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Engaged or entitled? Study orientations among traditional and non-traditional business students

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Abstract

Research on student engagement, study engagement and academic entitlement has followed separate paths. This research examined how the concepts relate to each other among traditional and non-traditional Finnish business students ($N = 476$). A cluster analysis indicated that students form two clusters. Part-time students, students over the age of 25, students with more than 5 years of work experience and students taking open university courses or studying for a master's degree were more likely to belong to the more engagement-oriented cluster than their comparison groups. Although respondents' student engagement and study engagement scales correlated moderately, only the cognitive engagement dimension of student engagement had a strong correlation with study engagement subscales, indicating that student engagement is a much wider, if somewhat a fuzzy, construct than study engagement. Further analysis showed significant differences between the study and student engagement levels of traditional and non-traditional students.

Keywords: student engagement, academic entitlement, study engagement, business students, non-traditional students

Introduction

Although often described as a fuzzy concept with multiple overlapping meanings student engagement refers to student behaviour, emotions and cognition that contribute to positive learning outcomes and deep learning (e.g. Kahu, 2013; Kuh, 2009a). Student engagement should be separated from the notion of study engagement, which refers to a positive, fulfilling, work-oriented experience while studying (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Academic entitlement, on the other hand, characterises an instrumental orientation to study to purchase a degree without taking personal responsibility for it (e.g. Chowning and Campbell, 2009; Greenberger et al., 2008; Kopp et al., 2011; Lippman, Bulanda, and Wagenaar, 2009; Singleton-Jackson, Jackson, and Reinhardt, 2011).

In this paper, the term ‘study orientations’ is used as a collective term to refer to the three constructs of student engagement, study engagement and academic entitlement, which will be discussed in the following section. In the literature, there are several alternatives to refer to other than traditional-entry students, such as ‘mature’, ‘adult’ and ‘non-traditional’ students. In the literature review that follows, these students are referred to using the terms the cited authors originally used. In the empirical part of this paper, however, the term ‘non-traditional’ was chosen to describe those other than bachelor-level students with more than 5 years of working experience, studying part-time and older than 25 years of age. Thus, the author has taken a stand with regard to the choice of terminology to not label students between 18 and 25 as not being adults or being immature.

Study orientations

Student engagement

Although there are many confusing and overlapping definitions of student engagement (Reschly and Christenson, 2012; Vuori, 2014; Wolf-Wendel, Waird, and Kinzie, 2009), the term has become a proxy globally for educational quality. Kuh (2009b) even argues that student engagement is one of the few concepts that occasionally emerge in the study of higher education that are able to clarify complex issues and provide solutions for managing fundamental problems. This argument has been supported by research, which has shown the positive effect of student engagement on critical thinking, learning outcomes, retention rates and student satisfaction (Trowler and Trowler, 2010; Zepke, 2015a). An increasing number of critics, however, argue that student engagement is just another manifestation of marketisation of higher education that accentuates efficiency over other values of higher education (MacFarlane and Tomlison, 2017; Zepke, 2014; Zepke, 2015b) and overemphasises student participation (Gourlay, 2015).

Fredricks, Blumenfeld and Paris (2004) approach student engagement as a multidimensional meta-concept and suggest that student engagement can be divided into behavioural, emotional and cognitive components. Behavioural engagement refers to students' participation in academic, social and extracurricular activities. Emotional engagement encompasses students' positive and negative reactions to teaching staff, other students and the institution, as well as their sense of belonging and identification with the institution and the subject domain. Cognitive engagement focuses on the level of investment in learning and refers to students' thoughtfulness and willingness to exert effort for understanding complex ideas and mastering difficult tasks.

In higher education, the definition used most often originates from research by Kuh and his associates. They define student engagement by stating that it 'represents the time and effort students devote to activities that are empirically linked to desired outcomes of college *and* what institutions do to induce students to participate in these activities' (Kuh 2009b, emphasis in the original). This definition links student engagement with the effective teaching practices the educational institution may or may not provide to support students' learning activities. The link between student behaviour with institutional actions explains why student engagement is increasingly understood as a proxy for educational quality. Moreover, this linkage has been the basis for creating metrics that combine student learning with institutional action, for example, the National

Survey of Student Engagement, the Australasian Survey of Student Engagement and the UK Engagement Survey (Buckley, 2015; Coates, 2010; Kuh, 2009c). These surveys allow student engagement to be compared department by department and institution by institution and thus provide higher education administrators with metrics that can be seen as proof of educational quality in accountability-driven higher education cultures (Zepke, 2014; Zepke, 2015, see also critique by Trowler, 2015 and Buckley, 2018).

While Kuh's definition recognises the behavioural and cognitive dimensions of student engagement, it has been critiqued for not considering students' emotions as a fundamental part of student engagement (Kahu, 2013). Moreover, Kuh's definition and the definition proposed by Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004) have met with criticism arguing that they are too narrow and do not acknowledge the wider sociocultural and ecological aspects around students, faculty and institutions that are vital for student engagement (Kahu, 2013; Lawson and Lawson, 2013; Zepke, 2015).

Previous quantitative research on the student engagement of non-traditional students shows that their engagement patterns may differ considerably from those of younger students. Mature/adult learners do not participate as often as their younger counterparts in out-of-classroom activities and, as such, they tend to score lower on engagement survey subsections that measure enriching educational experiences (Kahu, Leach, and Zepke, 2013; Price and Baker, 2012). Instead, adult students may spend more time in educationally purposeful activities (Gibson and Slate, 2010), which may result in higher scores for academic engagement (Rabourn, BrckaLorenz, and Shoup, 2018). In addition, mature learners are better able to integrate their learning into work than younger students (Kahu, Leach, and Zepke, 2013). Although they spend less time interacting with the teaching staff, non-traditional perceive the quality of interaction higher than younger students do (Price and Baker, 2012; Rabourn, BrckaLorenz, and Shoup, 2018).

Qualitative studies on non-traditional student engagement provide additional, if somewhat controversial, insights into adult students' interactions with faculty. Gilardi and Guglielmetti (2011), after having interviewed Italian non-traditional students, report that they invest more energy into informal relationships with the faculty than traditional students. However, Wyatt (2011), in a study based on interviews of North American non-traditional students, reports that non-traditional students voluntarily interact with

instructors in class only if they like the instructor. If not, they behave and communicate with peer students and faculty in class the way it is expected and limit contacts outside the classroom on class- or assignment-related topics.

Study engagement

While the concept of student engagement originates from research in educational sciences, the concept of study engagement (or occasionally referred to only as ‘engagement’ or ‘students’ engagement’ when discussed in the context of higher education, e.g. Garrosa et al., 2017) has its background in occupational and health psychology, particularly in the study of work engagement and burnout prevention. The original construct of ‘work engagement’ refers to a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind experienced at work. This kind of work is characterised with vigour, dedication and absorption, and it is not focused on any particular person, behaviour or event (Bakker et al., 2008). Arguing that this positive, fulfilling state of mind can also be experienced while studying, the concept and measurement of work engagement has been applied to education by replacing the words ‘work’ and ‘job’ with ‘studies’ or ‘class’ (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Similar to the definition of student engagement by Fredricks, Blumenfeldt, and Paris (2004), study engagement is divided into behavioural, cognitive and emotional components. The behavioural component ‘vigour’ refers to energy, resilience and willingness to put effort into studying. The cognitive element ‘absorption’ refers to deep concentration in learning and losing one’s sense of time. The emotional dimension is referred to as ‘dedication’; it is characterised as finding inspiration, meaningfulness and enthusiasm in one’s studies.

Previous research indicates that study engagement is positively related to academic performance (Salanova et al., 2008; Schaufeli et al., 2002) and that positive emotions, personal resources and study engagement are reciprocally related (Ouweneel, Le Blanc, and Schaufeli, 2011). Moreover, researchers have found that study engagement fluctuates during different times of day and week (Garrosa et al., 2017) and that students may experience study burnout and study engagement at the same time (Salmela-Aro and Reed, 2017). Salanova et al. (2010) have found that the older students become, the more

engaged they are. Salmela-Aro and Reed (2017), however, showed that that study engagement decreases during the course of study.

Academic entitlement

The concept of academic entitlement refers to a student's fundamental perception of having a right to certain goods, services or outcomes offered by their institutions and professors that do not relate to their actual academic performance (Chowning and Campbell, 2009; Greenberger et al., 2008; Jackson, Singleton-Jackson, and Frey, 2011; Kopp et al., 2011, Singleton-Jackson et al., 2010). Many scholars fear that the culture of academic entitlement may undermine the goal of educational achievement as students fail to accept their own role in learning and adopt consumeristic orientations to studying (Cain, Romanelli, and Smith, 2012; Fullerton, 2013; Morrow, 1994; Jackson, Singleton-Jackson, and Frey, 2011; Lippman et al., 2009). The consumeristic approach to studying is manifested by students expecting good grades not because of good academic performance, but by trying or working hard (Twenge, 2009) and demanding individual arrangements for exams, requesting personalised services schedules due to personal holidays, and class behaviour that is not normally considered appropriate (Greenberger et al., 2008). Previous literature in academic entitlement has often associated with the behaviour characteristic to the Millennial generation (Cain, Romanelli, and Smith, 2012; Jeffres, Barclay, and Stolte, 2014; Westerman et al., 2012).

Research shows multiple links between academic entitlement and counterproductive academic performance. Academic entitlement has been shown to have a relationship with academic dishonesty, incivility and cheating (Chowning and Campbell, 2009; Greenberger et al., 2008; Sohr-Breston and Boswell, 2011), study absences (Taylor et al., 2015) and work avoidance (Kopp, Finney, and Jurich, 2011) and to cause lower academic performance (Jeffres, Barclay, and Stolte, 2014). Moreover, it has been shown that when compared with less entitled students, the students with high scores for academic entitlement communicate with their instructors in a more demanding way (Goodboy and Frisby, 2014) and attempt to make a favourable impression (Goldman and Martin, 2014).

Several researchers have established a link between academic entitlement and narcissism (Chowning and Campbell, 2009; Greenberger et al., 2008; Kopp, Finney, and Jurich, 2011, Menon and Sharland, 2011; Turnipseed and Cohen, 2015). Male students tend to have higher levels of academic entitlement (Boswell, 2012; Ciani, Summers and Easter, 2008; Sohr-Preston and Boswell, 2015), while no differences have been found with regard to academic entitlement between the college class or generational status of students (Boswell, 2012). College class refers to the number of years the student has been enrolled at a university, whereas generational status refers to whether a student's parent(s) earned a four-year higher education degree.

The present study

In the rhetoric promoting the merits of student engagement on the one hand and warning against the detrimental effects of academic entitlement on the other, these concepts of engagement and entitlement can be regarded as dichotomous. Engagement enjoys a connotation of being good, while entitlement is seen as bad. Sometimes these concepts are viewed as opposite ends of the students' study orientation continuum, along which a student may proceed from engagement to entitlement (e.g. Knowlton, 2013; Knowlton and Hagopian, 2013). With the exception of Knepp (2016), however, there is no previous research examining students' engagement and entitlement levels in the same research sample. Knepp (2016) studied psychology students and found that increased entitlement was associated with decreased student engagement. To give further insight into the relationship between these concepts, the following research questions were developed for this study.

Research question 1: Can engagement and entitlement be regarded as opposite ends of higher education students' study orientation?

Research question 2: How are student engagement and study engagement related to each other?

Moreover, in order to contribute to the research on study orientations of non-traditional students, the research aimed at finding out

Research question 3: Do non-traditional students differ from traditional students on student engagement, study engagement and academic entitlement?

This question is particularly relevant for Finland, as it is facing a skills shortage in all industries due to digital transformation. Finland needs a massive re-education programme, which implies that higher education institutions will need to accommodate more non-traditional students than previously (Oosi et al., 2019).

Methods

Data collection and sample

This paper is based on the responses of 476 students in one Finnish higher education institution. These students voluntarily accepted an invitation to participate in an online survey on study orientations. The survey included questions on student engagement, study engagement and academic entitlement, and respondents were able to select whether they wanted to respond in Finnish or English. The invitation was sent to students working towards their bachelor's or master's degrees as well as open university students who either majored in business or business information technology or took business studies courses in open university during that semester. In Finland, open university is not an autonomous university, but both universities and universities of applied sciences offer separate courses or broader modules that are accessible to all and have no educational prerequisites (Oosi et al., 2019; Ministry of Education and Culture, 2019.)

The author works in a faculty position in an institution and was granted research permission by the university research director to send a survey to students enrolled in business programmes. With the help of administrative personnel, the link to the survey was sent to student email lists.

Business students were chosen for this study because of previous research indicating that they might be more entitled and less engaged than students in other disciplines (Leach, 2016; Vanteenskiste et al., 2006; Westerman et al., 2012). The

research design made it possible to examine the study orientations between demographic factors and student status, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. around here

Measures

Due to the criticism of the most commonly used engagement survey instruments, the student engagement measure for this study was the student engagement scale (SES), which has been previously validated and was constructed with the purpose of taking into account students' emotions and the wider socio-economic environment that were critiqued to be lacking from other student engagement instruments (Gunuc & Kuzy, 2015). The measure includes three items on student *valuing* (e.g. 'University is of great importance in my life'), eight items on *sense of belonging* on campus (e.g. 'I look forward to going to campus', 'I take part in campus activities'), ten statements regarding *cognitive engagement* (e.g. 'I determine my own learning goals', 'I discuss what I have learned in class with my friends out of class') and six statements on *peer relationships* (e.g. 'I feel myself as a part/member of a student group', 'I like seeing my friends in class'). Additionally, the measure includes ten questions concerning *relationships with faculty members* (e.g. 'My teachers respect me as an individual', 'My teachers interact/communicate with me') and four items on *behavioural engagement* (e.g. 'I follow the rules in class', 'I try to do my best regarding my responsibilities in group work').

Respondents' answers to the survey questions on student engagement were given on a five-point Likert scale ranging from completely disagree to completely agree. The SES scale was modified in this survey by replacing the term 'homework' in the original for 'learning assignments', to better suit the terminology used in the institution. To examine the reliability of the components, a Cronbach alpha was calculated for each component of the student engagement scale. The Cronbach alpha for *peer relationships* was .85; for *relationships with faculty members*, .89; for *behavioural engagement*, .69; for *valuing*, .75; for *sense of belonging*, .88; and for *cognitive engagement*, .88.

For the purposes of studying *study engagement*, a previously validated nine-item Utrecht Work Engagement Scale for Students (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004) was used. *Absorption* was measured with three statements: ‘Time flies when I am studying’, ‘I get carried away when I am studying’ and ‘I am immersed in my studies’. The questions for *dedication* were: ‘I find my studies full of meaning and purpose’, ‘My studies inspire me’ and ‘I am enthusiastic about my studies’. Finally, the statements for *vigour* were: ‘When I study, I feel like I am bursting with energy’, ‘When studying I feel strong and vigorous’ and ‘When I get up in the morning I feel like going to class’. The respondents answered to these questions on a scale of 1–7 (never, a few times a year, once a month, a few times a month, once a week, a few times a week, every day). The Cronbach alpha values for the components in the study engagement scale were: *vigour* .86, *absorption* .84 and *dedication* .91.

The survey questions on *academic entitlement* were based on a previously validated entitlement scale developed by Jackson, Singleton-Jackson and Frey (2011). This instrument was selected from among the other academic entitlement scales (Chowning and Campbell, 2009; Greenberger et al., 2008; Kopp et al. 2011) because it was considered as requiring the fewest modifications if used in a tuition-free higher education context. The original instrument contained seven items that related to *accommodation* (e.g. ‘A professor should let me arrange to turn in an assignment late if the due date interferes with my vacation plans’), three on *reward for effort* (e.g. ‘For group work, I should receive the same grade as the other group members regardless of my level of effort’). In addition, there were three questions on *shopper mentality* (e.g. ‘The purpose of obtaining a university degree is to get a job when you are finished’) and three on *individualised needs* (e.g. ‘I deserve to have more of a say in how my classes are organised’).

The modifications that were made to better fit the Finnish context were: 1) changing ‘professor’ to ‘lecturer’; 2) changing a statement referring to ‘readings’ and ‘grade B’ to ‘I should receive the same grade as the other group members regardless of my level of effort’ (Chowning and Campbell, 2009) because of the different way of grading and giving assignments in the Finnish system; 3) replacing the statement ‘I am paying for the opportunity to obtain an education’ to ‘Courses that are not beneficial for

my future career should be removed from the curriculum' because only a minority of Finnish students pay tuition fees (see Anonymous, 2015); 4) changing a statement in the original scale referring to 'telephone conversation in class' as 'using a mobile phone' (Lockett et al., 2016); and 5) in a similar fashion to Lockett et al. (2016), adding a statement 'It's perfectly acceptable for me to surf the Internet during class'. The answers were given on a Likert-type six-item scale ranging from completely disagree to completely agree.

A principal component analysis (Promax with Kaiser Normalisation) was performed to study the dimensionality of the student entitlement statements. This was done to reduce the number of variables in the data set. Promax rotation is an oblique rotation that allows the factors to be intercorrelated. The Kaiser criterion was used to select the number of factors was an eigenvalue greater than 1. The result of the analysis was a pattern of three components that were titled as consumer attitude with six statements, teacher flexibility expectation with three statements and individualised class behaviour with three statements (Table 2) yielding Cronbach alpha values of .66, .74 and .72, respectively. Other statements did not load to the pattern and were left out of the examination.

Table 2. around here

Analysis methods

First, the correlations between study scales of student engagement, study engagement and academic entitlement were examined. Secondly, to investigate the relationship between engagement and entitlement, a cluster analysis was performed after standardising the scales. As a result, the respondents of this study fell into two clusters (Figure 1) separating the more entitlement-oriented students from the more engagement-oriented ones.

Figure 1. around here

Group membership of the two clusters was examined by using chi-square analysis. The cluster membership was used to form two comparison groups for subsequent analysis of independent t-tests. The traditional student group consisted of respondents of the sample that fulfilled all the following criteria: bachelor-level studies, maximum of 5 years of work-experience, 25 of age or younger and full-time student status. The number of students belonging to this group was 153. The non-traditional student group (n=53) that was created for further analysis included students that were either open university or master-level students and fulfilled all of the following criteria: part-time student status, age of over 26 years and at least 5 years of work experience.

Findings

Engagement and entitlement

The results of this study indicate that the engagement constructs and the academic entitlement construct cannot be regarded as opposite poles of study orientation dimension. The scales correlated negatively, but weakly. The correlation between study engagement scale and academic entitlement scale was $-.15, r(476) = p = .001$ between and $-.19$ between the student engagement scale and the academic entitlement scale ($r(476) p < .001$.) Also the subscales of student engagement, study engagement and academic entitlement had weak negative correlations (Appendix 1.)

However, the two-cluster solution indicated that students can be divided into engagement- or entitlement-oriented groups. The first cluster (n = 188) included students who scored higher than other group on academic entitlement but had low levels of student engagement and study engagement. The second cluster comprised students (n = 288) with high levels on student engagement and study engagement but who scored lower on academic entitlement. (Table 3.)

Table 3. around here

Chi square tests showed significant relationships between the cluster membership and age. The students who were at least 26 years of age were less likely to belong to entitlement-oriented cluster than younger students ($\chi^2(1, N = 474) = 6.63, p < .01$).

Significant relationships were also found between cluster membership and full-time student status. Membership in entitlement-oriented cluster was more likely if the students studied full-time whereas part-time students were more likely to belong to the engagement-oriented cluster ($\chi^2(1, N= 476) = 12.32, p < .001$). Moreover, students differed in their likelihood of belonging to either entitlement-oriented or engagement-oriented cluster by their work experience. The students who had work experience of 5 years or less were more likely to belong to more entitlement-oriented cluster and those with more work experience to the more engagement-oriented cluster ($\chi^2(1, N= 474) = 6.21, p = .013$).

Significant relationships were also found between the level of the studies and cluster membership. Open university students and students working towards the master's degree were more likely to be members of engagement-oriented cluster whereas students working towards their bachelor's degree were more likely to be members entitlement-oriented cluster. ($\chi^2(2, N = 476) = 0.07, p = .011$).

No relationship was found between the gender or nationality of the students and the cluster membership.

Study engagement and student engagement

The study engagement and student engagement scales correlated moderately ($r(476) = .625, p < .001$) and as shown in Table 4, correlations between study engagement and student engagement scores ranged from .19 to .70. Very significant correlations were found between *dedication* and *cognitive engagement* $r(476) = .70, p < .001$ and between *absorption* and *cognitive engagement* $r(474) = .70, p < .001$. This indicates that the study engagement concept is narrower than student engagement concept.

Table 4. around here

Traditional and non-traditional students

As shown in Table 5, non-traditional students showed very significantly higher scores on both student and study engagement than traditional students. The difference between non-traditional students and traditional students was significant or very significant on all other subscales of student and study engagement except for sense of belonging, on which no differences were found (Table 5.) Non-traditional students scored significantly higher on relationships with faculty members, valuing, behaviour engagement and cognitive engagement whereas traditional students had significantly higher scores on peer relationships.

No differences were found between the non-traditional and traditional students on the composite academic entitlement score. However, traditional students had very significantly higher scores on individualized class behaviour than traditional students indicating that they are more likely to deviate from class behaviour norms set by the instructor. (Table 5)

Table 5. around here

Conclusions

This study provided new insight into the mutual relationships of three study orientation concepts: student engagement, study engagement and academic engagement. First, this study showed that study engagement and student engagement are parallel concepts. Study engagement, however, correlates strongly only with the cognitive dimension of student engagement and is thus a narrower concept. This means that these concepts should be seen and used as different, yet complementary concepts. Study engagement captures student's intention to study and focussed energy while studying, but

fails to give insight on how the wider higher education environment, for example how peers, faculty and values affect student learning. Reschly and Christensen (2012, 3) refer to the discussion on the clarity of the student engagement concept as ‘conceptual haziness’; Vuori (2014, 509) calls student engagement a ‘fuzzword of a buzzword’; Wolf-Wendel, Waird and Kinzie (2009, 407) allude to the discussion around student engagement as ‘tangled web of terms’, while Macfarlane and Tomlison (2017, 7) argue that the use of the concept is ‘nebulous’. The finding of this study that study engagement and student engagement correlate only in one dimension further adds to the previously recognized lack of clarity on the subject when one talks about engagement in higher education.

Second, this study showed that students fall to a more engagement or entitlement-oriented groups. Therefore, although student engagement and academic entitlement cannot be considered as exact opposite sides of a higher education student’s study orientation, it can be interpreted that they represent two fundamentally different orientations to study. Those with high academic entitlement scores have adopted a customer-like, instrumentalist attitude towards higher education and behave accordingly. Those with high engagement scores show attitudes and behaviour that, according to majority of research in student engagement, should deepen their learning. In light of student engagement critique (Macfarlane and Tomlison, 2017; Zepke, 2014; Zepke, 2015b), however, an alternative interpretation of this finding could be that both academic entitlement and student engagement are two different kinds of manifestations of the marketisation of higher education, although from the point of view of the institution on these two concepts, student engagement is welcomed and academic entitlement is seen as a burden.

The third contribution of this study was a finding that non-traditional students had significantly higher study engagement and student engagement levels than traditional students. Previous studies had shown that the student engagement patterns of non-traditional students differ considerably from those of traditional students (Gibson and Slate, 2010; Kahu et al., 2013; Price and Baker, 2012; Rabourn, BrckaLorenz, and Shoup 2018). This study, although conducted with a student engagement instrument not directly comparable with earlier studies, showed similar results as the previous studies first by

indicating that non-traditional students' relationships with faculty members are contributing to their engagement to a larger extent than to traditional students' engagement and second by showing that the peer relationships of traditional students are more important for their engagement than for non-traditional students.

Previous studies of study engagement have not directly compared traditional and non-traditional students, but in a similar way to this study the study of Salanova et al. (2010) established a link between student's age and increased study engagement. Altogether these results may be interpreted to indicate that maturity, either referring to students' chronological age, their work experience, or as in the case of master students, to previous higher education studies, has a wide potential to increase both study and student engagement.

Fourth, this study provided new insight into the study of academic entitlement as it was carried out in a mostly tuition-free context. The results suggest that the existence of entitled orientations and consumeristic attitude is not dependent on tuition fees (c.f. Anonymous, 2013). Moreover, this research suggests that academic entitlement is not related to belonging to the Millennial generation (c.f. Cain, Romanelli, and Smith, 2012; Jeffres, Barclay, and Stolte, 2014; Westerman et al., 2012), as entitled study orientations can be found in all age groups.

Both the engagement and the entitlement literature have given plenty of suggestions how to increase engagement (e.g. National Survey of Student Engagement, 2009; Tinto and Pusser, 2006) and decrease entitlement (e.g. Cain et al., 2012; Twenge, 2009) in the classroom and in the wider campus and off-campus environments. In the literature of non-traditional student engagement, particular emphasis has been given to methods that aim at increasing non-traditional student engagement. Less attention has been given to the opportunity to mix class arrangements in those universities that offer open university courses. This research was conducted in a higher education institution that offers mixed classroom settings combining degree students with non-degree students with an open university student status. The increased use of these kinds of practices might provide learning arenas wherein the more mature students may inhibit some outbursts of the most extreme forms of entitled individualised class behaviour and promote more engagement-oriented student behaviour among traditional students.

The generalisability of this study is limited because the respondents were taking part in this survey voluntarily, so the results may suffer from respondent bias on the part of students who are either extremely engaged or extremely entitled. As the study was among the first in a (mostly) tuition-free environment, further research could be conducted to further investigate the dimensions of academic entitlement in this context. Interviewing traditional and non-traditional students on their perceptions of academic entitlement could offer deeper understanding of non-traditional students' academic entitlement. A qualitative study on academic entitlement in a tuition-free higher education context might also be beneficial to construct a measure of academic entitlement that better explains the phenomenon in the (mostly) tuition-free context.

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Appendix 1.

(Appendix) table around here

Figure 1. Two-cluster solution

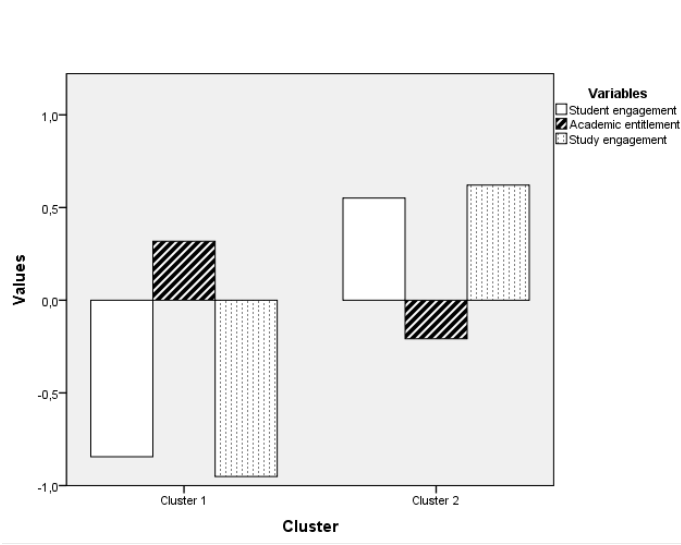


Table 1. Sample characteristics

		Open university (n = 35)	Bachelor's (n = 400)	Master's (n = 41)	Total
Gender					
	Female	26	271	33	330
	Male	9	126	7	142
	N/A		3	1	4
Age					
	≤ 25 years	8	162	1	171
	26–35 years	15	137	12	164
	≥ 36 years	12	99	28	139
	N/A		2		2
Status					
	Full-time	4	241	6	251
	Part-time	31	159	35	225
Work experience					
	≤ 5 years	11	201	5	217
	> 5 years	24	197	36	257
	N/A		2		2
Nationality					
	Finnish	25	345	35	405
	Other	9	52	6	67
	N/A	1	3		4

Table 2. Pattern matrix for academic entitlement

Statement	Consumer attitude	Teacher flexibility expectation	Individualised class behaviour
Courses should be designed to take into account student needs.	.788		
I deserve to have more of a say in how my classes are organised.	.777		
Courses should be taught that take into account students' individual learning styles.	.684		
A professor should let me arrange to turn in an assignment late if the due date interferes with my vacation plans.	.527		
I am a customer of this university.	.454		
Courses that are not beneficial for my future career should be removed from the curriculum.	.339		
I would think poorly of a professor who didn't respond the same day to an email I sent.		.896	
I would think poorly of a professor who didn't respond quickly to a phone message I left him or her.		.879	
A professor should be willing to meet with me at a time that works best for me, even if inconvenient for the professor.		.622	
A professor should not be annoyed with me if I use my mobile phone during class.			.896
It's perfectly acceptable for me to surf the Internet during class.			.773
Professors have no right to be annoyed with me if I tend to come late to class or tend to leave early.			.718

-
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalisation.
a. Rotation converged in five iterations.

Table 3. Final cluster centres (N = 476)

Cluster		
	Engagement-oriented (<i>n</i> = 181)	Entitlement-oriented (<i>n</i> = 295)
Student engagement	-.97	.60
Study engagement	-.87	.53
Academic entitlement	.36	-.22

Table 4. Correlation between study engagement and student engagement

	Peer	Faculty	Behaviour	Valuing	Belonging	Cognitive	Vigour	Absorption	Dedication
Peer	1,00								
Faculty	,33**	1,00							
Behaviour	,22**	,37**	1,00						
Valuing	,33**	,47**	,36**	1,00					
Belonging	,64**	,47**	,26**	,49**	1,00				
Cognitive	,19**	,51**	,60**	,46**	,31**	1,00			
Vigour	,24**	,45**	,42**	,46**	,37**	,63**	1,00		
Absorption	,14**	,45**	,44**	,47**	,32**	,68**	,85**	1,00	
Dedication	,19**	,48**	,42**	,51**	,39**	,68**	,82**	,88**	1,00

** $p < .01$

Table 5. Summary of independent t-tests results

	Traditional (n=153)	Non-traditional (n=53)		
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>
<u>Student engagement, sum</u>	148.80(22.43)	158.77(20.05)	-2.86**	204
Peer relationships	22.10(5.63)	20.49(4.30)	2.15*	117.86
Relationships with faculty	34.04(6.89)	38.25(8.85)	-3.84***	204
Behavioural engagement	16.99(2.24)	17.79(1.84)	-2.36*	204
Valuing	12.53(2.40)	13.23(1.88)	-2.16*	115.12
Sense of belonging	27.42(7.13)	25.91(5.85)	1.54	109.32
Cognitive engagement	35.73(7.52)	43.11(4.59)	-8.44***	149.46
<u>Study engagement, sum</u>	38.69(12.54)	50.89(9.98)	-7.15***	112.88
Vigor	12.65(4.36)	16.06(3.91)	-5.03***	204
Absorption	12.53(4.56)	17.34(3.52)	-7.91***	116.66
Dedication	13.51(4.30)	17.49(3.24)	-7.04***	119.37
<u>Academic entitlement, sum</u>	38.31(7.74)	37.74(8.58)	.46	204
Consumer attitude	20.49(3.80)	21.04(4.03)	-.89	204
Teacher flexibility expectation	7.73(2.53)	8.28(2.97)	-1.31	204
Individualised class behaviour	10.09(3.58)	8.42(3.91)	2.87**	204

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$