

LINKING ACADEMIC ENTITLEMENT WITH WORK VALUES,  
WORK ETHICS, AND POST-GRADUATE  
JOB ENTITLMENT

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis study examined the relationships of academic entitlement (AE) with work values, work ethics, and post-graduation job entitlement. The sample consisted of 664 undergraduate students from Texas State University. *AE* was found to have a negative, significant correlation with having high: moral ethics; belief in centrality of work; belief in not wasting time and taking responsibility for one's actions; actively managing time and staying productive; and intrinsic work values. *AE* was also found to have a positive correlation with more leisure time, higher beliefs in job entitlement after graduation, and extrinsic work values. Mediation analysis found that intrinsic work values partially mediate the effects between *AE* and work ethic factors centrality of work and belief in not wasting time and taking responsibility for one's actions. In addition, intrinsic work values fully mediated the effects between *AE* and beliefs in actively managing time and staying productive.

# I. INTRODUCTION

## Background

Generation studies have investigated the work values (Krahn & Galambos, 2014; Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010), attitudes, and ethics (Twenge, 2010; Twenge et al., 2010) of young adults related to changes in perceptions of life. Three generations have been specifically examined: the Baby Boomers (1946 - 1964), Generation X (1965 -1981), and Generation Y (born in 1982 and after), also known as Generation Me (GenMe; Twenge, 2010) or Millennials (Thompson & Gregory, 2012).

The social changes, world events, and life experiences that a generation goes through is thought to affect their outlook on life (Kapoor & Solomon, 2011; Krahn & Galambos, 2014; Twenge, 2009). Some of these changes are the economic outcomes of events such as World War II, after which Baby Boomers no longer had to live through the hardships of depression such as what their parents went through. Instead, this generation witnessed their parents' purchasing power rise to where food, shelter, and material items were handed down by the parents, instead of requiring the receivers to work for it (Jones, 1980, as cited in Achacoso, 2002). Similar effects are thought to be in GenMe individuals because some believe they have been treated as more special and more sheltered by the Baby Boomers (DeBard, 2004), and are in need of immediate gratification (Singleton-Jackson, Jackson, & Reinhardt, 2010).

Although this cyclical change may be inevitable (Howe & Strauss, 2000), educators and employers are dealing with generations that have developed different perceptions and outlooks on work and achievement in life (Alsop, 2008; Kapoor & Solomon, 2011; Twenge, 2010). Furthermore, researchers have supported the idea that

young adults from GenMe are going to display more behaviors of entitlement in higher education (Singleton-Jackson et al., 2010).

Academic entitlement (AE) is defined as the belief of anticipating positive results, such as high grades, despite low performance in the academic setting (Kopp, Zinn, Finney, & Jurich, 2011) or the belief that achievement in academia is under obligation regardless of the amount of effort placed towards that achievement (Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Ciani, Summers, & Easter, 2008; Greenberger, Lessard, Chen, & Farruggia, 2008). Achacoso (2002) pointed out that a sense of entitlement is an innate trait in everyone, where to some extent everyone has anticipated some specific outcome that they believe should occur. However, instructors have found AE to be an increasingly important issue (Kopp & Finney, 2013; Singleton-Jackson et al., 2011; Twenge, 2009).

Those with high AE beliefs have been known to insist on augmenting grades for work that is insufficient or even become aggressive in order to attain what they want (Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Ciani et al., 2008; Greenberger et al., 2008; Lippman, Bulanda, & Wagenaar, 2009). For example, Kopp and Finney (2013) found that AE is directly linked with behaviors of incivility (e.g., inappropriate use of technology in class, talking in class, and noncompliance with institutional policies). In addition, Chowning and Campbell (2009) found that students who received negative feedback regarding an essay task reported greater degrees of negative affect. These adverse emotions can be seen as the spark in maladaptive behaviors such as incivility and may carry over to other domains outside of academia.

In addition to an increase in AE, there is an increase in issues rising in the work place where employers are complaining that young adults from recent generations are

more difficult to retain in the workplace and have different perspectives of work values and ethics (Kapoor & Solomon, 2011; Thompson & Gregory, 2012; Twenge, 2010; Twenge et al., 2010). With a decline in traditional work values and ethics also comes changes in behaviors that are displayed as a sense of entitlement to benefits, promotions, and training (Miller, Woehr, & Hudspeth, 2002).

### **Purpose and Significance of the Study**

AE will probably continue to increase beyond GenMe due to current academic pushes such as the “No child left behind act” (Paone & Lepkowki, 2007), which may likely condition students to be more performance-oriented with a main focus on grades, rather than mastery-oriented. Therefore, it is important to understand how AE coexists with other contexts of entitlement to have a better understanding of the behavior and its potentially negative impact. The goal of this study is to examine the relationships of work values, work ethics, and post-graduation job entitlement with AE in order to contribute more knowledge towards entitlement as a construct and its specific domains.

The past research reveals that young GenMe adults, compared to previous generations, exhibit higher AE, as well as potentially problematic beliefs that pertain to professional work that will follow their academic career (i.e., lower work ethics, lower internal work values but higher external work values, and higher post-graduate job entitlement). Unfortunately, past research has yet to investigate whether AE is related to the problematic work beliefs. The closest is a study revealing that individuals who hold high AE beliefs have less mastery-approach goal orientation and are, thus, less willing to put effort in hard work (Kopp et al., 2011).

## **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

Taken together, all of this past work leads to the following five hypotheses: AE will be negatively related to work ethics (H1), negatively related to intrinsic work values (H2), positively related to extrinsic work values (H3), and positively related to post-graduate job entitlement (H4). Previous research has also reported that work values will predict work ethics (Miller et al., 2002); therefore, work values will be tested as a mediator for AE and work ethics (H5).

In addition, exploratory analyses will be conducted with the gender, academic classification, major, and source of college tuition demographic variables. Whereas past research has found gender differences and changes within individuals' AE, work values, and job entitlement from the start to finish of their undergraduate years (Chow, Krahn, & Galambos, 2014; Krahn & Galambos, 2014), research has not yet investigated whether the potential relationships between AE and these work-related variables depend on the student's gender, year in rank, major, or methods of paying for tuition.

## **II. LITERATURE**

### **Academic Entitlement**

AE is thought to be different from general entitlement (GE; Kopp et al., 2011). GE was spawned as an element of narcissism, whereas AE is believed to have been developed through generation perceptual changes. In fact, it was found that narcissism and GE are only slightly associated with AE (Greenberger et al., 2008). One of the socio-cultural changes that was thought to have led to AE is the self-esteem movement, where parents were educated to increase their children's self-esteem to produce a better outcome of success in school (Moses & Moses-Hrushovski, 1990, as cited by Kopp & Finney, 2013). Moses & Moses-Hrushovski (1990) proposed that children receiving too much for little effort would increase entitlement beliefs. Another example is the role of the student as a consumer at a university (Kopp et al., 2011). The perceptions of students feeling that they are treated as customers by the university due to how the university markets to them, and how much the students have to pay to attend (Lippman et al., 2009; Singleton-Jackson et al., 2010) creates a consumer-oriented role and can lead the students to feel that they are at least entitled as customers.

AE is also believed to have formed due to grade inflation in the K-12 educational system. A study conducted by the ACT test developers found that between 1991 and 2003 GPAs have increased in high schools, but there were no evidence of increases in achievement on standardized tests (Woodruff & Ziomek, 2004). Therefore, students have learned to put in little effort for a higher grade (Lippman et al., 2009; Twenge & Campbell, 2009). These differences in life experiences may have assisted in developing

perceptions of entitlement at work and in an academic context (Thompson & Gregory, 2012; Twenge, 2009; Twenge, 2010).

Furthermore, AE has also been thought of as a coping mechanism for when students face stressful academic challenges (Baer, 2011) such as not obtaining the grade required to pass the class or enter a higher academic program. Although studies have found that AE and GE are separate constructs, and AE may not manifest itself in other relations outside of academia (Chowning & Campbell, 2009), it is important to identify to what extent AE behaviors are displayed outside of the academic context, but yet coexist with AE in order to better understand this type of entitlement. Specifically, for students who are pursuing a degree related to a future career, issues like work ethics, work values, and post-graduate job expectations may be relevant for AE.

### **Work Values and Ethics**

Work values have commonly been examined by focusing on two factors: extrinsic and intrinsic work values. Extrinsic values are benefits that the job provides external from the job environment or job performance, such as status, promotions, and income. On the other hand, intrinsic values are benefits that the job provides in the job environment and during job performance, such as holding the interest of the person, remaining challenging and stimulating, opportunities for decision making, and autonomy (Mortimer & Lorence, 1979). These two factors have been thought to predict a person's work ethics (Miller et al., 2002). Miller et al. defined work ethics as the investment of importance and effort towards a job. Rather than being one construct, Miller et al. believed that work ethics actually encompasses a set of perspectives that define the behavior of how one values

work. For example, if a person holds high work ethics, then they will also hold high intrinsic work values.

There are contradictory findings regarding whether or not younger generations have differing work values (intrinsic vs. extrinsic) than previous generations. The consistencies that studies have found are that GenMe has increased in extrinsic work values (i.e., status, money; Twenge et al., 2010), work rewards (Krahn & Galambos, 2014), materialistic desires (Wray-Lake, Syvertsen, & Briddell, Osgood, & Flanagan, 2011) and leisure values (Twenge et al., 2010; Twenge, 2010). In addition, a longitudinal study revealed that high school students from GenMe increased in extrinsic work rewards and work values (i.e., job promotions and benefits) from ages 18 to 25 compared to Generation X (Krahn & Galambos, 2014). However, Twenge et al. (2010), Twenge (2010), and Wray-Lake et al. (2011) found that Generation X had higher extrinsic work values when compared to Baby Boomers and GenME. Although Generation X may have been the pinnacle of extrinsic work values, GenMe has also been found to have lower intrinsic work values (Twenge et al., 2010), work centrality (Twenge et al., 2010; Twenge, 2010), work priorities, (Wray-Lake et al., 2011), and work ethics (Twenge, 2010; Twenge et al., 2010) when compared to Baby Boomers and Generation X. These changes in perceptions of the importance of work may bring about other job related beliefs such as job entitlement.

### **Post-Graduate Job Entitlement**

Job entitlement, the belief that attaining a higher skill set, such as a degree in higher education, promises a favorable job that reflects the skill and/or degree earned (Derber, 1978), has been thought to have increased over the past few decades (Twenge,



2006). The few recent studies that have focused on job entitlement beliefs revealed that after high school, between the ages of 18-25, students' job-entitlement beliefs actually decrease, although researchers attribute the decrease to their sample having experienced an economic recession and participants potentially finding it difficult to find a job during that period (Chow, Krahn, & Galambos, 2014). However, other studies have found that the decrease was less in GenX and in females (Krahn & Galambos, 2014). In addition, GenMe individuals have displayed more AE behaviors in college, and therefore, they may hold strong convictions that if they put high effort in school, then they are entitled to a job post-graduation (Krahn & Galambos, 2014; Twenge, 2006), although research has not yet tested this hypothesis.

### **III. METHOD**

#### **Participants**

Participants were undergraduate college students from freshman-level Introduction to Psychology courses and from a variety of senior-level courses from different disciplines that have popular majors (e.g., accounting, English, mass communication, psychology) at Texas State University. Recruitment of participants was by utilizing a participant pool via the Psychology Department at Texas State University. In addition, emails were sent to multiple professors who taught courses outside of the psychology department to request student participation in the study for extra credit.

The complete sample number was 707, but after the removal of missing data, the sample included 664 students. Furthermore, cases were selected to only include those below the age of 33, which focuses on the GenMe population only. Examination of those in older generations did not occur since there were too few. The sample consisted of 24.0% males and 76.0% females. Regarding ethnic background, there were 32.7% Hispanics or Latinos, 45.3 % Caucasian Americans, 9.3 % African Americans, 4.4 % Asian Americans, and 8 % who reported that they were either bi-racial or of other ethnic origin. The academic classification of the participants were 33.0% freshmen, 17.0 % sophomores, 18.0% juniors, and 32.0% seniors. The majors were condensed to four different categories: Social Sciences (47.4%), Health Sciences (21.1%), Mathematics and Sciences (19.3%), and other (12.0%).

#### **Research Design and Data Collection Procedures**

For this complex correlational design research study, participant completed a survey online through a survey program called Qualtrics. This survey included

instruments that assessed key demographic variables (demographics of age, ethnicity, academic classification, major, SES levels, and tuition resource), as well as AE, work values, work ethics, and job entitlement.

### **Instruments, Reliability, and Construct Validity**

#### **Demographics**

For general demographic information, questions on gender, age, grade level, ethnicity, major, SES, and source of college tuition were asked (see Appendix, Questions 1-10).

#### **AE**

AE was measured using the *Academic Entitlement Questionnaire* (AEQ; Kopp et al., 2011; see Appendix, Questions 51-76). This questionnaire includes 26 statements about AE (e.g., “Because I pay tuition, I deserve passing grades”), to which participants reported their level of agreement using a 7-point Likert scale. The AEQ has good internal reliability with a Cronbach’s alpha of .81 (Kopp et al., 2001). Using data from the current sample, reliability for this scale was found to be excellent,  $\alpha = .90$ .

#### **Work Ethics**

Work ethics were assessed with the *Multidimensional Work Ethic Profile–Short Form* (MWEP-SF; Meriac, Woehr, Gorman, & Thomas, 2013; see Appendix, Questions 11-38). This scale was originally developed by Miller et al. (2002), and was condensed to a shorter form of 28 items with the following subscales: self-reliance (being independent at work), centrality of work (being fulfilled from work; also related to intrinsic work values), hard work (believing that success comes from hard work), delay of gratification (willing to have rewards delayed), leisure (valuing non-work leisure time), wasted time

(being productive at work), and morality/ethics (being fair at work). This multidimensional construct contains items that overlap domains of work ethics that do not generalize to one specific job, and is therefore, more fit for the sample. It is a widely known scale used to measure work ethics and has been found to be valid and reliable (Cronbach's alpha = .95; Meriac et al., 2013).

Using data from the sample in the current thesis study, a factor analysis was conducted using principle axis factoring as the extraction method. For the current sample, it was found that the work ethic scale contained 8 factors instead of 7. The additional factor consisted of two items that were related to having high productivity at work. This is similar to the original factor of wasted time because the two items (I constantly look for ways to productively use my time; I try to plan out my workday so as not to waste time) defined the factor of wasted time in Meriac et al. (2013) study. Therefore, the 8<sup>th</sup> factor was labeled as productivity for the belief of being a productive worker. In addition, the 7<sup>th</sup> factor consisted of two items that were related to working efficiently at work without wasting time (It is important to stay busy at work and not waste time; Time should not be wasted, it should be used efficiently) and taking responsibility for own actions (One should always take responsibility for one's actions). Differences in Meriac's study found that the latter item was part of the moral/ethics factor. Therefore, factor 7 was labeled as wasted time and taking responsibility for own actions.

Reliability was found to be good for all 8 factors: willing to delay gratification (DG) had a Cronbach's alpha = .69; belief in success coming from hard work (HW) had an alpha = .81; desire for leisure time (Leisure) had an alpha = .79; having moral ethics (ME) had an alpha = .60; being self-reliant (SR) had an alpha = .78; having work central

to life (CW) had an alpha = .78; belief in not wasting time and having responsibility (WTrespon) had an alpha = .68; and belief in actively managing time and staying productive (AMTpr) at work had an alpha = .68. Altogether, the items were found to have a reliability of .84.

### **Work Values**

Work values were assessed with a scale used by Chow et al. (2014; see Appendix, Questions 39-44). This scale includes three intrinsic work value items (e.g., “work that gives you a feeling of accomplishment”) and three extrinsic work value items (e.g., “work that pays well”), to which participants indicated their importance using a 5-point Likert scale. In a longitudinal study, Chow et al. used this scale five times in young adults between the ages of 18 to 25 and found that Cronbach’s alpha ranged from .56 to .67 for the items assessing intrinsic work values, and from .53 to .63 for the items assessing external work values.

Using data from the sample in the current thesis study, reliability for the three intrinsic work value (IWV) questions was found to be .50, and for the three extrinsic work values (EWV) questions it was found to be .60. When all six items were combined, reliability was found to be .60.

### **Post-Graduate Job Entitlement**

To measure job entitlement beliefs, a two item scale developed by Chow et al., (2014) was utilized (see Appendix, Questions 45 & 47). Four additional questions were developed to capture perspectives of job entitlement beliefs related to one paying for their degree, or simply earning a degree even though one lacks skills for a job related to the

degree (see Appendix, Questions 46, 48, 49, & 50). Participants used a 5-point Likert scale to indicate their level of agreement with these statements about job entitlement.

Using data from the sample in the current thesis study, internal consistency of this scale was good with Cronbach's alpha of .73. A principle axis factor analysis revealed two factors. Items 45, 46, 47, 48, and 50 loaded onto one factor which had to do with attaining a degree and a right to a job after graduating. Item 49 was the only item that loaded onto the second factor which had to do more with GPA, degree, and expectations of attaining a job. Since this item was assessing something other than job entitlement, it was not included in the composite score for job entitlement (JE) scale.

### **Statistical Analyses**

A series of Pearson correlation analyses were conducted to assess the relationships between *AE* and the work-related variables: intrinsic work values (*IWV*), extrinsic work values (*EWV*), post-graduate job entitlement (*JE*), and the work ethics subscale scores—self-reliance (*SR*), centrality of work (*CW*), hard work (*HW*), delay of gratification (*DG*), leisure (*Leisure*), and morality/ethics (*ME*), belief in staying productive (*AMTpr*), and wasted time and belief in taking responsibility for one's own actions (*WTrespon*).

A between-subjects ANOVA was conducted to assess differences in *AE* based on gender (*Gender*), academic class (*AcadClas*), major (*Major*), and source of college tuition (*WorkTuition*, *LoansTuition*, and *OtherTuition*), as well as interactions for these variables. Next, two between-subjects MANOVAs were conducted to assess group differences in: (1) the work ethics subscales self-reliance (*SR*), centrality of work (*CW*), hard work (*HW*), delay of gratification (*DG*), *Leisure*, moral/ethics (*ME*), actively

managing time and staying productive (*AMTpr*), and wasted time/responsibility (*WTrespon*); and (2) intrinsic work values (*IWV*), extrinsic work values (*EWV*), and job entitlement (*JE*). The independent variables were based the same demographic variables, with the addition AE as a dichotomous variable (*AE\_Dichot*). The dichotomous variable was created by finding the median for *AE* (-.07), and those who scored above the median were categorized as being low in *AE*, whereas those who scored above the median were categorized as being high in *AE*.

To assess the mediation effects of work values on AE and work ethics, a mediation model was tested by the use of regression analysis. The first regression analysis tested whether AE influences work ethics. Second, the influence of AE was tested against work values. Third, the influence of work values was tested against work ethics. Finally, the influence of both AE and work values was tested against work ethics to determine if work values is fully or partially mediating the model.

## IV. RESULTS

After standardizing all of the scores, *IWV*, *EWV*, *ME*, *CW*, *WTrespon*, *AMTpr*, and *HW* all had high negative skewness. The outliers that caused the skewness were removed from the original, non-standardized variables by making them missing values. For the non-standardized *IWV* and *EWV* variables, values 0 to 9 were listed as missing. For the non-standardized *ME* and *AMTpr* variables, values -7 to -2.8 were selected as missing. For the non-standardized *HW* variable, values -5 to -3.09 were selected as missing data. For the non-standardized variable *CW*, values -5 to -4 were selected as missing values. Finally, for the non-standardized variable *WTrespon*, values of -8 to -3.16 were selected as missing. The previous variables were then standardized again. *AE*, *JE*, and the remaining work ethics subscales (*SR*, *DG*, and *Leisure*) were left as z-scores. All variables had less than 5% of missing data; therefore, analyses were conducted using exclude listwise.

### Correlation Analyses

*AE* was found to have a negative, significant correlation with *IWV*, *ME*, *CW*, *AMTpr* and *WTrespon* (see Table 1). Higher academic entitlement is associated with less intrinsic work values, moral ethics, centrality of work, belief in actively managing time and staying productive, and the belief in not wasting time and taking responsibility for one's actions. *AE* was found to have a positive, significant correlation with *EWV*, *Leisure*, and *JE*. Therefore, higher beliefs in academic entitlement is associated with higher extrinsic work values, desire for leisure time, and belief in job entitlement.



## ANOVA and MANOVA

A between subjects ANOVA was conducted with *AE* as the dependent variable and the predictor variables being the following demographics: *Gender*, *AcadClass*, *Major*, *WorkTuition*, *LoansTuition*, and *OtherTuition* (see Table 2). A marginally significant interaction was found between *AcadClass* and *LoanTuition*,  $F(12, 557) = 1.76$ ,  $p < .05$ , *eta square* = .04. Since there were no additional main

Table 1  
*Pearson Correlations with AE*

| Variable | <i>r</i> | <i>p</i> |
|----------|----------|----------|
| IWV      | -.09     | .02*     |
| EWV      | .10      | .01**    |
| SR       | -.07     | .06      |
| CW       | -.20     | .00***   |
| HW       | .06      | .16      |
| DG       | -.03     | .46      |
| Leisure  | .24      | .00***   |
| ME       | -.11     | .00**    |
| JE       | .34      | .00***   |
| WTrespon | -.20     | .00**    |
| AMTpr    | -.09     | .03*     |

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ . Intrinsic work values (IWV); extrinsic work values (EWV); self-reliance (SR); centrality of work (CW); hard work (HW); delay of gratification (DG); moral/ethics (ME); wasted time/responsibility for own actions (WTrespon); actively managing time and staying productive (AMTpr); job entitlement (JE)

Table 2

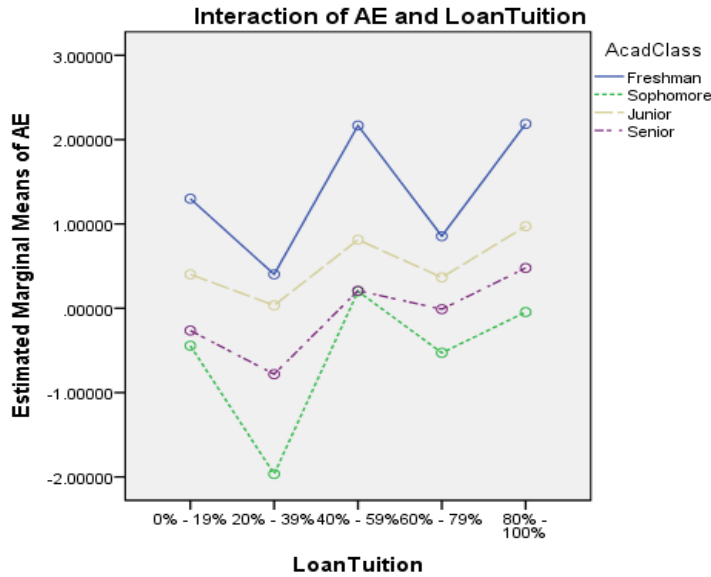
*ANOVA Predicting AE from Demographic Variables*

| Variable                   | F    | df      | p     | eta square |
|----------------------------|------|---------|-------|------------|
| Gender                     | 2.67 | 1, 595  | .10   | .00        |
| AcadClass                  | 5.45 | 3, 595  | .00** | .03        |
| WorkTuition                | .207 | 4, 595  | .08   | .01        |
| LoansTuition               | 3.00 | 4, 595  | .02*  | .02        |
| Gender x AcadClass         | .18  | 3, 595  | .91   | .00        |
| Gender x WorkTuition       | .49  | 4, 595  | .74   | .00        |
| Gender x LoansTuition      | 1.99 | 4, 595  | .10   | .01        |
| AcadClass x WorkTuition    | 1.60 | 12, 595 | .09   | .03        |
| AcadClass x LoansTuition   | 1.94 | 12, 595 | .03*  | .04        |
| WorkTuition x LoansTuition | 1.30 | 14, 595 | .20   | .03        |

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ . Academic class (AcadClass); tuition received from loans (LoansTuition); tuition received from work (WorkTuition)

effects found in the remaining IVs, an additional factorial ANOVA was conducted with the removal of *Major* and *OtherTuition* to further investigate the interaction between *AcadClass* and *LoanTuition* (see Figure 1). The interaction was found to be significant between *AcadClass* and *LoanTuition*,  $F(12, 595) = 1.94$ ,  $p < .05$ , *eta square* = .04. The effect size, however, is small.

Simple main effect analysis utilizing LSD revealed that for students who received 0% -19% of their source of tuition from loans, freshmen exhibited significantly higher AE means compared to sophomores,  $t(595) = 3.36$ ,  $p < .01$ ; juniors,  $t(595) = 2.40$ ,  $p < .05$ ; and seniors,  $t(595) = 3.78$ ,  $p < .001$ . Juniors displayed higher means in AE compared to sophomores  $t(595) = 2.00$ ,  $p < .05$ , and seniors,  $t(595) = 2.24$ ,  $p < .05$ . For students who received 20% - 39% of their source of tuition from loans, freshmen again had



**Figure 1.** Interaction of Academic class (*AcadClass*) and tuition from loans (*LoanTuition*) on academic entitlement (*AE*)

significantly higher means in AE compared to sophomores,  $t(595) = 4.02, p < .001$ , and seniors,  $t(595) = 2.47, p < .05$ . Sophomores had lower means in AE compared to juniors,  $t(595) = -3.17, p < .01$ , and seniors,  $t(595) = -2.30, p < .05$ . Out of the students who received 40% - 59% of their college tuition from loans, freshmen showed higher means in AE compared to sophomores,  $t(595) = 2.97, p < .01$ ; juniors,  $t(595) = 3.36, p < .01$ ; and seniors,  $t(595) = 3.36, p < .001$ . For those students whose college tuition is paid 60% - 79% from loans, freshmen had the highest means in AE compared to sophomores,  $t(595) = 2.38, p < .05$ , and seniors,  $t(595) = 3.36, p < .05$ . For students who receive 80% - 100% of their source of tuition from loans, freshmen had significantly higher means in AE compared to sophomores,  $t(595) = 3.49, p < .01$ ; juniors,  $t(595) = 2.54, p < .05$ ; and seniors,  $t(595) = 3.12, p < .01$ . Also, within the 80% - 100% bracket, juniors were approaching significantly higher means in AE compared to sophomores,  $t(595) = 1.92, p = .06$ . This indicates that freshmen entering college and receiving zero to any amount of

loans to pay for college, will have higher levels of AE compared to sophomores, junior, and seniors. Figure 1 reveals that students who receive 40% - 59% or 80% - 100% of their source of tuition from loans tend to increase in levels of AE. Although freshmen are typically higher than any other academic class, if a student receives approximately half or more than three-quarters of their source of tuition from loans, they will be more likely to have higher levels of AE.

The between-subjects MANOVA was conducted with *AE\_Dichot* and the original six demographic variables (*Gender*, *Major*, *AcadClass*, *WorkTuition*, *LoanTuition*, and *OtherTuition*) as the predictor variables, along with the eight work ethic variables as the dependent variables. A significant interaction effect was found between *AE\_Dichot* and *LoanTuition*, *Wilke's Lambda* = .91,  $F(32, 1911.89) = 1.61$ ,  $p = .05$ , *eta square* = .02. However, due to the SPSS software producing non-estimable values, an additional MANOVA was conducted without the independent variable *AcadClass* and *OtherTuition* since neither produced a main effect in the first attempt. In the new MANOVA (see Table 3), homoscedasticity was violated; therefore, Pillai's Trace was used for reporting. A marginal significant interaction effect was found between *AE\_Dichot* and *LoanTuition*, *Pilliai's Trace* = .80,  $F(32, 2164) = 1.44$ ,  $p = .05$ , *eta square* = .02. In addition, a main effect was found in *WorkTuition*, *Pilliai's Trace* = .09,  $F(32, 2268) = 1.57$ ,  $p < .05$ , *eta square* = .02. However, both of these findings had small effect sizes.

The ANOVA (see Table 4) revealed that the group differences within *WorkTuition* were in *HW*,  $F(4, 571) = 2.40$ ,  $p < .05$ , *eta square* = .02, and *SR*,  $F(4, 571) = 2.95$ ,  $p < .05$ , *eta square* = .02. The interaction of

Table 3

*MANOVA Predicting Work Ethics from AE\_Dichot and Demographic Variables*

| Variable                   | Pillai's<br>Trace | F    | df        | p    | eta square |
|----------------------------|-------------------|------|-----------|------|------------|
| Gender                     | .01               | .68  | 8, 564    | .71  | .01        |
| Major                      | .06               | 1.41 | 24, 1698  | .09  | .02        |
| WorkTuition                | .09               | 1.57 | 32, 2268  | .02* | .02        |
| LoansTuition               | .09               | 1.64 | 32, 2268  | .01* | .02        |
| AE_Dichot                  | .02               | 1.31 | 8, 564    | .24  | .02        |
| Gender x Major             | .02               | .55  | 21, 1698  | .96  | .01        |
| Gender x WorkTuition       | .06               | 1.05 | 32, 2268  | .39  | .02        |
| Gender x LoansTuition      | .04               | .76  | 32, 2268  | .84  | .01        |
| Gender x AE_Dichot         | .01               | .73  | 8, 564    | .66  | .01        |
| Major x WorkTuition        | .15               | .89  | 96, 4568  | .78  | .02        |
| Major x LoansTuition       | .16               | .98  | 96, 4568  | .54  | .02        |
| Major x AE_Dichot          | .04               | .84  | 24, 1698  | .69  | .01        |
| WorkTuition x LoansTuition | .22               | 1.13 | 112, 4568 | .17  | .03        |
| WorkTuition x AE_Dichot    | .07               | 1.25 | 32, 2268  | .16  | .02        |
| LoansTuition x AE_Dichot   | .08               | 1.44 | 32, 2268  | .05* | .02        |

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ . Tuition received from work (WorkTuition); tuition received from loans (LoansTuition); AE dichotomous (AE\_Dichot)

*AE\_Dichot* and *LoanTuition* was significant on the following WE variables: *DG*,  $F(4, 571) = 2.49$ ,  $p < .05$ , *eta square* = .02; *WTrespon*,  $F(4, 571) = 2.60$ ,  $p < .05$ , *eta square* = .02; and *AMTpr*,  $F(4, 571) = 2.95$ ,  $p < .05$ , *eta square* = .02.

To examine group differences in *WorkTuition*, the post hoc test using Scheffe found that those who receive 0% - 19% of their source of tuition from work have lower means in *SR* compared to those who receive 40% -59% of their

Table 4

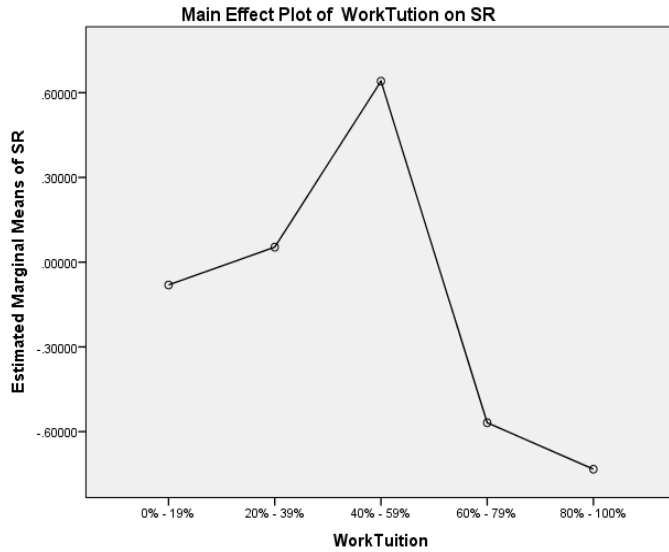
*ANOVA Predicting Work Ethics from AE\_Dichot and Demographic Variables*

| Variable                   | Dependent variables | <i>F</i>     | <i>df</i>        | <i>p</i>     | eta square |
|----------------------------|---------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|------------|
| WorkTuition                | Self-reliance       | 2.95         | 4, 571           | .02*         | .02        |
| LoanTuition x<br>AE_Dichot | Delay Grat<br>AMTpr | 2.49<br>2.95 | 4, 571<br>4, 571 | .04*<br>.02* | .02<br>.02 |

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ . Tuition received from work (WorkTuition); tuition received from loans (LoansTuition); AE dichotomous (AE\_Dichot); actively managing time and staying productive (AMTpr)

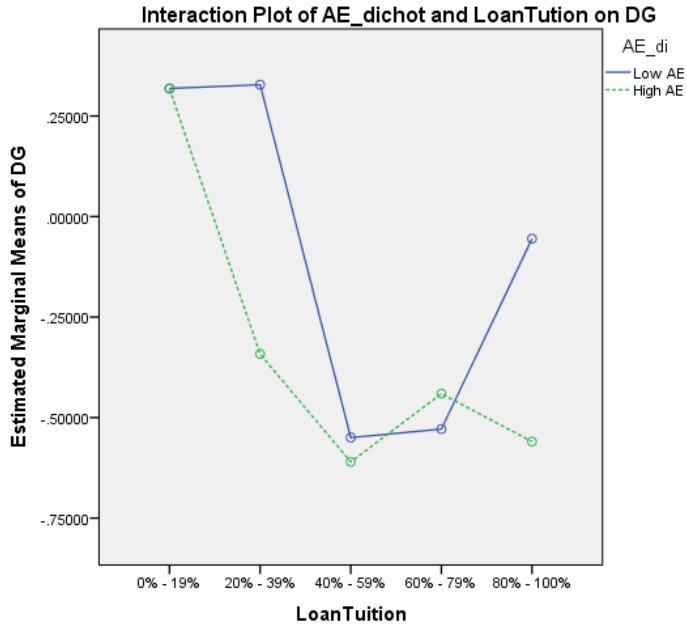
source of tuition from working,  $t(571) = -3.36, p < .05$ . This indicates that students who work for at least half of their tuition, are more likely to be self-reliant compared to those who receive less of their source of tuition from not working. However, figure 2 reveals that students who receive approximately three-quarters of their source of tuition from working, their self-reliance will decrease. This indicates that students who do work through college to pay for tuition will be more self-reliant. However, if the student is working for more than half of their college tuition, their self-reliance may decrease. No additional significant differences were found in the post hoc.

A simple main effect analysis found that those who are low in AE and receive 0% - 19% of their source of tuition from loans, have higher means in *DG* compared to those receiving 60% - 79% of their tuition from loans,  $t(571) = 2.02, p < .05$ . Those who are high in AE and receive 0% - 19% of their source of tuition from loans still have marginally higher means in *DG* compared to those that receive 20% - 39%,  $t(571) = 1.94, p = .05$ , and significantly higher means compared to those receiving 60% - 79%,  $t(571) = 1.98, p < .05$ . No additional significant effects were found.

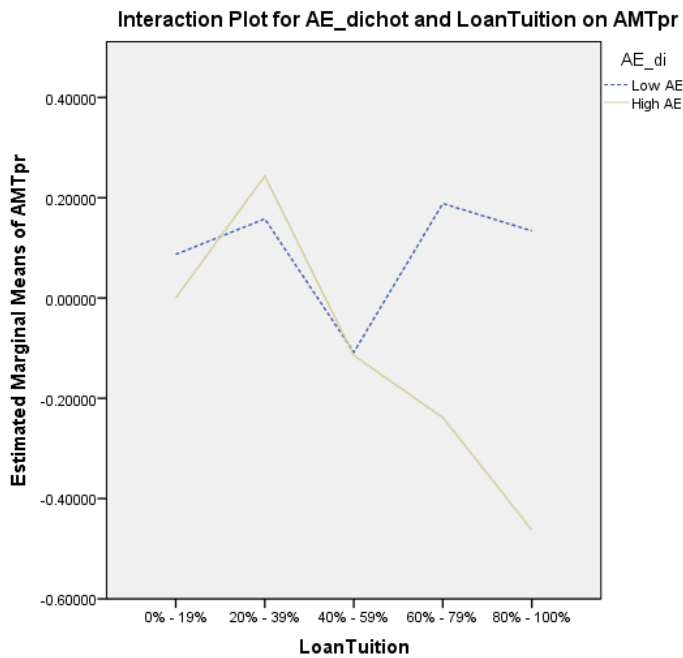


**Figure 2.** Main effect of tuition received from work (*WorkTuition*) on self-reliance (*SR*)

Figure 3 reveals that the lowest means of DG were in those receiving approximately half of their source of tuition from loans. Those who are high in AE, had higher means of delaying gratification when they only receive 0% - 19% in loans to pay their tuition. This indicates that even for those with high levels of AE, the less money one receives from loans, the higher one's ability to delay gratification. In addition, for those who are high in AE, and receive 20% - 39% of their source of tuition from loans showed higher means in believing in staying productive compared to those receiving 80% - 100% of their source of tuition from loans,  $t(571) = 2.01, p < .05$ . Figure 4 shows this interaction between high *AE* students and how receiving more in loans are associated with *AMTpr*. This indicates that for GenMe students that have high beliefs in being academically entitled, the more loans they receive, the less likely they will have higher beliefs in actively managing their time and staying productive.



**Figure 3.** Interaction of tuition from loans (*LoanTuition*) and academic entitlement dichotomous variable (*AE\_Dichotomous*) on delay of gratification (*DG*)



**Figure 4.** Interaction of tuition from loans (*LoanTuition*) and academic entitlement dichotomous variable (*AE\_Dichotomous*) on belief in actively managing time and staying productive (*AMTpr*)



An additional between-subjects MANOVA was conducted with the same demographic variables on *IWV*, *EWV*, and *JE*. Since there were no significant findings, additional MANOVAs (see Table 5) were conducted with the removal of *LoanTuition*, *OtherTuition*, *AcadClass*, and *Major*. Significant main effects were found in *AE\_Dichot*, *Wilke's Lambda* = .97,  $F(3, 625) = 7.60$ ,  $p < .05$ , *eta square* = .04. A significant interaction was found between *Gender* and *WorkTuition*, *Wilke's Lambda* = .96,  $F(12, 1653.89) = 1.99$ ,  $p < .05$ , *eta square* = .01. The ANOVA (see Table 6) revealed that the significant group differences for *AE\_Dichot* was in *JE*,  $F(1, 625) = 13.69$ ,  $p < .01$ , *eta square* = .02, and in *IWV*,  $F(1, 625) = 6.26$ ,  $p < .05$ , *eta square* = .01. However, homoscedasticity was violated using the Levene's test for *JE* only. The significant group difference between *Gender* and *WorkTuition* was found in *EWV*,  $F(4, 625) = 4.76$ ,  $p < .01$ , *eta square* = .03.

Table 5

*MANOVA Predicting Work Values (IWV and EWV) and Job Entitlement (JE) from AE\_Dichot, Work Tuition, and Gender*

| Variable                | <i>Wilks' Lambda</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>df</i>   | <i>p</i> | <i>eta square</i> |
|-------------------------|----------------------|----------|-------------|----------|-------------------|
| Gender                  | .98                  | 4.77     | 3, 625      | .00**    | .02               |
| WorkTuition             | .96                  | 2.00     | 12, 1653.89 | .02*     | .01               |
| AE_Dichot               | .97                  | 7.60     | 3, 625      | .00***   | .04               |
| Gender x WorkTuition    | .96                  | 1.99     | 12, 1653.89 | .02*     | .01               |
| Gender x AE_Dichot      | .99                  | 1.35     | 3, 625      | .26      | .01               |
| WorkTuition x AE_Dichot | .98                  | .93      | 12, 1653.89 | .52      | .01               |

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ . Tuition received from work (WorkTuition); AE dichotomous (AE\_Dichot)

Table 6

*ANOVA Predicting Work Values (IWV and EWV) and Job Entitlement (JE) from AE\_Dichot, Work Tuition, and Gender*

| Variable             | Dependent Variables | <i>F</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>p</i> | eta square |
|----------------------|---------------------|----------|-----------|----------|------------|
| Gender               | EWV                 | 14.28    | 1, 627    | .00***   | .02        |
| Gender x WorkTuition | EWV                 | 4.76     | 4, 627    | .00**    | .03        |

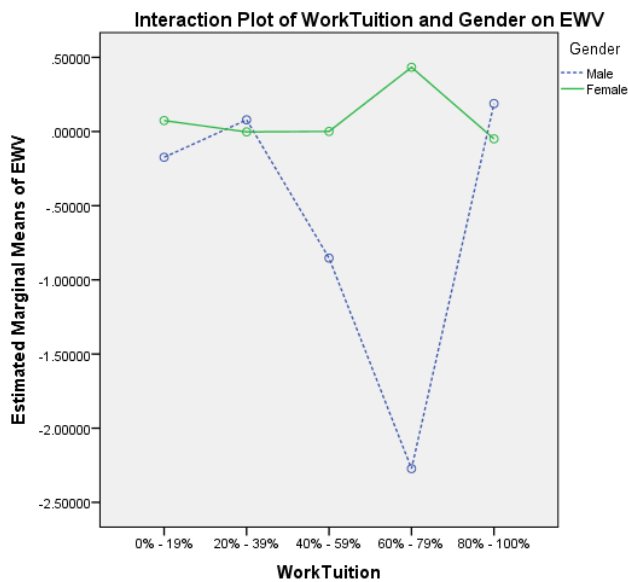
\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ . Tuition received from work (WorkTuition).

The significant differences of *AE\_Dichot* groups on *JE* indicated that students who have low *AE*, tend to have lower *JE* ( $M = -.27$ ) compared to those who have high *AE* ( $M = .25$ ). This implies that Gen X students who are also academically entitled, are more likely to have post-graduate job entitlement. For *AE\_Dichot* and *IWV*, those with low *AE* ( $M = .07$ ) have higher means in *IWV* compared to those who have high *AE* ( $M = -.09$ ). This indicates that those who are highly academically entitled will be more likely to hold lower intrinsic work values.

For *Gender* and *WorkTuition* on *EWV*, males who are receiving 0%-19% of their source of tuition from work have higher means in *EWV* compared to those who receive 40% - 59%,  $t(625) = 2.45$ ,  $p < .05$ , and even higher compared to males receiving 60% - 79%,  $t(625) = 3.63$ ,  $p < .01$ . Males that received 20% - 39% of their source of tuition from work exhibited higher means in *EWV* compared to those who received 40% - 59% ,  $t(625) = 2.48$ ,  $p < .05$ , and even higher for males that received 60% - 79%,  $t(625) = 3.72$ ,  $p < .01$ . For males that received 40% - 59% of their source of tuition from work had higher means in *EWV* compared to those that received 60% - 79%,  $t(625) = 2.26$ ,  $p < .05$ . However, males that received 80% - 100% of their source of tuition from work had

higher means in *EWV* compared to those that received 60% - 79%,  $t(625) = 2.57, p < .05$ , and compared to those who received 40% - 59%,  $t(625) = 3.79, p < .01$ .

This indicates that if males receive more than half of their source of tuition from work, their extrinsic work values may increase. Figure 5 shows that for males receiving at least half of their tuition from work will tend to decrease in extrinsic work values the most; however, it does not decrease much if they are paying for more than 80% of their tuition by working. No significant differences were found in females for this interaction.



**Figure 5.** Interaction of *Gender* and tuition received from work (*WorkTuition*) on extrinsic work values (*EWV*)

### Mediation Analysis

A mediation analysis was conducted to determine if work values (*IWV* and *EWV*) mediate the effect of *AE* on work ethics (WE) factors (*Leiusre, CW, HW, ME, WTrespon, SR, AMTpr* and *DG*). Outliers for the regression were tested using the Mahalanobis procedure, which found that  $\chi^2(11) = 31.26$  for the upper end of the tail at alpha level

.05, and .001 for the lower end of the tail. Therefore, cases above values of 31.26 and below 1.83 were selected to be taken out of the analysis.

The predictor variable *AE* was significantly related to both the proposed mediator *WV* for *EWV*,  $\beta = .10$ ,  $t(1) = 2.61$ ,  $p < .01$ , and for *IWV*,  $\beta = -.11$ ,  $t(1) = -2.78$ ,  $p < .01$ , and the outcome variable *WE* (see Tables 7): for *CW*,  $\beta = -.19$ ,  $t(1) = -4.95$ ,  $p < .00$ ; for *ME*,  $\beta = -.10$ ,  $t(1) = -2.40$ ,  $p < .02$ ; for *Leisure*,  $\beta = .26$ ,  $t(1) = 6.77$ ,  $p < .001$ ;

Table 7  
Coefficients for *AE* on *WE* and *WV* (*IWV* and *EWV*)

|                | <i>B</i> | $\beta$ | <i>t</i> | <i>p</i> | <i>Bivariate r</i> | <i>Partial r</i> |
|----------------|----------|---------|----------|----------|--------------------|------------------|
| AE on ME       | -.09     | -.10    | -2.40    | .02**    | -.10               | -.10             |
| AE on WTrespon | -.19     | -.19    | -4.87    | .00***   | -.19               | -.19             |
| AE on CW       | -.19     | -.19    | -4.95    | .00***   | -.19               | -.19             |
| AE on Leisure  | .26      | .26     | 6.77     | .00***   | .26                | .26              |
| AE on AMTpr    | -.09     | -.09    | -2.22    | .03*     | -.09               | -.09             |
| AE on IWV      | -.11     | -.11    | -2.78    | .01**    | -.11               | -.11             |
| AE on EWV      | .10      | .10     | 2.61     | .01**    | .10                | .10              |

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$  Moral/Ethics (*ME*); wasted time/responsibility for own actions (*WTrespon*); actively managing time and staying productive (*AMTpr*); centrality of work (*CW*); intrinsic work values (*IWV*); extrinsic work values (*EWV*)

for *WTrespon*,  $\beta = -.19$ ,  $t(1) = -4.87$ ,  $p < .001$ ; and for *AMTpr*,  $\beta = -.09$ ,  $t(1) = -2.22$ ,  $p < .05$ . *AE* did not predict work ethic variables *DG*, *SR*, or *HW*. These results suggested that *WV* (*IWV* and *EWV*) might mediate the effect of *AE* on *CW*, *ME*, *Leisure*, *AMTpr*, and *WTrespon*. Additionally, work value factor, *IWV* predicted: *ME*,  $\beta = .13$ ,  $t(1) = 3.40$ ,  $p < .01$ ; *WTrespon*,  $\beta = .14$ ,  $t(1) = 3.65$ ,  $p < .001$ ; *AMTpr*,  $\beta = .18$ ,  $t(1) = 4.60$ ,  $p < .001$ ; and *CW*,  $\beta = .16$ ,  $t(1) = 4.14$ ,  $p < .001$ . *EWV* predicted *Leisure*,  $\beta = .26$ ,  $t(1) = 6.77$ ,  $p < .001$

(see Tables 8). These results suggested that *IWV* might mediate the effect of *AE* on *CW*, *ME*, *AMTpr*, and *WTrespon*, and *EWV* might mediate the effect of *AE* on *Leisure*.

Table 8  
Coefficients for *WV* (*IWV* and *EWV*) on *WE*

|                 | <i>B</i> | $\beta$ | <i>t</i> | <i>p</i> | <i>Bivariate r</i> | <i>Partial r</i> |
|-----------------|----------|---------|----------|----------|--------------------|------------------|
| IWV on ME       | .13      | .13     | 3.40     | .00**    | .13                | .13              |
| IWV on WTrespon | .14      | .14     | 3.65     | .00***   | .14                | .14              |
| IWV on CW       | .16      | .16     | 4.14     | .00***   | .16                | .16              |
| IWV on AMTpr    | .18      | .18     | 4.59     | .00***   | .18                | .18              |
| EWV on Leisure  | .26      | .26     | 6.77     | .00***   | .26                | .26              |

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ . Moral/Ethics (ME); Wasted Time/responsibility for own actions (WTrespon); actively managing time and staying productive (AMTpr); Centrality of work (CW).

To test for mediation, several mediation analyses were conducted via regression analysis (see Tables 9 and 10). Specifically, the mediating effects tested were for *IWV* between *AE* and *CW*, *AE* and *ME*, *AE* and *WTrespons*, and *AE* and *AMTpr*, and the for *EWV* between *AE* and *Leisure*. *AE* significantly predicted *ME*,  $\beta = -.10$ ,  $p < .05$ ; *WTrespon*,  $\beta = -.19$ ,  $p < .01$ ; *CW*,  $\beta = -.19$ ,  $p < .01$ ; and *AMTpr*,  $\beta = -.09$ ,  $p < .05$ . However, when *IWV* was entered into the regression, the effect of *AE* shrunk for: *WTrespon*,  $\beta$  changed from  $-.190$  to  $-.176$ ; for *CW*,  $\beta$  changed from  $-.193$  to  $-.177$ ; and for *AMTpr*,  $\beta$  changed from  $-.09$  to  $-.07$ . These results indicated that *IWV* mediated the effect of *AE* on *WTrespon* (see Figure 6) and *CW* (see Figure 7). The testing of the mediating effect of *IWV* between *AE* and *AMTpr* resulted in *AE* no longer being significantly related, indicating that *IWV* is fully mediating the effects of *AE* on *WE* variable *AMTpr* (see Figure 8). In addition, the mediating effect of *EWV* between *AE* and *Leisure* was

tested. However, when *AE* and *EWV* were entered together to predict *Leisure*, the effect of *EWV* became non-significant, indicating that *EWV* was not a mediator.

Table 9

*Coefficients for Final Model: AE and WV on WE*

|                 | <i>B</i> | $\beta$ | <i>t</i> | <i>p</i> | <i>Bivariate r</i> | <i>Partial r</i> |
|-----------------|----------|---------|----------|----------|--------------------|------------------|
| IWV on ME       | .12      | .13     | 3.16     | .00**    | .13                | .13              |
| AE on ME        | -.08     | -.08    | -2.06    | .04*     | -.10               | -.08             |
| IWV on WTrespon | .12      | .12     | 3.19     | .00**    | .14                | .13              |
| AE on WTrespon  | -.17     | -.12    | -4.52    | .00***   | -.19               | -.18             |
| IWV on CW       | .14      | .14     | 3.68     | .00***   | .16                | .15              |
| AE on CW        | -.17     | -.18    | -4.56    | .00***   | -.19               | -.18             |
| IWV on AMTpr    | .18      | .18     | 4.45     | .00***   | .18                | .18              |
| AE on AMTpr     | -.08     | -.07    | -1.78    | .08      | -.09               | -.07             |
| EWV on Leisure  | .05      | .05     | 1.30     | .20      | .08                | .05              |
| AE on Leisure   | .25      | .25     | 6.61     | .00***   | .26                | .25              |

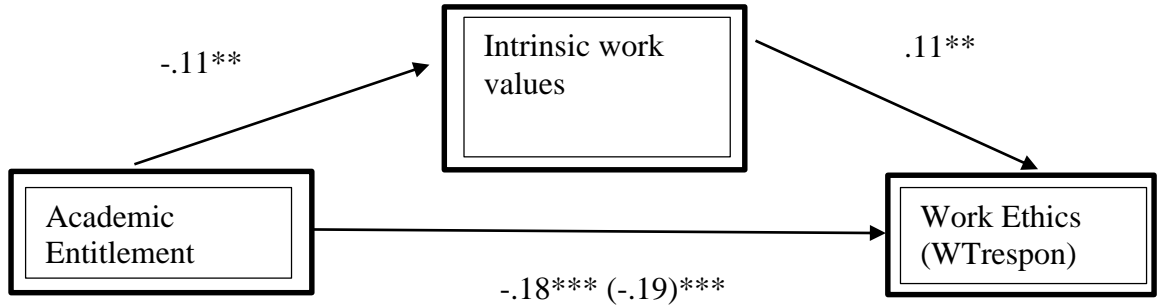
\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ . Moral/Ethics (ME); wasted time/responsibility for own actions (WTrespon); actively managing time and staying productive (AMTpr); centrality of work (CW); intrinsic work values (IWV); extrinsic work values (EWV)

Table 10

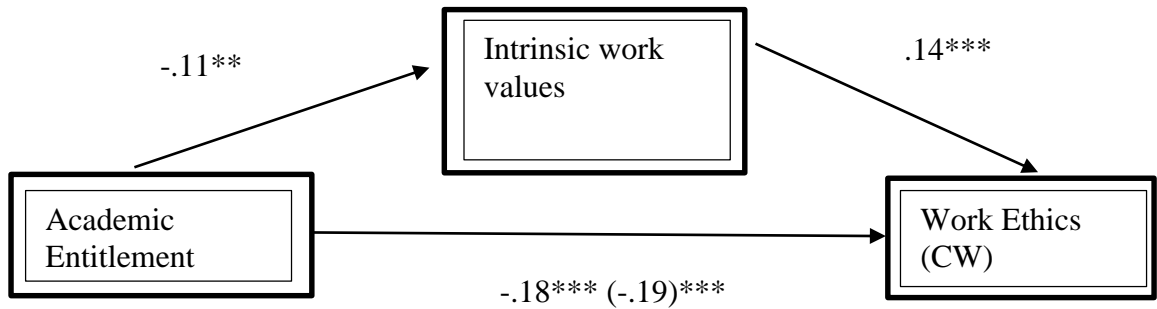
*Values for AE and WV on WE*

|          | <i>R</i> | $R^2$ | $R^2_{adj}$ | $\Delta R^2$ | <i>Fchg</i> | <i>p</i> | <i>df1</i> | <i>df2</i> |
|----------|----------|-------|-------------|--------------|-------------|----------|------------|------------|
| ME       | .16      | .02   | .02         | .02          | 7.90        | .00***   | 2          | 631        |
| WTrespon | .23      | .05   | .05         | .05          | 17.10       | .00***   | 2          | 631        |
| CW       | .24      | .06   | .05         | .06          | 19.24       | .00***   | 2          | 631        |
| AMTpr    | .20      | .04   | .04         | .04          | 12.59       | .00***   | 2          | 624        |
| Leisure  | .26      | .07   | .07         | .07          | 23.83       | .00***   | 2          | 660        |

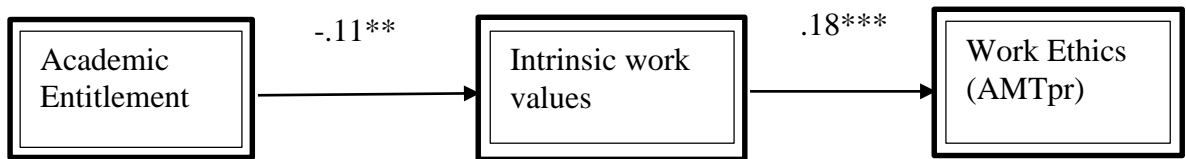
\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ . Moral/Ethics (ME); wasted time/responsibility for own actions (WTrespon); actively managing time and staying productive (AMTpr); centrality of work (CW)



**Figure 6.** Academic entitlement predicting work ethics factor, belief in not wasting time and taking responsibility for one's actions (WTrespon), partially mediated by intrinsic work values.



**Figure 7.** Academic entitlement predicting work ethics factor, belief in holding work central to life (CW), partially mediated by intrinsic work values.



**Figure 8.** Academic entitlement predicting work ethics factor, belief in actively managing time and staying productive (AMTpr), fully mediated by intrinsic work values.

## **V. DISCUSSION**

### **Discussion of Results**

The purpose of the current thesis study was to determine whether work values, work ethics, and post-graduate job entitlement are related to AE. In addition, AE was hypothesized to predict work ethics, with work values serving as a mediating factor. The current sample confirmed these hypothesis. AE was found to be negatively correlated with four of the work ethic factors (H1); the more academically entitled one is, the less one holds work central to life, believe that people should be treated fairly at work, believe in not wasting time and taking responsibility for one's own actions. This is consistent with previous findings in that GenMe individuals have lower work ethics, such as believing in wasting time and not holding work central to life (Kapoor & Solomon, 2011; Thompson & Gregory, 2012; Twenge, 2010; Twenge et al., 2010; Wray-Lake et al., 2011).

The one work ethics factor that was positively related to AE was the desire for leisure time, which is consistent with previous studies that have shown that younger generations have increased in leisure values compared to previous ones (Twenge et al., 2010; Twenge, 2010). Being academically entitled may indicate that one enjoys less work and more free time. An article from the BBC by Wakefield (2015) reported that children between the ages of 5 and 16 spend an average of 6.5 hours a day on "screens". The author did not clarify whether these children are using the technology for academics, or if it is strictly for entertainment. However, he did indicate that the majority of the screen time was "spent watching TV, playing games consoles, using a mobile, computer or tablet." Therefore, if children and adolescents are spending this much time outside of



school on entertainment, instead of studying for mastery learning or working, then it is easy to believe that young adults enter college desiring more leisure time than work, and possess lower beliefs in centrality of work, not wasting time and taking responsibility for one's own actions.

The remaining three work ethics factors, hard work, delay of gratification, and self-reliance, were not significantly related to AE in this sample. One inconsistent finding in the current sample compared to previous research (Kopp et al., 2011) is that AE was not found to be related at all to the belief in hard work. Students with high AE levels have been thought of to not put high effort into their work; yet for this sample, hard work is not even related. One reason for this could be due to the MWES-SF scale, which resulted in 8 factors rather than 7 factors as previously found. The inconsistency in the number of factors in the scale may be due to the scale's inability to be applicable to all populations.

Another reason why *HW* was not found to be related at all, could be due to students with high AE truly believing that they are working hard when they may not be. For example, one study showed that students' perceptions of hard work and amount of effort expended for assignments were rated higher than what faculty rated it as (Zinn, Magnotti, Marchuk, Schultz, Luther, & Varfolomeeva, 2011). Therefore, students may believe that they are working hard; however, it is not the appropriate amount of work required to understand the concept. This superficial, or performance-based learning, is taught to children who are pushed through the K-12 school system without being fully prepared to continue to the next grade. If students are not being informed or held accountable for not putting in enough effort to master a concept or subject, then it is more

likely that students will resort to AE as a coping mechanism when they are faced with this problem in college or at a job.

The relationships between AE and both work value factors were confirmed as the hypothesis predicted and are consistent with previous studies (Twenge et al., 2010); the higher in AE one is, the less one's intrinsic work values are (H2), and the higher one's extrinsic work values are (H3). Therefore, GenMe students with beliefs in AE are more likely to have higher extrinsic work values and lower intrinsic work values. The final hypothesis was also confirmed in that the more one is academically entitled, the more likely they will have higher post-graduate job entitlement beliefs (H4). These two separate constructs of entitlement do overlap, which indicates that academic entitlement has additional characteristics that can be carried outside of academics.

Academic entitlement's relationships with work related variables are the focal point of this thesis study; however, sources of college tuition, academic class, and gender are also considered to influence AE beliefs. The interaction between academic class and percentage of source of tuition that comes from loans, revealed that regardless of how much a freshmen's college tuition is coming from loans, their beliefs in AE remain higher than sophomores, juniors, and seniors. This finding is slightly inconsistent with previous studies that have shown that AE remains the same in all class levels (Ciani, Summers, & Easter, 2008). However, juniors and seniors were also found to have high AE levels depending on the percentage of their source of tuition they receive from loans.

Receiving loans to pay for college tuition may not only influence beliefs in AE, but also abilities to delay gratification and beliefs in actively managing time and staying productive. Students who receive fewer loans, regardless of having low or high AE, are

associated with having higher abilities in delaying their gratification. Therefore, students who do receive loans to pay for college may be utilizing the loans to receive immediate gratification from other purchases with the loans. Financial debt studies have found that many young adults do not contemplate the consequences of misusing loans such as debt (Holub, 2002; Robert & Jones, 2001). If students are not considering the negative consequences of misusing debt, then they may be more likely to misuse it for immediate gratification. Furthermore, GenMe students who are receiving loans for college, and are also highly academically entitled, are more likely to have lower beliefs in being productive. Therefore, receiving loans to pay for college tuition has been associated with having higher levels of AE, lower desires to delay gratification, and lower beliefs in staying productive in those who hold high AE beliefs. This indicates that the lack of independence in the youth and young adults may be influencing a delay in maturity for economic self-sufficiency.

Being highly academically entitled may not only influence students' beliefs in productivity when receiving loans to pay for college tuition, but it also may have an influence alone on intrinsic work values and post-graduate job entitlement. GenMe students have been previously identified as having lower intrinsic work values than older generations. However, GenMe students who are also academically entitled may be even more likely to have lower intrinsic work values and higher beliefs in post-graduate job entitlement. Therefore, these findings imply that this form of entitlement is not necessarily confined to an academic setting and is more likely to continue into the workplace, along with lower intrinsic work values and high job expectations.

Although intrinsic work values may be influenced by AE, extrinsic work values may be impacted by work experience. For males who receive less of their source of tuition from working tend to have higher extrinsic work values. However, extrinsic work values did increase if a male student pays 80% of their tuition and up from working. Not only may working to pay for college have an effect on extrinsic work values, but it may also have an effect on self-reliance. Students who receive approximately half of their college tuition from working, are more likely to be self-reliant. However, once the student is depending on work income to pay for more than 60% of their college tuition, their ability to be self-reliant is diminished. The decrease in self-reliance, and the increase in extrinsic work values after receiving more than half, and more than three-quarters, respectively, of college tuition from work may be due to having an unbalanced work, school, and life style. Working almost full-time hours to pay for college tuition, while maintaining an acceptable GPA can cause high stress, which could then influence beliefs in self-reliance and extrinsic work values. Nonetheless, the significant findings suggest that work experience may strengthen beliefs in self-reliance, and for males, provides opportunities to shape their extrinsic work values.

However, most children in America do not work due to child labor protective laws, and adolescents who do work are not necessarily expected to pay bills for their material desires. In fact, it is socially acceptable that American children are sheltered by their caretakers for a quarter of their lives, including the years that students are in college. Therefore, if children in America are not required to work (e.g., chores, mastery-learning of their homework) and learn that it takes high effort to attain the things one desires in life instead of just letting them become free riders for 20 years, they will have an

extensive amount of free time where they can develop high values for leisure time, instead of high work ethics and intrinsic work values.

The mediation analysis showed that intrinsic work values only are a partial mediating factor in *AE* predicting work ethics factors centrality of work, moral/ethics, and belief in not wasting time and taking responsibility for one's actions. It was also found that intrinsic work values fully mediated the effects between *AE* and beliefs in actively managing time and staying productive. Leisure is a work ethics factor that cannot be predicted by work values. The remaining work ethics factors are predicted more by both work values factors than by *AE*. For *DG*, *HW* and *SR*, *AE* does not predict these work ethic factors.

It has been proposed that work values predict work ethics (Miller et al., 2002), and now it is confirmed that *AE* can also predict work ethics depending on the person's intrinsic work values. Forming intrinsic work values and high work ethics require work experiences and depending on the income received from working to survive or purchase goods. However, very little is expected of children and adolescents in America. In combination with preventing children from having to endure negative consequences due to the self-esteem movement, or by being pushed along in the educational system, and simultaneously requiring little or no effort from the youth to contribute to their own survival, *AE* could serve as a way of coping with these stressors when more demands are finally encountered later in life. Once these students enter college, it is a complete surprise to them, not to mention a threat to their self-esteem, that the effort that they have learned to put into their work is not enough.

## **Strengths and Limitations**

The current sample was large and of the targeted population; therefore, external validity is relatively high, and the findings can be generalized to similar college students in an academic setting. However, given the correlational nature of this survey research that did not manipulate any variables through true experimentation, the ability to make causal inferences is relatively low.

One of the strengths of the current study is that it looked for differences in popular majors and tuition sources. Although there were no significant findings in popular majors, results may be different in a larger population. Given that the sample did not have enough of a variety of majors, this can be seen as a limitation. Another limitation is that the study consisted of more females than males. With a larger male population, different findings may occur. An additional limitation is that this study was conducted via an online survey, and therefore there may be bias. Finally, given that the MWEP-S scale was found to have eight factors instead of seven, this scale may not be completely valid for this sample. The use of a different work ethic scale may provide better results.

## **Future Research**

Future research could investigate the same variables in this study further using a larger sample to explore other possible group differences in popular majors. In addition, this study could be repeated using a different work ethics scale to examine whether there is truly not a relationship between AE and the belief in working hard, delaying gratification, being self-reliant, and belief in staying productive. In addition, it may be beneficial to look at other work related variables such as work history (e.g., employed or

not, length of time employed, etc.) during adolescent years to examine whether there are any differences in extrinsic and intrinsic work values between those who began working early in life compared to those who began to work later in life, such as after graduating high school.

### **Conclusions and Applications**

For students entering college, academic entitlement prevails, and can continue to have an effect on the student's attitudes, beliefs, and values after graduation and upon entering the workforce. Socio-cultural experiences and world events that different generations encounter are changing young adults' attitudes' and beliefs' such as their: centrality of work; moral ethics; not wasting time and taking responsibility for one's own actions; actively managing time and staying productive; self-reliance; leisure values; as well as intrinsic and extrinsic work values. These changes are not without accompanying behaviors that are counter-productive to businesses and economic growth of our country. Moreover, AE can be used to predict a potential employee's work ethic's centrality work and belief in not wasting time and taking responsibility, while using intrinsic work values as a mediating factor.

Being academically entitled may be used as a coping mechanism when confronted with the challenges in succeeding in college. Unfortunately, we may be overprotecting our offspring to where it is inhibiting a form of growth and maturity in upcoming generations. The information found through this study will contribute to the little research that has been done on AE and its impact on young adults entering the job market.

## APPENDIX SECTION

### Demographics

1. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your gender?
  - a. Female
  - b. Male
3. What is your ethnicity?
  - a. Caucasian
  - b. Hispanic or Latino
  - c. African American
  - d. Asian American
  - e. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is your academic classification?
  - a. Freshman
  - b. Sophomore
  - c. Junior
  - d. Senior
5. What is your major?
  - a. Psychology
  - b. Accounting or other business major
  - c. Mass Communication
  - d. English
  - e. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
6. What amount of your college education costs are paid for through income you receive from work?
  - a. 0% – 19%
  - b. 20% – 39%
  - c. 40% – 59%
  - d. 60% – 79%
  - e. 80% – 100%
7. What amount of your college education costs are paid for through student loans that you will need to pay back later?
  - a. 0% – 19%
  - b. 20% – 39%
  - c. 40% – 59%
  - d. 60% – 79%
  - e. 80% – 100%
8. What amount of your college education costs are paid for through sources other than work and student loans, which are addressed in the two previous questions? These sources include but may not be limited to your parents or other family members, your spouse, a trust fund, or other source of unearned income (i.e. scholarships, grants, etc.).
  - a. 0% – 19%
  - b. 20% – 39%



- c. 40% – 59%
  - d. 60% – 79%
  - e. 80% – 100%
9. As best you can, please estimate your family's current income.
- a. \$0 – \$24,999
  - b. \$25,000 – \$49,999
  - c. \$50,000 – \$74,999
  - d. \$75,000 – \$99,999
  - e. \$100,000 or more
10. What is your yearly income?
- a. \$0 – \$24,999
  - b. \$25,000 – \$49,999
  - c. \$50,000 – \$74,999
  - d. \$75,000 – \$99,999
  - e. \$100,000 or more

**MWEP-SF**

This section lists a series of statements. On a scale of 1–5, please choose the alternative that best represents your level of agreement with each statement.

|                      |          |         |       |                   |
|----------------------|----------|---------|-------|-------------------|
| 1                    | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5                 |
| Strongly<br>Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly<br>Agree |

- 11. It is important to stay busy at work and not waste time.
- 12. I feel content when I have spent the day working.
- 13. One should always take responsibility for one's actions.
- 14. I would prefer a job that allowed me to have more leisure time.
- 15. Time should not be wasted, it should be used efficiently.
- 16. I get more fulfillment from items I had to wait for.
- 17. A hard day's work is very fulfilling.
- 18. Things that you have to wait for are the most worthwhile.
- 19. Working hard is the key to being successful.
- 20. Self-reliance is the key to being successful.
- 21. If one works hard enough, one is likely to make a good life for oneself.
- 22. I constantly look for ways to productively use my time.
- 23. One should not pass judgment until one has heard all of the facts.
- 24. People would be better off if they depended on themselves.
- 25. A distant reward is usually more satisfying than an immediate one.
- 26. More leisure time is good for people.
- 27. I try to plan out my workday so as not to waste time.
- 28. The world would be a better place if people spent more time relaxing.
- 29. I strive to be self-reliant.

- 30. If you work hard you will succeed.
- 31. The best things in life are those you have to wait for.
- 32. Anyone who is able and willing to work hard has a good chance of succeeding.
- 33. It is important to treat others as you would like to be treated.
- 34. I experience a sense of fulfillment from working.
- 35. People should have more leisure time to spend in relaxation.
- 36. It is important to control one's destiny by not being dependent on others.
- 37. People should be fair in their dealings with others.
- 38. A hard day's work provides a sense of accomplishment.

**Work Values**

This section lists a series of work rewards. On a scale of 1–5, please choose the alternative that best represents how important it would be to you in looking for or choosing a full-time job.

|                         |                       |                       |                         |                   |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 1                       | 2                     | 3                     | 4                       | 5                 |
| Not at all<br>Important | Slightly<br>Important | Somewhat<br>Important | Moderately<br>Important | Very<br>Important |

- 39. Work that gives you a feeling of accomplishment
- 40. Work where you make most decisions yourself
- 41. Work that is interesting
- 42. Work that pays well
- 43. Work with good chances for promotion and advancement
- 44. Work with little chance of getting laid off

**Job Entitlement**

This section lists a series of statements. On a scale of 1–5, please choose the alternative that best represents your level of agreement with each statement.

|                      |          |         |       |                   |
|----------------------|----------|---------|-------|-------------------|
| 1                    | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5                 |
| Strongly<br>Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly<br>Agree |

- 45. I have a right to the kind of job that my education and training has prepared me for.
- 46. After attaining my degree, I expect to find a well-paying job related to my degree shortly after graduating.
- 47. If I put in a lot of effort in college and attain my degree, I have a right to a job related to my degree.
- 48. If I attain a job with my degree, but lack some skills, I should be trained at the job because I have the degree.

49. With a degree and a high GPA, I should be more likely to find a job than someone with a lower GPA.
50. Regardless of my GPA, if I paid for a degree and earned it, I have a right to a job in a field that reflects my degree.

### AEQ

On a scale of 1–7, please choose the alternative that best represents your level of agreement with each statement.

|                      |          |                      |         |                   |       |                   |
|----------------------|----------|----------------------|---------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|
| 1                    | 2        | 3                    | 4       | 5                 | 6     | 7                 |
| Strongly<br>Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat<br>Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat<br>Agree | Agree | Strongly<br>Agree |

51. If I don't do well on a test, the professor should make tests easier or curve grades.
52. Professors should only lecture on material covered in the textbook and assigned readings.
53. Professors should not expect me to complete work or study for tests over school breaks (e.g. Thanksgiving, Spring Break).
54. I focus on learning what is necessary to satisfy the requirements, but no more.
55. Professors must be entertaining for me to learn.
56. If I am struggling in a class, the professor should approach me and offer to help.
57. If a professor does not cover material in class, I should not be expected to learn it.
58. It is the professor's responsibility to make it easy for me to succeed.
59. Professors should provide their lecture notes online.
60. Professors should provide study guides.
61. The professor is responsible for how well I do in class.
62. My grades are more affected by how much a professor likes me than the amount or quality of work I do.
63. If I cannot learn the material for a class from lecture alone, then it is the professor's fault when I fail the test.
64. I am a product of my environment. Therefore, if I do poorly in class, it is not my fault.
65. Because it is the professor's job to help me learn, if I do not do well, it is the professor's fault.
66. I've done poorly on exams because they weren't geared to my test-taking style.
67. If I have a family vacation scheduled, I should be able to make up work that I miss.
68. I should be able to turn in assignments late without a penalty.
69. I should be given the opportunity to make up a test, regardless of the reason for the absence.
70. I should have input into how my classes are taught.
71. Because students are the ones who take classes, they know best what good teaching is.

72. I'm paying for my classes, so I should be able to skip class without a grade penalty.
73. If I have more than one test on the same day, I should have the opportunity to move one of them.
74. Because I pay tuition, I expect to pass the class and get credit.
75. Because my tuition pays professors' salaries, professors should accommodate my wishes.
76. Because I pay tuition, I deserve passing grades.

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