Inflated expectations: an investigation into college students’ academic entitlement beliefs

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Academic entitlement is defined as the belief that academic benefits, positive outcomes, or preferential treatment should be given regardless of individual effort (Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Greenberger, et al., 2008; Kopp et al., 2011). The current study investigated antecedent and outcome relationships of endorsing academic entitlement beliefs (AEBs) among undergraduate college students using structural equation modeling (SEM). Specific variables evaluated in the model as predictors of AEBs included students’ beliefs regarding achievement goals (i.e., mastery-approach, mastery-avoidance, performance-approach, and performance-avoidance), control beliefs (i.e., internal, chance, and powerful others), consumerism, narcissism, and parental involvement; as well as the background characteristics of students’ age and exposure to community college. Outcome variables included in the model consisted of students’ beliefs regarding academic policies, in-class behaviors, and academic expectations.

An email was sent to all undergraduate students at a large university in the southeastern region of the United States soliciting participation for an online questionnaire.
The responses of 904 participants were randomly divided into two equal subsamples: one for model evaluation and modification, and one to evaluate model stability.

Results of the SEM model gave indication of multiple relationships. Specifically, powerful others, chance, mastery-avoidance goals, performance-avoidance goals, beliefs in consumerism, and parental over-involvement were all observed to positively predict AEBs. Endorsements of AEBs and consumerism beliefs were observed to positively predict students’ beliefs in preferential academic policies regarding grading, scheduling, and personal accommodations.

The findings of the current model present a contemporary perspective on how AEBs relates to an array of both general and specific student beliefs. The positive correspondence between students’ endorsements of AEBs and students’ beliefs in accommodating academic policies suggests that AEBs are potential precursors to maladaptive in-class beliefs. The positive relationships observed between students’ AEBs and students’ beliefs in powerful others, parental over-involvement, consumerism, and chance all indicate that AEBs are an externally oriented system of beliefs. Future recommendations include improving measures as well as investigating developmental changes, behavioral consequences, parental over-involvement and individual differences in academic entitlement.
DEDICATION

I dedicate this manuscript to my grandmother Elsie Mae Warren, whose unwavering belief and encouragement throughout my life has always been a source of inspiration and comfort.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The term psychological entitlement refers to the stable and pervasive belief that one should receive special privileges, benefits, or outcomes without consideration to whether the special treatment or privileges are deserved (Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, & Bushman, 2004; Harvey & Martinko, 2008). In the context of academia, these privileges, benefits, and outcomes typically take the form of high grades and preferential treatment. Students holding these academic entitlement beliefs (AEBs) hold self-perceptions of themselves as deserving of these privileges and benefits, independent of their actual academic achievement.

One of the first published investigations examining AEBs was conducted in 1986 and focused on the beliefs of students training to be medical doctors (Dubovsky, 1986). In this seminal work, Dubovsky outlined five characteristics that saliently represented AEBs. The first characteristic is the belief that knowledge is a right and should be delivered with as little effort and discomfort required from the learner as possible. Second, other people will give the individual all the education that they need. Third, problems with learning are due to inadequate instruction or instructors. Fourth, recognition and reward should be given out evenly, regardless of effort or ability. Finally, entitlement is characterized by a feeling that Dubovsky characterized as “an
urgent need to relieve discomfort through action” (Dubovsky, 1986, p. 1673). Dubovsky explained that the final characteristic foreshadows the individual’s reaction when any of the prior four characteristics are not met. Examples of these reactions include rude and confrontational behavior (Greenberger, Lessard, Chen, & Farruggia, 2008), angry emails to professors (Lippmann, Bulanda, & Wagenaar, 2009), and attempted grade negotiations (Baer & Cheryomukhin, 2011).

The most contemporary definition of AEBs comes from the work of Kopp, Zinn, Finney, and Jurich (2011). They describe the phenomenon as, “the expectation that one should receive certain positive academic outcomes (e.g., good grades) in academic settings, often independent of performance” (p. 107). Kopp and colleagues arrived at their definition of AEBs through a critical review of the existing research and measures of the construct for the purpose of creating a more psychometrically sound measure of the construct. Through addressing the statistical inadequacies in prior AEBs measurement scales and the postulations of four experimental models, the researchers developed the most comprehensive measurement of AEBs to date. Due to the comprehensive nature of their study, their definition and measurement scale of AEBs were used for the present study.

Although AEBs have been discussed in the research literature as far back as the 1980s, the measurement of the construct has only gained prominence within the past decade. In fact, the majority of published scales measuring AEBs have entered the literature within the past five years (Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Greenberger, Lessard, Chen, & Farruggia, 2008; Jackson, Singleton-Jackson, & Frey, 2011; Kopp et al., 2011). The current rise in interest surrounding AEBs, in conjunction with the contemporary
increase in studies investigating the increase in both narcissism and general entitlement of incoming college students (Bourke & Mechler, 2010; Twenge, 2009; Twenge & Campbell, 2008) create a solid foundation for investigating factors that potentially contribute to AEBs, but have yet to be evaluated. The aim of the present study was to evaluate some of those potential factors.

Working from the Kopp et al. (2011) definition of AEBs, the current study investigated the relationship and potential relationships that a variety of student characteristics have with AEBs. Specific characteristics evaluated include: (a) demographic variables that contemporary literature has pointed to as potential indicators of AEBs; (b) students’ beliefs about academic responsibility assessed through critical evaluation of academic expectations before college and at different college levels, students’ beliefs about what is being bought with their tuition dollars (i.e., consumerism beliefs), beliefs about an overall inflated sense of self (i.e., narcissism beliefs), and locus of control beliefs; and (c) precursory factors evaluated through examination of students’ beliefs about parental practices that bolster AEBs, and impact students’ achievement goal orientation.

**Academic Responsibility**

**Academic Expectations**

High academic expectations are defined as anticipating positive outcomes in an educational setting. To achieve these positive outcomes, the expectations of high achievement must be accompanied by a requisite amount of effort by the student. If not, these expectations may become unrealistic and create a potential for AEBs. Although the origins of inflated academic expectations remain unclear, many researchers have begun
their investigations of the phenomenon at the high school level. Recent investigations into the expectations of the current generation of high school students have shown a significant increase in their self-evaluations of academic performance. For example, Twenge and Campbell (2008) used data from the Monitoring the Future (MTF) study to compare the responses of high school students from 1975 to responses of high school students in 2006. Twenge and Campbell’s results indicated that, compared to the 1975 cohort, students in 2006 believed themselves to be more intelligent than others their age, have higher ability than others their age, and have higher grades than others their age. These results proved more interesting after Twenge (2009) conducted a follow-up study utilizing a separate sample of data from the MTF study. Twenge found that, in comparison to the 1976 cohort, students from the 2006 cohort reported putting forth a significantly lower amount of effort into their academic preparation. The combination of these findings led Twenge to conclude that in comparison to students from the past, the present day high school student holds higher expectations of success in academics for less effort.

Unfortunately, the inflated beliefs about students’ academic expectations do not stop at the high school level. Shapiro (2012) evaluated 363 college freshmen on the first day of school to gain an understanding of their AEBs, superiority beliefs, and their tolerance for cheating. Shapiro’s results indicated that a majority of the students polled highly endorse questions addressing high AEBs. Although no significant results were found for student superiority, a positive relationship was found between tolerance for cheating and AEBs. Specifically, students who endorsed AEB questions also endorsed
questions aimed at assessing a high tolerance for cheating. These results give strength to the idea that AEBs are carried over from high school to the college level.

**Student Beliefs**

Related to AEBs and inflated expectations are other maladaptive beliefs of students, including beliefs about consumerism and narcissism. In the consumerism view, the perceived role of the student is skewed, based on the belief that the tuition and fees that they have paid entitle them to high grades, promotion, or a diploma, thus creating the false sense that they are a consumer of a product and not a student enrolled to learn (Franz, 1998). The student as customer (SAC) model (Finney & Finney, 2010) defines the interaction between institution and student in terms of a theory of exchange. This theory positions the school and the student in a reciprocal relationship where some goods or services are transferred between parties for different goods or services. This exchange can be symbolic, where the transfer of goods are more psychological or social in nature (e.g., tuition is perceived as payment for increasing one’s future job opportunities); or utilitarian, where the exchange is a transfer of goods (e.g., tuition for a diploma). SAC beliefs have been incorporated into some of the more recent measures of AEBs as components used to identify student beliefs about what is being purchased with their tuition dollars, how much control they should have in relation to their academic experience (e.g., class times, scheduled exams, attendance policy, etc.), and perceptions about the role of the instructor (Jackson et al., 2011; Kopp et al., 2011).

Both the consumerism beliefs of students and students’ expectations of high achievement for low effort have been shown to share a positive relationship with a more general sense of individual deservingness commonly referred to as narcissism. Although
research has indicated that the hubris associated with narcissism may yield short term benefits, the long term effects of narcissistic beliefs point towards more negative outcomes (Robins & Beers, 2001). Vazire and Funder (2006) conducted a meta-analysis of the literature on narcissism dating back to 1979, with a focus on how the impulsivity of narcissism results in detrimental outcomes. The researchers found three key areas where high narcissism results in negative outcomes. The first is interpersonal relationships. Through comparisons of scores from the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI) and evaluations of reviews from peers, participants with high NPI scores were perceived more negatively than peers with low NPI scores. Second, the findings indicated that the narcissist’s belief in self-enhancement hinders psychological adjustment. Specifically, when faced with negative feedback, narcissists have a tendency to respond with aggression and hostility. The final area is in academics. The narcissist’s self-enhancing beliefs bleed over into the academic domain via unrealistic expectations of their abilities. When their expectations are not met, the resulting action can lead to him or her engaging in a multitude of maladaptive behaviors in attempts to validate their self-enhancing beliefs. These behaviors include: academic dishonesty such as cheating and plagiarism, aggressive and uncivil outbursts directed at instructors and peers, and attributing the cause of their shortcomings to someone or something other than themselves (Brunell, Staats, Barden, & Hupp, 2011; Menon & Sharland, 2011; Stucke, 2003).

**Locus of Control**

If students expect high grades for little effort, believe that their tuition payments entitle them to beneficial academic outcomes, and hold self-beliefs that they are more
deserving than other people, then an important question arises. Whom do they believe controls these outcomes? To address this question, this paper turns to an examination of the literature on locus of control.

Control is defined as the extent to which students believe they can control their own academic outcomes (Perry, Hladkyj, Pekrun, Clifton, & Chipperfield, 2005). Students with a strong external locus of control carry the belief that academic outcomes are controlled by sources or people other than themselves. Students with a high internal locus of control carry the belief that they are personally responsible for their academic outcomes. One of Dubovsky’s (1986) outlined characteristics of AEBs was that other people will give all the information that is necessary. In more concise terms, one of the potential characteristics of AEBs is the tendency to endorse an external locus of control. Contemporary literature aimed at investigating AEBs has given support to the connection between AEBs and control beliefs. In the development of the Academic Entitlement Questionnaire (AEQ), Kopp et al. (2011) found strong positive relationships between AEBs and beliefs in external control among undergraduate college students. In evaluating the questions for their measure of AEBs, Chowning and Campbell (2009) found such a large endorsement of external control by participants, that two-thirds of their Academic Entitlement Scale (AES) was devoted to assessing beliefs about external responsibility.

**Motivational Beliefs**

In addition to academic responsibility, the motivational underpinnings of AEBs have also been a focal point of multiple studies and investigations. In reviewing the literature on AEBs and the potential relationships it shares with beliefs about academic
motivation, two areas of interest emerged: the over-involvement of parents that contribute to students’ beliefs about entitlement, and students’ achievement goal orientation.

**Parental Over-involvement**

Some parental practices potentially contribute to both the increase in external locus of control of present day college students as well as maladaptive motivational beliefs and behaviors. For the majority of college students, the college years are a critical period of time for developing independence and autonomy. However, there are parents who complicate this time period by involving themselves into every aspect of their college-age child’s life. Due to the overprotective and overinvolved actions of these parents, they have been labeled helicopter parents, who hover over their son or daughter and land to give assistance when necessary. To stay in near-constant contact with their children, many helicopter parents utilize cellular phones, instant messaging, and social networking sites to maintain what Strauss (2006) labeled an “electric umbilical cord” to ensure that they stay abreast of any situation deemed too much for their child to handle on his or her own.

In their evaluation of AEBs, Greenberger et al. (2008) found a strong positive relationship between the entitlement beliefs of college students and the academic expectations of their parents. Specifically, students’ reporting high AEBs also reported high expectations from their parents to outperform their scholastic peers as well as high levels of achievement anxiety. The same sample of students reporting high parental expectations also reported being extrinsically rewarded by parents when these expectations were met. These findings led the researchers to conclude that students who reported strong pressure from their parents to outperform their peers also reported strong
beliefs that grades were more important than mastering the material. The information discovered in Greenberger and colleagues’ study is interesting for two reasons. First, it gives evidence that academic pressures placed on students by their parents at an early age can have an effect on the student into their college years. Second, the positive relationship between high AEBs and the focus on grades over task mastery indicates a potential relationship between AEBs and achievement goals. The combination of parental influence with and parental endorsement of normative comparisons provided potential evidence of a link between AEBs and achievement goal theory (AGT).

**Achievement Goal Theory**

Since the late 20th Century, researchers investigating achievement goals have done so through the concepts of achievement goal theory (AGT; Dweck, 1986; Nichols, 1984). In general, AGT divides goal oriented behaviors into two distinct and opposing approaches to achievement: a mastery orientation, which is highlighted by behaviors focused at increasing personal competence; and a performance orientation, which includes behaviors focused on personal ability level relative to others. The most recent iteration of achievement goal theory has divided both the mastery and performance component into approach and avoidance components, creating a framework comparing four different behavior orientations (i.e., mastery-approach, mastery-avoidance, performance-approach, and performance-avoidance). Existence of the four different achievement goal orientations has been shown in both academic (Van Yperen, 2006) and occupational studies (Baranik, Barron, & Finney, 2007). In addition, AGT has been used to evaluate the utility of different AEB scales (Jackson, et al., 2011; Kopp et al., 2011). However, neither Jackson et al. (2011) nor Kopp et al. (2011) used all four components
of the 2x2 achievement goal theory in their studies. To get a better understanding of how the current goal orientations relate to AEBs, an assessment of the connections between AEBs and each goal orientation needs to be conducted.

The recent increase in the interest of AEBs has led to the postulation of different theories and subsequent development of different scales attempting to adequately measure the construct. Nascent investigations on AEBs have exposed multiple factors that both contribute and relate to these maladaptive beliefs. However, due in some part to the contemporary nature of the construct, the current literature focused on AEBs remains incomplete. Working from prior research on academic responsibility (i.e., student expectations and beliefs) and academic motivation, the literature review herein critically examines the contributions of factors previously connected with AEBs as well as identifies potential contributing factors not yet empirically evaluated in an effort to clarify the rationale for the proposed study.

The need for a more thorough understanding of how different student-related factors relate to AEBs is evident in the gaps in the current literature investigating the construct. Although the current research surrounding AEBs has focused on how to define and measure these beliefs, future research needs to build on the current knowledge base and investigate the connections that AEBs share with other student related factors. The rationale behind this study is to increase the knowledge base of AEBs through identifying student variables that are believed to contribute to the maladaptive belief system of AEBs. Through a more comprehensive understanding of the construct, educators can gain a better sense of how to address current AEBs as well as implement preventative measures to help curtail these beliefs before they have a chance to intensify. The
importance of this study lies in its ability to identify these contributing student factors and show how they interact with AEBs.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the following sections, prior research investigating AEBs and the relationships that these beliefs share with academic expectations, academic beliefs, and academic motivation will be reviewed. Reviewed first is the literature on the academic expectations of students prior to college as well as expectations of students at the university and community college level.

Academic Expectations

Pre-college Expectations

The academic expectations of high school students have continued to rise over the last few decades. In an effort to evaluate the extent of this rise, Goyette (2008) focused on educational expectations of high school students through analysis of data collected from a cohort of tenth grade students, parents, and teachers gathered from the High School and Beyond Survey (HSB) of 1980, the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS) of 1990, and the Educational Longitudinal Study (ELS) of 2002. Goyette’s results indicated that, from 1980 to 2002, the expectation of achieving a bachelor’s degree doubled from approximately 43% to 86%. One of the main reasons postulated to account for the increase in academic expectations was the subsequent increase in occupational expectations. Specifically, students who reported expecting occupations that required
minimal education increased from 26% to 39% over the 10-year period, but expectations of obtaining occupations requiring more extensive education nearly tripled from 13% to 32% over the same amount of time.

With such a large increase in the academic expectations of high school students, it would stand to reason that a subsequent increase in academic achievement would be necessary to bring these expectations to fruition. However, research investigating the relationship between academic expectations and academic achievement has yielded conflicting results. In a study comparing data from three different longitudinal studies (National Longitudinal Study [NLS], HSB, and the NELS) administered in three separate decades (1976-2000), Reynolds, Stewart, Macdonald, and Sischo (2006) compared high school seniors’ responses regarding educational expectations to their subsequent academic achievements. Similar to Goyette (2008), Reynolds and colleagues’ (2006) results indicated that the percentage of students reporting that they expected to obtain more than a bachelor’s degree nearly doubled from 1976 to 2000. In addition, the disparity between academic expectations and actual academic achievement nearly doubled as well, from 19% to 30%. Due in part to this disparity, Reynolds and colleagues performed a subsequent evaluation of grades, curriculum track, enrollment in college preparatory courses, and academic expectations to evaluate any shared relationship they may have with one another. The findings of this evaluation indicated a negative relationship across the variables. Specifically, academic expectations continued to increase over time as overall grades and enrollment in stringent curriculum tracks and college preparatory courses decreased. The results of their studies led Reynolds and colleagues to conclude that the future academic plans of high school students are getting
increasingly ambitious and, with regard to their academic achievement, increasingly unrealistic.

Although these results may come across as shocking or hard to believe, when viewed through the lens of AEBs, these statistics are more easily understood. One of the hallmark characteristics of AEBs is the belief that knowledge is a right and should be delivered with minimal effort on the part of the student (Dubovsky, 1986). Minimal academic effort and how it affects students’ academic future has been investigated as far back as the mid 1960’s (Stinchcombe, 1965). Stinchcombe believed that the effort put forth in school is regulated by how relevant the information being learned would be to their future success. Rosenbaum (1998) tested Stinchcombe’s hypothesis as a part of a study aimed at evaluating the role that effort plays in the future academic expectations of high school students. Through interviews and self-report surveys of high school seniors, Rosenbaum found that 40% of the student participants believed the effort they put forth in high school was irrelevant to them getting into college. Moreover, 78% of those students reported doing less than an hour of homework a day and 25.3% reported less than an hour of homework per week. Evaluation of the questions assessing relevance of the participants’ current coursework on future academic success indicated that 46% of the students believed that hard work in high school was not necessary for future academic success.

With high academic expectations and a strong belief that any effort put forth is good enough to get them into college, the question of how these beliefs get perpetuated arises. One explanation given by Rosenbaum (1998) is that these maladaptive beliefs are being bolstered by teachers and counselors through their continuous encouragement of all
students under the guise that every student can attend college regardless of whether or not the student has learned the academic skills necessary to succeed. Rosenbaum referred to this phenomenon as a “college-for-all” norm.

Although the underlying message of the “college for all” norms was designed to encourage students to maintain high achievement expectations in hopes that it would help motivate them to overcome their academic adversities, for some students, encouraging expectations of high achievement without addressing the necessary skills to meet the requirements necessary for high achievement can result in detrimental effects well into the college years. For example, Forsyth, Lawrence, Burnette, and Baumeister (2007) studied the effects of esteem bolstering messages in low performing college students and found that encouraging students’ sense of self does not always result in academic success. In their study, 86 students who had failed to achieve 80% mastery on their first major exam were randomly assigned to one of three groups: an esteem bolstering group, an internal locus of control group, and an experimental control group. At the onset of the study, each group received e-mail messages with a review question from the course. The esteem bolstering group received an additional message expressing the importance of maintaining high self-esteem. The internal locus of control group received an additional message expressing the importance of taking responsibility for their performance. The experimental control group received only the review questions. Participants in the groups were subdivided into two additional groups based on their exam grades: a C-group and a D/F group. Participants’ scores on the final exam were compared to their initial exam scores to evaluate the influences of the esteem bolstering and internal control bolstering messages. The researchers hypothesized that the addition of the two messages would
increase the achievement of the students in the experimental groups. The results indicated that for the C group, a slight but non-significant decrease occurred across participants in each of the message conditions. In the D/F group, the only significant result found was a significant decrease in grades for the participants in the self-esteem bolstering message group. These results led the researchers to conclude that encouraging student’s expectations of achievement without addressing the skills necessary to meet the requirements necessary for high achievement can result in decreased academic performance, especially in lower performing students.

University Expectations

Beliefs about academic entitlement are not restricted to the high school level. The vast majority of the research investigating AEBs has focused on the entitlement beliefs of students at the university level. Similar to pre-college studies, a major focal point of research at the college level is the discrepancy between expectation and effort. For example, Clayson (2005) evaluated the incongruence between academic expectations and academic effort by examining the estimated test scores of 100 undergraduate marketing students against their actual test score. Participants were asked to estimate their test score upon completion of an examination on three separate occasions during the academic semester, yielding three separate estimation-actual grade pairs. Initial results showed a significantly negative relationship between the grade students expected on an exam and the actual grade students achieved. Specifically, the majority of the students asked to estimate their grade on the final examination tended to have lower actual grades than previously estimated. However, the researcher found no significant relationships between the estimation-actual grade pairs and any of the questions related to class
performance. This result led the researcher to conclude that the inflated expectations were not due to a lack of competence, but to a belief in a subjective level of performance set by prior experience and expectations.

Similar to Clayson’s (2005) study, Landrum (1999) asked participants to report the amount of effort they believe they put into a course (failure, below average, average, superior, distinguished), the grade they expected to receive at the end of the course, and the letter grade that the students believed should be attached to each of the amounts of effort. For example, a letter grade of A would be attached to a distinguished level of effort. The researcher found that, although approximately 94% of the students reported believing that an average amount of effort was equivalent to a letter grade of C, 72% of the students in the sample who reported putting forth an average amount of effort expected a letter grade of A or B. This result led to the conclusion that the expectation of high grades does not coincide with the understood amount of effort necessary to attain those grades.

Landrum and Dillinger (2000) expanded on the earlier findings of Landrum (1999) by asking students from seven different majors to compare the amount of effort they felt they put forth in a course to the grade they expected to receive from the course. Approximately 71% of students who reported giving an amount of effort that was below average reported expecting a grade of C or higher. Moreover, 63% of students reporting giving an average amount of effort expected a grade of B or higher (Landrum & Dillinger, 2000). In an additional component of the study, researchers compared both the students’ reported amount of effort and expected grades to their actual course grade at the end of the semester. Results of the comparison indicated that approximately 45% of the
students in the entire sample received a grade higher than expected. Moreover, 53% of the students, who reported putting forth an average amount of effort, actually received a grade of B or higher. These results led the researchers to conclude that students’ expectations may be driven by grade inflation. Specifically, if the majority of grades in a course are A’s and B’s, then average performance would result in one of those grades because it would put them in the middle of the normal grading distribution.

Similar to students’ expectations of high achievement for little effort in college, is the reported reduction in academic preparation of students for college. Academic preparation is defined as time devoted to learning outside of the learning classroom. This includes: studying, reading, writing, engaging in homework or lab work, data analysis, rehearsal, and academically-related activities (National Survey of Student Engagement, 2012, p. 9). One of the most widely accepted rules of thumb for academic preparation is to allot 2 hours of study time for every 1 hour of class time (McCormick, 2011). For example, in a three-hour course, a student should expect to devote six hours outside of class to their studies. For a 9-hour semester course load, the amount of time devoted to academic preparation should be approximately 18 hours. According to the National Survey of Student Engagement (2012), approximately 57% of the college seniors participating in the study indicated spending 15 hours or less of their time on class preparation. In addition, data from the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (2012) indicated that approximately 76% of incoming college freshmen devoted 15 hours or less to academically preparing for classes in high school. These findings indicated that the majority of college seniors and incoming freshman prepare for class 3 hours less than the recommended amount.
To investigate undergraduate students’ perceptions of academic preparation directly, Ansburg (2001) compared students’ grade assigning perceptions through comparing student’s expectations with their beliefs about academic preparation in three unique categories: student-reported easy courses, student-reported hard courses, and student-reported courses that were taught at a moderate level. Results indicated that students believed that higher grades should be given more often in the easy course than in the moderate level course, and more often in the moderate level course than in the hard course. Students also reported that low grades (C’s and D’s) should follow a distinctly opposite pattern than high grades. Specifically, fewer C’s and D’s should be given in the easier course than the moderate level course, and fewer C’s and D’s should be given in the appropriate level course than in the hard course. Participants also stated that approximately 50% of students taught in a class at the appropriate level should receive a high grade (A or B). With regard to academic preparation, students reported that an appropriate amount of time to devote to studying outside of class is less than 5 hours per week for all classes combined. These findings reflect college students’ beliefs that little effort and academic preparation are necessary to make high grades in college level courses as well as the belief that grades should be inversely proportionate to perceived difficulty of the course.

Community College Expectations

A substantial portion of the extant literature investigating academic preparation has focused on preparing students to transition from high school into college. One avenue that many students pursue to achieve a college education is to first attend community college and then transfer to a four-year university. However, investigations
on AEBs at the community college level are virtually nonexistent. This is puzzling due to the large numbers of students enrolling at these institutions. Rosenbaum, Deil-Amen, and Pearson (2006) indicated that the increase in community college enrollment has increased by approximately 500% since 1965. By 2009, community colleges were serving over 41% of the nation’s undergraduate population, which is roughly 8.2 million students (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2010).

Although still a viable outlet for vocation and trade skills, the community college system is also recognized as an alternate route to accessing a college degree for individuals not academically prepared for the rigors of a four-year institution. However, studies have indicated that these underprepared students enrolled in community college have lower course completion rates, higher test anxiety, less persistence, and lower re-enrollment numbers than their prepared counterparts (Grimes, 1997). In addition, research has indicated a couple of policies inherent in the community college system that may indirectly aid in perpetuating the AEBs that students have carried with them since high school. First, the majority of community colleges do not maintain stringent entry requirements. Where most four-year institutions require applicants to meet a minimum test score on a standardized college entrance exam, admission at the community college level requires little more than a high school diploma or a certificate of general educational development (GED). The open access policies fostered by these institutions potentially promote the belief that any effort above what they already exert is unnecessary for future academic success because no additional academic effort is necessary to attend (Toby, 2010). Second, community colleges offer remedial courses for students who may not have the necessary academic skills to gain admission into a 4-
If students enter college under the impression that any skills they did not learn in high school can be made up for in college, then the possibility of decreased effort in high school increases, perpetuating the “college for all” ethos. However, depending on the academic level of the student, multiple semesters of developmental courses might be required before they meet the requirements to take a course for college credit (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010).

**Summary of Expectations**

In reviewing the literature on education expectations and how they are related to AEBs, two points of interest emerge. First, the majority of studies investigating student expectations at the college level are descriptive in nature. Studies showing relationships with other academic variables or inferring any potential differences across students are minimal. The expectation of high grades independent of individual achievement is a hallmark of the AEB system. Through a more thorough examination of entitlement beliefs at the college level, researchers may achieve a more coherent understanding of the lofty expectations of students at different levels of academia. A second gap in the current literature that needs to be addressed with regard to student expectations is the age differences of students. Although research has compared students expectations from different time periods (e.g. Kuh & Hu, 1999) and across different majors (Landrum & Dillinger, 2000), the literature is lacking in studies investigating the expectations of students of different ages within the class. Due to the fact that persons enter college at different stages of their life, including an age variable in evaluations of AEBs may direct future research to groups of students where AEBs are more concentrated.
Second, through critical examination of the academic entitltment literature, none of the studies focusing on AEBs have used community college exposure as a variable of interest. However, research has suggested that some of the policies and procedures of the community college system may be unintentionally bolstering AEBs and promoting students who are not prepared for university level academics (Bailey et al., 2010; Toby, 2010). Evaluating the amount of time students have spent attending community colleges may offer some insight into the extent to which AEBs are carried over into the university system.

**Student Beliefs**

AEBs are not only affected by student expectations but also by their concurrent beliefs about the mission of education and their role in society. This section turns to analysis of student beliefs about consumer aspect of college and their narcissism. Each of these have been implicated as contributing to the phenomena of AEBs (e.g. Chowning & Campbell; Greenberger et al., 2008; Kopp et al., 2011).

**Consumerism**

A commonality shared by both community colleges and 4-year universities is the reliance on student tuition dollars as revenue to keep the institutions open and functioning. Increases in student enrollment translate into more tuition dollars, which in turn generates more revenue. To increase enrollment, institutions may emphasize different features of the university above academics. These features include state of the art gymnasiums, modern residential facilities, and a variety of entertainment and dining options. A downside to this type of marketing strategy is the potential for students to
perceive themselves more as a customer buying the college experience than a student attending school to increase their knowledge base. This phenomenon is contemporarily referred to as consumerism.

There is no shortage of models attempting to interpret beliefs about consumerism. However, few of the models highlight the impact that the phenomenon has on the student as a learner. In the Potts (2005) model, Potts suggested that applying a consumer model to higher education redefines academic success as the goal of graduating or obtaining a degree. From this perspective, academic honesty and educational inquiry are secondary to doing what is necessary to obtain one’s goal. The role of the instructor changes from educating students to ensuring that the student is satisfied with their purchase. In a sense, the student is the customer, making payments each semester until their diploma has finally been paid off.

A similar perspective comes from the research of Ness and Osborn (2010), who suggests that the effectiveness of the educational process as it relates to the student as a consumer is determined by three key categories. Ness and Osborn titled the first category “edu-tainment”. The goal of edu-tainment is to keep the student entertained while in learning classroom. Ensuring that the student is entertained is the most important job of the instructor. From the institutional standpoint, entertained students will maintain their enrollment and possibly communicate their satisfaction to peers, thus increasing enrollment in the most entertaining classes. Entertaining instructors receive positive student evaluations. Positive student evaluations help instructors achieve tenure and job security. The second category deals with the practicality of the instruction. Specifically, how the information taught in the class can be immediately applied in the students’
everyday life. Consumers want to be able to use their purchase at or before the time of payment. This stands in stark contrast to the traditional model of higher education that is based on constructing a foundation for lifelong learning, not immediate satisfaction. However, from the consumer perspective, the sooner the information can be used, the more practical and effective it is perceived to be. The final category is the relevance of the course material to the student from the perspective of the student. Effectiveness in this category is measured in relation to the extent that the student believes the information taught in the course holds personal relevance. In Ness and Osborn’s (2010) model, the role of education shifts from teaching students what they should know to selling information about what they should do.

Studies aimed at investigating the consumerism beliefs of students have yielded interesting results. To evaluate the SAC perspective, Finney and Finney (2010) investigated consumerism beliefs among college students using self-reports of overall psychological entitlement, student satisfaction with their current school, attitudes toward complaining, educational involvement, a single question measure asking the students’ belief about their role as a customer of their university, and demographic variables. Overall, students with higher beliefs that they were customers of the university felt more entitled to academic outcomes. Further dissemination of the data indicated that age was a significant predictor of both consumer and entitlement beliefs. Specifically, older students were more likely to report that they are customers of the university than were younger participants. However, younger students were more likely to report feelings of overall entitlement. With regard to involvement, Finney and Finney found no relationship between consumerism beliefs and students’ educational involvement.
However, they did find a positive relationship between entitlement beliefs and educational involvement, leading them to conclude that students may believe that effort given both inside and outside of the classroom should entitle them to beneficial academic outcomes, regardless of their actual achievement.

In a similar study, Delucchi and Korgen (2002) gave questionnaires to college students assessing behaviors and attitudes related to their college experience. Approximately 43% of students reported that they believe they deserve a degree due to payment of tuition and regardless of academic effort. In addition, 73% of participants stated that they preferred taking a course in which they would learn little to nothing and be given a high grade rather than a course that required more effort for the higher grade.

To assess in-class responsibility, Delucchi and Korgen asked students the extent to which they believe it was the instructor’s duty to keep the student engaged. Fifty-three percent of the participants reported believing that it was the instructor’s job to maintain their attention. In addition to keeping and maintaining student’s attention, 25% of participants believed that the instructor should consider factors other than the student’s academic performance (e.g., financial need, maintain GPA, graduate school entrance requirements) when assigning grades.

The findings of their study led Delucchi and Korgen (2002) to draw some interesting conclusions. First, almost one-half of the participants reported that a degree is owed them due to payment of tuition. This finding led the researchers to conclude that if the consumerism minded student does not obtain the grade they want by academic means, they will just demand it. Second, the majority of students believed that it was the job of the instructor to ensure that the student pays attention, leading the researchers to conclude
that the consumerist minded student believes that they should be entertained by the instructor.

In a more recent study assessing students’ beliefs about consumerism, Singleton-Jackson, Jackson, and Reinhardt (2010) used focus groups to evaluate the responses of 52 undergraduates ranging in age from 18 to 25. Participants were randomly placed into focus groups of seven to 10 people each. The participants were asked questioned in a semi-structured interview format about what they believed their education was worth. Qualitative analysis of audio tapes of the interviews indicated the emergence of six distinct themes that reveal students’ consumerist ideas about the nature of college. The first was product value of education, or what the students believed the goal of their education was. Approximately 35% of the students reported that the goal of their education was to get a good job. The second theme was social promotion, or getting academic credit for non-academic reasons. Responses included beliefs that instructors should always round grades up, give credit for effort, or advance students based on a specific need (e.g., keep scholarship, maintain GPA). The third theme was the role of the professor. This theme was hallmarked by the idea that the professor works for the student and should be available at the students’ discretion. The fourth theme was the role of teaching assistants. One of the most frequent responses under this theme was that the teaching assistant should know how to teach. Ironically, this response was not an identified response with regard to questions addressing the role of the professor. The fifth theme was the role of the administration. This theme was marked by responses that the administrators get paid too much money for too little work. The final theme was shoppers or scholars, in which the interviewer directly asked the focus groups if they
believed they were customers of their university. Multiple participants’ responses affirmed the belief that students were customers of their universities, with multiple respondents citing the payment of tuition as a major component of their belief. An overarching theme, which was present in all of the minor themes, was that the students wanted more control over their academic future as indicated by their dissatisfaction with scheduling, tuition cost, and the amount of work required of them.

The findings of research investigating consumerism beliefs draw some interesting parallels to some of the original characteristics of AEBs. One of the earliest characteristics of AEBs is the idea that other people will give all the education that is necessary (Dubovsky, 1986). With regard to consumerism, those “other people” are the instructors and administrators who are responsible for the class. Many of the consumerism models place the instructor in the position of entertainer or service provider (Franz, 1998; Ness & Osborn, 2010; Potts, 2005). Skewed perceptions of the instructor have also been found in the responses of students when asked their beliefs about the instructor’s role (Delucchi & Korgen, 2002; Singleton-Jackson et al., 2010). The perceptions of the instructor’s role mirror the AEB characteristic that any problem with learning is due to inadequate instruction of instructors (Dubovsky, 1986). According to the literature, the consumer oriented student holds a belief that they are paying for a product (e.g., high grades, promotion, and diploma). If this product is not received or the student is not satisfied with the outcome, then the responsibility for this dissatisfaction or lack of product is placed on the provider of the product (e.g., the instructor and administration).
Narcissism

Another belief that has gained a great deal of support with regard to AEBs is the general sense of inflated self-importance commonly referred to as narcissism, which has been shown to be indicative of overall entitlement (Brown, Budzek, & Tamborski, 2009). A large body of research focusing on narcissism has focused on the generation of students born between 1982 and 2002 (Rickes, 2009). Commonly referred to as Millennials, Generation Y, and the Me Generation, this cohort of entering college students has been described as more self-serving than any other generation that has come before them (Bourke & Mechler, 2010; Stewart, 2009; Twenge, 2009; Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010; Twenge, Konrath, Foster, Campbell, & Bushman, 2008a, 2008b). One source of evidence of this generational increase in narcissism is the meta-analytical study performed by Stewart and Bernhardt (2010). To evaluate potential generational differences in psychological characteristics of college students, Stewart and Bernhardt compared data from college students in school from 2004-2008 to data from students who were in school before 1987. Sample data was gathered from the California Psychological Inventory (CPI) data repository for both groups. The researchers chose to evaluate the psychological characteristics of self-assurance, impulse control, achievement assets, health and well-being, and narcissism. Results indicated that the data from the 2004-2008 groups were significantly higher than the pre-1987 group on the narcissism estimate, but significantly lower on the other five variables.

Similar findings were found by Twenge et al. (2008a) through meta-analysis of the NPI scores of college students from 1979 to 2006. The researchers found a significant positive correlation between scores on the NPI and year in school.
Specifically, overall scores on the NPI increased over the 29 year period of data investigated. Further analysis of the data indicated that narcissistic beliefs had increased approximately 30% since 1979. These results led the researches to conclude that present day college students are more narcissistic than the college students of years past and that the trend is steadily growing.

Culture and gender have also been shown to play a large role in narcissistic beliefs (Foster, Campbell, & Twenge, 2003). In a study of over 3,000 participants worldwide and employing the NPI as their measure, Foster and colleagues found that participants from cultures with a more group focused orientation (collectivistic) reported lower levels of narcissistic beliefs than participants from cultures that focus on the individual (individualistic). Male participants reported higher narcissistic beliefs than females before and after age and income were controlled for. When age was evaluated, researchers found that the younger respondents reported higher levels of narcissistic beliefs both before and after possible confounding variables (gender and income) were accounted for.

To evaluate student’s impressions of themselves in an academic setting, Robins and Beer (2001) conducted two studies to evaluate student self-appraisals. The first study involved a collaborative task involving group decision-making. After completion of the task, the participants were asked to evaluate their performance, their peers’ performance, and how they believe their peers would evaluate them. Findings from the first study indicated that self-evaluations of performance were higher than the performance ratings given to the individuals by their peers. Peer evaluations of individuals and individuals’ beliefs about peer evaluations were not different. These findings led the researchers to
conclude that individuals maintained bias beliefs about their own performance even when they evaluate themselves from other people’s perspective.

In the second study, Robins and Beers (2001) had first year college students complete questionnaires on their self-perceived academic ability, narcissism, self-serving attributions for their academic performance, ego involvement in academic achievement, self-esteem, and subjective well-being. Academic ability, academic achievement, and graduation status were also measured. Participants were assessed annually for four years. The results of the questionnaires indicated that students with self-enhancing beliefs consistently reported believing they would get higher grades than their peers. Comparisons of the academic achievement of participants reporting self-enhancing beliefs with their peers indicated that the students reporting self-enhancing beliefs did not outperform their peers, nor were they more likely to graduate than their peers. These findings led Robins and Beers to conclude that self-enhancing beliefs do not have any clear academic benefits.

To evaluate how narcissism relates to entitlement, Greenberger et al. (2008) incorporated the construct into the development of their measurement of AEBs. Their scale was constructed to evaluate how self-serving students believed their academic experience should be. The researchers defined AEBs as “a construct that includes expectations of high grades for modest effort and demanding attitudes towards teachers” (p.1193), and investigated the potential relationships that AEBs might share with other personality variables. Greenberger and colleagues compared 466 undergraduate students on seven separate measurements: a general psychological entitlement scale, a non-exploitive entitlement scale, an exploitive entitlement scale, their measure of AEBs,
narcissism, work orientation, and social commitment. Their results indicated a significant positive relationship between responses on their AEBs scale and general psychological entitlement, exploitive entitlement and narcissism. However, a negative relationship was found to exist between responses on the scale and work orientation, social commitment, and self-esteem. The combination of relationships across these variables led the researchers to two conclusions: (1), that AEBs are not solely a “reflection of exaggerated self-esteem” (Greenberger et al., 2008; p. 1197) and (2) the idea that students endorsing high AEBs expect rewards and special treatments that exceed their actual achievement, regardless of how it affects others.

To directly investigate the relationship between narcissism and academically dishonest behaviors, Brunell, Staats, Barden, and Hupp (2011) divided 199 college students into two groups and asked them to complete a questionnaire on cheating. Each questionnaire asked questions addressing feelings of guilt and academically dishonest behaviors. One group responded to questions about their opinions of their own cheating behaviors and the other group responded to questions regarding their opinions on the cheating behaviors of their peers. In addition to the questionnaires on cheating, each participant was asked to complete the NPI. Comparison of the questionnaires indicated that participants responding to questions about themselves reported engaging in academically dishonest behaviors less and feeling more guilt than participants responding to questions about their peers. Correlations of the responses of the questionnaires from participants answering questions about themselves with their responses on the NPI showed a significant positive relationship between academic dishonesty and narcissism. Further analysis of the relationship between the NPI and participant responses indicated
that the Exhibitionism subscale of the NPI was a significantly negative predictor of guilt but a significantly positive predictor of academic dishonesty for participants who answered questions about themselves. However, these relationships were not found in the other group. These findings led the researchers to conclude that due to the need for admiration, as measured by high endorsement of statements on the Exhibitionist subscale of the NPI, individuals with high narcissistic beliefs in order to demonstrate their superiority, will engage in dishonest academic behaviors more often and feel less guilt about doing so than their less narcissistic peers.

The behaviors associated with narcissistic beliefs fall in line with Dubovsky’s characteristic of AEBs that outlines the need of the entitled individual to engage in actions in order to relieve discomfort when the self-serving beliefs that they hold are not met (1986). Greenberger et al. (2008) indicated a relationship between narcissistic beliefs and AEBs in the construction of their measure. Narcissism has also been shown to be connected with morally questionable behaviors such as academic dishonesty and cheating (Brunell et al., 2011; Vazire & Funder, 2006). Narcissism has also been linked to younger college students (Bourke & Mechler, 2010; Stewart, 2009; Twenge, 2009; Twenge et al., 2010; Twenge et al., 2008a, 2008b).

**Summary of Student Beliefs**

The age related findings of student beliefs are of particular interest. First, consumerism beliefs were shown to be more prevalent in older students than in younger (Finney & Finney, 2010). Second, younger students have reported higher beliefs in overall entitlement (Finney & Finney, 2010) and narcissism than older students (Bourke & Mechler, 2010; Stewart, 2009; Twenge, 2009; Twenge et al., 2010; Twenge et al.,
However, the links between age, consumerism, and narcissism have currently not been evaluated collectively with regard to the relationship they share with AEBs. A more thorough evaluation of how these variables collectively interact with AEBs, may aid in a better understanding of AEBs as well as increase the current understanding of the role age plays across all three constructs.

**Locus of Control**

In conjunction with findings indicating an increase in student narcissism in recent years (Twenge et al., 2008a), contemporary research has also indicated an increase in student beliefs in external control (Twenge, Zhang, & Im, 2004). External control is a facet of the construct locus of control. Locus of control is defined as “a generalized expectancy to perceive reinforcement either contingent upon one’s own behaviors (internal control) or as the result of forces beyond one’s control (external control)” (Levenson, 1981, p. 15). To evaluate the increase in beliefs in external control, Twenge and colleagues (2004) compared control beliefs of students of varying ages in two separate studies. In the first study, the researchers collected locus of control data from self-reports of college students between 1960 and 2002. The findings of this study indicated that on average, the cohort of college students in 2002 reported having an 80% higher belief in external control than the 1960 cohort. The second study evaluated external beliefs of students between grades four and eight across the same time interval as the first study. Twenge et al. (2004) found a significant increase in beliefs of external locus of control among adolescents in 2002 compared to adolescents in the 1960 cohort, leading the researchers to conclude that beliefs in external control have been steadily increasing over that time period.
The largest downside to the increase in external control beliefs is the resulting
effects that it has on achievement. Across the majorities of studies examining control
beliefs and how these beliefs interact with academic achievement, researchers have
indicated that beliefs in external control are maladaptive and result in negative academic
outcomes. For example, Perry, Hladkyi, Pekrun, Clifton, and Chipperfield (2005)
compared college students’ responses from a questionnaire addressing control beliefs to
their cumulative GPA three years after the survey was administered. The researchers
found a significantly negative relationship between external control and GPA as well as a
significantly positive relationship between internal control and GPA in all three years of
the study. In addition, external locus of control was shown to have a significantly
positive relationship with the number of classes that students withdrew from. These
findings led the researchers to conclude that perceived control has a direct effect on
college students’ academic achievement.

Another example comes from the work of Carden, Bryant, and Moss (2004), who
found that students with high beliefs in external control showed higher levels of
procrastination and test anxiety, but lower GPAs than the participants with beliefs in an
internal locus of control. Similar results were also found by Kirkpatrick, Stant, Downes,
and Gaither (2008) in their study comparing students’ perception of control with course
grades. Their results showed that students reporting an external control orientation had
course averages one full letter grade below students reporting an internal control
orientation.

Currently, the relationship between external control beliefs and AEBs has been
evaluated in the construction of two scales used to measure AEBs. Using the Personal
Achievement subscale of the Spheres of Control Scale (a scale developed to measure locus of control across three key areas of life: personal achievement, interpersonal relationships, and socio-political) as a component of their evaluation of the AES, Chowning and Campbell (2009) found a significantly negative relationship between the Personal Achievement subscale and the External Responsibility subscale of the AES, indicating that participants who endorsed AEBs also endorsed beliefs that their achievement was not theirs to control, but dependent upon some externally controlled factor. Kopp et al. (2011) utilized the Levenson Locus of Control Scale (LOCS), which bifurcates external control beliefs into chance beliefs and powerful others beliefs (Levenson, 1981) in the evaluation of their AE measure. According to Levenson (1981), chance beliefs are highlighted by the belief that outcomes are decided by fate. For example, a student with a high chance belief might attribute a good grade on a test to being lucky that day. Powerful others beliefs are beliefs indicating that outcomes are decided by people who are perceived to have power over them. Using the LOCS, Kopp et al. (2011) found significant positive relationships between chance beliefs and the AEQ as well as significant positive relationships between powerful others beliefs and the AEQ. The results from both the Chowning and Campbell (2009) and Kopp et al. (2011) studies indicate a positive relationship between AEBs and external control beliefs.

The powerful others component of external control as defined by Levenson (1981) fits well with Dubovsky’s (1986) characteristic of AEBs that maintains that other people will provide the individual all the education that is needed. Specifically, if individuals with external beliefs identify the instructor as a powerful other, then from the students’ perspective, the responsibility for their personal academic achievement falls
solely on the instructor. The most common outcome measure of academic achievement in education today is grades. Therefore, according to the powerful others perspective, it is the instructor’s responsibility to give the student the grade the student believes they deserve, and not the students’ responsibility to earn that grade.

Research investigating the relationship between external control and perceptions of the role of the instructor has yielded some interesting results. Goulden and Griffin (1997) found that the majority of participants in their study believed that teachers should take into account student effort when assigning grades. In addition, 40% of the students in the study believed that they could obtain a higher grade by negotiating with the instructor. This finding falls in line with Dubovsky’s (1986) characteristic of AEBs that claims students high in AEBs have an urgent need to relieve discomfort through action. However, in contrast to the students’ beliefs, only 13% of the instructors polled for the study believed in changing grades due to attempted negotiations on the part of the student. Similar findings were reached by Gautney and Cann (2001) in their study investigating students’ expectations of instructors’ grading procedures. Of the participants, 74% reported believing that when they receive a grade lower than expected, the low grade was due to the instructor being negligent with regard to understanding the amount of effort the student put into their work.

The desire of students with external control orientations to want instructors to include effort as a component of the grading procedures (Gautney & Cann, 2001; Goulden & Griffin, 1997) is puzzling for three reasons. First, research has shown that students have a working understanding of what letter grade should be attached to specific levels of effort (Landrum, 1999; Landrum & Dillinger, 2000). Second, research has
shown a marked decrease in the amount of academic effort and preparation put forth by students (ACT, 2005; Ansburg, 2001). However, studies have shown that students still expect high grades for the minimum effort they put forth (Landrum, 1999; Landrum & Dillinger, 2000). Finally, external control is highlighted by beliefs that the individual is not responsible for their own personal outcomes. If the individual does not believe that they are responsible for their own outcomes, then their concern with evaluations of their individual effort comes into question. A more critical evaluation of how control beliefs relate to AEBs may give more insight into how these constructs interact.

**Motivational Beliefs**

Motivation is defined as the urge or drive to accomplish something and, in relation to academics, is customarily divided into intrinsic and extrinsic components (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Intrinsic motivation is the accomplishment of some activity for its inherent value. Extrinsic motivation is typically viewed as accomplishing an activity for some external reward or benefit. In this section, two distinct factors of motivational beliefs that have been connected with students’ AEBs (i.e., parental over-involvement and achievement goal theory) are reviewed.

**Parental Over-involvement**

A healthy parent-offspring relationship has been shown to facilitate positive academic, social, and emotional development during their sons’ or daughters’ college years (Mattanah, Hancock, & Brand, 2004). However, there is a growing body of research that has focused on a more maladaptive parent-offspring relationship called helicopter parenting. The practices associated with helicopter parenting are highlighted
by the parent interjecting themselves into every aspect of their sons’ or daughters’ life. In
an effort to identify some of the maladaptive parental practices associated with helicopter
parenting (i.e., parental over-involvement) from other forms of parental involvement,
Padilla-Walker and Nelson (2012) created a model investigating how helicopter parents’
behaviors related to their offspring’s academic behaviors. Four hundred thirty-eight
students and at least one of their parents filled out questionnaires on the extent to which
the parent hovered, attempted to control their child (behaviorally and psychologically),
and gave the students autonomy. The students alone answered self-report measures of
self-worth, school engagement, and perception of adulthood and identity. Results
indicated that helicopter parenting was a positive predictor of parental over-involvement
and a negative predictor of both autonomy and school engagement, leading the
researchers to suggest that helicopter parenting may foster a dependency on external
sources in the decision making processes of students and contribute to their lack of
independence and preparation for their future.

In a similar study, Segrin, Woszildo, Givertz, Bauer, and Murphy (2012) surveyed
538 pairs of college students and their parents on multiple constructs dealing with
parenting involvement and well-being. The parents completed questionnaires on their
individual parenting style, family environment, a measure of over parenting, and parent-
child communication. The students completed measures evaluating their beliefs about
family satisfaction, general entitlement, self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, and positive
relationship with others. Segrin and colleagues found a significantly positive relationship
between reports of over parenting and general entitlement. These findings led the
researchers to conclude that the protective nature of the helicopter parent may foster a belief in their offspring that they deserve similar treatment from others.

The combination of findings from Padilla-Walker and Nelson (2012), and Segrin and colleagues (2012) both indicate the potential for students to foster a belief in an external locus of control due to the over involvement of their parents. Evaluating this phenomenon from the perspective of Levenson’s (1981) model of control, the helicopter parent could potentially be perceived as a powerful other. Recall that Levenson defined powerful others as a component of external control highlighted by beliefs that outcomes are decided by people who are perceived to have power over them. Munich and Munich (2009) suggest three potential characteristics of over involved parents that contribute to the perception of the parent as powerful other. First is the overreaction to negative feedback about their child. For example, a student receives a bad grade on a test. Because the helicopter parent feels the need to fix their child’s problems, the parent goes straight to the department head to advocate for their offspring. The parent does not contact the instructor, nor does the parent question the amount of time or effort their son or daughter put into preparing for the examination. A second characteristic is the placing of blame for their offspring’s academic discrepancies directly on the instructor. For example, a student receives a bad grade on a test. The over-involved parent attributes the lack of their son or daughter’s achievement on the instructor for not being entertaining enough to keep the student engaged, or for scheduling classes and tests at times that are too inconvenient. Munich and Munich’s final characteristic highlighting how the over-involved parent could potentially be perceived as a powerful other is the need of the overinvolved parent to advocate for their son or daughter at every level. Examples of this
characteristic include: contacting the instructor to ask them to extend a deadline, calling the department to inform the instructor that their child will not be in class due to illness, attempting to negotiate academic due dates and times that conflict with their son or daughter’s personal schedule, and delivering excuses to attempt to explain their son or daughter’s conduct or lack of achievement.

Although both locus of control beliefs and parental over-involvement have been used in scales developed to measure AEBs (Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Greenberger et al., 2008; Kopp et al, 2011), to date, none of the scales have used both variables in the development of their models. The only measure that did incorporate parental over-involvement found significant positive relationships between AEBs and students’ beliefs about parental achievement expectations, achievement pressure, and rewards for achievement (Greenberger et al., 2008). An evaluation of beliefs surrounding student responsibility and the motivational construct of helicopter parenting could potentially give insight into the relationship that these two variables share with each other as well as AEBs.

Achievement Goal Theory

In addition to the potential external contributions to students’ AEBs made by specific parenting practices, a more direct examination of the internal motivational beliefs of students needs to be evaluated as well. A common theme that is present across the majority of definitions of AEBs is the idea that high grades and academic rewards should be given regardless of the amount of personal effort put forth to attain them. If students’ strongly endorse the idea that they shouldn’t have to work for academic gains, then an
investigation into students’ motivation to achieve may provide a more comprehensive understanding of how these beliefs originate.

Achievement motivation has been an important area of research in increasing the understanding of the underlying mechanisms of student learning for over a quarter century. At its earliest inception, achievement motivation was measured by behaviors oriented towards establishing or expressing high ability (Nicholls, 1984). Nicholls’ conceptual model of achievement behaviors were bisected into two distinct and opposing approaches to achievement: a learning orientation, which is highlighted by behaviors focused at increasing personal competence; and a performance orientation, which includes behaviors focused on evaluation of ability level relative to others. For learning-oriented individuals, achievement is gained through success on tasks judged to be difficult. However, for the performance-oriented individual, achievement is gained through either demonstrating higher ability relative to a normative group or avoiding demonstrating low ability in relation to that same group. For example, to demonstrate high ability, an individual would have to succeed where others have failed, such as a making the best grade on a test. To avoid demonstrating low ability, an individual would engage in tasks that the majority of the normative group would succeed in, or tasks that everyone in the group would likely accomplish.

Dweck (1986) conceptualized achievement motivation in much the same way. Dweck’s learning goals, which she referred to as behaviors meant to increase competence, understanding, or mastery of something new, parallel the learning orientation of Nichols (1984). Similarly, Dweck’s (1986) performance goals were conceptualized as behaviors with the purpose of either gaining positive judgments of
one’s competence or avoiding negative judgments of one’s competence in relation to a normative group. Learning goals were seen as the more adaptive of the two orientations. Individuals with learning goal orientations tend to persist when confronted with difficulties and seek out challenges aimed at increasing their knowledge base. Performance-oriented individuals tend to quit when confronted with difficulties and avoid challenges due to not wanting to display low competence.

Through critical evaluation of how students’ perceived ability relates to achievement motivation, Elliot and Dweck (1988) further distinguished learning goals from performance goals. Through a series of tasks in which both perceived ability and goal orientation were manipulated, the researchers refined Dweck’s (1986) initial concept of achievement goals. Specifically, Elliot and Dweck (1988) found that individuals endorsing performance goal orientations base their future ability on their current perceived ability. The performance-oriented individual perceives errors as failure to reach one’s goal. However, the focus of learning goal oriented individuals is not on current ability but information mastery. These individuals perceive errors as weak points in ability that need to be resolved for future success. The results of their study gave support to the idea that achievement motivation is separated into two different learning orientations.

To evaluate the dual orientation model in a real world scenario, Ames and Archer (1988) studied how achievement goals and motivation are related in a working classroom. To assess students’ goal orientations, a questionnaire was developed that focused on mastery and normative (performance) goals as they relate to the climate of the classroom (i.e. what type of goal system is fostered in the classroom). The questionnaire
was given in a packet with self-reports assessing learning strategies, task preference (easy/difficult), attitudes towards the class (like/dislike), perceived ability relative to classmates, and casual attributions (ratings of importance of ability, effort, use of strategy, and teachers job) given for their performance. Ames and Archer found that mastery goal oriented students reported using more learning strategies, preferred challenging tasks, and had more positive attitudes towards the class as a whole than did the students endorsing performance goals.

As the research investigating goal orientation and how they relate to achievement increased, researchers began to expand on the existing model. Based on findings from the Elliot and Dweck (1988) study, Elliot and Harackiewicz (1996) conceptualized a model that divided the performance goal orientation into two separate measureable components. Specifically, the revised model maintains the mastery goal orientation as a single orientation aimed at increasing one’s knowledge base, but separates the performance goal orientation into a performance-approach goal and a performance-avoidance orientation. In a performance-approach orientation, the focus is on demonstrating competence. In a performance-avoidance orientation, the focus is to avoid demonstrating incompetence. In this model, performance-approach goals are perceived as adaptive due in part to the idea that the need to demonstrate competence is in line with the need to demonstrate success. Performance-avoidance goal orientations are perceived as maladaptive due to the perception that the achievement setting is a threat, eliciting multiple negative outcomes (e.g. anxiety, learned helplessness, self-handicapping). To evaluate their model, Elliot and Harackiewicz (1996) evaluated the proposed three component model with a sample of 84 college students. Participants were asked to
complete a puzzle with the goal of finding a particular word as many times as they could in the time allotted. In the performance-approach group, the directions informed the participant that the puzzle was an opportunity to demonstrate that they were good at solving puzzles. In the performance-avoidance group, the directions informed the participant that the puzzle was an opportunity to demonstrate that they were not poor problem solvers. In the mastery group, the directions informed the participant that once time expires, the experimenter will grade the puzzle and inform them of the percentage of the whole that they got correct. Results indicated that participants in the performance-avoidance group spent less time solving puzzles, reported less enjoyment of completing the puzzles, reported putting less effort into completing the puzzles, and were less likely to appraise solving the puzzles as a positive challenge than the performance-approach group or the mastery group. However, no significant differences were found across these same variables for the performance-approach group and the mastery group.

The lack of a significant difference between the performance-approach and the mastery group in the study by Elliot and Harackiewicz (1996) led achievement motivation researchers to investigate the possibility that goal orientations are independent constructs and more than one goal orientation could be in use at any one time (Harackiewicz, Barron, Carter, Lehto, & Elliot, 1997). To test their multiple goal theory, Harackiewicz and colleagues conducted a study that consisted of five components given to three separate sections of an introductory psychology class at different times during the semester. The first wave assessed students’ achievement orientation and test anxiety. The second wave (given 2 to 3 weeks later) required students to fill out a questionnaire aimed at assessing self-reported achievement goal orientations (mastery, performance,
work avoidance) The third wave, which was given a month after the second wave, required participants to respond to an open ended question focused on evaluating the extent to which student spontaneously endorse any of the three achievement goal orientations. The fourth wave was conducted close to the end of the semester and required students to respond to 11 questions regarding their interest and perceived competence in the class. The final wave consisted of obtaining the participants final course grades from the university records office. To evaluate the independence of the goal orientations, interest and course grade were used as outcome variables in a regression model that used goal orientation, perceived competence, and interactions of the model variables as predictors. Perceived competence and a perceived competence by performance goal interaction were both positive predictors of interest. This finding indicated that students who perceived themselves as doing well in the course reported having more interest in the course than students perceiving themselves as doing poorly. In other words, performance goals had a negative effect on students reporting high levels of competence, but not students who reported low levels of competence. The findings of positive outcomes (higher grades) for students reporting a performance goal combined with the interactive effects of the performance goal and a perceived mastery goal orientation factor (interest) help show that the factors are independent and more than one can be in use simultaneously.

More recently, motivational researchers expanded on the approach/avoidance dichotomy by introducing it into the mastery goal orientation component of the model (Pintrich, 2000; Elliot & McGregor, 2001). Specifically, the mastery component is divided into an approach orientation that focuses on increasing competency, and an
avoidance component that is focused on not misunderstandings information, or failing to learn a specific task. The main difference between the mastery-avoidance component and the performance-avoidance component is the focus of the mastery component on an individual’s knowledge base (i.e., not losing previously learned information or avoiding mislearning new information) and not normative or external comparisons. The 2x2 (mastery-approach/mastery-avoidance, performance-approach/performance-avoidance) model was the basis for the construction of the Achievement Goal Questionnaire (AGQ; Elliot & McGregor, 2001). The researchers developed questions aimed at addressing each of the four components of achievement goal theory and included them in a packet of self-reports along with measures evaluating work mastery (i.e., satisfaction in doing a job), competitiveness, self-determination, task engagement, and fear of failure. All variables were then entered into a regression analysis with achievement goal orientations as the outcome variable and the remainder of the self-report measures as predictor variables. Results indicated that work mastery and self-determination were positive predictors of the mastery-approach goal orientation. Fear of failure was a positive predictor of performance-approach, performance-avoidance, and mastery-avoidance goals. Need for achievement was also positive predictors of performance-approach goals. These results led the researcher to conclude that there was an avoidance component of the mastery goal orientation and the AGQ was an adequate measure for assessing all four achievement goal orientations.

In 2008, the AGQ was revised to better assess achievement goal orientations through reevaluating many of the original questions (Elliot & Murayama, 2008). First, questions that emphasized a value or a concern rather than an achievement goal were
either removed or rewritten. Second, many of the original questions pitted one goal against another. Research investigating achievement goals after the original AGQ was created provided evidence that individuals pursue different goals in different situations and can be oriented to more than one goal at the same time (Harackiewicz, Barron, Pintrich, Elliot & Thrash, 2002; Pintrich, 2003). Therefore, Elliot and Murayama (2008) either removed or rewrote questions that indicated competition between goals. The results of these changes led to the development of the Achievement Goal Questionnaire Revised (AGQ-R).

The achievement goal model is currently one of the most adequate models of assessing the reasons why students engage in a particular task (Anderman & Wolters, 2006). However, only two of the models of AEBs have used achievement goal orientations as external variables to evaluate how AEBs relate to achievement motivation. Jackson et al. (2011) divided their academic entitlement measure into four distinct factors: accommodation, reward for effort, control, and product value. To evaluate the relationship between their measure and achievement motivation, Jackson and colleagues created a nine question scale assessing mastery goal, performance-learning goal, and performance-avoidance goal orientations. Jackson and colleagues found a negative relationship between the accommodation factor of their entitlement measure and the mastery-learning orientation subscale. Jackson et al. also found positive relationships between the performance-learning goal and both the accommodation and reward for effort factor of their academic entitlement measure as well as a positive relationship between the performance-avoidance goal and both the accommodation factor and reward for effort factor of their academic entitlement measure. In the development of the AEQ,
Kopp et al. (2011) evaluated achievement goals through questions addressing mastery-approach and work-avoidance orientations. Their results indicated that AEBs shared a negative relationship with mastery-approach beliefs, but a positive relationship with work avoidance beliefs.

Although both Jackson et al. (2011) and Kopp et al. (2011) both found negative relationships between AEBs and a mastery-approach goal orientation, neither study evaluated the potential relationship that AEBs might share with a mastery-avoidance orientation. Furthermore, only the Jackson et al. (2011) study utilized both the performance-approach and performance-avoidance goal orientations as a measure of achievement goals. To better evaluate the connections between achievement goal theory and AEBs, the current study will address the phenomenon through two techniques not utilized in the nascent literature: (a) All four components of the 2x2 goal theory will be evaluated. Through evaluating all components of the most recent version of achievement goal theory, we may be able to obtain a clearer understanding of the unique relationships that each shares with AEBs. (b) The Achievement goal questionnaire revised (AGQ-R) will be included as the method used to evaluate students’ goal orientations. After exhaustive searches of literature focusing on both AEBs and achievement goals, no studies were found that evaluate the constructs in the proposed way. Therefore, the current study will add to the literature on both AEBs and achievement goal motivation.

The academic expectations of contemporary high school and college students have been shown to be on the rise (Forsyth et al., 2007; Goyette, 2008). However, this increase in expectations has not been accompanied by an increase in academic effort (Clayson, 2005; Landrum & Dillinger, 2000). This increase in expectations without a
subsequent increase in effort set the foundation for the contemporary studies focused on AEBs. Currently, AEBs have been shown to be related to consumerism beliefs (Delucchi & Korgen, 2002; Finney & Finney, 2010; Singleton-Jackson et al., 2010), beliefs regarding personal narcissism (Brunell et al., 2011; Greenberger, et al., 2008; Robins & Beer, 2001; Vazire & Funder, 2006), beliefs in external control (Carden, et al., 2004; Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Kirkpatrick, et al., 2008; Kopp et al., 2011; Perry, 2005), parental over-involvement (Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Greenberger et al., 2008; Kopp et al., 2011; Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012; Segrin et al., 2012), and achievement goals (Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Greenberger et al., 2008; Kopp et al., 2011; Singleton-Jackson, et al., 2011). Despite the evidence of relationships between AEBs and multiple student beliefs and characteristics, little is known about how these different beliefs and characteristics relate to AEBs.

Purpose of the Study

Contemporary investigations aimed at defining and measuring beliefs about academic entitlement have established a stable foundation on which future investigations can be built. To add to the current understanding of AEBs, the current study focused on two main areas. The primary focus of the study was to investigate the potential impact that different student characteristics, expectations, beliefs, and academic motivations have on students’ AEBs. The secondary focus of the present study was to evaluate potential outcomes prior research has indicated as stemming from AEBs. Due to its ability to explain the relationship among multiple variables, structural equation modeling (SEM) was utilized to address the following research questions:
i. To what extent do students’ background characteristics contribute to AEBs?
   a. Does student age correspond with AEBs?
   b. Does attending community college correspond with students’ AEBs?

ii. To what extent do motivation and other beliefs contribute to students’ AEBs?
   a. Do beliefs in consumerism correspond with AEBs?
   b. Do beliefs in narcissism correspond with AEBs?
   c. Do students’ control beliefs (i.e., beliefs in internal, powerful others, or chance) correspond with their beliefs in academic entitlement?
   d. Do beliefs in over-involved parents correspond with AEBs?
   e. Do achievement goals (i.e., mastery-approach, mastery-avoidance, performance-approach, and approach avoidance goals) correspond with AEBs?

iii. What are the potential outcomes of AEBs?
   a. Do endorsing AEBs correspond with students’ beliefs about the policies and procedures of the institution the student is attending?
   b. Do endorsing AEBs correspond with students’ in-class behaviors?
   c. Do endorsing AEBs correspond with student’s grade expectations?
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

Participants

Responses were collected from 1110 participants, yielding 904 retained records from undergraduate students of varying majors from a single institution in the south east region of the United States. Results from the demographic survey indicated a mean age for all participants of 20.48 (SD = 2.11) with a range from 18 to 36. The majority of the sample was Caucasian (76.2%) and female (62.6%) with 17.4% of the respondents reporting that they were African American and approximately 6% reporting that they were of a different racial background. The mean number of hours completed at community college was 16.43 (SD = 26.44) and ranged from zero to 150. With regard to college major, the largest portion of the sample reported having a major in the College of Arts and Sciences (28.5%), followed by College of Engineering (19.1%), College of Education (17%), College of Business (12.3%), and College of Agriculture and Life Science (9.3%). The remaining colleges (College of Architecture, Art, and Design; College of Forest Resources; College of Veterinary Medicine; and BSIS Interdisciplinary Studies) had a cumulative 8.7% of respondents, with 4.3% of the respondents reporting that they were undecided. Over half of the participants reported having their tuition and fees paid for through loans (29.2%) and/or academic scholarships (26.4%). Twenty six percent of participants reported that their tuition and fees were paid for by a parent or
guardian, and less that 16% of students reported paying tuition and fees with grant monies (11.7%), personal savings (2%), a job (1.3%), and athletic scholarship (0.7%) combined. Evaluations of the self-reported academic questions indicated a mean ACT score of 24.34 ($SD = 5.33$) and a mean cumulative GPA of 3.12 ($SD = .72$).

**Sampling Procedure**

To solicit participation for the study, a recruitment letter was sent via email to all undergraduate students enrolled in the 2013 spring semester at the main campus of a large land grant university in the southeastern United States. Enclosed in the recruitment letter were guidelines for participation, information on the incentive offered, and a hyperlink to a battery of questionnaires posted on the SurveyMonkey.com web site. Participant responses were downloaded and analyzed using IBM SPSS v.20 statistical analysis software. Eleven hundred students participated in the study. Following the guidelines of Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, and Tatham (2006) for removing cases with large quantities of missing or omitted responses, cases with more than 10% missing responses on any one scale were removed. Additionally, and cases with a high concentration of missing data (i.e., more than three sequential omitted responses) were also removed, resulting in a sample of 970 participants. For cases with less than 10% missing responses, the mean value of all valid responses for each scale missing values was calculated for each subject. Missing scale values were replaced by substituting the calculated mean for the omitted values. The remaining questions were then scored and evaluated for any atypical responses via the Mahalanobis Distance formula. Any $D^2$ value greater than 4 was removed from analysis. Applying the Mahalanobis $D^2$ resulted in the removal of 66 more participants, yielding a final sample of 904.
Instrument

The major focus of the current study was twofold: To evaluate different student characteristics and beliefs that have been shown to be or have been hypothesized to be related to AEBs, and to evaluate potential outcomes that result from endorsing these beliefs. To accomplish this task, a questionnaire was constructed that included multiple self-reports addressing the different student characteristics, beliefs, and behaviors believed to share relationships with AEBs. The final questionnaire contained nine separate measures, including two self-reports that were constructed for the purpose of the current study. The following sections explain each of the measures used for the questionnaire in greater detail.

Demographic Questionnaire

To gain a better understanding of our sample, a 10 question demographic questionnaire was utilized to evaluate participant gender, race, age, highest level of parental education, composite ACT score, current overall GPA, current school classification (i.e., freshman, sophomore, junior, or senior), and the college or school that housed their current major (e.g., College of Business, College of Education, etc.). To address community college exposure, a question asked participants to report the number of hours he or she had completed at a community college. The Demographic Questionnaire can be reviewed in Appendix A.

Student Beliefs

Consumerism. The questionnaire measuring students’ consumerism beliefs was adapted from the Consumerist Attitudes Toward Undergraduate Education Scale
Fairchild and colleagues used the measure as one of many components to evaluate students’ academic beliefs. The modified scale contains six statements measured on a seven point Likert type scale from one (Strongly disagree) to seven (Strongly agree). Example of statements include: “I think of my education as a product I’m buying,” and “My relationship with the university is similar to the relationship between a customer and service provider.” The scale is scored by taking the mean value of all six questions and modified so that higher scores indicating stronger consumerism beliefs. Initial piloting of the original measure study using students from a single university yielded an alpha coefficient of .67 for undergraduate students (Fairchild et al., 2012). Reliability of the measure via Cronbach’s alpha for the current study was .62, which prior research has indicated as acceptable for exploratory research (Hair et al., 2006). See Appendix B for the Consumerism Survey.

**Narcissism.** The Abbreviated Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI-16) was used as a parsimonious measure for evaluating the personality characteristic of narcissism (Ames, Rose, & Anderson, 2006). The NPI-16 uses 16 questions aimed at evaluating narcissism as a single construct. Questions are divided into forced choice pairs of statements. Examples of the statement pairs include, “I think I am a special person” and “I am no better or no worse than most people,” and “I am an extraordinary person” and “I am much like everybody else.” Participants choose the statement from each pair that they feel best represents what they believe about themselves. Responses consistent with narcissistic beliefs are coded as one and responses that are inconsistent with narcissistic beliefs are coded as zero, creating a range of scores from 0 to 16. Higher scores therefore indicate higher endorsements of narcissistic beliefs. Initial piloting was done with
college undergraduate students; obtained reliability estimates for the scale have indicated a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient ranging from .72 to .85 (Ames et al., 2006; Konrath, Bushman, & Grove, 2009). In the current study, the estimated internal consistency reliability for total NPI-16 was judged to be consistent with those of prior reports (α = .72). The NPI-16 can be reviewed in Appendix C.

**Locus of Control.** The LOCS includes 24 items to measure locus of control on three separate dimensions, with eight stimuli per dimension (Levenson, 1981). The I-scale, or internal scale, measures the degree to which people believe they control their own circumstances. An example statement on the I-scale is, “Whether or not I get to be a leader depends on my ability.” The P-scale, or powerful others scale, measures the degree to which people believe that the circumstances that affect their lives are controlled by people with influence or authority. An example statement from the P-scale is, “My life is chiefly controlled by powerful others.” The C-scale, or chance scale, measures the degree that people believe that circumstances that affect their lives are dictated by chance. An example statement from the C-scale is, “When I get what I want, it’s usually because I am lucky.” The measure is designed for participants to respond on a six point Likert type scale which ranges from -3 (Strongly disagree) to +3 (Strongly agree), though the respondent marks choices as 1 (Strongly disagree) to 6 (Strongly agree). To score the measure, the researcher sums the eight relevant item scores for each subscale and adds 24 as a constant to eliminate negative values, creating a range of scores for each scale from zero to 48. High values represent high beliefs in the construct. Estimates of subscale reliability via the Kuder-Richardson formula (version unspecified) produced coefficients of .64 for the I-scale, .77 for the P-scale, and .78 for the C-scale (Levenson, 1981).
Levenson (1981) reported correlations of .41 between the P-scale and the C-scale, -.25 between the P-scale and the I-scale, and .19 between the C-scale and the I-scale. Estimates of internal consistency reliability from this study yielded Cronbach’s coefficient alpha values of .60 for the I-scale, .74 for the P-scale, and .74 for the C-scale; indicating acceptable reliability for each of the three scales. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship that each control belief shares with AEBs, all three scales were analyzed in the model as individual predictors. See Appendix D for Levenson’s Multidimensional Locus of Control Inventory.

Motivational Beliefs

Parental over-involvement. The Helicopter Parenting Scale (HPS) is a 10-item scale used to evaluate participant beliefs about how involved their parents are in their lives (Lemoyne & Buchanan, 2011). Example statements include: “My parents were not afraid to let me stumble in life” and “My parents have always been very involved in my activities.” Participants answer each statement on a five point Likert type scale with one representing “Strongly disagree” and five representing “Strongly agree”. The instrument is scored by averaging the 10 item scores, after reverse-coding three items such that higher scores represent higher perceptions of helicopter parenting practices. Lemoyne and Buchanan (2011) reported an acceptable level of estimated reliability (α = .71). Evaluation of reliability measures for the scale using the current sample also indicated a comparable estimated reliability for total scores (α = .72). See Appendix E for the HPS.

Achievement Goal Theory. The AGQ-R is a 12-item self-report questionnaire designed to assess achievement goals based on the contemporary 2x2 achievement goal theory framework (Elliot & Murayama, 2008). Three statements were written for each of
the four components of Achievement Goal Theory (mastery approach, mastery-avoidance, performance approach, and performance-avoidance) for a total of 12 questions. An example mastery-approach question is, “My aim is to completely master the material presented in this class.” An example of mastery-avoidance statement is, “I am striving to avoid an incomplete understanding of the course material.” An example performance-approach statement is, “I am striving to do well compared with other students.” An example performance-avoidance statement is, “My aim is to avoid doing worse than other students.” Respondents answer on a scale that is scored from one (Strongly disagree) to five (Strongly agree). Mean scores are taken for each of the indexes with higher values indicating stronger endorsements of the achievement goal. Initial estimates of internal consistency, via Cronbach’s coefficient alpha, indicated acceptable levels of estimate reliability for each of the four subscales (mastery-approach, .84; mastery-avoidance, .88, performance-approach, .92; performance-avoidance, .94; (Elliot & Murayama, 2008). Evaluation of Cronbach’s alpha for the current set of data indicate acceptable levels of estimated reliability for each subscale as well (mastery-approach, .60; mastery-avoidance, .61, performance-approach, .85; performance-avoidance, .74). Due to the modeling of achievement goals as separate distinct factors in the contemporary literature (Elliot & Murayama, 2008; Liem, Lau, & Nie, 2008), and to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship that each achievement goal potentially has with AEBs, all four scales were analyzed in the model as individual predictors of AEBs. The AGQ-R instrument is presented in Appendix F.
Academic Entitlement

The AEQ is an eight statement self-report measure designed to evaluate the extent to which individuals believe they are deserving of positive academic outcomes regardless of academic performance (Kopp et al., 2011). Questions were written with an emphasis on the key characteristics of academic entitlement proposed by Dubovsky in 1986, as well as to address gaps and measurement inconsistencies found in prior attempts to measure the construct. An example question is, “It is the professors’ responsibility to make it easy for me to succeed” Participants respond on a seven point Likert type scale from one, indicating that the participant strongly disagrees with the statement, to seven, indicating that they strongly agree with the statement. The measurement is scored by taking the mean of all eight questions. Higher values indicate higher beliefs in academic entitlement. Initial checks of reliability via coefficient omega indicated no problems with the scale ($\omega = .81$), nor did a follow up test with a different sample of participants ($\omega = .84$; Kopp et al., 2011). Estimated reliability coefficient via Cronbach’s alpha for the present study indicated an acceptable level of internal consistency of the scale ($\alpha = .76$). The AEQ can be found in Appendix G.

Outcome Variables

Working from literature on potential outcomes related to AEBs, self-reports were developed to evaluate students’ responses to questions addressing these outcomes. To differentiate behavioral outcomes from belief outcomes, the questions were presented to participants in two separate questionnaires. One focused on academic behaviors and expectations of the student and the second focused on beliefs regarding the policies and practices of the students’ institution and instructors. Due to the novelty of the questions
written to evaluate outcomes of endorsing AEBs, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was applied to all researcher written self-report questions to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors being represented. The resultant factors were scored by taking the mean scores of all questions that loaded onto each factor.

**Academic Behaviors and Expectations.** Eleven total items were written by the investigator to measure students’ AEBs, academic behaviors, academic effort, and academic expectations. Seven questions were created to represent student behaviors hypothesized in literature as potential outcomes of AEBs (Brunell, et al., 2011; Menon & Sharland, 2011, Rosenbaum, 1998; Shapiro, 2012; Twenge & Campbell, 2008). To better assess student beliefs over a complete grading period, questions were written to address the participants’ previous school semester. An example question was: “Last semester, how often did you text during class?” Participants respond on a five point Likert type scale from one, indicating that the student never engaged in the activity, to five, indicating that he or she engages in the activity all the time. Three questions were written to represent students’ academic effort and preparation. The first was written to represent effort put forth in the participants’ previous semester in school, and the second to address the amount of effort participants predicted they would put forth in the current semester. Respondents answered the questions on effort using the same five point Likert type scale as the first seven questions, with higher scores indicating higher effort. A third question was written to assess the amount of academic preparation student engaged in over the course of a typical week during their previous semester in school. Participants responded to the preparation question on an eight item multiple choice scale ranging from zero hours of preparation to more than 30 hours of preparation. A final question was
added to the instrument asking students to report his or her expected GPA at the end of the current semester. Respondents answered on an eight item multiple choice scale ranging from 4.0 to “less than 1.0”. All items regarding academic behaviors and expectations can be found in Appendix H.

**Institutional Policies.** To evaluate the potential relationship between students’ entitlement beliefs and their beliefs about different institutional policies and procedures, an eight item questionnaire was developed for the study. Example of statements include: “I believe that the dates to add or drop a class should be extended” and “I believe my institution should be more responsive to the lives of students.” Responses are measured on a seven point Likert type scale from one (Strongly disagree) to seven (Strongly agree). The Institutional Policies Survey can be reviewed in Appendix I.

**Research Design**

The current research project employed a two phase design utilizing both exploratory and confirmatory procedures to investigate the relationships discussed in the research questions used to guide the study. Phase one employed EFA to reduce the number of researcher written questions down to a set of factors that more adequately measure the postulated outcomes of AEBs (i.e., beliefs regarding institutional policy, academic behaviors, and academic expectations). Phase two employed a SEM procedure to evaluate the relationship across all variables of interest. The conceptual model concept linked 12 measured variables to AEBs. Specifically, the structure of the conceptual model directly linked three measures of control beliefs (Internal, Powerful Others, and Chance), four measures of achievement goals (Mastery-Approach, Mastery-Avoidance,
Performance-Approach, Performance-Avoidance), a measure of evaluating beliefs in consumerism (Consumer), a variable evaluating beliefs in narcissism (Narcissism), a variable evaluating beliefs in parental over-involvement (Parent), and the background characteristics of participants’ age (Age) and the number of hours completed at a community college (CC_Hours) to AEBs. The structure of the conceptual model also included a direct link from AEBs to the factors derived from the EFA.

It was expected that modifications to the conceptual model might be warranted. Therefore, the sample of participants was split into two subsamples: one containing odd numbered cases (Sample 1) and the other containing even numbered cases (Sample 2). All changes applied to the model were conducted with Sample 1 only. Once a model with acceptable model-data fit was achieved, the data from Sample 2 were applied to the model to investigate model stability.

**Analysis**

All statistical analysis was accomplished using IBM SPSS v.20, except for the SEM, which was analyzed using IBM Amos v.21 structural equation modeling software. After the initial data refinement conducted in the sampling procedure, the measurement scales were scored. Once all scales were scored, data were split into two equal subsamples containing 452 cases each (Sample 1 and Sample 2). A comparison of the demographic information between the samples indicates that the participants in each group were very similar (see Table 1).
Table 1

Demographic Comparison of Subsamples

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<th>Demographic Variable</th>
<th>Sample 1</th>
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<td>Frequency N (%)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>286 (63.3)</td>
<td>280 (61.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>165 (36.5)</td>
<td>168 (37.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
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<tr>
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<td>69 (15.3)</td>
<td>88 (19.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>357 (79)</td>
<td>332 (73.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>22 (4.9)</td>
<td>30 (6.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<tr>
<td>18-20 Years</td>
<td>261 (57.7)</td>
<td>245 (54.2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>21-23 Years</td>
<td>165 (36.5)</td>
<td>185 (38.3)</td>
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<td>24-26 Years</td>
<td>19 (4.3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>27 and Above</td>
<td>7 (1.5)</td>
<td>11 (2.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Education</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Degree</td>
<td>128 (28.3)</td>
<td>90 (19.9)</td>
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<td>Some Graduate Work</td>
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<td>College Degree</td>
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<tr>
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<td>10 (2.3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>14-18</td>
<td>32 (7.2)</td>
<td>32 (7.2)</td>
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<td>19-23</td>
<td>132 (29.8)</td>
<td>149 (33.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-28</td>
<td>171 (38.5)</td>
<td>155 (35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29-33</td>
<td>99 (22.3)</td>
<td>88 (19.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 and Above</td>
<td>4 (0.9)</td>
<td>9 (2.0)</td>
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Table 1 (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community College Hours</th>
<th>2023 N (51.5)</th>
<th>2024 N (49.6)</th>
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<td>None</td>
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<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-10 Hours</td>
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<td>85</td>
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<td>21-30 Hours</td>
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<td>41-50 Hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>81 Hours and Above</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<th>MSU Classification</th>
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<th>2024 N (26.6)</th>
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<tr>
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<td>101</td>
<td>120</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
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<td>75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>104</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>148</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Overall GPA</th>
<th>2023 N (30.2)</th>
<th>2024 N (30.3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.0-0.99</td>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0-1.99</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0-2.99</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0-3.99</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major College</th>
<th>2023 N (10.4)</th>
<th>2024 N (8.2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture and Life Science</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>37</td>
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<tr>
<td>Architecture, Art, and Design</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arts and Sciences</td>
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<td>132</td>
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<td>Business</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>69</td>
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<td>Engineering</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forest Resources</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary Medicine</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSIS-Interdisciplinary Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
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<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Payment of Tuition and Fees</th>
<th>2023 N (28.8)</th>
<th>2024 N (24.1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Scholarship</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletic Scholarship</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loans</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent or Guardian</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Savings</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the Above</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Percentage of the sample’s demographic variables in parentheses
Assumptions

Before any model relationships were evaluated, the basic assumptions of structural equation modeling were evaluated. Checks for a linear relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variables were assessed via evaluation of the predicted values plotted against the residual values. Inspection of the overall variate and the partial variates gave no indication of any significant departure from a linear relationship for any of the variables in Sample 1 or Sample 2.

Homoscedasticity was also evaluated via evaluation of the residual plots. Inspection of the residuals of the dependent variables across all of the independent variables gave no significant indication of a pattern of increasing or decreasing residual values in either sample.

Checks for univariate normality were accomplished visually using a normal probability plot. Only two variables were observed by the researcher to deviate from a normal distribution. Visual inspection of the scatterplots comparing the standard normal distribution of the variables to the variables observed values showed deviations from normality on the demographic questions of age and community college exposure. Due to the nature of the population of interest (i.e., college undergraduate students), the distribution of age and community college exposure represented in the sample reflect the typical distribution of the target population and were considered acceptable. Specifically, 90% of the participants in both subsamples reported an age lower than 23. With regard to the number of community college hours participants reported, approximately 50% of the participants in both samples reported never attending community college. Univariate normality was also evaluated based on the guidelines for substantial departures from
normality (i.e. skews equal to or greater than the absolute value of three and kurtosis equal to or greater than an absolute value of seven) outlined by West, Finch, and Curran (1995). Observation of the data indicated that skews ranged from -1.17 to 1.79 for Sample 1 and from -1.30 to 2.02 for Sample 2. Kurtosis of the data ranged from -.41 to 3.54 for Sample 1 and from -.38 to 7.78 for Sample 2. One variable (Age) was found to have values outside the suggested normal range, and it was observed in Sample 2 only.

Multivariate normality was evaluated using Mardia’s statistic for multivariate skew and kurtosis via DeCarlo’s (1997) macro. Examination of the multivariate skew (Sample 1 = 20.05, \( p < .001 \); Sample 2 = 21.80, \( p < .001 \)) and the multivariate kurtosis (Sample 1 = 213.57, \( p < .001 \); Sample 2 = 188.18, \( p < .001 \)) indicated violations of multivariate normality. A second evaluation of multivariate normality was conducted visually via comparison of the Mahalanobis \( D^2 \) values to the \( \chi^2 \) values. Interpretations of the visual inspection did not indicate any extreme deviations from a normal distribution (i.e., excessive deviations from a straight line) in Sample 1 or Sample 2. Based on the findings of the visual inspection of multivariate normality and the size of the sample selected for evaluation, the deviations from multivariate normality observed in the Mardia statistic were judged not to have a practical impact on the pending analyses.

**Outcome Variables**

After evaluating the necessary assumptions, the questions written by the researcher addressing potential outcomes associated with AEBs were evaluated for common factors via EFA. To review, all statistical manipulation was conducted with Sample 1 only. Evaluation of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy and the Bartlett’s test of sphericity indicated that the selected questions had sufficient
correlations to merit factor analysis (KMO = .70, $\chi^2 = 1544.21, df = 136, p < .001$). All questions except expected GPA and predicted number of preparation hours were analyzed via a maximum likelihood analysis with an equamax orthogonal rotation. Maximum likelihood estimations have been shown to be robust to violations of normality (Hair et al., 2006). An orthogonal rotation was chosen based on the suggestions of Hair et al. (2006) stating that an orthogonal rotation method is preferred when the research goal is to obtain, “a set of uncorrelated measures for subsequent use in other multivariate techniques” (p. 127). The equamax orthogonal rotation was chosen due to its ability to simplify both the columns and the rows of factor matrix, yielding a more parsimonious matrix than either the quartimax or the varimax rotation. Only questions with loadings above |.40| were retained as a component of any one particular factor. The criterion for the number of factors extracted was that of eigenvalues greater than one. Results of the factor analysis indicated seven distinct factors that accounted for 47% of the total variance explained. Critical evaluation of the output tables indicating the amount of variance explained by each potential factor, the factor matrix, and the scree plot, gave cause for concern. Examination of the cumulative variance explained in the rotated model indicated that the final two factors explained less than 5% of the variance in the model. Examination of the factor matrix indicated that three of the factors were composed of only two questions each, one factors contained only one question, and another factor did not have any questions that met the criteria to be considered a component of that unique factor. Examination of the scree plot gave a visual indication that the amount of common variance was lower than each factor’s unique variance after the fourth factor. Four questions did not loadings high enough for consideration as a
component of any of the seven factors. The amount of variance for each factor can be reviewed in Table 2. The factor loadings of the questions and their loading coefficients can be reviewed in Table 3. The scree plot is presented in Figure 1.

Table 2

*Total Variance Explained (Initial EFA)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Initial Eigenvalues</th>
<th>Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>% of Variance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.879</td>
<td>11.051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.469</td>
<td>8.643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.371</td>
<td>8.063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.073</td>
<td>6.312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.035</td>
<td>6.089</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.018</td>
<td>5.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.845</td>
<td>4.969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.803</td>
<td>4.723</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.754</td>
<td>4.434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.659</td>
<td>3.874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.625</td>
<td>3.676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.543</td>
<td>3.192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.462</td>
<td>2.718</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.384</td>
<td>2.26</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>0.335</td>
<td>1.968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>.311</td>
<td>1.828</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3

Factor Matrix for The Initial Exploratory Factor Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Academic_Behaviors_1</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.04</td>
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<td>Academic_Behaviors_2</td>
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<td>.01</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>-.03</td>
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<td>Academic_Behaviors_3</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.03</td>
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<td>.01</td>
<td>.04</td>
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<td>.05</td>
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<td>.01</td>
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<td>.10</td>
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<td>.09</td>
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<td>.35</td>
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</table>

Note. Factor loadings > .40 are in boldface.
After evaluating the results from the initial EFA, modifications were made and the data was reanalyzed. Based on the information observed in the scree plot from the original analyzes, as well as the total eigenvalues of the rotated solution, the number of factors was restricted to four. Following guidelines for identifying significant factor loadings based on sample sizes greater than 200 (Hair et al., 2006), factor loadings for the second analysis were reduced from .40 to .35. The methods of analysis utilized in the initial EFA (i.e., maximum likelihood extraction and equamax rotation) were retained. The results of the second EFA indicated that a four factor solution accounted for approximately 37% of the total variance explained. Evaluation of the output tables
indicating explained variance showed that each of the four rotated factors explained at least 5% of the total variance. Inspection of the factor matrix indicated that two questions did not meet the requirements to be considered a component of any one factor. Table 4 shows the variance for each factor evaluated in the analysis. Table 5 shows the factor loadings of the questions in the analysis.

Table 4

*Total Variance Explained (Second EFA)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Initial Eigenvalues</th>
<th>Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>% of Variance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.879</td>
<td>11.051</td>
</tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1.469</td>
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<td>6.089</td>
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<td>2.260</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
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<td>1.828</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table 5

Factor Loadings for Exploratory Factor Analysis with Maximum Likelihood Extractions and an
Equamax Rotation (Second EFA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
<th>Factor 3</th>
<th>Factor 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Behaviors_1</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Behaviors_2</td>
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<td>.99</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Behaviors_3</td>
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<td>-.15</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Behaviors_4</td>
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<td>.10</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.39</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.13</td>
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<tr>
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Note. Factor loadings > .35 are in boldface.

Based on the EFA findings, response indexes corresponding to each factor were computed by taking the mean score for all questions on each of the four unique factors. To evaluate the stability of each of the newly developed indices, internal consistency was conducted via Cronbach’s coefficient alpha. The first index consisted of seven of the eight questions developed to evaluate beliefs regarding institutional policies and was labeled Policy Beliefs. Evaluation of Cronbach’s alpha for Policy Beliefs indicated that the estimated reliability for the index was acceptable ($\alpha = .77$). The second index included Academic Behavior questions one and two. Both questions address the uncivil use of cell phones during class and were labeled Behaviors. Cronbach’s alpha for the Behaviors index was also acceptable ($\alpha = .77$). The questions that loaded on the third
index came from the Academic Behaviors questionnaire and addressed student's academic expectations. Therefore, the third index was labeled Expectations. Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for the Expectations factor was acceptable (\( \alpha = .65 \)). The fourth index included Academic Behaviors questions three, four, six, and seven. However, the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient indicated an unacceptably low level of estimated reliability (\( \alpha = .49 \)) resulting in the omission of the fourth index from future analysis. The remaining three indices were incorporated into the conceptualized model as measured outcome variables structurally linked directly to AEBs. A summary of the estimated reliability for all variables of interest can be seen in Table 6. A more thorough description of the questions that loaded onto each of the indexes used as outcome variables can be seen in Appendix J. The initial path diagram of the conceptualized model is given in Figure 2.

Table 6

*Estimated Reliability Coefficients of Measured Variables*

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<td>Expectations</td>
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Figure 2. Initial Conceptual Model

**Fit Criteria**

Due to the experimental nature of the model, modifications were anticipated. The main purpose of Sample 1 was to develop the initial model, evaluate the strength of
relationships of the variables within the model, and manipulate the model to achieve a suitable model-data fit. Once a model with acceptable model-data fit was achieved, Sample 2 was used to evaluate the stability of the model. To adequately assess model-data fit, four different measures were evaluated following the suggested guidelines for adequate model-data fit as outlined by Hair et al. (2006). The chi-square goodness of fit test ($\chi^2$) is an absolute test of model data fit that evaluates the difference between the observed covariance and the estimated covariance. Ideally, a good model-data fit based on the $\chi^2$ goodness of fit test will yield a low $\chi^2$ that is not observed to be statistically significant. However, two main issues make using the $\chi^2$ statistic as the only measure of model-data fit problematic. First, $\chi^2$ is a function of the size of the sample used in the analysis. Increased sample size increases the $\chi^2$ even when the covariance of the observed and estimated variables remains constant. Second, the potential exists for inflated $\chi^2$ values based on an increased number of predictors.

To help address the problem of an inflated $\chi^2$ statistic, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) was also used to evaluate model-data fit. The RMSEA is considered a badness-of-fit test and incorporates the $\chi^2$ value, the sample size, and degrees of freedom directly into the equation. Lower RMSEA values indicate better fit. Following the guidelines for acceptable RMSEA values based on sample sizes greater than 250 set by Hair et al. (2006), an observed RMSEA value below .07 was considered to meet the requirements of acceptable model-data fit.

The third measure used to assess model-data fit was the comparative fit index (CFI). The CFI is an incremental fit index that is not as sensitive to model complexity as the $\chi^2$ statistic. Higher CFI values indicate better fit. Following Hair and colleagues
(2006) guidelines for acceptable CFI values based on sample sizes larger than 250, an observed CFI value greater than .92 would indicate acceptable fit.

The final measure used to assess model-data-fit was the standardized root mean residual (SRMR). The SRMR is a standardized goodness of fit measure and was employed for the current study to aid in comparing the fit of the model-data from Sample 1 and Sample 2. Lower SRMR values indicate better fit. Following the goodness-of-fit guidelines of Hair et al. (2006) for sample sizes larger than 250, an observed SRMR less than .08 would indicate acceptable fit.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

To gain a better understanding of the degree to which participants expressed each of the beliefs measured by the questionnaires prior to model analysis, descriptive analysis of participant responses was conducted on each of the measurement scales. Evaluation of sample means and standard deviations indicated a high degree of similarity between samples on all scales of the questionnaires (see Table 7). Scores on the AEBs scale, Narcissism, Powerful Others, and Chance scales were all below the midpoints of the scales, indicating low endorsements of each scales’ respective beliefs. The lowest endorsement rate among all responses was observed on the AEBs scale. In contrast, scores on the Consumerism, Parent, Internal Control, Mastery-Approach (MAP), Mastery-Avoidance (MAV), Performance-Avoidance (PAV), and Performance-Approach (PAP) measures were all above the midpoint of each of the scales’ respective beliefs; with Internal Control beliefs having the highest endorsement rate among all responses.
Table 7

*Descriptive Statistics of Scale Responses by Analysis Sample*

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Indices</th>
<th>Sample 1 M (SD)</th>
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<td>AE Beliefs</td>
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<td>Parent</td>
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<td>3.04 (.43)</td>
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<td>Narcissism</td>
<td>4.21 (2.81)</td>
<td>4.62 (2.98)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>31.68 (6.17)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Powerful Others</td>
<td>17.34 (7.71)</td>
<td>17.47 (7.86)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chance</td>
<td>18.45 (7.52)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mastery Approach</td>
<td>4.42 (.53)</td>
<td>4.40 (.56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mastery Avoidance</td>
<td>4.03 (.72)</td>
<td>4.00 (.78)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Performance Approach</td>
<td>4.26 (.79)</td>
<td>4.23 (.83)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Performance Avoidance</td>
<td>4.24 (.76)</td>
<td>4.26 (.74)</td>
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</table>

*Note:* Scores on the AE Beliefs and the Consumerism scales ranged from 0-7. Scores on the Parent, MAP, MAV, PAV, PAP, scales ranged from 0-5. The Narcissism scale ranged from 0-16. The Internal, Powerful Others, and Chance scales all ranged from 0-48. Sample size for both samples was 452.

**Correlations**

In addition to evaluating the means and standard deviations of the participant responses, bivariate correlations on all variables of interest were calculated prior to model investigation. Observing the shared relationships of the variables prior to model evaluation gave the researcher both a preliminary sense of how the variables would potentially relate in the model as well as a sense of what model modifications would be most appropriate to improve model-data fit. All relationships observed to have a statistically significant relationship with AEBs are discussed in detail in this section. Relationships of all other variables will be discussed based on observed correlations judged to be moderate (i.e., equal to or greater than |.30|) and statistically significant at the .01 alpha level. Readers are referred to the correlation matrix in Table 8 to view the correlations and significance levels across all variables entered into the model.
AEBs were shown to share statistically significant positive relationships with the indicator variables of Performance-Approach (PAP; \( r = .10, p < .05 \)), Performance-Avoidance (PAV; \( r = .11, p < .05 \)), Parental over-involvement (PAR; \( r = .29, p < .01 \)), Consumerism (CON; \( r = .36, p < .01 \)), and Powerful Others (PWO; \( r = .30, p < .01 \)). AEB shared a statistically significant negative relationship with the Mastery-Avoidance indicator variable (MAV; \( r = -.16, p < .01 \)). Observations of the relationships between AEB and the three outcome variables indicated a statistically significant positive correlation between AEB and Policy Beliefs (POL; \( r = .54, p < .01 \)), as well as AEB and Behaviors (BEH; \( r = .19, p < .01 \)). With regard to background characteristics, AEB was observed to share a statistically significant negative correlation with GPA (\( r = -.23, p < .01 \)), and AGE (\( r = -.10, p < .05 \)).

Many of the other variables of interest were observed to share substantial relationships. The highest correlation observed in the matrix was found between the PAP and the PAV components (\( r = .84, p < .01 \)), which were both measured components of the Achievement Goal construct. Other notable correlations observed among the Achievement Goal construct were between MAP and MAV (\( r = .48, p < .01 \)), MAV and PAV (\( r = .44, p < .01 \)), MAV and PAP (\( r = .36, p < .01 \)), and MAP and PAP (\( r = .31, p < .01 \)). Due to each of these components written to specifically address the higher order factor of achievement goals, high to moderate correlations were expected. Similarly, high to moderate correlations were also expected between components of the Control construct. However, the only statistically significant relationship observed was between the Powerful Others (PWO) and the Chance (CHN) component (\( r = .62, p < .01 \)). Two
other notable correlations in the model were observed between Consumerism and Policy Beliefs \( (r = .42, p < .01) \), and MAP and Expectations \( (r = .30, p < .01) \).
## Table 8

**Correlations of Students’ Reported Characteristics and Beliefs for Sample 1**

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</table>

*Note:* AEB = Academic Entitlement Beliefs, MAP = Mastery Approach, MAV = Mastery Avoidance, PAP = Performance Approach, PAV = Performance Avoidance, PAR = Parental over-involvement, CON = Consumerism, NAR = Narcissism, INT = Internal Control, PWO = Powerful Others, CHN = Chance, POL = Policy Beliefs, EXP = Expectations, BEH = Behaviors, AGE = Participant Age, CCH = Community College Hours. *p < .05, **p < .01.
Initial Model Evaluation

Guided by the literature reviewed, the postulated research questions, and preliminary analysis, a SEM was constructed to evaluate the relationships that different student beliefs and characteristics share with AEBs, as well as to evaluate the relationships AEBs have with more specific academic beliefs and behaviors. Variables evaluated as predictors of AEBs in the conceptual model included: students’ control beliefs (i.e., internal [Internal], powerful others [Powerful Others], and chance beliefs [Chance]), achievement goals (i.e., mastery-approach [MAP], mastery-avoidance [MAV], performance-approach [PAP], and performance-avoidance [PAV] goals), consumerism beliefs (Consumer), beliefs regarding parental over-involvement (Parent), and beliefs regarding narcissism (Narcissism). In addition to student beliefs, the background characteristics of age (AGE), and exposure to community college (CC Hours) were also entered into the model as predictors of AEBs. Variables in the model evaluated as being predicted by AEBs include: student beliefs regarding institutional policy (Policy Beliefs), academic behaviors (Behaviors), and academic expectations (Expectations). Readers are referred to the path diagram in Figure 2 of the Methods section for a visual depiction of the initial conceptual model.

All model estimations were conducted using a maximum likelihood estimation technique. The maximum likelihood estimation procedure was chosen as the method of data estimation based on literature indicating both its robustness to violations of normality as and its sensitivity to model-data fit with sample sizes greater than 400 (Hair, et al., 2006; Olsson, Foss, and Breivik, 2004). Inspection of the initial model fit indicated that the data fit the model poorly ($\chi^2 = 1446.13$, $df = 105$, $p < .001$; CFI = .18; RMSEA = .81).
Evaluation of the standardized regression weights and statistical significance of the predictor variables indicated that Consumer ($\beta = .25, p < .001$), Parent ($\beta = .18, p < .001$), PAV ($\beta = .19, p < .001$), Powerful Others ($\beta = .13, p = .001$), and Chance ($\beta = .10, p = .02$) were all statistically significant positive predictors of AEBs. The MAV variable was observed to be a statistically significant negative predictor of AEBs ($\beta = -.23, p < .001$). Inspections of the standardized regression weights and statistical significance of the links between AEBs and the outcome variables indicated that AEBs was a statistically significant predictor of both Policy ($\beta = .54, p < .001$) and Behaviors ($\beta = .19, p < .001$). No other relationships in the model were observed to be statistically significant. Standardized coefficients and significance levels for the initial conceptual model are presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Standardized Coefficients for the Initial Model Evaluation

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<th>Parameter Estimate</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficient</th>
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<td>MAV $\rightarrow$ AE Beliefs</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>AE Beliefs $\rightarrow$ Policy Beliefs</td>
<td>.54***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AE Beliefs $\rightarrow$ Behaviors</td>
<td>.19***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AE Beliefs $\rightarrow$ Expectations</td>
<td>-.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$
Based on the findings from the initial evaluation and review of the Amos supported modification indices, two distinct manipulations were applied to the model to improve model-data fit. Due to the primary goal of the study focused on identifying predictors of AEBs, the first modification consisted of retaining only those variables shown to have a statistically significant correspondence with AEBs at the .05 alpha level. The second modification applied to the model consisted of modeling a direct link from the predictor variables maintained in the model to each of the three outcome variables. Specifically, the control variables of Powerful Others and Chance, the achievement goal variables of MAV and PAV, the Consumer, and the Parent variable were all linked directly to the Policy Beliefs, Behaviors, and Expectations. All three outcome variables were retained in the second model. Although the Expectations outcome variable was not observed to be predicted by AEBs, it was retained to gain a better sense of the shared relationships across all variables observed in the model. Once all modifications were made, the model was reanalyzed. The path diagram for the first alternate model is presented in Figure 3.
Figure 3. First Alternate Model
First Alternate Model

Removing the relationships not found to be statistically significant and allowing direct relationships between the predictor variables and the outcome variables improved the model fit, although the resulting model fit did not meet the minimum criteria set for acceptability ($\chi^2 = 431.15, df = 19, p < .001; \text{CFI} = .50; \text{RMSEA} = .22, \text{SRMR} = .14$). Evaluation of the standardized regression weights and statistical significance of the predictor variables indicated that the prediction of AEBs by Consumer, Parent, and MAV remained constant. A slight decrease was observed in the prediction that the PAV ($\beta = .13, p = .002$), Powerful Others ($\beta = .12, p = .004$) had on AEBs and a slight increase was observed in the prediction that the Chance ($\beta = .11, p = .01$) variable had on AEBs. The relationship between AEBs and Policy Beliefs was reduced but still statistically significant ($\beta = .19, p < .001$). Powerful Others ($\beta = -.14, p = .002$) and PAV ($\beta = -.10, p = .04$) were observed to have a statistically significant negative correspondence with the outcome variable of Expectations. PAV was also observed to have a statistically significant positive correspondence with Behaviors ($\beta = .11, p = .02$). Conversely, MAV was observed to have a statistically significant positive correspondence with Expectations ($\beta = .16, p < .001$) and a negative correspondence with Behaviors ($\beta = -.13, p = .006$). The only indicator variable to statistically significantly correspond with the Policy Beliefs variable was Consumer ($\beta = .24, p < .001$). No other statistically significant relationships were observed in the model. Standardized coefficients and significance levels for the first alternate model are presented in Table 10.
To improve the model fit of the first alternate model, two distinct modifications were applied. First, all relationships not observed to be statistically significant at the .05 alpha level were removed from the model. Second, analysis of the correlation matrix created for the current study (See Table 8) indicated that the relationships between the variables of MAV and PAV, Powerful Others and Chance, Parent and Consumer, Chance and Consumer, Powerful Others and Consumer, Parent and Chance, and Powerful Others and Parent, were all statistically significant at the .01 alpha level. Based on the statistical
significance of the observed correlations, the relationships between the different pairs of variables were reproduced in the model. All other relationships were maintained.

**Alternate Model Two**

Inspection of the model fit for the second alternate model indicated an acceptable model fit ($\chi^2 = 56.73$, $df = 25$, $p < .001$; CFI = .96; RMSEA = .05, SRMR = .07). Evaluation of the standardized coefficients and statistical significance of the predictor variables indicated that the correspondence between MAV and Behaviors ($\beta = -.16$, $p = .002$), PAV and Behaviors ($\beta = .16$, $p = .003$), Consumer and Policy Beliefs ($\beta = .26$, $p < .001$), and AEBs and Policy Beliefs ($\beta = .45$, $p < .001$) increased slightly. Alternatively, inspections of the correspondence between Powerful Others and Expectations ($\beta = -.13$, $p = .004$), MAV and AEBs ($\beta = -.23$, $p < .001$), and Consumer and AEBs ($\beta = .24$, $p = .08$) indicated a slight decrease in coefficient values. Additionally, the correspondence between Powerful Others and AEBs ($\beta = .12$, $p = .02$), Chance and AEBs ($\beta = .11$, $p = .04$), MAV and Expectations ($\beta = .16$, $p = .001$), and PAV and Expectations ($\beta = -.08$, $p = .06$) were all observed to have reductions in statistical significance. Moreover, the correspondence between PAV and Expectations failed to be statistically significant at the .05 alpha level and was removed from the model. No other significant changes were observed in the model. The standardized coefficients and significance levels for the second alternate model are presented in Table 11. The path diagram of the second alternate model is presented in Figure 4.
Table 11

*Standardized Coefficients for the Second Alternate Model*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter Estimate</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Powerful Others $\rightarrow$ AE Beliefs</td>
<td>.12*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powerful Others $\rightarrow$ Expectations</td>
<td>-.13**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chance $\rightarrow$ AE Beliefs</td>
<td>.11*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAV $\rightarrow$ AE Beliefs</td>
<td>-.23***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAV $\rightarrow$ Behaviors</td>
<td>-.16**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAV $\rightarrow$ Expectations</td>
<td>.16**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAV $\rightarrow$ AE Beliefs</td>
<td>.13**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAV $\rightarrow$ Behaviors</td>
<td>.16*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAV $\rightarrow$ Expectations</td>
<td>-.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer $\rightarrow$ AE Beliefs</td>
<td>.24***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer $\rightarrow$ Policy Beliefs</td>
<td>.26***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent $\rightarrow$ AE Beliefs</td>
<td>.18***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AE Beliefs $\rightarrow$ Policy Beliefs</td>
<td>.45***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* *$p < .05,$ **$p < .01,$ ***$p < .001*
Figure 4. Second Alternate Model
Although the second alternate model yielded an acceptable model-data fit, a final modification was applied to the model. Specifically, the correspondence between PAV on Expectations was removed from the model. This was done for two reasons. First, the relationship was not observed to be statistically significant. Second, due to allowing PAV and MAV to correlate, any changes in the direct relationships of the PAV variable could potentially affect the direct relationships of the MAV variable. Once the relationship between PAV and expectations was removed, the model was reevaluated.

**Final Model**

Results of the analysis indicated an acceptable model-data fit ($\chi^2 = 60.35$, df = 26, $p < .001$; CFI = .96; RMSEA = .05, SRMR = .07). Inspection of the standardized coefficients and significance values indicated that the removal of the relationship between PAV and Expectations resulted in a slight decrease in the correspondence between MAV and Expectations ($\beta = .12$, $p = .009$). However, a slight increase was observed in the statistical significance of the relationship between Powerful Others and Expectations ($\beta = -.14$, $p = .002$). No other significant changes were observed in the model.

**Model Stability**

To evaluate the stability of the result obtained from Sample 1, the model was reanalyzed using Sample 2. Inspection of the model fit indicated an acceptable model data fit ($\chi^2 = 89.42$, df = 26, $p < .001$; CFI = .92; RMSEA = .07, SRMR = .07). To more thoroughly evaluate differences between Sample 1 and Sample 2, a z-score was calculated to test the equality of model coefficients. Three noteworthy differences were
observed. First, the relationship between MAV and AEBs was statistically significantly weaker in Sample 2 than in Sample 1 ($z = 2.28, p < .05$). Second, the relationship between MAV and Expectations was statistically significantly stronger in Sample 2 than in Sample 1 ($z = 2.90, p < .01$). Third, the relationship between PAV and AEBs was weaker in Sample 2 than in Sample 1 ($z = -2.47, p < .05$) and changed from positive to negative. No other statistically significant differences were observed between the samples. Comparisons of the standardized regression weights and significance levels between Sample 1 and Sample 2 on the final model are presented in Table 12. The path diagram of the final model is presented in Figure 5.

Table 12

*Standardized Coefficients for the Final Model*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter Estimate</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficient</th>
<th>Sample 1</th>
<th>Sample 2</th>
<th>z-score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Powerful Others → AE Beliefs</td>
<td>.12*</td>
<td>.16**</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powerful Others → Expectations</td>
<td>-.14**</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chance → AE Beliefs</td>
<td>.11*</td>
<td>.11*</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAV → AE Beliefs</td>
<td>-.23***</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>2.28*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAV → Behaviors</td>
<td>-.16**</td>
<td>-.20***</td>
<td>-.45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAV → Expectations</td>
<td>.12**</td>
<td>.30***</td>
<td>2.90**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAV → AE Beliefs</td>
<td>.13**</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-2.47*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAV → Behaviors</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>.22***</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer → AE Beliefs</td>
<td>.24***</td>
<td>.26***</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer → Policy Beliefs</td>
<td>.26***</td>
<td>.18***</td>
<td>-1.04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent → AE Beliefs</td>
<td>.18***</td>
<td>.15***</td>
<td>-.37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AE Beliefs → Policy Beliefs</td>
<td>.45***</td>
<td>.43***</td>
<td>-.87</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$
Figure 5. Final Model
Research Question Synopses

Research Question One

The first guiding research question investigated the extent to which students’ background characteristics contributed to their beliefs in academic entitlement. The first variable of interest guiding this research question was student age. The model did not identify a statistically significant correspondence between student age and their AEBs. Since the main goal of the study focused on identifying student beliefs and characteristics that predicted AEBs, age was removed from the model. The second background characteristic evaluated was students’ exposure to community college as measured by the number of hours completed at a community college. The model did not indicate community college exposure to be a statistically significant predictor of AEBs. Due to the lack of observed correspondence with AEBs, community college exposure was removed from the model.

Research Question Two

The second research question was focused on identifying the potential correspondence of various student beliefs with AEBs. Evaluations of the standardized total effects indicated that AEBs were positively predicted by students’ consumerism beliefs, beliefs in powerful others, beliefs in chance, beliefs in parental over-involvement, and performance-avoidance goal orientations. Observations of the standardized total effects indicated that AEBs were negatively predicted by mastery-avoidance goals.
Research Question Three

The final research question was oriented towards the potential outcomes hypothesized to stem from AEBs. Based on the result of the EFA of the questionnaires addressing outcomes predicted to be related to AEBs, four latent factors were derived, with three of the factors having an acceptable level of estimated reliability to be evaluated as components in the conceptualized model. The three outcome variables (Policy Beliefs, Behaviors, and Expectations) were included in the model to evaluate the extent to which AEBs predicted the different outcomes. Through model modification, other variables, hypothesized to be predictive of AEBs, were shown to be significant predictors of the outcome variables as well.

**Policy Beliefs.** The outcome variable of Policy Beliefs was included in the model to evaluate the relationship that AEBs potentially had with students’ beliefs regarding accommodating academic policies. Evaluation of the standardized total effects indicated that students’ AEBs were a statistically significant positive predictor of students’ beliefs regarding accommodating academic policies. Consumerism beliefs were also observed to be a statistically significant positive predictor of students’ beliefs in academic policies.

**Behaviors.** The outcome variable of Behaviors was included in the model to evaluate the relationship that AEBs potentially had on students’ maladaptive in-class behaviors. AEBs were not observed to correspond with the maladaptive in-class behaviors of students. However, the mastery-avoidance goal orientation was observed to have a statistically significant negative relationship with students’ maladaptive in-class behaviors, and the performance-avoidance goal orientation was observed to have a
statistically significant positive correspondence with students’ maladaptive in-class behaviors.

**Expectations.** The outcome variable of Expectations was included in the model to evaluate the potential relationships that AEBs had with students’ academic expectations. AEBs were not observed to have any correspondence with students’ academic expectations. However, the mastery-avoidance goal orientation was observed to be a statistically significant positive predictor of students’ academic expectations. Students’ beliefs in academic policy were observed to be a statistically significant negative predictor of students’ academic expectations.

**Summary of Results**

The proposed research project was guided by three general research questions designed to thoroughly investigate potential antecedents and outcomes of AEBs. First, students’ background characteristics (i.e., student age and community college exposure) were evaluated to investigate the extent to which these variables predicted AEBs. Results indicated that neither student age nor community college exposure had a significant effect on AEBs. The second research question focused on the correspondence between different motivational beliefs and the relationships that each belief potentially had with AEBs. All student beliefs hypothesized to have a direct influence on AEBs were observed to share significant relationships with AEBs in the model. Evaluation of the coefficient of determination indicated that the combination of the predictor variables accounted for 24% of the explained variance in AEBs ($R^2 = .24$). The final research question focused on the extent to which AEBs predicted students’ beliefs in various
accommodating academic policies, students’ maladaptive in-class behaviors, and
students’ academic expectations. Only AEBs and consumerism beliefs were observed to
directly predict students’ beliefs in accommodating academic policies. However, all
variables hypothesized to have a direct effect on AEBs in the model were observed to
have an indirect effect on academic policy beliefs. Evaluations of the direct effect of
AEBs with the direct and indirect effects of the indicator variables explained 35% of the
variance in students’ academic policy beliefs ($R^2 = .35$). Although, AEBs were not
observed to have any correspondence with students’ in-class behaviors or students’
academic expectations, some of the indicator variables did. The combination of mastery-
avoidance and performance-avoidance goal orientations (the only variables in the model
to have any correspondence with in-class behaviors) accounted for 3% of the variance in
students’ in-class behaviors ($R^2 = .03$). The only indicator variables observed in the
model to have any direct correspondence with academic expectations were beliefs in
powerful others and mastery-avoidance goal orientations. The combination of direct
(powerful others and mastery-avoidance goal orientations) and indirect (all indicator
variables in the model) predictors was observed to accounted for 4% of the explained
variance in students’ academic expectations ($R^2 = .04$).
The current study examined AEBs through a systemic evaluation of the relationships among variables contemporary research has indicated as sharing associations with, contributing to, or stemming from AEBs. To help facilitate the goals of the study, three major research questions were asked. Two focused on factors contributing to AEBs, and one focused on outcomes of endorsing AEBs. In the following sections, important findings of the study will be discussed in relation to the three research questions and in relation to findings currently in the extant body of literature on entitlement beliefs.

**Background Characteristics**

In the current project, two background characteristics were chosen to be evaluated in the model: student age and community college exposure. Researchers argue that the students enrolling in college today are more narcissistic and entitled than the generations before them (Bourke & Mechler, 2010; Rickes, 2009; Stewart, 2009; Twenge, 2009; Twenge et al., 2010; Twenge et al., 2008a, 2008b). However, findings in the current project stand in stark contrast to earlier reports. Inspections of the correlation matrix (see Table 8) gave no indication of a significant relationship between students’ age and narcissism beliefs. A small, significant, negative correlation was observed between
students’ age and AEBs; however when evaluated in the model, age was not observed to be a significant predictor of AEBs. These findings indicate that, although higher AEBs may be negatively related to student age, inflated AEBs cannot be attributed to merely being a younger student.

The second background characteristic evaluated in the model was community college exposure. The variable measuring community college exposure was written to address the amount of time that participants spent in community college prior to university enrollment. Community college exposure was not shown to have any relationship with AEBs or any of the outcome variables predicted by AEBs. The literature examining the effects of community college attendance on the entitlement beliefs of university students is sparse. However, it was included in the current model for two key reasons. Initially, inclusion of the variable was done in an effort to corroborate prior research suggesting that various policies and procedures of the community college system may reduce academic responsibility and promote academic entitlement (Meyer, 2006; Toby, 2010). The second reason community college exposure was included as an indicator of AEBs was to help substantiate studies indicating community college students possess higher beliefs in external control and lower personal responsibility for academic achievement (Grimes, 1997). However, community college exposure was not shown to correspond with any of the variables in the model, indicating that attending community college does not share a statistically significant relationship with students’ AEBs.

**Beliefs**

Results of the model (see Table 12) indicated multiple significant findings among the indicator variables focused on students’ beliefs. Six variables were shown to be
direct indicators of AEBs: beliefs in consumerism, the control beliefs of powerful others and chance, beliefs regarding parental over-involvement, and mastery-avoidance and performance-avoidance achievement goal orientations. Four beliefs (narcissism, internal control, mastery-approach, and performance-approach goal orientations) were not observed to have a significant correspondence with AEBs.

**Consumerism**

The observed correspondence between consumerism beliefs and AEBs gives support to some of the contemporary theories of consumerism suggesting that students’ beliefs regarding payment of tuition and fees entitles them to a both a degree (Delucchi & Korgen, 2002) and generally desirable academic outcomes (Finney & Finney, 2010). Additionally, Delucchi and Korgen (2002), and Singleton-Jackson et al. (2010) found substantial relationships between consumerism beliefs and beliefs about the role of the instructor. Results of the current model support these findings as well. In the factor analysis, questions regarding the responsibilities of the instructor loaded onto the factor addressing students’ beliefs in accommodating academic policies (see Appendix J). Further results of the model indicated that beliefs in consumerism did have a statistically significant positive relationship with the accommodating academic policy beliefs of students. This findings also supports Potts’ (2005) model of academic consumerism, in that students strongly endorsing beliefs that the tuition and fees paid to the institution should not only entitle them to beneficial academic outcomes free of actual achievement (i.e., AEBs), but should also include accommodations and services from instructors and administrators (i.e., beliefs in academic policy).
Control Beliefs

Three different control beliefs were originally entered into the model to evaluate the extent to which different beliefs in personal control predicted students’ AEBs. To review, internal control beliefs are focused on the extent to which individuals believe they have power over the circumstances of their lives. External control beliefs are focused on the extent to which individuals believe the circumstances of their lives are controlled by some external means (i.e., powerful others or chance). In the current model, only the two external control beliefs were observed to correspond with AEBs, which supports the findings from prior research that has indicated a positive association between external control and AEBs. Specifically, the idea that academic benefits should be bestowed upon the student and not earned by the student has been a key factor guiding the majority of contemporary definitions of AEBs. Jackson-Singleton et al. (2011) describe AEBs as a feeling of deservingness free of personal performance or responsibilities. Chowning and Campbell (2009) describe it as expectations without personal responsibility (2009); and Kopp et al. (2011) highlight that the academic benefits should be given free of individual performance. The observed correspondence between powerful others and AEBs supports Dubovsky’s (1986) characteristic of AEBs that other people will provide all the information that is necessary. However, the correspondence between chance beliefs and AEBs is not as clear. Levenson (1981) described the chance belief as depending on good or bad luck. In a sense, it is a control belief free of any (internal or external) personal responsibility. The positive relationship between chance and AEBs gives indication that students’ chance beliefs may be reflected in their beliefs about academic achievement. Specifically, if students endorsing chance
beliefs do not perceive themselves as responsible for their academic achievement, nor do they believe achievement should come from another person (i.e., a powerful other), then the correspondence between chance beliefs and AEBs may be reflecting the sense that no one is responsible for achievement and responded to questions on the AEQ based on the prospect of a beneficial outcome.

**Parent**

Students’ beliefs in parental over-involvement were observed to have a positive correspondence with AEBs. These results fall in line with prior research findings indicating that over involved parenting practices may foster a dependency on external sources in the decision making processes of students and contribute to their lack of independence and preparation for their future (LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2011). One of the defining characteristics of AEBs is the idea that knowledge is a right and should be given to the student with minimal effort or discomfort (Dubovsky, 1986). If the lack of student independence and autonomy originates with parents who have made the majority of the decisions for their son or daughter, then the potential exists for the student to expect this treatment to continue into the college years. Although the college years should be a time of developing autonomy among students, those students who arrive at college with a preexisting belief that the responsibility for meeting their needs and dealing with their problems falls on the parent, may bleed over into the classroom in the form of AEBs, with the expectation that either the parents will intervene to ensure that the student receives the level of achievement that he or she perceives they deserve, or some other external source (e.g., the course instructor or administration) will ensure that they are given their perceived level of achievement. This conclusion is partially supported in the
current project by the statistically significant relationship observed between parental over-involvement and powerful others, as well as the significant prediction of AEBs by both parental over-involvement and powerful others in the SEM model.

**Achievement Goals**

Evaluation of the relationships among the four achievement goal orientations and AEBs indicated that only the avoidance goal orientations (i.e., mastery-avoidance and performance-avoidance goals) were observed to correspond with AEBs. The main focus of the avoidance component is to avoid the possibility of a negative outcome. With regard to mastery-avoidance, the negative outcome is a failure to properly learn new material or a decline in skills and knowledge already learned. With regard to the performance-avoidance goal orientations, the negative outcome is underperforming in comparison to one’s academic peers (Hulleman et al., 2010; Senko et al., 2011). Prior investigations into the avoidance goal orientations have indicated that both mastery-avoidance and performance-avoidance goal orientations have been associated positively with fear of failure and negatively with self-determination (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). However, the negative relationship between mastery-avoidance goal orientations and AEBs observed in the current model suggest that students’ endorsing mastery-avoidance goals believe that achievement should be earned and not given. This idea is further corroborated by the observed relationships that mastery-avoidance goals were observed to have with the outcome variables focused on in-class behaviors and expectations of academic effort. Specifically, the negative correspondence between mastery-avoidance goals and in-class behaviors indicates a focus on instruction through not engaging in behaviors that would take attention away from the information being delivered in class. 102
By avoiding any in-class distractions, mastery-avoidance students can eliminate potential opportunities to misunderstand information. Additionally, the positive correspondence between mastery-avoidance goals and expectations indicates a belief that maintaining current knowledge and avoiding misunderstanding of new information requires a high degree of personal effort. In contrast, the positive correspondence between performance-avoidance orientations and AEBs indicates that students endorsing performance-avoidance goals may be endorsing beliefs that achievement should be given and not earned as a method of avoiding normative academic comparisons.

Additional finding regarding avoidance goals was found in evaluating the stability of the final model. In the evaluation of the equality of model coefficients between Sample 1 and Sample 2, three relationships were observed to be statistically significantly different from one another. Specifically, the observed correspondence between the mastery-avoidance orientation and AEBs was statistically significantly higher in Sample 2 than in Sample 1. However, the relationship was still negative between the two variables supporting the idea that higher beliefs in mastery-avoidance goal orientations predict lower AEBs. The observed correspondence between the mastery-avoidance orientation and academic expectations was also statistically significantly higher in Sample 2 than in Sample 1, supporting the initial finding that higher beliefs in a mastery-avoidance goal orientations predict higher beliefs in academic expectations. The observed correspondence between the performance-avoidance orientation and AEBs was not only statistically significantly lower in Sample 2 than in Sample 1, but also changed from a positive to a negative relationship. This finding implies that performance-avoidance beliefs may not be a stable predictor of AEBs.
Narcissism

Students’ narcissism beliefs were included in the model to evaluate the extent to which a more general sense of deservingness relates to academics. In the current model, narcissism was not observed to be a statistically significant predictor of AEBs. Observations of the correlation matrix also indicated that narcissism and AEBs did not share a statistically significant relationship prior to model evaluation. The lack of a significant relationship between students’ narcissism beliefs and AEBs stands in contrast to prior AEB research. In the development of their academic entitlement measurement scales, both Chowning and Campbell (2009) and Greenberger et al. (2008) found significant positive relationships between narcissism and AEBs. However, Greenberger and colleagues concluded that, based on the relationship AEBs shared with other entitlement measures, academic entitlement was more than an expression of an inflated sense of self. The lack of relationship between narcissism and AEBs in the current model extends the conclusions drawn by Greenberger and colleagues to include the idea that AEBs are more complex than simply an inflated sense of self.

Outcome Variables: Beliefs about Policy, Classroom Behaviors, and Academic Expectations

Guided by the literature on entitlement, outcome variables were written to reflect different beliefs and behaviors either shown to be or postulated to be predicted by AEBs. Originally, four outcome measures were entered into the model, but one variable was removed due to an extremely low level of reliability. The remaining three outcome variables included: Academic policies which evaluated students’ endorsement for accommodating academic policies and procedures of the institution, administration, and
Policy Beliefs

The most prominent relationship observed in the model was the correspondence between AEBs and academic policy beliefs. Due to the nature of the questions about academic policy beliefs (included to reflect the endorsement of accommodating or lenient policies—potential consequences of academic entitlement), this relationship was expected to be fairly strong. Additionally, the measure used to evaluate AEBs (i.e., the AEQ; Kopp et al., 2011) contained five questions regarding beliefs about instructor responsibilities that were similar to two questions about instructors in the policy beliefs measure (see Appendix G for the AEQ questions and Appendix J for the policy beliefs questions). However, the majority of the policy beliefs questions were aimed at evaluating students’ beliefs regarding the policies and procedures of the institution itself. The observed correspondence between AEBs and policy beliefs indicates that AEBs are not restricted to the policies and procedures of the learning classroom or immediate instructor, but extend to the policies and procedures of the overall institution.

In addition to AEBs, consumerism directly corresponded with endorsement of accommodating academic policies. The observed relationship between AEBs and policy beliefs falls in line with the customer service and satisfaction expectations components of more contemporary models of consumerism. With regard to the Potts’ (2005) model, inflated consumerism beliefs in higher education are highlighted by the idea that the
student is buying the college experience. Part of that experience is the acquisition of high
grades or a diploma, but a second component is service and satisfaction with the
experience in general. Students’ perceptions of service and satisfaction take the form of
beliefs that one is owed special accommodations such as extended deadlines, removal of
penalty fees, and an overall focus on the desires of the student. Yet, consumerism beliefs
were not observed to positively predict students’ beliefs about in-class behaviors (i.e.,
cell phone use in class). This finding indicates that consumerist attitudes toward higher
education were not related to off-task behaviors in class.

Behaviors

The academic behaviors questions were written to reflect students’ rude and
disruptive in-class behaviors and reflected students’ beliefs in cell phone usage (i.e.,
talking and texting) during class. AEBs were not observed to have any correspondence
with students’ behaviors. However, the mastery-avoidance and the performance-
avoidance goal orientations were observed to significantly correspond with students’ in-
class behaviors but in opposite directions. Specifically, the mastery-avoidance
orientation had a negative correspondence with students’ in-class behaviors and the
performance-avoidance orientation had a positive correspondence with students’ in-class
behaviors. One explanation for the negative correspondence between the mastery-
avoidance orientation and in-class behaviors is that students’ endorsing the mastery-
avoidance orientation potentially perceive the behaviors as distractions that take attention
away from attending to the material presented during class and contributing to the
misunderstanding or failure of learning the material. The positive correspondence
between the performance-avoidance goal orientation and in-class behaviors are more
difficult to interpret. Prior studies have indicated that performance-avoidance orientations have a significant relationship with task disengagement (Liem et al., 2008). Liem and colleagues defined task disengagement as a lack of, “students’ persistence in the face of difficult or boring tasks” (p. 496). With regard to task disengagement, the usage of cell phones may be a potential way that students disengage from a class lecture or assignment that they perceive as boring or too challenging, giving potential insight into why performance-avoidance goals were observed to correspond with in-class behaviors. Additionally, this idea supports the AEBs’ characteristic of the need to relieve discomfort through action (Dubovsky, 1986). Specifically, if the discomfort is sitting in class and paying attention, and leaving the learning classroom could potentially increase this discomfort through unwanted attention to the student (e.g., being identified publicly for disrupting the instructor), then using a cell phone to text, search the internet, or play games could potentially be an alternate method of relieving the discomfort of being in class by redirecting one’s attention.

**Expectations**

The expectations component evaluated the amount of expected effort students’ believed was necessary to obtain a desired grade. The questions written for the expectations component included beliefs about effort in the most recently completed semester as well as the current semester. AEBs were not observed to significantly correspond with students’ academic expectations. However, mastery-avoidance goal orientations and beliefs in powerful others were observed to significantly correspond with academic expectations. The lack of relationship between AEBs and academic expectations is puzzling. Kopp et al., (2011) indicated a strong negative correlation
between AEBs and academic effort as well as between external control and effort. The current study utilized the same instrument to evaluate AEBs and control as Kopp et al., used (i.e., the AEQ and the Levenson Multidimensional Locus of Control Inventory), but could not replicate the researchers’ results. A potential reason for the discrepancy is that the current study measured a more general sense of expected effort, where Kopp and colleagues evaluated students’ reported effort when completing a short series of assessment. The difference in results may be due to the potential of AEBs to have a moderating impact on academic expectations when evaluated on a small scale (i.e., effort on a single assessment), but an insignificant impact when the evaluation of effort is more general (i.e., overall evaluations of past and present academic effort).

The mastery-avoidance goal orientation was observed to have a positive correspondence with academic expectations. This relationship may be due to the focus on task or information mastery more so than on avoidance. The major focus of the mastery orientation is on understanding information and increasing one’s competence (Elliot & McGregor, 2001; Hulleman et al., 2010). To accomplish this, the mastery-oriented student actively engages in the learning process. In the mastery-approach goal oriented student, engaging in the learning process is accomplished by putting forth effort to promote a complete understanding of the information and an increase in one’s competency. In the mastery-avoidance oriented student, engaging in the learning process is accomplished by putting forth effort to avoid misunderstanding the information or losing competence. Inspection of the correlation matrix indicated a significant positive relationship between academic expectations and GPA, but an insignificant relationship between mastery-avoidance and GPA, giving support to prior research indicating that the
adoption of mastery goal orientations may not yield greater academic benefits in the classroom than the adoption of performance goal orientations (Senko et al., 2011).

Beliefs in powerful others was observed to have a significant negative correspondence with students’ expectations. This finding indicates that students’ who believe others, who have power over them or their situations, dictate the circumstances of their lives, expect to put forth less effort towards their academic achievements. One potential reason for this finding is the idea that if students believe academic outcomes are dependent on the will of others perceived to have power over them or their situation and not due to personal effort and ability, then putting forth high levels of effort may be perceived as futile.

**Contributions and Implications**

The current study extends the literature on AEBs in many key ways. One of the most notable is the methodological approach used to evaluate the relationships AEBs have with other beliefs, behaviors, and student characteristics. Specifically, the current project employed a SEM technique to evaluate students’ beliefs, behaviors, and characteristics that literature has pointed to as sharing relationships with AEBs. Although the same SEM technique was used by Kopp et al. (2011) in the construction and validation of the AEQ, the researcher’s model was restricted to include only variables prior literature suggested as potential precursors to academic entitlement. The current study extends the knowledge base of AEBs by being one of the first studies to include outcomes that are potentially predicted by these beliefs.

The current project also adds to literature on AEBs by critically evaluating student beliefs, behaviors, and characteristics that have been overlooked or omitted in previous
studies. One area in particular is the correspondence that students’ consumerism beliefs have with their AEBs. Although Kopp and colleagues included a single question on the AEQ directly addressing beliefs about deservingness of grades with regard to payment of tuition (see Appendix G), a more general sense of the impact of consumerism has been largely overlooked. With the exception of Kopp and colleagues, and Delucchi and Korgen, (2002), the majority of information relating academic entitlement to consumerism has come from theoretical literature warning about the potential negative impact treating students like customers may have on their current and future academic achievement (Finney & Finney, 2010; Ness & Osborn, 2010; Potts, 2005). Singleton-Jackson and colleagues (2010) took a more qualitative approach to investigating the relationship between consumerism and academic entitlement by conducting focus groups addressing the cost and value associated with higher education. Their findings indicated that in discussion about academic entitlement, students tended to endorse consumerism beliefs (i.e., beliefs they are paying for a product) at a fairly high rate. Jackson et al. (2011) used the findings of Singleton-Jackson and colleagues (2010) to develop the first scale of AEBs that included a consumerism component, but did not extend the relationship between consumerism and AEBs past basic correlations with other personality variables. The present study extends the contemporary literature on both AEBs and consumerism beliefs by being one of the initial studies to investigate and show that AEBs are significantly predicted by beliefs in consumerism. The relationship observed between consumerism and academic policies adds to the consumerism literature by identifying a significant relationship between the two. Specifically, the results of the current model indicated that consumerism beliefs significantly predicted students’ policy
beliefs. The combination of relationships observed in the present model not only provide evidence that consumerism beliefs correspond with AEBs, but also insight into what consumerism endorsing students may believe their tuition dollar are buying them in addition to grades (i.e., accommodations and preferential treatment from instructors and administrators).

The current model was also one of the first to evaluate the correspondence between over-involved parents and college students’ AEBs. In the development of their AEBs scale, Greenberger at al., (2008) found evidence that the social-comparative pressure of parents influenced students’ AEBs. The current project extended the investigation of parental influence of Greenberger and colleagues by evaluating the correspondence that students’ beliefs in parental over-involvement potentially share with students’ AEBs. Moreover, the current study was one of the first to use the HPS (LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2011) as a tool to evaluate students’ beliefs in over-involved parenting behaviors. Therefore, the current study adds to the current knowledge base by showing the Helicopter Parenting Scale to be an acceptable instrument for assessing college students’ beliefs about the over involvement of their parents in their lives.

The current project was one of the first to evaluate the potential correspondence that exposure to community college potentially has with students’ AEBs. Although numerous articles have been written postulating the negative academic outcomes associated with community college (Bailey et al., 2010; Meyer, 2006; Toby, 2010), empirical studies evaluating the relationship between community college exposure and student outcomes are sparse. The lack of observed correspondence between community
college and AEBs in this study give preliminary evidence that exposure to community
college alone does not contribute to students’ AEBs at the university level.

In addition to evaluating the relationship between student beliefs, characteristics
and AEBs, the current model also evaluated behaviors and beliefs thought to be predicted
by AEBs. The current study is one of the first attempts to extend what is known about
AEBs beyond focusing on its antecedents and investigate potentially maladaptive
outcomes of endorsing AEBs. The findings of the current model indicating a significant
correspondence between AEBs and beliefs regarding accommodating academic policies
give initial insight into the correspondence that AEBs potentially have with more specific
beliefs regarding the role of instructors and administrators. The lack of observed
relationship between AEBs and deviant in-class behaviors indicates that AEBs may not
manifest in uncivil and maladaptive in-class behaviors. Additionally, the lack of an
observed relationship between AEBs and academic expectations indicates that students’
AEBs do not necessarily predict the amount of effort they expect to exert in order to
achieve their academic goals.

**Limitations**

Although the current study adds significant contributions to the current body of
knowledge regarding AEBs, it was not without its limitations. One of the most notable
limitations was the novelty of the questions used to develop the outcome variables. The
outcome questions were written to address beliefs and behaviors hypothesized to stem
from more general AEBs. However, some of the questions did not load onto any factors,
resulting in two of the factors being represented by two questions each (behaviors and
expectations). A general rule in factor development is to have a minimum of three
questions representing each factor (Hair et al., 2006). The consequences of having such a low number of questions on the behaviors and expectations variable could potentially yield false results due to underrepresentation or falsification of the variable.

Another limitation of the current study was the method used to quantify community college exposure. Specifically, time spent in community college was assessed using a single question asking the number of hours of community college completed. Responses ranged from zero hours to over 150 hours. In hindsight, a single question addressing number of hours of community college completed may not have been the best approach to evaluating the potential impact that community college exposure might have on AEBs. The effects of community college may have better been addressed with a battery of questions focusing on the type of courses taken (e.g., remedial, developmental, advanced), perceived academic effort, and students’ beliefs regarding the stringency/leniency of the policies of the instructor and institution. Including more comprehensive questions regarding students’ community college experience should enable future researchers to gain a better understanding of the impact that the experience has on their AEBs at the university level.

An additional limitation of the current study was the low estimated reliability of responses on multiple scales. The typical lower limit of acceptable reliability via Cronbach’s alpha is typically .70, but acceptable estimates can be lower (i.e., .60) when used for exploratory purposes (Hair et al., 2006). Five variables (consumerism, internal control, mastery-approach, mastery-avoidance, and academic expectations) were observed to have an alpha coefficient below .70 but met the threshold for exploratory analyses--above .60 (see Table 6). These marginal levels of estimated reliability
potentially contributed to the removal of the internal control and mastery-approach goal orientation from the model and reduced or removed some of the relationships that might have been observed had the variables been more internally consistent. Due to the marginal levels of estimated reliability in some of the models’ measures, the possibility for artificial findings was also increased, potentially indicating findings that were not necessarily “true”. A possible explanation for the marginal reliability levels of the mastery-approach goal orientation, mastery-avoidances goal orientation, and the academic expectations variable is the sparse amount of questions used to evaluate the constructs. The AGQ-R (Elliot & Murayama, 2008) was included in the study due to the concise nature of the questionnaire. However, with only three questions per scale (see Appendix F), the measure becomes extremely sensitive to deviations in internal consistency. The academic expectations scale was represented by only two questions and fell prey to the same problems as the mastery-approach and mastery-avoidance goal orientation variables. The lack of reliability of the internal control and consumerism variable is not as easy to explain. One potential explanation is the lack of maturation among participants in the sample. The majority of the sample evaluated consisted of young undergraduate students (see Table 1). If college is a period of time for building autonomy and self-reliance, then many of their beliefs may still be developing, resulting in mixed results and low estimates of internal consistency.

Two other limitations focus on the selection and screening of participants. First, all participants selected came from a single university. Using a single university as a data pool limits the generalizability of the findings to institutions with similar academic climates. Second, the criteria set for screening out multivariate outliers (i.e.,
Mahalanobis $D^2$) may have been too conservative, resulting in the removal of an overly excessive amount of participants. Although the resulting sample was still large enough to yield adequate results, following the strategy outlined by Barnett and Lewis (1994) for identifying atypical cases (i.e. dividing the $D^2$ values by the degrees of freedom [$df$]), would have potentially resulted in a larger sample.

**Recommendations**

**Recommendations for Research**

**Measuring Academic Entitlement and Consequent Behaviors.** To gain a better understanding of the construct of academic entitlement as a whole, one key direction for the focus of future investigations is to continually work on improving the measurements used to evaluate the construct. The AEQ, the chosen measure of AEBs in the current study, is a statistically sound tool for identifying student beliefs, but does little to aid in identifying how these beliefs are represented behaviorally. The findings of the current model gave no indication that AEBs correspond with students’ academic behaviors. However, both popular press (Clift, 2011) and contemporary educational research (Baer & Cheryomukhin, 2011; Brown et al., 2009; Nordstrom et al., 2009; Stewart & Bernhardt, 2010) have indicated that uncivil classroom behaviors are perpetuated by an overinflated sense of entitlement. The academic behaviors’ questions written for the current study addressed behaviors oriented towards uncivil or disruptive in-class behaviors. The questions that were actually represented in the model both focused on cell phone usage. To gain a more thorough understanding of the relationships that different uncivil and disruptive in-class behaviors share with AEBs, future endeavors should focus on expanding and elaborating on the behavioral outcomes shown in the
present study as being predicted by AEBs. This would address two important limitations of the current study. First, adding questions to the behaviors variable would increase our understanding of what maladaptive behaviors are being endorsed by students. Second, through adding more questions, the behaviors variable could be better represented potentially exposing relationships in the model that are too weak to be considered with the current behaviors variable. The academic expectations variable in the current model suffers from the same lack of questions that the behaviors variable did. Further investigations into developing questions to better assess students’ perceptions of effort may result in a better outcome measure as well as a more accurate relationship with AEBs.

**Consequences of AEBs: Maladaptive Behaviors.** A similar direction for potential future researchers examining AEBs is to investigate some of the more maladaptive and clandestine behaviors that may be predicted by AEBs, such as cheating and plagiarism. In their study on self-entitled students and cheating, Brown, et al., (2009) indicated that students with high entitlement beliefs were more likely to engage in academic cheating than their less entitled counterparts. Similarly, Williams, Nathanson, and Paulhus (2010) found that self-entitled students were more likely to report engaging in plagiarism. Although cheating and plagiarism are not necessarily disruptive behaviors, they still strike at the heart of education. Investigations into precursory beliefs that potentially correspond with maladaptive academic behaviors, could potentially aid in curtailing these behaviors before they are exhibited.
**Developmental Maturation.** Another direction of future investigation that researchers may want to orient themselves towards is potential maturational differences in AEBs. Current evaluations of academic entitlement have all focused on student at the college level (Achacoso, 2002; Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Greenberger et al., 2008; Jackson et al, 2011; Kopp et al., 2011), and found compelling evidence of the existence of AEBs in that particular age group. Research investigating the beliefs of high school students has indicated that both educational expectations and perceived ability has risen in recent years, but has not been accompanied by an increase in effort or preparation (Goyette, 2008; Twenge, 2009; Twenge & Campbell, 2008). Given that the combination of high expectations for little effort is a defining characteristic of AEBs, investigating entitlement at an earlier academic level may give insight into the academic origins of AEBs.

Based on the detrimental outcomes associated with AEBs observed in the current study, future researchers may also want to direct their attention to the potentially lasting effects of endorsing AEBs. Evaluations of AEBs beyond the undergraduate level could also give insight into the maturational changes of AEBs. Evaluation AEBs at the graduate level could potentially yield beneficial information about how AEBs in higher education change over time. In addition, evaluating AEBs of people in the workplace could potentially indicate how salient AEBs are once a student graduates and enters the job market, as well as give insight into some of the consequences associated with endorsing these beliefs.

**Institutional and Student Differences.** Due to the limitation of all participants gathered from a single institution, future researchers investigating AEBs may want to
evaluate differences across different universities and colleges. The current study utilized a public university with a moderate number (37%) of students who were the first person in their family to attend college (i.e., first generation students). Due in part to the university being public, the requirements for entry are not as stringent as many of the private or Ivy League university. Therefore, the students in the study did not necessarily have to ensure a consistently high level of achievement during their junior high and high school years to meet the strict academic requirements for admittance into a highly selective university. Future studies may want to investigate the AEBs of students from families with multi-generations attending college as well as students attending institutions that utilize a rigorous selection process. Comparing multi-generational students to first generation students may give insight into the different academic expectations and pressured faced between the two groups, potentially yielding new information regarding the origins and outcomes of AEBs. Similarly, evaluating differences between institutional type (i.e., moderately selective versus highly selective universities) may also give insight into the different nuances of AEBs between high achievement driven students and students who are not as achievement driven.

In addition to investigating AEBs across students’ academic lineage and types of institutions, evaluating AEB differences with regard to students’ choice of academic program and class selection may also yield important differences. Specifically, future researchers may find it useful to investigate the distinctions in AEBs between students choosing majors and classes that place a high demand on their cognitive abilities as well as personal time, to those students choosing less difficult majors and classes. Specific investigations could focus on the differences in AEBs between programs that “weed out”
students (i.e., programs focused on retaining only the highest achieving students) and programs that strive to keep students in (i.e., programs focused on avoiding dismissing any students). Additionally, research could focus on comparing the differences in AEBs between students selecting majors that require specific skills, expertise, or board exams, to those students selecting majors with less stringent graduation requirements. Evaluating AEBs at this level could potentially yield information regarding how and why certain students select certain majors. Similarly, future researchers may want to investigate the differences in AEBs between students’ enrolled in honors courses and students enrolled in general education courses to gain a more thorough understanding of how AEBs relate to different students within a particular university.

**Motivational Factors.** Researchers may also want to investigate the relationship that students’ self-regulation shares with AEBs. Self-regulated learning is highlighted by the assumption that goals, meaning, and strategies are constructed by the learner from information gathered both internally (i.e., mental processes) and externally (i.e., the learner’s environment; Pintrich, 2004). The current model evaluated the relationship that achievement goals shared with AEBs, but did not investigate the relationships that individual meaning and learning strategies may have on AEBs. Including an evaluation of motivational and learning strategies via investigation of student self-regulation may extend the understanding of AEBs past the current relationships identified in the current model.

Future research may also want to more critically investigate the impact of parental over-involvement on students’ AEBs. College should be a maturational milestone in which the student becomes more self-reliant and less dependent on the parent or
caregiver. However, with regard to the helicopter parents, students’ autonomous growth can potentially be inhibited by the over involvement of the parent or guardian, resulting in a dependency on external sources to make decisions and solve problems for them. The observed correspondence between external control beliefs and beliefs regarding parental over-involvement, corroborate this idea. However, more research is necessary to fully understand the impact of helicopter parenting on the entitlement beliefs of college age students.

**Relation to Academic Policies.** Another direction of future research that could potentially yield fruitful results is investigations focusing on different policies and procedures of the K-12 and community college systems that have been hypothesized to be detrimental to student achievement. One specific area that needs attention is social promotion or promoting the student regardless of whether or not the necessary academic standards for promotion have been achieved. The main argument behind social promotion is that if there are more detriments than benefits to retaining a student, then promoting them through to the next grade regardless of their achievement would be less harmful to the students in the long run (Owings & Kaplan, 2001). The major downside for the student who is socially promoted is the indirect teaching that the students do not have to be accountable for meeting academic standards. Lack of personal responsibility for academics is a defining feature of AEBs. However, the literature investigating social promotion is lacking. One of the few studies that did evaluate the effects of social promotion in academia indicated a strong negative relationship between social promotion in middle school and subsequent high school achievement (Kariuki & Page, 2001). A
more critical evaluation of social promotion may give more insight into how AEBs originate.

Another direction of research that could help increase the understanding of AEBs is to investigate the potential relationship the construct shares with minimum grading policies. Minimum grading policies are typically defined as grading practices that positively adjust the lowest possible grade a student could receive on any (or every) test or assignment (e.g. a minimum score is increased from a 0 to 50). The reasoning behind minimum grading policies is to ensure that a student would not be retained due to a single low score, allowing student who would otherwise fail a course to pass (Carey & Carifio, 2011). Proponents of minimum grading policies claim that it helps sustain a healthy locus of control, increases student motivation, and keeps students academically engaged (Carey & Carifio, 2011; Carifio & Carey, 2009, 2010). However, studies aimed at student motivation have shown that motivation and student engagement tend to be higher when the grading system is strict as opposed to lenient (Docan, 2006; Elikai & Schuhmann, 2010). With regard to academic motivation, results from the current study indicated that avoidance goals (both mastery-avoidance and performance-avoidance goals) predicted AEBs, academic behaviors, and academic expectations. Hence, investigating the relationship between minimum grading policies and AEBs could prove to be beneficial in improving what is known about academic entitlement as well as academic motivation.

**Recommendations for Practice**

Results of the model indicate that AEBs are predicted by beliefs in both parental over-involvement and consumerism. Addressing these two systems of beliefs directly
may proactively prevent or hinder the development of AEBs. With regard to parental over-involvement, it is recommended that every effort be made to educate parents on the importance of autonomy development. In a summary outlining how to acclimate over-involved parents to the culture associated with higher education, Coburn (2006) discussed different methods that institutions have begun implementing to help parents relinquish control over the decision making of their son or daughter. Examples included pamphlets and websites, as well as orientation programs designed specifically for parents explaining the importance of allowing their college-age son or daughter to develop a sense of autonomy. If the over-involvement of the helicopter parent can be transformed into a healthier, more independent relationship, then the entitlement issues stemming from parental over-involvement can potentially be reduced.

Another recommended approach to hindering students’ AEBs is through addressing consumerism beliefs directly. The results of Delucchi and Korgen’s (2002) study on consumerism supported the idea that consumerism beliefs are rooted in a person’s culture and cannot be affected at the college level. However, Delucchi and Korgen do suggest attempting to counteract consumerism beliefs by increasing students’ intellectual curiosity by holding students accountable for their own achievement and through clearly communicated faculty expectations. One method of communicating clear expectations to the students is through stringent grading rubrics and detailed syllabi (Lippmann et al., 2009). Lippmann and colleagues also suggest that, for efforts to curtail consumerism beliefs to be effective, the administration has to play an active role in reducing consumerism beliefs by promoting a climate of academic engagement. Based on the findings of the current study, addressing consumerism beliefs indirectly by
promoting academic engagement and student accountability could potentially reduce the impact the construct has on AEBs as well as the impact consumerism has on beliefs regarding the policies and procedures of the institution and instructors.

The results of the model also give some indication of how parents and instructors can help curtail academic entitlement in students before they manifest into even more maladaptive classroom beliefs and behaviors. Parents can use the findings of the current study as a template for understanding some of the beliefs that lead to AEBs and how they could potentially alter the relationships with their children to avoid some of the observed beliefs and outcomes. Specifically, parents could begin to instruct their children on the value of mastery learning and reduce reinforcing achievement based on normative comparison and social competition. Parents could also instill in their children a sense of responsibility and accomplishment for their academic outcomes, orienting them toward a more internal rather than external locus of control. Finally, parents can begin to help their children develop a sense of autonomy by allowing them to make their own mistakes and avoiding attempting to fix every problem that their son or daughter may encounter. Instructors can help address beliefs regarding academic entitlement by clearly and concisely communicating their expectations of instructor’s and students’ roles in the classroom, expectations of assignments via scoring rubrics, and expectations regarding attendance and classroom behavior.

The model presented in the current project was developed and tested to give future researchers an understanding of how different student beliefs and attributes, prominent in the current entitlement literature, work together to predict beliefs in academic entitlement. Additionally, the model developed for the current study was
designed to give insight into some of the potential outcomes of endorsing these beliefs.

Hopefully, the findings of the current project will be used by others to investigate, improve, and refine the body of knowledge focused on academic entitlement.
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APPENDIX A

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE
Demographic Questionnaire

1. Gender: Male _______ Female _______

2. Race: African American_____ Caucasian_______ Other_______

3. Age: ________

4. Highest level of education your parent(s) completed (check one):
   - graduate degree________
   - some graduate work________
   - college degree________
   - some college________
   - high school degree____________
   - did not graduate high school________

5. What is your composite ACT score?___________

6. Number of hours completed at community college: __________

7. Please indicate your current MSU classification (check one):
   - Freshman________
   - Sophomore________
   - Junior________
   - Senior________

8. Current overall G.P.A at MSU: __________

9. Please indicate which college houses your current major (check one):
   - College of Agriculture and Life Science________
   - College of Architecture, Art, and Design________
   - College of Arts and Sciences________
   - College of Business________
   - College of Education________
   - James Worth Bagley College of Engineering________
   - College of Forest Resources________
   - Veterinary Medicine________
   - BSIS-Interdisciplinary Studies________
   - Undecided________
10. How has the majority of your tuition and fees been paid for (check one):

- Academic Scholarship
- Athletic Scholarship
- Loans
- Parent or Guardian
- Grants
- Job
- Personal Savings
- None of the Above
APPENDIX B

CONSUMERISM ATTITUDES TOWARD UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION
Consumerism Attitudes Toward Undergraduate Education

Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements with 1 indicating that you **strongly disagree** with the statement and 7 indicating that you **strongly agree** with the statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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1. I think of my education as a product I’m buying.

2. My relationship with university is similar to the relationship between a customer and provider.

3. I believe students **should** think of themselves as customers of the educational institution they are attending.

4. My choice of major depends mostly on my future earning potential

5. I believe a college education should mainly be providing job credentials over an intellectual environment.

6. I believe students in college are primarily learners rather than customers.*

* Reverse Coded
APPENDIX C

THE ABBREVIATED NARCISISTIC PERSONALITY INVENTORY (NPI-16)
In this section are a series of pairs of statements. For each pair, please select the one that best describes you.

1. A. I know that I am good because everybody keeps telling me so.*
   
   B. When people compliment me I sometimes get embarrassed.

2. A. I like to be the center of attention.*
   
   B. I prefer to blend in with the crowd.

3. A. I think I am a special person.*
   
   B. I am no better or no worse than most people.

4. A. I like having authority over people.*
   
   B. I don’t mind following orders.

5. A. I find it easy to manipulate people.*
   
   B. I don’t like it when I find myself manipulating people.

6. A. I insist upon getting the respect that is due me.*
   
   B. I usually get the respect I deserve.

7. A. I am apt to show off if I get the chance.*
   
   B. I try not to show off.

8. A. I always know what I am doing.*
   
   B. Sometimes I am not sure of what I am doing.

9. A. Everybody likes to hear my stories.*
   
   B. Sometimes I tell good stories.

10. A. I expect a great deal from other people.*
    
    B. I like to do things for other people.

11. A. I really like to be the center of attention.*
    
    B. It makes me uncomfortable to be the center of attention.
12. A. People always seem to recognize my authority.*
   B. Being an authority doesn’t mean that much to me.

13. A. I am going to be a great person.*
   B. I hope I am going to be successful.

14. A. I can make anybody believe anything I want them to.*
   B. People sometimes believe what I tell them.

15. A. I am more capable than other people.*
   B. There is a lot that I can learn from other people.

16. A. I am an extraordinary person.*
   B. I am much like everybody else.

* = Narcissistic Response
APPENDIX D

LEVENSON MULTIDIMENSIONAL LOCUS OF CONTROL SCALE
Levenson Multidimensional Locus of Control Scale

Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements with 1 indicating that you strongly disagree with the statement and 6 indicating that you strongly agree with the statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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1. Whether or not I get to be a leader depends mostly on my ability.

2. To a great extent, my life is controlled by accidental happenings.

3. I feel what happens in my life is mostly determined by powerful people.

4. Whether or not I get into a car accident depends mostly on how good a driver I am.

5. When I make plans, I am almost certain to make them work.

6. Often there is no chance of protecting my personal interests from bad luck happenings.

7. When I get what I want, it is usually because I am lucky.

8. Although I might have good ability, I will not be given leadership responsibility.

9. How many friends I have depends on how nice a person I am.

10. I have often found that what is going to happen will happen.

11. My life is chiefly controlled by powerful others.

12. Whether or not I get into a car accident is mostly a matter of luck.

13. People like myself have very little chance of protecting our personal interests when they conflict with those of strong pressure groups.

14. It’s not always wise for me to plan to far ahead because many things turn out to be a matter of good or bad fortune.

15. Getting what I want requires pleasing those people above me.

16. Whether or not I get to be a leader depends on whether I’m lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time.

17. If important people were to decide they didn’t like me, I probably wouldn’t make many friends.

18. I can pretty much determine what is going to happen in my life.
19. I am usually able to protect my personal interests.

20. Whether or not I get into a car accident depends mostly on the other driver.

21. When I get what I want, it’s usually because I worked hard for it.

22. In order to have my plans work, I make sure that they fit in with the desires of people who have power over me.

23. My life is determined by my own actions.

24. It’s chiefly a matter of fate whether or not I have few friends or many friends.

Internal Scale Questions: 1, 4, 5, 9, 18, 19, 21, 23
Powerful Others Scale Questions: 3, 8, 11, 13, 15, 17, 20, 22
Chance Scale Questions: 2, 6, 7, 10, 12, 14, 16, 24
APPENDIX E

HELICOPTER PARENTING SCALE
Helicopter Parenting Scale

Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements with 1 indicating that you **strongly disagree** with the statement and 5 indicating that you **strongly agree** with the statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. My parents supervised my every move growing up.
2. I sometimes felt that my parents didn’t feel I could make my own decisions.
3. My parents let me figure things out independently.*
4. It was very important to my parents that I never fail in life.
5. My parents were not afraid to let me stumble in life.*
6. My parents often stepped in to solve life problems for me.
7. Growing up, I sometimes felt like I was my parents’ project.
8. My parents have always been very involved in my activities.
9. I trust my parents’ judgment over my own.
10. I rarely talk to my parents before I make a big decision.*

* = Reverse Coded
APPENDIX F

ACHIEVEMENT GOAL QUESTIONNAIRE REVISED (AGQ-R)
AGQ-R

Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements with 1 indicating that you strongly disagree with the statement and 5 indicating that you strongly agree with the statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. My aim is to completely master the material presented in this class.
2. I am striving to do well compared to other students.
3. My goal is to learn as much as possible.
4. My aim is to perform well relative to others.
5. My aim is to avoid learning less than I possibly could.
6. My aim is to avoid performing poorly compared to others.
7. I am striving to understand the content of this course as thoroughly as possible.
8. My goal is to perform better than the other students.
9. My goal is to avoid learning less than it is possible to learn.
10. I am striving to avoid performing worse than other students.
11. I am striving to avoid an incomplete understanding of the course material.
12. My aim is to avoid doing worse than other students.

Mastery Approach Goal Questions: 1, 3, 7
Mastery-Avoidance Goal Questions: 5, 9, 10
Performance-Approach Goal Questions: 2, 4, 8
Performance-Avoidance Goal Questions: 6, 11, 12
APPENDIX G

ACADEMIC ENTITLEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE (AEQ)
Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements with 1 indicating that you strongly disagree with the statement and 7 indicating that you strongly agree with the statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. If I don’t do well on a test, the professor should make tests easier or curve grades.
2. Professors should only lecture on material covered in the textbook and assigned readings.
3. If I am struggling in a class, the professor should approach me and offer to help.
4. It is the professor’s responsibility to make it easy for me to succeed.
5. If I cannot learn the material for a class from lecture alone, then it is the professor’s fault when I fail the test.
6. I am a product of my environment. Therefore, if I do poorly in class, it is not my fault.
7. I should be given the opportunity to make up a test, regardless of the reason for the absence.
8. Because I pay tuition, I deserve passing grades.
APPENDIX H

ACADEMIC BEHAVIORS AND BELIEFS QUESTIONNAIRE
Academic Behaviors and Beliefs Questionnaire

Using the scale provided, please respond to the following questions based on your behaviors this past semester in college. Think about all the courses you took this last semester.

1-NEVER
2-RARELY
3-SOMETIMES
4-FREQUENTLY
5-ALL THE TIME.

1. How frequently did you text during class?
2. How frequently did you use your cell phone for reasons other than texting during class?
3. How frequently were you late to class?
4. How frequently did you leave class early?
5. How frequently did you get upset with instructors or complain about the requirements or policies of a course?
6. How frequently did you ask if you could take a test on a different date or get an extension on an assignment due to a conflict with your schedule?
7. How frequently did you ask an instructor to change a grade?
8. Thinking back to last semester, how often did you put forth 100% of your effort to achieve the grade you wanted?
9. Thinking about the current semester, how often do you predict that you will put forth 100% of your effort to achieve the grade you want?
10. Thinking back to last semester, how many hours did you typically spend preparing for your classes (e.g., reading the textbook, studying for tests, reviewing lecture notes, working on assignments) outside of the classroom in a typical seven day week?

a) 0 hours       e) 16-20 hours
b) 1-5 hours     f) 20-25 hours
c) 6-10 hours     g) 25-30 hours
d) 11-15 hours    h) More than 30 hours

11. At the end of this semester, what do you expect your grade point average for the semester to be?

a) 4.0       e) 2.0
b) 3.5       f) 1.5
c) 3.0     g) 1.0
d) 2.5    h) less than a 1.0

* = Reverse Code
APPENDIX I

INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES QUESTIONNAIRE
Institutional Policies Questionnaire

1) I believe the dates to add or drop a class should be extended.

2) I believe that I should be able to drop a class without any penalty or fees regardless of when I choose to drop the class.

3) I believe there should be no limit to the number of times I can retake a course to improve my grade.

4) I believe my institution should pay close attention to what the students want.

5) Academics are the top priority at my university.*

6) I believe my institution should be more responsive to the lives of students.

7) I believe instructors at my institution should be more accommodating to students’ needs and desires.

8) I believe my instructors have expectations for success in the classroom that are too high.

* = Reverse Code
Factor Questions

Policy Beliefs

I believe the dates to add or drop a class should be extended (IP1).
I believe that I should be able to drop a class without any penalty or fees at any time (IP2).
I believe there should be no limit to the number of times I can retake a course to improve my grade (IP3).
I believe my institution should pay close attention to what the students want (IP4).
I believe my institution should be more responsive to the lives of students (IP6).
I believe instructors at my institution should be more accommodating to students’ needs and desires (IP7).
I believe my instructors have expectations for success in the classroom that are too high (IP8).

Behaviors

Last semester, how often did you text in class (AB1)?
Last semester, how often did you use your cell phone for reasons other than texting during class (AB2)?

Expectations

Thinking back to last semester, how often did you put forth 100% of your effort to achieve the grade you wanted (AB8)?
Thinking about the current semester, how often do you predict that you will put forth 100% of your effort to achieve the grade you want (AB9)?