

New Adolescent Money Attitude Scales: Entitlement and Conscientiousness

Ivan F. Beutler and Clinton G. Gudmunson

The development of two new money-attitude scales measuring entitlement and conscientiousness in adolescents are described. The scales were developed through student and focus group input and from a review of literature on entitlement and conscientiousness as a new adolescent financial education curriculum was being developed. The findings from 265 high school students resulted in a 6-item measure of entitlement, $\alpha = .76$, and a 4-item measure of conscientiousness, $\alpha = .82$. There was strong evidence for consistency of items for each scale loading well on single factors and maintaining reliability across a variety of demographic subgroups. The scales are distinct from, and yet complement existing money-attitude scales, such as conspicuous consumption, power-prestige, and financial prudence, and thus offer new tools for research on adolescent economic socialization.

Key Words: adolescence, conscientiousness, economic socialization, entitlement, money attitudes

Introduction

Modern industrialized society has, in many ways, transformed adolescence into a developmental period focused on consumption (Lapsley, Enright, & Serlin, 1985). In place of skill development and productive family life, earning and spending money have become hallmarks of adolescent experience (Steinberg & Cauffman, 1995). These historical changes have pushed adolescents to adopt the consumer value of materialism as part of their socialization into adult society. American children today are immersed in the consumer marketplace to a degree that is historically astounding (Schor, 2004). The influence of the consumer marketplace is even more apparent in adolescent experience. For many adolescents, success has become highly monetized and displayed by highly visible role models flaunting power-prestige, popularity, and wealth as the path to success. Easy portable access to around-the-clock media has intensified advertiser access to adolescents.

In this constant barrage of media messages, youth may be particularly susceptible to the idea that buying expensive items is normal behavior for affluent people, and that anyone who is wealthy should be living high (Stanley & Danko, 1996). Adolescents have been targeted by a core marketeering message of materialism; promised that

enough of the right things will make you feel good about yourself, have friends, status, and happiness. Credit is advertised to youth as an easy answer to obtaining possessions that would normally be out of their financial reach. These media messages have frequently persuaded adolescents that their worth or the worth of others is defined by what they own or can purchase (Dittmar, 2004; Skafte, 1989).

The consumer value of materialism has situated possessions at the center of life goals and aspirations. Individuals with materialistic values have been observed to spend more money on themselves and less on others, to place greater emphasis on financial security and less emphasis on interpersonal relationships, and to experience less satisfaction with their lives (Richins & Dawson, 1992). Evidence has supported the notion that materialism has become a value held by many Americans (Bredemeier & Toby, 1960; Cushman, 1990; Fromm, 1967). Yet, another consumer value, voluntary simplicity, has also been documented, which could be considered the antithesis of materialism.

Voluntary simplicity has been defined as a lifestyle of material self-restraint, moral responsibility, spiritual growth, and self-actualization (Elgins, 1981; Shama & Wisenblit, 1984). A variety of life goals have been observed to differ

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between individuals who ascribed to values of voluntary simplicity versus materialism. For instance, Richins and Dawson (1992) reported that respondents low on materialism tended to place considerably more emphasis on interpersonal relationships than on financial security. Voluntary simplicity has been associated with frugality regarding money. College students on the brink of graduation experienced less financial strain in anticipation of their financial future if their family of origin practiced prudent financial policies (Hibbert, Beutler, & Martin, 2004).

Little is known about the development of materialism and voluntary simplicity during adolescent years, and whether there are underlying money attitudes that may culminate to create one value rather than another. Money attitudes may be defined as an opinion, mindset, or feeling regarding money, its meaning, its use, and preeminence (Rutherford & DeVaney, 2009). The growing importance of the financial world in the lives of youth as they transition to adulthood has illuminated the importance of money attitudes that lead to positive behaviors such as living within one's means, paying bills on time, avoiding excessive debt, and so forth. Negative spending behaviors have been better understood through the study of money attitudes like power-prestige, anxiety, and distrust (Roberts & Jones, 2001). Money attitudes can help inform parents, family members, and financial educators who seek to encourage, teach, and otherwise assist youth with important and inevitable financial choices (Acock & Bengtson, 1978; Blee & Tickamyer, 1995; Thornton, Alwin, & Camburn, 1983).

The purpose of this paper is to introduce two new money-attitude scales, *entitlement* and *conscientiousness*. These scales represent money attitude measures designed specifically for the adolescent. In our view, entitlement and conscientiousness appear to be relevant contributors to the broader consumer values of materialism and voluntary simplicity, respectively (Elgins, 1981; Richins & Dawson, 1992). These attitude-value pairs represent divergent approaches to life. Adolescent entitlement and adult materialism give inordinate priority to the accumulation of money and the things it can buy, whereas adolescent conscientiousness and adult voluntary simplicity give priority to interpersonal relationships that support and foster a community feeling. Thus, research on entitlement and conscientiousness is an important part of understanding ways that adolescents develop and become socialized to adopt adult roles and consumer values regarding money.

Literature Review

The Emergence of Money-Attitude Scales

Consumer values have been defined as enduring beliefs or specific modes of conduct that are personally or socially preferable to opposing modes of conduct. These values are pervasive guides that influence "actions, attitudes, judgments, and comparisons across specific objects and situations and beyond immediate goals to more ultimate goals" (Rokeach, 1973, p. 18). Rokeach distinguished values from attitudes asserting that for an individual, values reach across multiple life contexts, whereas attitudes may be context specific such as the money attitudes that are part of an adolescent's financial understanding and economic socialization. For example, Pugh (2009) made a case for how children's consumerism may be driven by desire (or value) to socially belong, not for the purpose of status seeking but out of a desire for involvement in everyday social exchanges around which they had context-specific attitudes. The more material goods children had, the more they had to talk about with their peers.

Although the study of money attitudes dates back to Veblen's (1899) writings on conspicuous consumption, it was not until 30 years ago that money attitude scales emerged in the academic literature. Yamauchi and Templar (1982) first published a set of five money attitude scales, and two years later Furnham (1984) reported on an overlapping set of six subscales. Three of the Yamauchi and Templar scales (power-prestige, anxiety, and distrust) have received continued use in money attitudes research due to their psychometric qualities, general scale strength, and broad applicability (Roberts & Jones, 2001). A variety of other money attitudes have been studied with less formal development as scales and scholars have begun to emphasize family-related correlates of adolescent money attitudes. Parents have been recognized as a primary agent in the economic socialization of children (Beutler & Dickson, 2008; Danes, 1994). For instance, when children perceived their parent(s) as caring, they were less likely to hold conspicuous consumption attitudes (Gudmunson & Beutler, 2012).

Entitlement

Entitlement has been defined as "a right to benefits specified, especially by law or contract," or the "belief that one is deserving of or entitled to certain privileges" (Merriam-Webster's Dictionary). In the current study, entitlement was defined as an attitude in which adolescents feel their parents are obligated to provide and pay for the things they want or believe they deserve. Entitlement encompasses adolescents' belief that their parents' financial resources

automatically belong to them and their parents should pay for things they desire even if they are “extras.”

The construct of entitlement has been studied primarily in psychotherapy (Bishop & Lane, 2002). Many psychotherapy patients believed they were “special.” This was a learned attitude in which they sought refuge and defense. Financial entitlement in adolescents is a substantially different construct that emerges in the process of financial socialization. Adolescents with a sense of entitlement have felt little responsibility for how they spent their parents’ money; an attitude which may eventually replace parent money with credit cards, high interest loans, and other behaviors leading to financial difficulty and heightened levels of stress.

Indulgent parenting may be a contributing factor to entitled attitudes in adolescents. Adolescents who described their parent(s) as indulgent (rather than authoritative) have been observed to be less work oriented, less competent and less engaged in school and more engaged in drug use and misconduct at school (Durbin, Darling, Steinberg, & Brown 1993; Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, & Dornbusch, 1991; Steinberg, Lamborn, Darling, Mounts, & Dornbusch, 1994). Chamberlain (2000) concluded that our society practically force feeds instant gratification and indulgence. Writing from the perspective of a child psychologist, Kindlon (2001) asserted that our culture has become so steeped in the celebration of money and privilege that kids in the middle and lower-middle classes have aspired to a self-indulgent, materialistic way of life resulting in unhappiness, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and problems with intimacy regardless of age, income, or culture (Kasser, 2002).

Stanley and Danko (1996) wrote insightfully about one subset of entitled youth: the children of America’s very affluent. They found many of these parents were anxious to ensure their children’s financial success. As their children became adults, many of them continued to support the high standard of living their children had come to expect with what Stanley and Danko labeled *economic outpatient care*. This care consisted of substantial monetary gifts in the form of real estate, tuition, securities, and private assets that were designed to help the children get ahead financially.

What were the effects of indulgent economic outpatient care? Rather than boosting the child’s financial future, it more often fostered an attitude of dependence and entitlement. Being given large cash gifts early on encouraged consumption and further dependence on such gifts;

children felt compelled to maintain a lifestyle commensurate with possessions beyond their means. Stanley and Danko (1996) observed that children who received economic outpatient care became more dependent on credit, were less likely to invest, and generally less productive than children with less indulging parents. Furthermore, they “never fully distinguish between their wealth and the wealth of their gift-giving parents” (p. 154). They assumed their parents’ wealth was essentially their own. This failure or delay in becoming financially independent from parents may have origins that grow out of adolescent attitudes of entitlement.

Adolescents need aid in making the transition to adulthood, but this assistance must be different than indulgence. Osgood, Foster, Flanagan, and Gretchen (2005) examined a number of vulnerable populations and documented tremendous disadvantages among youth who face transition to adult roles without parental support. These authors warned that economic globalization is likely to give rise to more competitive job markets. This situation would require youth to spend even more time and money in preparation for adult roles. Parental help has represented some of the best support available to youth during these crucial years. This help varied from financial to emotional support and was observed to make a noticeable and positive difference for those who received it (Settersten & Ray, 2010).

In their study of affluent youth, Luthar and Latendresse (2005) touched on issues of entitlement. They observed that children in upper-class families were at risk of psychological maladjustment, even if their greater monetary resources tended to obscure these appearances. These problems were similar to the psychosocial problems that Kasser and Ryan (1993, 1996) reported as outcomes associated with an extrinsic identity orientation.

It has been observed that children with cold and controlling parents were more inclined to seek security and worth through avenues of extrinsic orientation (Kasser, 2005). Child-parent money-related conflicts (Moore-Shay & Berchmans, 1996) were observed to be more likely in the presence of inter-parental conflict and low parental involvement, especially when the conflict involved mothers (Flouri, 2004). Adolescents exposed to persistent levels of high stress often substituted love of possessions for interpersonal family relationships (Roberts, Tanner, & Manolis, 2005). Negative money attitudes and practices that result in anxiety and continued real and imagined intra-familial interactions were likely to be transferred from one generation to the next (Allen, Edwards, Hayhoe, & Leach, 2007).

Thus, the impact of affluence, as well as money attitudes and practices, has been observed for their potential as a positive help and as a negative distraction for youth as they transition into adult roles. These contrasting paths are stunning and not well understood. In this light, *entitlement* and *consciousness* as money attitudes in youth merit further study.

Conscientiousness

A contrasting money attitude to entitlement is conscientiousness. Costa and McCrae (1992) defined conscientiousness as a personality trait involving caution, thoroughness, self-discipline, thinking before acting, and acting according to the dictates of one's conscience. Conscientiousness is related to emotional intelligence and impulse control. In the current study, the definition of conscientiousness was restricted to adolescents' acknowledgment of responsibility toward their parents for how they spend money allocated to them. It included frugality, paying others back, and cautious spending habits.

Stanley and Danko (1996) uncovered some common characteristics of affluent Americans that are similar to this profile of a financially conscientious person. They contrasted millionaires who were successful at building net worth with those who emphasized status-seeking consumption. Millionaires who built net worth were more likely to have an annual household budget; knew how much their family spent each year for food, clothing, and housing; were more likely to hold discount department store credit cards, rather than credit cards from high-status retailers; had clearly defined financial goals; and spent more time planning their financial future. In terms of financial goals, high net-worth and low net-worth millionaires with comparable salaries reported similar financial goals. Most of the affluent Americans that Stanley and Danko studied held conscientious financial behaviors regardless of their current net worth.

Webley and Nyhus (2006) defined conscientiousness in a substantially more general way than our operational definition by considering conscientiousness as a broad personality trait. The concept of financial prudence seemed to also be related to conscientiousness, and there has been some research conducted in this area. Hibbert, Beutler, and Martin (2004) found that financial prudence in one generation generally reduced the level of financial strain for the next generation. The everyday routines in their family of origin had modest but measurable impact on the conscientiousness of these college students. Kohn (1990) argued that

parents who established a caring home environment that supported children in meeting intrinsic needs were better able to promote prosocial values in their offspring and free them from self-preoccupation.

There is a need to better understand the role of money attitudes in the development of adolescents and their socialization toward assuming adult roles. The extent to which this socialization has been facilitated or deterred by different money attitudes is yet to be clarified in the literature. During recent decades, the consumer culture has grown to have significant influence on adolescents, and an emerging literature indicates a likely link between outcomes associated with parent-child relationships. Thus, it seems likely that money attitudes, such as entitlement and conscientiousness, will be influenced by parent-child relationships as well as the cultural influence of materialism, both of which merit further study. The purpose of the current study was to provide a measure of entitlement and conscientiousness that will help facilitate future understanding of the ways adolescents develop and become socialized to adopt values regarding money.

Methods

An inductive process that was initiated via discussions with emerging adults in a classroom learning experience and five adolescent focus groups were used to generate an initial pool of question items. The pool of items and response scales were further refined in two pilot studies with respondent feedback, exploratory factor analysis, and reliability analyses informing the selection of items that advanced in each round of testing. Finally, the results were validated in a third round of testing, the results of which are presented in the current study.

Scale Development

Learning context. The initial idea to develop entitlement and conscientiousness scales developed out of a classroom learning experience. The authors witnessed strongly held attitudes about money among adolescents who defended competing positions regarding the allocation of personal and family resources. These attitudes were expressed in the context of a project that developed and tested five personal finance lesson plans for adolescents (Beutler, Beutler, Nelson, & Gudmunson, 2007). One of the units was designed to engage teens in a discussion about financial responsibility. Students were asked to respond to a case problem entitled *Jeremy's Boots*. Shared by a graduate student working on the project, *Jeremy's Boots* represents a real-life experience:

Jeremy's Boots

When Jeremy was a sophomore in high school he found a pair of boots that he wanted very badly. They were the latest style and very flashy and he wanted to impress his friends. The boots were \$140 and he knew that he would have to work hard at his job to earn the money. When Jeremy finally had enough money, he told his parents he was going to buy the boots.

Jeremy's father and mother both worked full time as custodians in order to pay the bills and put food on the table. Jeremy's father was very displeased when he found out that Jeremy wanted to spend \$140 on a pair of boots that would only be in style for a short time. He expressed to him that he and his mother worked hard all day long to provide the basic necessities. Jeremy's father felt that if he wanted to "waste his money on shoes" that maybe Jeremy should start helping pay for some of the food. Ultimately Jeremy's father told Jeremy not to buy the boots.

Jeremy told his father that he felt he should be able to buy whatever he wanted because he earned the money. He did not feel it was right for his father to tell him what he should be doing with his money. After all Jeremy felt his parents were obligated to provide him with his needs and wants.

Do you feel Jeremy's father was justified in being upset about Jeremy's decision to buy the boots? Why or Why not?¹

Student conversation about this case problem ranged from a discussion about financial responsibility to a classroom debate about financial rights and responsibilities that polarized the participants. Some students took the position that Jeremy had earned the money and was entitled to spend it however he chose; they contended that parents had the responsibility to pay for the needs and wants of their children. Other students felt that Jeremy had a responsibility to help his family and it was appropriate for him to be accountable to his father for how he used the money.

Item generation. Scale item generation began with an informal review of recorded class discussion surrounding *Jeremy's Boots*. Student assertions in the discussions revealed money attitudes that prompted a literature review (e.g., Furnham, 1984; Richins & Dawson, 1992; Roberts & Jones, 2001; Schor, 2004; Stanley & Danko, 1996) and aided in development of an initial pool of survey items. Following the literature review, a series of focus groups with adolescent students provided additional information regarding their sources of personal income as well as expecta-

tions surrounding the use of familial and individual money. Early focus group questions were broad and exploratory, while later questions were more narrowly focused. Five focus groups were conducted; about equal numbers of male and female adolescents participated. Frequently mentioned responses were converted into items for the survey. At this point we were not certain if we were looking at attitudes, preferences, or behaviors so the questions asked and the items generated were pointed at a rather large target. For example: "When I want to get something, and my parents say 'no,' I keep asking and I ask my parents for clothes that are cool, even if they are expensive." Both of these items were dropped after the second pilot as our work focused on attitudes and not behaviors.

Pilot one. Sixty adolescent students, ages 13-15, completed the first pilot survey. Items were eliminated using exploratory factor analysis to identify those that cross loaded or whose loadings were low (under .40). The analysis also revealed two factors that passed our initial scree plot analysis. These factors were labeled entitlement and conscientiousness and resulted in scales with promising reliability coefficients ($\alpha = .67$ and $.79$, respectively). Several smaller potentially interesting scales were also identified which were not germane to this paper. Based on respondent feedback, it was concluded that a 7-point conscientiousness frequency scale confused some adolescents and the format of the survey was adjusted to a 5-point scale. Likewise the 5-point agree-disagree entitlement scale was adjusted to a 4-point scale as some adolescents expressed confusion by the neutral center point "neither agree nor disagree."

Pilot two. The survey consisted of 45 items including the money attitudes of entitlement and conscientiousness and several other money attitude scales based on earlier work. Ninety teens, ages 14-16, responded to the second pilot. The reduced scales (entitlement scale from five to four and conscientiousness from seven to five points), improved the completion rate of respondent feedback. Three additional items loaded on the entitlement scale (for a total of six items) for a slightly improved reliability ($\alpha = .75$), but no additional items contributed to improvement in the conscientiousness scale (four items).

After analyses of the data from pilot two, the focus of our work narrowed. Our attention clearly focused on the development of *entitlement* and *conscientiousness* as money attitudes. For example, items that explored entitlement and conscientiousness in terms of more abstract perceptions and behaviors were dropped from the survey.

Validating Sample

A final survey was completed by students from 10 high schools located in two states in the western United States. The survey included demographic questions, six entitlement and four conscientiousness scale items (see Table 1), and questions from several other established money attitude scales. Completed surveys were obtained from 265 students (59% female). The average age of the sample was 16.5 years. The race-ethnicity of the sample was 88% White Caucasian, 6% Hispanic-Latino; African American, Asian, and Native American comprised the remainder of the sample in roughly equal proportions. Education means for the mothers and fathers of the adolescents were 2.97 and 3.24 respectively on a 1 to 5 point scale, corresponding with *some college*. Most of the sample came from dual-earner families with 85% reporting a father or male caregiver working full time and 70% reporting a mother or female caregiver working full or part time.

Analysis Procedure

We used several different analyses to provide evidence for the measurement properties of the entitlement and conscientiousness scales. First, we examined the means, standard

deviations, and correlations between items in both scales to determine if responses approximated normal distributions and if there were meaningful inter-item associations distinguishable from between-scales item associations. Second, because the items in each scale were developed in pilot studies using exploratory factor analysis and retesting to refine the pool of items, we turned to confirmatory factor analysis to confirm replication of the factor structure in the validating sample. Detailed examination of all the various aspects of these scales was completed only in the final validating sample. For instance, we examined whether similar measurement properties would be observed when demographic subgroups were tested separately. Because there had been no prior testing of sample subgroups we reported the means, standard deviations, Cronbach's alpha reliabilities, and factor structure using exploratory factor analyses in this part of the analysis procedure. Finally, to test convergent and discriminant validity of the new scales, we examined the correlations of the entitlement and conscientiousness scales with three other existing adolescent money attitude scales; conspicuous consumption, power-prestige, and prudence.

Table 1. Item Wording and Response Scales of Entitlement and Conscientiousness Money Attitudes Scales

Item wording and response scales
Entitlement
1. I feel it is my parents' job to pay for my everyday needs.
2. My parents should provide me with spending money.
3. I feel my parents should pay for the 'extras.'
4. I feel my parents should pay for my college education.
5. I deserve to get most of the things I want.
6. I feel my parents should help me get the things I want.
Conscientiousness
7. I help my parents save money by being thrifty and frugal.
8. When my parents buy me things, I try to 'pay them back' by helping them out.
9. I am cautious, even when spending my parents' money.
10. I feel personal responsibility when spending my parents' money.

Note. For entitlement, response options were: 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (agree), and 4 (strongly agree). For conscientiousness, response options were 0 (never), 1 (seldom), 2 (sometimes), 3 (frequently), and 4 (always).

These were based on an 8-item conspicuous consumption scale (Gudmunson & Beutler, 2012), a 7-item power-prestige scale (Furnham, 1984; Roberts & Jones, 2001; Yamauchi & Templar, 1982) and a 3-item financial prudence scale (Hibbert et al., 2004)². These validating scales were subjected to exploratory factor analysis and the items of each money attitude loaded well on a single factor; the alpha reliabilities for these scales were .87, .86, and .60, respectively. A mean of the items was computed for each existing scale to be used in correlational analysis (tests of convergent and discriminant validity) with the new entitlement and conscientiousness scales.

Results

Correlations

Table 2 contains the correlations, means and standard deviations for the entitlement and conscientiousness scales.

The inter-item correlations in the entitlement scale were all positive, ranging from .23 to .56, and were significantly associated with each other ($p < .05$). The mean scores ranged from 2.09 to 2.62 (standard deviations ranged from 0.70 to 0.84) on a 4-point scale; 1 (Strongly disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Agree), and 4 (Strongly agree). Higher scores indicated more entitlement attitudes.

The inter-item correlations in the conscientiousness scale were somewhat larger on average than those in the entitlement scale. All correlations were positive; they ranged from .40 to .74 and were significantly associated with each other ($p < .05$). The mean scores ranged from 2.55 to 3.14 (standard deviations ranged from 1.32 to 1.46) on a 5-point scale; 0 (Never), 1 (Seldom), 2 (Sometimes), 3 (Frequently), and 4 (Always). Higher scores indicated more conscientiousness attitudes. The means and standard

Table 2. Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Indicators of Entitlement and Conscientiousness (N = 265).

Variable	Entitlement					Conscientiousness				
	Needs	Spend	Extras	College	Deserve	Get	Thrift	Pay	Cautn	Resp
Entitlement										
Everyday needs (Needs)										
Spending money (Spend)	.39									
'Extras' (Extras)	.27	.56								
College education (College)	.30	.44	.42							
Deserve things (Deserve)	.29	.34	.27	.23						
Get things (Get)	.37	.37	.35	.31	.31					
Conscientiousness										
Thrifty and frugal (Thrift)	-.03	-.10	-.06	-.12	-.07	-.02				
Pay parents back (Pay)	.03	-.03	-.07	-.09	-.01	-.05	.46			
Cautious (Cautn)	.02	-.12	-.12	-.17	-.10	-.08	.56	.46		
Responsible (Resp)	.03	-.09	-.09	-.18	.01	-.03	.54	.40	.74	
<i>M</i>	2.51	2.21	2.09	2.47	2.14	2.62	2.55	2.73	3.08	3.14
<i>SD</i>	0.84	0.75	0.70	0.82	0.77	0.70	1.46	1.33	1.32	1.45

Note. Correlations with a magnitude of .12 or higher were significant, $p < .05$.

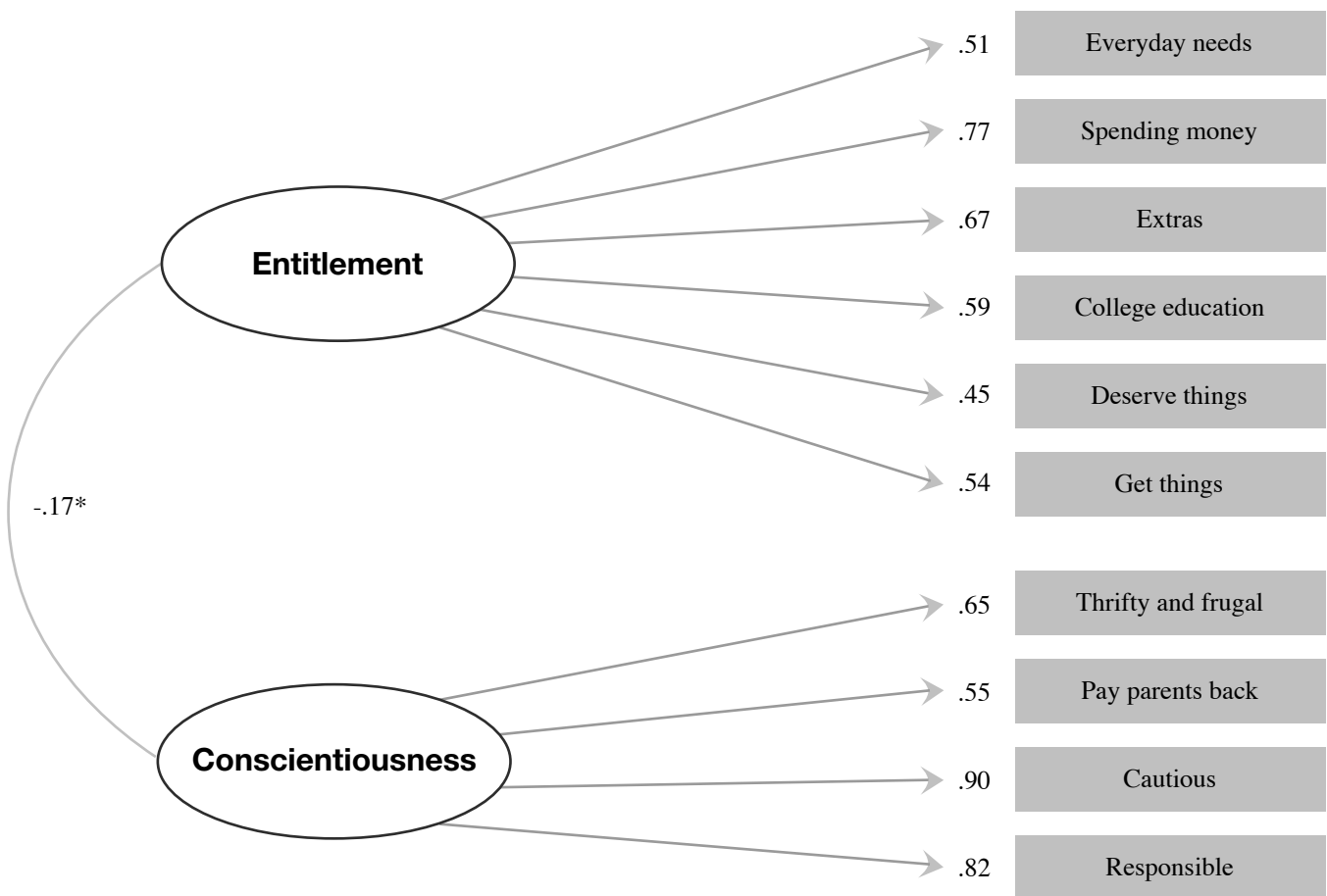
deviations for both scales suggested that they approximate normal distributions and thus would meet certain assumptions required in regression analyses and other forms of statistical analyses.

The correlations between the entitlement and conscientiousness items were generally small in magnitude ranging from -.18 to .03. All but four had a negative sign, although very few were significantly different from zero. Although this evidence confirms that the entitlement and conscientiousness scales are distinct from each other, it also suggests that the opposing nature of the scales was not quite as strong as we had anticipated. Further evidence for the overall association between the constructs was generated in confirmatory factor analyses.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

We used AMOS 19 to test the fit of a confirmatory factor analysis and generate factor loadings (see Figure 1). The fit for the two-factor model was excellent. The chi-square of 48.3 with 34 degrees of freedom was not significant, $p = .053$. Two baseline comparison indices were above .95 (CFI = .98, TLI = .97) and the root mean square error of approximation was below .05 (RMSEA = .04). The six entitlement items had standardized factor loadings ranging from .45 to .77 and the factor loadings for four conscientiousness items ranged from .55 to .90. By removing the error variance from individual items, it was possible to get a clearer picture of the association between the entitlement and conscientiousness constructs, which was $r = -.17$ between the constructs ($p < .05$). Thus, entitlement and

Figure 1. Standardized Findings for Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Entitlement and Conscientiousness Money Attitudes (N = 265).



Note. Model fit: $\chi^2 = 48.3$ ($df = 34$, $p = .053$) CFI = .98, TLI = .97, RMSEA = .04. $*p < .05$. All factor loadings were highly significant ($p < .001$).

conscientiousness money attitudes were negatively related but only to a small degree. Next we turned our attention to exploring the reliability and the stability of the factor structure for the demographic subgroups in the sample.

Reliability and Factor Stability

The scale means, standard deviations, alpha reliabilities, and factor structure for the total sample and for demo-

graphic subgroups are shown in Table 3. Both scales were found to be reliable in the total sample; the Cronbach's alphas were .76 for entitlement and .82 for conscientiousness. The factor loadings were somewhat higher in the exploratory factor analysis, but the previous confirmatory factor analysis was a more stringent test, and both provided a clear picture of a good factor structure. The entitlement factor accounted for 46% of the variance in the first

Table 3. Subgroup Measurement Characteristics of Entitlement and Conscientiousness Money-Attitude Scales.

Subgroups	N	M	SD	α	Exploratory factor loadings ^a						Variance explained
					1	2	3	4	5	6	
Entitlement											
Total sample	265	2.34	0.52	.76	.64	.79	.72	.67	.57	.66	46.0
Males	109	2.39	0.61	.80	.67	.84	.76	.69	.64	.67	51.2
Females	156	2.31	0.44	.70	.62	.72	.65	.65	.49	.66	40.4
Ages 15-16	143	2.36	0.53	.77	.60	.83	.77	.68	.60	.63	47.7
Ages 17-18	122	2.32	0.50	.75	.68	.73	.65	.65	.56	.71	44.4
Racial/ethnic minority	31	2.23	0.60	.77	.28	.82	.84	.68	.80	.64	49.0 ^b
Non-minority	233	2.36	0.50	.76	.68	.79	.69	.66	.54	.66	45.5
Two-parent family	191	2.34	0.50	.75	.63	.81	.67	.62	.63	.66	45.1
Other family arrangement	74	2.34	0.56	.79	.71	.76	.82	.78	.46	.68	50.4
Conscientiousness											
Total sample	265	2.87	1.12	.82	.79	.70	.88	.84			65.2
Males	109	2.92	1.41	.85	.81	.70	.92	.88			68.6
Females	156	2.84	0.87	.77	.76	.72	.85	.78			60.4
Ages 15-16	143	2.92	1.20	.87	.81	.82	.90	.87			72.1
Ages 17-18	122	2.82	1.02	.74	.75	.49	.87	.86			57.2
Racial/ethnic minority	31	2.50	1.57	.93	.91	.87	.93	.92			82.2
Non-minority	233	2.91	1.03	.79	.77	.68	.87	.82			62.2
Two-parent family	191	2.88	1.07	.81	.79	.67	.89	.84			64.2
Other family arrangement	74	2.87	1.24	.84	.79	.77	.87	.86			67.7

Note. ^a Item numbers for factor loadings correspond with item wording in Table 2. ^b Two factors emerged with eigenvalues above one; Item 1 loaded on a second factor with a factor loading of .85, and the second factor accounting for 19% of the variance.

set of items, and the conscientiousness factor accounted for 65% of the variance in the second set of items.

A key question addressed in Table 3 was whether the good measurement properties for the overall sample held together for various subgroups. We investigated the measurement characteristics of each scale for males and females, ages 15-16 and ages 17-18, racial-ethnic minorities and non-minorities, and two-parent families and other family arrangements. In every case, the reliabilities were above the accepted limit of .70. In virtually every instance, we saw that the factor structure held together in a single factor with factor loadings well above .50 and with variance accounted for at a level of at least 44%. The one exception was for the first item in the entitlement scale for racial-ethnic minorities which had a poor loading (.28) on the main scale and cross loaded onto a second factor. The wording of this item was: "it is my parents' job to pay for my everyday needs." This item could, perhaps, be dropped from future studies.

Convergent and Discriminant Validity

The final stage in the analysis was to examine how the new scales correlated with money attitude scales that have appeared in previous studies. We focused on three such scales: conspicuous consumption, power-prestige, and financial prudence. Each of these scales, although not developed exclusively for adolescents, has been used in money-attitude research with adolescents or traditional college-aged emerging adults. We expected that entitlement would be positively correlated with conspicuous consumption and power-prestige, and negatively correlated with financial prudence. These expectations were only partially confirmed;

the associations were .34 ($p < .001$), .36 ($p < .001$), and .04 (not significant) respectively (see Table 4). Likewise we expected the opposite types of relationships with these scales and the conscientiousness scale. It was not significantly correlated with conspicuous consumption (.08, *ns*), or with power-prestige (.01, *ns*) but was positively correlated with financial prudence (.38, $p < .001$). The fact that the significant correlations were moderate in size did, however, suggest that the new scales were different from, and thus complimentary to the existing scales. Yet, the correlations presented in Table 4 between the three existing scales and the two new scales (entitlement and conscientiousness) were not substantively meaningful. There was no clear articulation in the literature that explained how the correlations of these variables were meaningfully and theoretically related. This awaits the further theoretical and empirical research the new scales are expected to facilitate in future research. Next we discuss the implications of these findings and suggest avenues for further research.

Discussion and Implications

This paper introduces two new adolescent money-attitude scales into the literature: entitlement and conscientiousness. In developing these two scales, we have sought to build on the earlier work of Yamauchi and Templar (1982) and ensure the scales harmonized with existing scales. Results of our testing indicate that entitlement and conscientiousness are unique and separate attitudes from those measures reported in previous work. The scales can be used as standardized instruments in assessing adolescent money attitudes and offer an attitudinal dimension to the development of materialism and voluntary simplicity as consumer values.

Table 4. Convergent and Discriminant Validity of Entitlement and Conscientiousness Scales

Correlations with Other Money-Attitude Scales			
New money-attitude scales	Conspicuous consumption	Power-prestige	Financial prudence
Entitlement	.34*	.36*	.04
Conscientiousness	.08	.01	.38*
Sources	Gudmunson & Beutler, 2012	Furnham, 1984; Roberts & Jones, 2001; Yamauchi & Templar, 1982	Hibbert, Beutler, & Martin, 2004

* $p < .001$.

The development of these scales is a start to establishing entitlement and conscientiousness as distinct adolescent money attitudes. An important next step will be a study to further validate these scales. Current research on scales to measure adolescent money attitudes is almost non-existent. Little is known about adolescent money attitudes and how they may protect or expose youth to economic or psychological risks. Teens and pre-teens are primary targets of an expanding consumer culture; a culture for which changing money attitudes is an important catalyst. The consumer culture has replaced saving with reverence for spending. There is growing evidence that this culture spawns negative outcomes such as compulsive buying and materialism. Compulsive buying has been shown to be associated with distrust, anxiety and a preoccupation with the purchase of status (Hayhoe, Leach, Allen, & Edwards, 2005; Roberts & Jones, 2001). Materialism in the consumer culture holds out a promise of satisfaction and happiness, but a growing body of literature supports a contrary view (e.g., Kasser & Ryan, 1996; Richins & Dawson, 1992; Schor, 2004).

Although, entitlement and conscientiousness have been presented in the literature as somewhat opposing attitudes, our results suggested that the negative association was not strong. This is evidence that the scales tap into distinct constructs; that entitlement is not merely a lack of conscientiousness and likewise that conscientiousness is not merely a lack of entitlement. Further research would likely benefit from examining the prevalence of different combinations of entitlement and conscientiousness among various samples and from checking for meaningful thresholds in these measures.

Future research should also consider rates of change over time and their developmental consequences. The entitlement and conscientiousness scales are context specific to the financial domain, but are expected to be precursors to more general values such as materialism and voluntary simplicity that have the potential to permeate more aspects in life. For instance, materialism has been shown to impact relationship outcomes among married couples (Dean, Carroll, & Yang, 2007). To test these ideas further, it will be important in longitudinal research to investigate the extent to which these money attitudes in adolescence have a contagion effect in later adult relationships. Likewise the importance of linked lives, such as from sibling to sibling or parent to child across family generations, should be examined. It is possible that the values and practices in one generation will affect the money attitudes in the next.

Use of these measures will be most meaningful when used to study families, because each is inherently based on family processes. Entitlement is a reflection of an adolescent attitude of deserving “at will” access to parental monetary resources. Thus, the level of parental resources and their behaviors and contingencies in bestowing resources should be examined in further entitlement research. This inquiry could include the varied contexts of celebrations (e.g., birthdays, holidays, vacations, graduations, and marriages) or hardships (e.g., illness, job loss, divorce, or death) to ascertain the degree to which an attitude of entitlement or conscientiousness may magnify or diminish a sense of economic pressure.

The literature on economic and financial socialization (Beutler & Dickson, 2008; Gudmunson & Danes, 2011; Moschis, 1987; Ward, 1974) suggests that family members financially socialize each other both directly and indirectly. The combined effect of intended and unintended forms of socialization can have profound influence on the money attitudes of youth including the extent to which they are conscientious or entitled. Through everyday prosaic routines family members observe how others carry out their roles as fathers, mothers, siblings, and grandparents with regard to financial tasks such as earning, managing, shopping, spending, saving, and investing. In the context of these roles, youth develop attitudes, knowledge, and capabilities regarding money in an unintended process of financial socialization. In addition, youth may also be engaged with intentional forms of socialization in family life. These may include advice-giving, gift-giving, setting up accounts, and participation in the management of family resources. This influence needs to be better understood by financial counselors and planners as they seek to help clients realize not only their financial goals, but also the more invisible, but highly relevant goals associated with the financial well-being of youth.

Further research should also address one of the limitations of this study by including *entitlement* and *conscientiousness* in a sample that has a wider range of demographic factors. The age span and race-ethnicity of our sample were somewhat limited. This situation could best be achieved by sampling more heterogeneous populations. Due to privacy and liability issues associated with youth attending public schools, human subject’s guidelines precluded the collection of information regarding household income and multiple informants such as interviewing other family members or school officials. It is our hope that the scales can be useful in the planning of new randomly sampled and longitudinal research projects involving adolescents.

At some point, once the correlates and predictors of these money attitudes are better understood, it may become helpful to explore whether there are adaptive thresholds in individual scores of the measures, and to test whether thresholds can be useful as diagnostic tools for uncovering client strengths and weaknesses among the clientele of financial counselors, planners, and therapists. In working with families, professionals may also probe for sibling and peer-to-peer differences and family group phenomena. Parent expectations for their children's levels of entitlement and conscientiousness could also be compared with adolescent reports as a way of promoting intergenerational perspective-taking and to assist in family goal formation and discussion of the attitudes that families hold about their financial lives.

As financial professionals committed to the education of a rising generation, there is much about our audiences that needs to be known. Educators and financial counselors who plan financial curricula and counseling interventions have an important role to support and reinforce positive money attitudes in their efforts to improve individual and family well-being. The research reported here is an avenue for this type of advancement.

Endnotes

- ¹ Spending Well, Adolescent Financial Unit, Supported by Family Studies Center—School of Family Life, Copyright Brigham Young University, 2004.
- ² In editing the adolescent questionnaire for this study, two items of the financial prudence scale were mis-worded. This error necessitated use of an abbreviated financial prudence scale in this study with an alpha reliability of .60 instead of something closer to the full scale alpha of .82 as reported by Hibbert et al. (2004).

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