

## Chapter 9

# Academic Entitlement and the K–20 System: The Importance of Implementing Policies to Better the Education System

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### ABSTRACT

*This chapter was designed to explore the current crisis that the K-20 education system is facing with academic entitlement. This chapter per the researchers indicated the various causes of this phenomena. This chapter then unfolded to the researchers discussing academically-entitled students' behavior and how studies have revealed the lack of respect that students have towards their professors. The researchers further revealed that there is a relationship between academic entitlement and narcissism and that the levels of narcissism are higher today than they were in the 1970s. Lastly, this chapter discussed the methods of preventing academic entitlement from occurring in the K-20 system. The researchers then delved in discussing the various methods in helping children who have an entitled mindset. Furthermore, the researchers revealed the importance of the anecdotal philosophy of teaching advanced school policy information to academic leaders, who need to develop superior policies to include a firm policy regarding entitlement. Lastly, suggestions for future research were included.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

“Just give us an A and leave us alone,” “We are not indebted to the university, they are indebted to us,” “We are paying for our education, so we are consumers buying a product.” Welcome to the world of academic entitlement, where the newest influx of students, otherwise known as *Millennials*, *generation-me*, *generation Y*, amongst other terminology utilized to define this new wave of students, believe they have the power to control and choose all that pertains to completing their academic journey. Gone are the days when educators were looked upon as respected scholars with a wealth of knowledge that can be shared with their students to broaden their horizons (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). This era within education deems to be one where students view their teachers and professors as gatekeepers, and where the students see themselves as consumers having the right to attain the grade of an A without the required work needed to receive such a grade. This student-consumer idealism is not about the learning process, but more of a transactional process where the students feel that if they pay for goods and/or services, they should automatically obtain an A (Cain, Romanelli, & Smith, 2012). Students are now treating their educators as customer service representatives who provide services (Baker, Comer, & Martinak, 2008; Dubovsky, 1986; Morrow, 2009). Cain, Romanelli, & Smith (2012) commented that the term *student consumerism* and academic entitlement are closely related since “students are paying for their education, they deserve to be treated as consumers in every sense of the word” (p. 1). Although educators have implemented course policies and expectations, this wave of students believes that policies do not pertain to them. One might ask themselves, what is to become of our future? Who will be our future doctors and engineers? However, another critical question to be asked, is, what has brought on academic entitlement and how can we solve this before it is too late?

Truth be told, literature has indicated that there are an abundance of possible causes as to what brings on academic entitlement (Barton & Hirsch, 2016; Lord, 2008; Pinto & Mansfield, 2010; Sonner, 2000; Twenge, 2006, 2017); however for this chapter, the researchers will focus on covering (a) parenting styles, (b) self-esteem movement, (c) institutional climate, (d) millennials and the customer business model, and (e) grade inflation. Furthermore, the researchers will cover academic entitled student’s behavior in addition to the association of narcissistic personalities and academic entitlement. Lastly, the requirements necessitated to decrease and eventually wholly prevent academic entitlement from occurring within all academic institutions from K-20 will be covered.

## **Academic Entitlement**

Studies have illustrated that various researchers have defined academic entitlement differently. That said, Peirone & Maticka-Tyndale (2017) defined academic entitlement as the propensity of students to clasp on views, expectations, and beliefs that they are worthy of academic success without achieving that success through hard work. Whereas Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, & Bushman (2004) interpreted entitlement as “a pervasive sense that one deserves more and is entitled to more than others” (p. 31). Kopp & Finney (2013) additionally defined it as, “the expectation that one should receive positive academic outcomes, often independent of performance” (p. 322). However, as one can observe, all definitions will encompass the idea that students believe that they are worthy of or entitled to attaining specific goods and/or services that are to be offered by their academic institutions and professors that do not demonstrate the students actual performance or responsibilities within the classroom or online (Singleton-Jackson, Jackson, & Reinhardt, 2010).

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