	<.001	R^2 = .087	.169*	.095	1.988	.025
Agreeableness	F(6, 124) = 5.545***	-.022	.105	-0.264	.006	F(6, 128) = 3.140**	.043	.104	0.503	.001
Conscientiousness		-.107	.104	-1.216	.017		-.016	.102	-0.184	.004
Extraversion		-.169*	.093	-1.997	.026		.003	.090	0.038	<.001
Openness		-.049	.108	-0.558	.001		-.059	.108	-0.683	.002
Step 2										
Honesty-humility	N = 131	-.387**	.096	-4.440	.141	N = 135	-327**	.093	-3.703	.100
Emotionality	R^2 =.164	-.018	.098	-0.211	<.001	R^2 = .127	.170*	.094	2.015	.032
Agreeableness	F(10, 120) = 3.548***	-.010	.107	-0.125	<.001	F(10, 124) = 2.945***	.057	.103	0.678	.004
Conscientiousness		-.110	.108	-1.205	.012		.031	.104	0.342	.001
Extraversion		-.189*	.097	-2.131	.036		-.056	.092	-0.636	.003
Openness		-.071	.096	-0.830	.006		-.075	.107	-0.878	.006
Information support		.081	.085	0.943	.007		.081	.082	0.942	.007
Financial support		.042	.153	0.464	.002		-.054	.148	-0.589	.003
Family expectation		.143	.104	1.378	.016		.111	.102	1.056	.009
Values and beliefs		-.018	.155	-0.196	<.001		.176	.151	1.849	.027

Note = **p < .01; ***p < .001; R^2 values are adjusted for the number of included predictors; all variance inflation factors < 1.6.

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Table 3. Regression of academic entitlement on grade over- and underestimation

	Overestimated grades					Underestimated grades				
Predictors	Model fit	β	*SE*	*T*	η_p^2	Model fit	β	*SE*	*t*	η_p^2
				Exam/Essay						
Entitled expectations	$N = 41$; $R^2 = .084$	.396	.230	2.299	.122	$N = 25$; $R^2 < .001$	-.082	.240	-0.331	.005
Externalized responsibility	$F(2,38) = 2.827$	-.097	.249	-0.563	<.001	$F(2,22) = 0.114$	.115	.316	0.465	.010
				Lab report						
Entitled expectations	$N = 48$; $R^2 < .001$	-.026	.261	-0.157	<.001	$N = 18$; $R^2 < .001$	.175	.234	0.611	.024
Externalized responsibility	$F(2,45) = 0.089$	-.046	.328	-0.276	<.001	$F(2,15) = 0.287$	.032	.231	0.112	.001

Note. R^2 values are adjusted for the number of included predictors; all variance inflation factors < 1.4.

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Table 4: Regression of academic entitlement residualized by HEXACO scores on grade overestimation

Predictors	Model fit	B	*SE*	*t*	η_p^2
Residualized entitled expectations	$N = 40$; $R^2 = .084$	.427	.269	2.343	.129
Residualized externalized responsibility	$F(2,37) = 2.784$	-.274	.289	-1.502	.058

Note. R^2 values are adjusted for the number of included predictors, all variance inflation factors < 1.4.