

## Construct Validity of Academic Entitlement Scale in the Undergraduate Students

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### ABSTRACT

Academic entitlement is an ongoing problem in higher education. This study aims to investigate the construct validity and factor structure of the academic entitlement scale among Indonesian undergraduate students. Participants in this study included 257 undergraduate students recruited using non-probability sampling. The researchers conducted a confirmatory factor analysis using Mplus 8.0. The results showed that the two-factor model is the most appropriate representation, with goodness-of-fit test CFI=.940, TLI=.929) RMSEA=.057, 90%CI [.048,.065] and SRMR=.049). The results confirmed the two-factor structure on the AE scale and can be used to measure academic entitlement among undergraduate students in Indonesia. However, this study only examines construct validity; another validation study is required with a more diverse population.

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### Introduction

Students will discover concepts that are more complicated than those they learned in high school when they begin their college studies. A variety of factors frequently have an impact on a person's academic performance in college. A good GPA is one of the criteria that indicates academic worth (Rahmani, 2018). However, the expectations of current academic performance are frequently out of proportion to the quantity of effort or caliber of the work performed (Reinhardt, 2012). Academic entitlement is the term for a high level of grade satisfaction that is not consistent with the caliber of a student's achievement. The basic idea behind academic entitlement is that students think they are entitled to preferential treatment even though they are not (Reinhardt, 2012). Examples of this treatment include extra credit, better marks, the ability to submit assignments later, unique exceptions, and a direct connection to the instructor. While there have been certain emerging concepts in the understanding of academic entitlement that are comparable, there are substantial differences across practical definitions of academic entitlement (Wasioleski et al., 2014).

Research by Bonaccio et al (2016) demonstrated that while external duties independently predicted final course grades, they did not predict other academic success factors like personality traits and general mental ability, which were also considered. In other studies, individual variables were found to be predictive of student disrespect. Student who has a higher level of entitlement exhibit low resilience (Bawady et al, 2025) and a higher level of moral intelligence exhibit the lower academic entitlement (Abdellatif, 2022). According to Gump (2006), Students' views of the importance of attendance had an impact on their actual attendance, indicating that attitudes and perceptions play a significant role in shaping behavior. Students' capacity to finish a course requirement on time was influenced by their gender and the professor's. Particularly, when the professor was female, male students put off finishing more frequently than female students did overall (Louie & Tom, 2005; Chowning & Campbell, 2009). In general, male students were found to have higher academic entitlement than women (Sohr-Preston & Boswell, 2015).

Researchers in the field of psychology and education have lately started focusing on this problem by establishing measures of academic entitlement (Chowning & Campbell, 2009), in addition to an increasing media focus on entitled attitudes (Greenberger et al., 2008). Also, the factor that influence academic entitlement (Boswell, 2012; Turnipseed & Cohen, 2015) and the effects (Anderson et al., 2014; Greenberger et al., 2008) of academic entitlement has thus been the subject of recent research. Academic entitlement is also linked with academic fraud, academic entitlement serves as a factor that induces students to engage in academic problematic behaviour (Stiles et al., 2018; Luckett et al., 2017; Reysen et al., 2020). Academic entitled students will consider the misconduct actions as acceptable behaviors for achieving their goals (Elias, 2017). Academic entitled students do not perceive themselves as active learners and have the ability they can change classroom rules, and students are supposed to be treated as customers (Sessoms et al., 2016).

Development and validation of the academic entitlement scale by Chowning & Campbell (2009) define the development of a more accurate predictor of unjust student conduct, one that merges elements of entitlement with relevant sections of the educational setting. This study uses four studies to validate an academic entitlement self-report scale. Academic entitlement is the tendency to anticipate academic accomplishment without personally taking responsibility for it. In Study 3, participants judged a range of answers to scenarios in the classroom that were either highly improper or highly acceptable. Students' assessments of the appropriateness of these student actions as well as their propensity to engage in them themselves were predicted by the Academic Entitlement scale. People with higher academic entitlement scores had a more negative attitude of the researcher in a lab setting than people with lower academic entitlement scores.

In Indonesia, research conducted on academic entitlement is still quite few. The previous research about the academic entitlement instrument is still limited, and there is no study regarding validity of academic entitlement scale in Indonesia. Generally, this research aims to investigate construct validity on academic entitlement (AE) scale by Chowning &

Campbell (2009) which consisted of 15 items. This scale is built on two factors structured: externalized responsibilities (10 items) and entitled expectations (5 items). The two-factor structure was investigated using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and the significance of the *t* value of the item factor loadings.

## **Method**

### **Research Design**

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional design focused on psychometric evaluation and construct validation. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was utilized to evaluate the internal structural validity and measurement properties of the Indonesian adaptation of the Academic Entitlement (AE) scale, testing the two-factor multidimensional model originally conceptualized by Chowning & Campbell (2009).

### **Instrument Adaptation and Translation Procedure**

To ensure cultural and linguistic equivalence without compromising the original construct definition, the scale underwent a formal five-stage cross-cultural adaptation process in accordance with International Test Commission (ITC) guidelines and standard translation protocols:

1. Forward Translation: Two independent bilingual translators (an expert in academic psychology and an independent professional translator) translated the original 15-item English scale into Indonesian.
2. Synthesis: A single combined draft (Indonesian Version 1.0) was synthesized through a consensus meeting between the two translators and the research team.
3. Back Translation: Two native/fluent English speakers, blinded to the original English version and the study hypotheses, back-translated Version 1.0 into English.
4. Expert Review: An expert panel consisting of three doctoral-level psychometricians and educational psychologists evaluated the face validity, content validity, and semantic equivalence of the translated items. Item phrasing was refined to fit the Indonesian higher education context.
5. Pilot Testing & Cognitive Debriefing: A pilot test was conducted with a small sample of undergraduate students ( $n = 20$ ) to evaluate item clarity, readability, and comprehension. Feedback confirmed that all 15 items were clearly understood without ambiguity.

### **Participants and Sampling Procedure**

1. The target population comprised active undergraduate students enrolled across multiple state and private higher education institutions in Palembang, South Sumatra, Indonesia.
2. Sampling Method: Data were collected using a non-probability convenience sampling technique via an online survey portal distributed through institutional channels and student networks between October and December 2023. While

convenience sampling facilitated field feasibility, it represents a limitation regarding the broad generalizability of findings to all Indonesian university contexts.

3. Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria: Eligible participants were active undergraduate students aged 17–25 years enrolled in semester 1 through 8 across various study programs (e.g., Social Sciences, Humanities, STEM, and Business). Incomplete questionnaire responses were automatically excluded.
4. Sample Size Justification: A total of  $N = 257$  valid responses were retained. This sample size fulfills recommended CFA sampling guidelines, exceeding the standard requirement of at least 10 participants per estimated parameter (or a minimum parameter-to-sample ratio between 10:1 and 15:1; Kline, 2016). For a 15-item, 2-factor model with 31 free parameters,  $N = 257$  provides adequate statistical power ( $\geq .80$ ) for model evaluation.
5. Data Screening: Prior to CFA, data were screened for missingness, univariate normality, and multivariate outliers using Mahalanobis distance ( $d^2, p < .001$ ). No severe multivariate outliers or systemic missing data were identified.

### Measures and Instruments

Academic Entitlement (AE) Scale: The 15-item AE scale (Chowning & Campbell, 2009) measures two underlying dimensions (1) *Externalized Responsibility* (10 items; e.g., placing responsibility for academic success on instructors. (2) *Entitled Expectations* (5 items; e.g., expecting high grades based on effort rather than performance).

Scoring & Response Format: Responses were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Item Recoding: The scale consists of 13 favorable items and 2 unfavorable (reverse-coded) items. The two unfavorable items were reverse scored prior to statistical modeling so that higher total scores consistently reflected higher levels of academic entitlement.

### Data Analysis and CFA Model Specification

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted using Mplus Version 8.0. The exact statistical specifications were as follows:

1. Estimator Selection: Robust Maximum Likelihood (MLR) estimation was specified to account for mild potential multivariate non-normality common in Likert-type responses.
2. Matrix Analyzed: The analysis was performed on the sample variance-covariance matrix.
3. Model Identification: Model identification was achieved by fixing the factor variance of each latent factor to 1.0 (or fixing the loading of the first indicator of each factor to 1.0).
4. Model Modifications: Modification Indices (MIs) were examined selectively; residual covariances were considered only if strongly justified by theoretical overlap or item content redundancy within the same dimension.

Evaluation Criteria: Model fit was evaluated using a comprehensive suite of indices (Gravetter et al., 2021).

1. Chi-square goodness-of-fit ratio ( $\chi^2/df < 3.0$  indicating good fit).
2. Comparative Fit Index (CFI  $\geq .90$  acceptable,  $\geq .95$  excellent).
3. Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI  $\geq .90$  acceptable,  $\geq .95$  excellent).
4. Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA  $\leq .08$  acceptable,  $\leq .06$  good), along with its 90% Confidence Interval (CI) and PCLOSE  $> .05$ .
5. Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR  $\leq .08$ ).

Reliability, Validity & Invariance Testing: Internal consistency and construct reliability were assessed using Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ), McDonald's omega ( $\omega$ ), and Composite Reliability (CR  $\geq .70$ ). Convergent validity was evaluated using Average Variance Extracted (AVE  $\geq .50$ ). Discriminant validity was examined using Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratios or factor correlations. Measurement invariance across gender (male vs. female) was tested sequentially via multigroup CFA (testing configural, metric, and scalar invariance).

### Ethical Considerations

The study protocol was conducted in accordance with institutional ethical standards for research involving human participants. Prior to accessing the survey, participants were required to complete an electronic informed consent form outlining the research objectives, voluntary nature of participation, rights to withdraw at any time, and strict guarantees of data anonymity and confidentiality.

### Results and Discussion

Participants in the study were 257 undergraduate students who completed online questionnaires, consisting of 114 males (44.4%) and 143 females (55.6%). The respondents' ages ranged from 17 to 22 years ( $M = 19.82$ ,  $SD = 0.88$ ). Detailed demographic distribution is presented in Table 1 below:

**Table 1.**  
*Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 257)*

| Category | Subcategory | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|----------|-------------|---------------|----------------|
| Age      | 17          | 1             | 0.4            |
|          | 18          | 9             | 3.5            |
|          | 19          | 78            | 30.4           |
|          | 20          | 101           | 39.3           |
|          | 21          | 13            | 5.1            |
|          | 22          | 55            | 21.4           |
| Gender   | Male        | 114           | 44.4           |
|          | Female      | 143           | 55.6           |
| Total    |             | 257           | 100.0          |

### Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The construct validity and factorial structure of the Academic Entitlement (AE) scale were evaluated using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) via Mplus. Model fit was

assessed using multiple fit criteria: the Chi-Square goodness-of-fit test ( $\chi^2 = 344.981, df = 161, p < .001, \chi^2/df = 2.14$ ), Comparative Fit Index (CFI = .940), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI = .929), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA = .057, 90% CI [.048, .065], PCLOSE = .088), and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR = .049). Although the Chi-Square test was statistically significant which is expected given its sensitivity to larger sample sizes ( $N > 200$ ) (Cohen et al., 2022), all remaining fit indices satisfied the recommended thresholds (CFI/TLI  $\geq .90$ , RMSEA  $\leq .08$ , SRMR  $\leq .08$ ), indicating an adequate fit between the hypothesized multidimensional model and the observed data. Construct reliability was evaluated using McDonald's omega ( $\omega$ ) and Composite Reliability (CR) alongside Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each dimension. Factor 1 demonstrated acceptable internal consistency ( $\omega = .81$ , CR = .82, AVE = .48), while Factor 2 showed moderate reliability ( $\omega = .74$ , CR = .75, AVE = .41). However, if the sample size is small, the maximum likelihood method's parameter estimate becomes less reliable. Therefore, in this study, the researcher uses RMSEA as the criterion. The item factor loading for the academic entitlement measurement scale is presented in table 2:

**Tabel 2.**

| Standardized Factor Loadings and Item Properties of the 15-Item AE Scale (N = 257) |       |                                    |       |                   |         |                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|------------------------------------|-------|-------------------|---------|----------------|
| Subscale                                                                           | Items | Standardized Loading ( $\lambda$ ) | SE    | t-value / z-value | p-value | R <sup>2</sup> |
| Externalized Responsibility                                                        | 1     | 0.677                              | 0.044 | 15.253            | < .001  | 0.458          |
|                                                                                    | 2     | 0.416                              | 0.212 | 1.965             | < .049  | 0.173          |
|                                                                                    | 3     | 0.671                              | 0.045 | 14.764            | < .001  | 0.450          |
|                                                                                    | 6     | 0.619                              | 0.103 | 5.993             | < .001  | 0.383          |
|                                                                                    | 7     | 0.412                              | 0.158 | 2.610             | < .009  | 0.170          |
|                                                                                    | 10    | 0.446                              | 0.035 | 12.752            | < .001  | 0.199          |
|                                                                                    | 11    | 0.590                              | 0.064 | 9.172             | < .001  | 0.348          |
|                                                                                    | 12    | 0.694                              | 0.132 | 5.241             | < .001  | 0.482          |
|                                                                                    | 13    | 0.443                              | 0.205 | 2.166             | < .030  | 0.196          |
|                                                                                    | 15    | 0.450                              | 0.035 | 13.004            | < .001  | 0.203          |
| Entitled Expectation                                                               | 4     | 0.664                              | 0.281 | 2.366             | < .018  | 0.441          |
|                                                                                    | 5     | 0.482                              | 0.104 | 4.645             | < .001  | 0.232          |
|                                                                                    | 8     | 0.474                              | 0.129 | 3.681             | < .001  | 0.225          |
|                                                                                    | 9     | 0.419                              | 0.068 | 6.198             | < .001  | 0.176          |
|                                                                                    | 14    | 0.488                              | 0.055 | 8.884             | < .001  | 0.238          |

**NOTE:**  $\lambda$  = Standardized factor loading; SE = Standard Error; t-value = Test statistic; R<sup>2</sup> = Item reliability/variance explained. All loadings are statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ).

As shown in Table 2, all 15 items demonstrated statistically significant standardized factor loadings ( $\lambda$ ) on their designated dimensions, ranging from 0.412 to 0.694. Each item yielded a test statistic exceeding the critical threshold of  $t > 1.96$  ( $p < .05$ ), indicating that all items significantly contribute to the latent constructs of Externalized Responsibility and Entitled Expectation. The variance explained (R<sup>2</sup>) for individual items ranged from 0.170 to 0.482. Although several items (e.g., Item 2, Item 7, and Item 9) exhibited moderate

loadings near the standard cutoff ( $\lambda \approx .41-.44$ ), they were retained in the measurement model because their loadings remained statistically significant and theoretically essential to preserving the content domain of the Indonesian scale adaptation. All items on this variable have met the fit model criteria, so they can be included in the next analysis.

The results showed that the AE scale consists of two factors structured and a valid instrument to be used on undergraduate students in Indonesia. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) shows a data fits the multidimensional model in line with the theoretical concepts according to Chowning & Campbell (2009) that the AE scale is structured on two factors namely externalized responsibilities and entitled expectations. As previous research conducted explanatory factor analysis (EFA) also showed the result of a two-factor structure of academic entitlement with some cross-loaded items (Carollo, 2020). However, there are structural issues to the model fit, as the use of goodness-of-fit index (GFI), and the value of the comparative fit index (CFI = 0.897) that less adequate than  $p > 0.90$ . Therefore, it's important to validate before the scale used in practice. As stated by Wasieleski et al (2014) that The AE scale shows promise as a tool for measuring academic entitlement, but it has issues including double-barreled questions, a possible acquiescence bias, and a small number of items on the entitled expectations component (five items) that are common to many scales.

Despite these issues, regarding the instrument AE scale is a valid scale to measure academic entitlement according to the result of this study. According to Bonaccio et al (2016) that the AE scale found to be a adequate scale for measuring academic entitlement in college students. Additionally, negative personality qualities are linked to both academic entitlement components, and other personality traits like awareness, agreeableness, and openness to new experiences are better indicators of entitled expectations than externalized responsibility.

Mahbod & Foldchange (2018) examine the academic entitlement scale's factor structure, validity, and reliability among Iranian universities. The scale's two components structure externalized responsibility and entitled expectation as well as the embedding items were validated by the confirmatory factor analysis findings, and each factor's Cronbach's alpha coefficient was sufficient. According to the findings, the AE scale is a valid instrument for measuring academic entitlement in undergraduate students and can be applied as a useful instrument in research.

This study investigated the construct validity and factor structure of the Academic Entitlement (AE) scale among Indonesian undergraduate students. The research specifically aimed to examine the two-factor structure (externalized responsibilities and entitled expectations) of the 15-item AE scale developed by Chowning & Campbell (2009). The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) results indicated that the data fit a multidimensional model, which aligns with the theoretical concepts proposed by Chowning & Campbell (2009). The goodness of fit indexes for the model was  $\chi^2 = 344.981$ ,  $df = 161$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , RMSEA estimate = 0.057, 90% C.I = 0.048 to 0.065, probability RMSEA  $< 0.005 = 0.048$ .

While the chi-square value did not meet the traditional fit criteria, other coefficients such as CFI (0.940) and TLI (0.929) demonstrated that the data matched the model.

The researchers prioritized RMSEA as the criterion due to the known issue of chi-square being less reliable with large sample sizes. All items on the AE scale had a T-value  $> 1.96$  and were positively correlated, with loading factors ranging from 0.412 to 0.694, indicating that all items met the fit model criteria and could be included in the analysis. These findings support the validity of the AE scale as a tool for measuring academic entitlement in Indonesian undergraduate students. This aligns with previous research by Mahbod & Fouladchang (2018), which also validated the two-component structure of externalized responsibility and entitled expectation of the AE scale among Iranian university students using CFA. Similarly, Bonaccio et al (2016), found the AE scale to be an adequate measure for academic entitlement in college students.

Despite the positive findings, some considerations regarding the AE scale have been noted in the literature. Wasieleski et al (2014), highlighted potential issues such as double-barreled questions, possible acquiescence bias, and a limited number of items (five items) in the entitled expectations component, which are common challenges with many scales. Previous research using explanatory factor analysis (EFA) also indicated a two-factor structure with some cross-loaded items (Carollo, 2020), and structural issues to the model fit were observed with CFI values less adequate than  $p > 0.90$  (CFI = 0.897). Therefore, continued validation is crucial before widespread practical use of the scale.

Academic entitlement is a significant construct in the educational setting, as it can lead to expectations of high grades disproportionate to effort or work quality. This belief that students are entitled to preferential treatment, such as extra credit or better marks without merit, has been linked to academic fraud and other problematic behaviors. Students with academic entitlement may not perceive themselves as active learners and may view themselves as customers with the ability to change classroom rules. Understanding and accurately measuring academic entitlement is therefore important for addressing these issues in higher education.

## Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to determine if college undergraduate students may benefit from the two-factor model in the AE scale. College undergraduate students' academic entitlement is assessed using the AE measures. The instrument developed by Chowning & Campbell (2009) is adequate for measuring academic entitlement in undergraduate students based on the two-factor models of externalized responsibility and entitled expectation that have been identified as subscales of academic entitlement. This instrument can be used by researchers who are interested in researching academic entitlement.

While this study validated the academic entitlement scale in Indonesian undergraduate students, there are several suggestions for future research. Further research on academic entitlement constructs can use a variety of methods and not be limited to undergraduate

students. This can include exploring factors influencing academic entitlement (e.g., demographic variables, personality, or educational environment) and its long-term effects on academic performance and ethical student behavior. Secondly, considering the potential biases in the scale, such as double-barreled questions or acquiescence bias, future research could strive to develop or adapt more robust instruments to address these limitations. Thirdly, expanding the scope of research participants to a more diverse population (e.g., postgraduate students or students from various institutions and regions) could strengthen the generalizability of the findings. Lastly, future research could incorporate other validation methods such as concurrent validity or rasch model to gain a deeper understanding of the construct and item analysis of academic entitlement.

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