

## The Relationship Between Locus of Control, Self-Efficacy, and Entitlement in the United States

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**Abstract:** A small body of prior research that utilises a unidimensional conceptualisation of psychological entitlement suggests that individuals with a more internal locus of control and higher levels of self-efficacy tend to have lower levels of entitlement. However, prior research has not explored how locus of control and self-efficacy interact to predict entitlement using a multidimensional conceptualisation of entitlement. In the current quantitative research study, the researchers sought to explore the interaction between locus of control and general self-efficacy in predicting the multiple dimensions of psychological entitlement. A nationwide sample of 316 adult participants from the United States completed an anonymous survey measuring locus of control, self-efficacy, and entitlement. A hierarchical multiple regression indicated that general self-efficacy and locus of control significantly predict active and revenge entitlement, but there were no significant interactions between the predictor variables. Individuals with higher

general self-efficacy demonstrated lower levels of active entitlement and higher levels of revenge entitlement. Individuals with a more external locus of control demonstrated lower levels of both active and revenge entitlement. No significant relationships were found for the traditional maladaptive conceptualisation of entitlement or passive entitlement.

**Keywords:** Psychological entitlement, Self-efficacy, Locus of control, Personality psychology, Social psychology.

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### 1. Introduction

In recent years, the idea that younger generations tend to expect to receive desired outcomes without having to put forth the effort needed to earn those rewards has been trending in the academic literature and anecdotally in society (Fisk, 2010; Twenge & Foster, 2008). These tendencies to expect unearned rewards may co-occur with personality characteristics that have the potential to impact goal attainment and self-actualisation. By increasing our understanding of these personality traits and how they interact with one another to impact important life outcomes, we may be able to enact changes to maximise success among future generations. This study examines the interaction between locus of control (LOC) and general self-efficacy (GSE) in predicting psychological entitlement using two definitions of entitlement. The two definitions of psychological entitlement will be conceptualised in the following paragraphs to lay the groundwork for the study.

Entitlement is a concept that has been studied across disciplines, with each discipline having its own definition and corresponding method to measure the construct (Campbell et al., 2004; Thomlinson, 2013; Zemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2017). Even within the field of psychology, there exists variability in how entitlement is conceptualised. For example, even though there is agreement among researchers that a sense of deservingness is a central element of entitlement, there is a difference of opinion about how deservingness is manifested (Feather, 2008; Weiner, 1985). One view of entitlement depicts deservingness as an unearned, perceived right to certain outcomes, where the individual's actions or behaviours are not aligned with the expected reward (Twenge & Campbell, 2009). This perspective, which is presented in the personality psychology literature, sees entitlement as a socially detrimental trait related to narcissism, in which the individual has unjustifiable and unrealistic expectations about what is deserved.

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Another conceptualisation of entitlement in social psychology literature is associated with social norms and obligations. It is premised on the principle that each member of society has a right to certain benefits or supports (Black, 1990; Lessard et al., 2011). This approach includes prosocial perspectives of deservingness, promoting the idea that individuals deserve to pursue their own goals without harming others and to have certain basic needs met by society (Żemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2017). The concept of personality and social psychology in relation to entitlement are conceptualised below.

***Personality Psychological Perspective:*** The Personality Psychology perspective of entitlement grew out of the diagnostic criteria for Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD), which includes entitlement as a facet of the diagnostic criteria (APA, 1980). With its origins in NPD, this perspective of entitlement is closely aligned with pathological and maladaptive characteristics, such as espousing the belief that one deserves more and better things than others. Within this framework, the definition of entitlement focused on an individual expecting to receive special treatment, even when the associated behaviour did not align with the expected reward(s). This focus on pathological and maladaptive behaviours (Campbell et al., 2004) was reflected in the Narcissistic Personality Inventory's Entitlement subscale (NPI-E), the first extensively used instrument to measure entitlement (Raskin & Terry, 1988). Campbell et al. (2004) adapted the NPI-E to create a new instrument, the Psychological Entitlement Scale (PES). Yet, the unidimensional perspective of entitlement did not change, with a continued focus on the tendency for one to have unwarranted expectations of special treatment and a close alignment with the entitlement facet of NPD. The preponderance of research on psychological entitlement is based on this perspective. However, some argue that this perspective of entitlement is too narrow (De Cremer, 2006; Feather, 1994, 1999; Tomlinson, 2013; Żemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2017). This narrow focus of previous research on entitlement prompts the need for research to examine a more robust perspective of entitlement. The current research aims to fill that gap.

***Social Psychological Perspective:*** In contrast to the wholly maladaptive perspective that entitlement reflects unrealistic beliefs of deservingness, a social psychological perspective suggests that when viewed through the lens of social justice and fairness, entitlement can at times espouse a prosocial element (Feather, 1994, 1999, 2003; Lerner 1987). This reflects characteristics such as social responsibility and the belief that certain basic needs should be met for all members of society. The concept of legitimate entitlement, in which an individual deserves a specific outcome because their action aligns with the reward, is also implicated in this perspective (Fisk, 2010). This expanded view contributed to the development of a multidimensional perspective of entitlement that extends beyond the pathological characteristics and contains positive social traits as well. It presents entitlement as a behavioural tendency manifesting as either beneficial or maladaptive, depending on the context (Żemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2017).

Based on this conceptualisation, Żemojtel-Piotrowska et al. (2017) developed an entitlement model consisting of three dimensions: active entitlement, passive entitlement, and revenge entitlement. Active entitlement focuses on self-promotion to achieve a specific goal. This is accomplished without infringing on any person's rights. The passive entitlement component aligns with the view that the government or community is responsible for meeting the needs of the members of the community, such as through social programs. Finally, revenge entitlement reflects an individual's unwillingness to forgive a past wrong and a tendency to seek revenge on those who have harmed them. The Entitlement Attitudes Questionnaire (EAQ) was developed to measure these three facets of entitlement (Żemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2017).

Across both definitions of entitlement, a common theme that reoccurs is the role of the individual's sense of agency in achieving desired outcomes. From the personality psychology approach to entitlement, the individual expects to receive desired outcomes without their investment in achieving them, while active entitlement in the social-psychological approach involves a person taking action to obtain a desired outcome. Passive entitlement posits that there are certain basic rights that are inalienable and must be met for all members of society regardless of their actions and revenge entitlement involves a sense that one has the right to take action against those who have harmed them. When examining personality characteristics that may co-occur with entitlement to influence an individual's goal attainment and self-actualisation, the role of agency

may serve as an important link to understanding how the individual approaches their successes and failures. Given their connection with agency, two characteristics that warrant exploration are locus of control and general self-efficacy.

### **1.1 Locus of Control**

Locus of control (LOC), with its foundation in Social Learning Theory, was conceptualised by Rotter (1966, 1982) as the tendency of an individual to attribute outcomes or rewards to either internal or external factors. The extent to which an individual perceives the outcome to result from outside forces versus personal behaviours/actions determines whether the LOC is internally or externally derived. Individuals who display an internal LOC believe their own behaviours, actions, or other factors under their control result in a specific outcome. These factors may include effort, ability, and motivation. Others who believe that outside forces are responsible for determining whether they receive a specific outcome or reward are said to have an external LOC. That is to say that individuals with an internal locus of control demonstrate a sense of agency related to goal attainment, while those with an external locus of control do not. LOC can also be understood in relation to the way individuals perceive their successes and failures. Those with internal LOC find more meaning in these experiences and hold themselves accountable for the outcomes. Individuals with external LOC place responsibility for failures on other factors external to themselves (Davis & David, 1972).

Although Rotter (1975) cautioned against assuming internal LOC was more favourable than external LOC, research studies have supported that supposition (Anderson, 1977; Coleman & De Leire, 2003; Hopkins et al., 2020; Marks, 1998). Marks (1998) asserted that internally derived LOC is a healthier and more desirable dimension of this construct. Coleman and De Leire (2003) stated that teenagers with external LOC might be less prone to complete high school and/or enroll in college. Their findings suggest that individuals with an external LOC are more likely to attribute successes and failures to luck or fate, minimising the role of human capital investments on these outcomes. Similarly, research has suggested positive outcomes associated with internal LOC, such as higher grades in students (Hopkins et al., 2020) and higher levels of job satisfaction and job performance in the workforce (Anderson, 1977).

Given the role of agency in locus of control, logic suggests a connection between entitlement and LOC. One might expect that someone who has an internal locus of control would be more likely to believe that they need to put forth effort to attain the desired outcome, which would suggest a high level of active entitlement and a low level of entitlement from the personality psychology approach. They may also display indications of revenge entitlement if their belief that outcomes are under their control leads them to take action to revenge past wrongs. In support of this logic, a study by Carnes and Knotts (2018) found that participants with higher levels of internal LOC felt their actions directly impacted goal attainment and recognised that said actions would determine their reward. These same individuals were found to have lower levels of psychological entitlement, attributing outcomes and rewards to their own efforts as opposed to being entitled to those results with little recognition of their individual responsibilities. This conclusion supports Kerr's (1985) hypothesis that entitlement occurs when individuals believe that achievement outcomes are driven by external variables (external LOC) as opposed to a result of one's internal efforts (internal LOC). Similarly, from the perspective of academic entitlement, research suggests that highly entitled students demonstrate an external LOC, evidenced by their tendency to externalise responsibility for their performance and/or fail to expend the necessary effort to be successful (Anderson et al., 2013; Chowning & Campbell, 2009). Therefore, while only a few studies have examined this relationship, and those studies have focused on a limited perspective of the entitlement construct, there are indications to suggest that LOC does show a relationship with entitlement.

### **1.2 Self-Efficacy**

Bandura (1997) established the theoretical perspectives of self-efficacy in his seminal text, *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control*. He posits that the need to control events that affect one's life is ubiquitous in the actions an individual initiates. Ambiguity is disconcerting, particularly when faced with major decisions. Individuals' motivational intensity, affective states, and actions are controlled to a large degree by what they believe rather than on dispassionate truths. Bandura

concluded that this form of belief, which he terms as *efficacy*, is the basis of action. Self-efficacy, therefore, refers to an individual's beliefs about their ability to accomplish a given task. These beliefs, in turn, impact an individual's decision to take action, the amount of effort they expend on a task, how much they persevere when they encounter obstacles, their resilience to adversity, the intensity of stress they experience when facing challenges, and the level of accomplishment they achieve (Bandura, 1997; Wood & Bandura, 1989).

Bandura (1977) distinguished self-efficacy from other similar constructs such as self-concept and self-esteem. Self-concept is defined as a composite vision of one's being that is derived through experience and feedback from others. Self-efficacy, unlike self-concept, varies both between and within domains, fluctuating at different levels depending on the circumstances. When compared to self-esteem, the judgment of one's self-worth, there is an incompatibility to efficacy's judgment of capability (Bandura, 1977; Mitchell et al., 1994). Another distinction of self-efficacy is its focus on capabilities instead of focusing entirely on outcomes (Schunk, 1990).

Self-efficacy is commonly considered to refer to domain-specific beliefs, such that one may experience a high degree of confidence in their ability to accomplish their goals in one context, such as math, but a much lower degree of confidence in another context, such as playing football (Bandura, 1997). However, some researchers have also proposed the existence of a more global sense of confidence in the ability to accomplish one's goals across multiple contexts, which they refer to as general self-efficacy (GSE; Scholz & Schwarzer, 2005; Sherer & Maddux, 1982). While the level of efficacy may vary from one domain to the next, they suggest that an individual's GSE is implicated in more general contexts that are not focused on a narrowly defined skill area. GSE has been found to correlate with a variety of positive outcomes, such as psychological well-being (Akfirat, 2020), task performance (Chae & Park, 2020), life satisfaction (Bradley & Corwyn, 2004), and coping with stress (Solberg & Villarreal, 1997).

Individuals with a high sense of self-efficacy feel confident in their own ability to achieve desired outcomes and are therefore likely to take the steps necessary to successfully solve a problem or complete a task. That is, they believe they can earn the outcome that they desire (Boswell, 2012). Logic suggests that these individuals may be less likely to expect to receive desired outcomes without having to earn it and therefore display higher levels of active entitlement and lower levels of entitlement from the personality psychology approach. This may also implicate the tendency to take action to revenge past wrongs, as seen in revenge entitlement. In contrast, one who does not feel confident in their ability to earn an outcome may externalise their attributions of success, believing that achievement of a goal is out of their control. By externalising their attributions about the success, they can protect their self-esteem by diverting the responsibility away from themselves. These individuals, then, may be more likely to expect to receive desired outcomes without earning them (Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Greenberger et al., 2008).

While there is only a small body of research examining this relationship, there are mixed findings of whether this logic is supported. Within the area of academic entitlement, there is some evidence that lower levels of general self-efficacy are indeed associated with higher levels of academic entitlement (Boswell, 2012; Huang & Kuo, 2020; Sohr-Preston & Boswell, 2015). However, one study found that the relationship became nonsignificant when LOC was controlled for, suggesting that the association between general self-efficacy and academic entitlement may be attributable to other related factors (Sohr-Preston & Boswell, 2015). Furthermore, academic entitlement and psychological entitlement are considered to be related but distinct constructs (Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Greenberger et al., 2008). Therefore, findings of academic entitlement may not be generalisable to psychological entitlement. In fact, in the few studies that did examine psychological entitlement, no significant relationship was observed with general self-efficacy (Givertz & Segrin, 2014; Huang & Kuo, 2020). Therefore, the extant literature does not provide sufficient evidence to draw a conclusion about the relationship between general self-efficacy and psychological entitlement.

### **1.3 Self-Efficacy and Locus of Control**

Given the conceptual similarities between LOC and GSE and the mixed evidence of relationships between each construct and various measures of entitlement, further examination is warranted of

how the two constructs interact with each other to impact entitlement. Prior research has established that LOC and GSE show a moderate correlation, with individuals who have high GSE demonstrating a more internal LOC (Au, 2015; Georgescu et al., 2019; Judge et al., 2002; Kim & Lee, 2018; Roddenberry & Renk, 2010). Mediating effects have also been found between LOC and GSE within predictive models (Kim & Lee, 2018), suggesting that in addition to direct prediction of outcome variables, LOC and GSE are likely to interact to influence the predictive strength of each variable independently.

Some have suggested that both constructs reflect one single higher-order construct (Judge et al., 2002), while others demonstrate that LOC and GSE are, in fact, distinct variables that contribute unique predictive information related to personality (Chen et al., 2016; Hopkins et al., 2020). For example, in a study examining GSE and LOC as moderators of the relationship between supervisor support and intrinsic motivation, Chen and colleagues (2016) found that GSE amplified the relationship while internal LOC weakened the relationship. This suggests that, while related, GSE and LOC can have differing effects on outcomes. Similarly, Hopkins et al. (2020) found evidence of discriminant validity between the constructs in their study. While LOC and GSE are correlated and both predict academic performance, only GSE predicts cognitive and academic engagement.

While both constructs relate to an individual's belief about how likely they are to attain a desired outcome, they differ in the degree of agency involved. GSE reflects the extent to which the individual perceives they have the ability to achieve their goals while LOC reflects the extent to which the individual believes that the factors leading to certain outcomes are within their control. That is, GSE relates to whether they possess the skills to achieve a desired outcome, while LOC relates to whether the outcome is under their control. If the outcome is not under their control, having skills will not help them attain the outcome (Au, 2015).

#### **1.4 Purpose and Research Questions**

Prior research indicates that an internal LOC and high GSE are associated with lower levels of entitlement (Boswell, 2012; Carnes & Knotts, 2018; Sohr-Preston & Boswell, 2015). However, given the subtle distinctions between LOC and GSE, it begs the question of how much each variable uniquely contributes to the prediction of entitlement beliefs and whether there is an interaction between the two predictor variables. The authors have been unable to find any study that has considered these two predictor variables in conjunction with one another when predicting entitlement. Furthermore, prior research has utilised the unidimensional conceptualisation of entitlement and has not considered the multidimensional components reflected by the social psychology approach to entitlement. It makes conceptual sense that each component of the social psychology approach to entitlement will display a slightly different relationship with LOC and GSE. Therefore, the current study examines the relationship between LOC, GSE, and entitlement from two perspectives of entitlement. The research questions that guided this study were:

- Do LOC and GSE predict entitlement from the personality psychology approach to entitlement? If so, is there an interaction between the two predictor variables?
- Do LOC and GSE predict active entitlement? If so, is there an interaction between the two predictor variables?
- Do LOC and GSE predict passive entitlement? If so, is there an interaction between the two predictor variables?
- Do LOC and GSE predict revenge entitlement? If so, is there an interaction between the two predictor variables?

## **2. Research Methods**

The current study utilised a cross-sectional quantitative design to examine the relationship between self-reported locus of control, general self-efficacy, and psychological entitlement of adults throughout the United States.

### **2.1 Participants and Selection of Participants**

The current study included 316 participants who were recruited using Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk), an online platform that is designed to connect researchers with individuals who have expressed interest in completing research surveys. Any MTurk worker who was born between 1946 and 2000 and currently lives in the United States was eligible to participate in the study. MTurk

workers born between 1946 and 2000 and who reside in the United States were invited to participate in this study. Stratified sampling was utilised to ensure that an even distribution of participants was obtained across the age span, resulting in 105 participants born 1946-1964, 106 born 1965-1980, and 105 born 1981-2000. These date ranges were selected because they correspond to the birth years of the three prominent generations of adults (Pew Research Center, 2015). Participants who completed the study received compensation of \$1.00. Power analysis was conducted based on a medium effect size, which suggested that the current sample size was adequate for the analyses of this study. Detailed demographic information is reported in Table 1.

**Table 1:** *Demographic variables*

	N (%)
Gender	
Male	154 (48.7%)
Female	161 (50.9%)
Not Reported	1 (3%)
Ethnicity	
Caucasian	252 (80.4%)
African American	26 (8.2%)
Asian	16 (5.1%)
Hispanic	9 (2.8%)
Multi-Racial	6 (1.9%)
Native American	3 (.9%)
Not Reported	2 (.6%)
Geographic Region	
Northeast	81 (25.6)
South	99 (31.3)
Midwest	59 (18.7)
Southwest	25 (7.9)
West	49 (15.5)
Not Reported	3 (.9)
Setting	
Urban	89 (28.2)
Suburban	162 (51.3)
Rural	64 (20.3)
Not Reported	1 (.3)
Education Level	
< high school degree	3 (.9)
High school degree	25 (7.9)
Some college	80 (25.3)
Associate degree	42 (13.3)
Bachelor's degree	105 (33.2)
Master's degree	59 (18.7)
Doctoral degree	2 (.6)
Household Income	
Less than \$25,000	42 (13.3%)
\$25,000-\$34,999	57 (18%)
\$35,000-\$49,999	48 (15.2%)
\$50,000-\$74,999	83 (26.3%)
\$75,000-\$99,999	44 (13.9%)
\$100,000-\$149,999	30 (9.5%)
\$150,000 or more	11 (3.5%)
Not Reported	1 (.3%)

*Note.*

## 2.2 Materials

Data was collected via a self-report survey measuring demographic information, psychological entitlement, GSE, and LOC. Demographic information included gender, race/ethnicity, age, residential area, education level, occupation, and income level. Established surveys were used to measure the two approaches to psychological entitlement, GSE and LOC.

**Psychological Entitlement:** Psychological Entitlement was measured by two instruments, each measuring one of the two approaches to conceptualising the construct. The Psychological Entitlement Scale (PES; Campbell et al., 2004) aligns with the Personality Psychology approach and represents entitlement as a unidimensional construct characterised by a maladaptive expectation that one inherently deserves better outcomes than other individuals, regardless of the level of effort they invest in obtaining the outcomes. The PES consists of nine items scored on a 7-point Likert scale with a Cronbach's alpha of .84 (Campbell et al., 2004).

The Entitlement Attitudes Questionnaire (EAQ; Żemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2017) measures the three components of entitlement (active, passive, and revenge entitlement) depicted in the multidimensional Social Psychology approach which focuses on how an individual's self-interests interface with the interests of other members of society. Active entitlement is characterised by an individual's belief that they should be free to pursue their goals for their own gain. Passive entitlement centers around the belief that society has a responsibility to meet the needs of each member of society. Revengefulness involves an individual taking action to seek revenge on those who have violated their self-interest. This instrument consists of 15 items, with 5 measuring each of the three components of entitlement and was validated in 28 countries. The Cronbach's alphas for each entitlement type were .77 (active), .88 (passive), and .80 (revenge) respectively (Żemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2017).

**Self-Efficacy:** The General Self-Efficacy Scale is a 10-item self-report scale used to measure one's overall beliefs about their ability to cope with challenging situations in life. It was initially published in German and has been translated for use in 32 languages (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995). A Chronbach's alpha of .87 was obtained in a sample in the United States (Scholz et al., 2002).

**Locus of Control:** The Rotter Locus of Control Scale is a 29-item self-report scale used to measure LOC on a continuum from external to internal, with a higher score reflecting external LOC. For each item, respondents select between two statements that most closely describe their perspective (Rotter, 1966). An average Chronbach's alpha of .67 was reported across 71 studies (Beretvas et al., 2008).

### **2.3 Procedures**

This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board from the researchers' university prior to data collection. The researchers collected no identifying information, and there was no more than minimal risk to participants. All data is stored on the researchers' password-protected computers. Participants completed an anonymous survey through SurveyMonkey. Participants who completed the study received a \$1.00 credit to their MTurk accounts as compensation for their participation. Data was analysed using SPSS Version 26. Each research question was tested using a hierarchical multiple linear regression analysis with LOC and GSE entered as the predictor variables in the first model and the interaction effect entered as the predictor variable in the second model. For each analysis, one component of entitlement was entered as the outcome variable, consistent with the corresponding research question.

### **3. Results**

This section deals with the presentation of the results. All assumptions of multiple regression were met for each analysis, including independence of residuals, linearity, homoscedasticity, multicollinearity, and normality, and there were no unusual data points believed to have skewed the data. Missing data were omitted list-wise.

The first research question examined whether LOC and GSE predict entitlement from the personality psychology approach to entitlement and whether there is an interaction between the two predictor variables. Results indicated that LOC and GSE do not significantly predict psychological entitlement on the PES,  $F(2, 279) = .592, p = .554$ , adjusted  $R^2 = -.003$ , and neither predictor variable significantly predicted the dependent variable.

The second research question examined whether LOC and GSE predict active entitlement and whether there is an interaction between the two predictor variables. Results indicated that LOC and GSE significantly predict active entitlement,  $F(2, 287) = 3.576, p = .029$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .018$ , and both predictor variables significantly predicted the dependent variable. Higher levels of GSE and

a more external LOC were associated with lower levels of active entitlement. However, there was no significant interaction between LOC and GSE, as evidenced by an increase in total variation explained of 0.0%, which was not statistically significant  $F(1, 286) = 0.072, p = .788$ . Regression coefficients and standard errors can be found in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Multiple regression for active entitlement

Variable	B	95% CI for B		SE B	$\beta$	R <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$
		LL	UL				
<b>Step 1</b>							
Constant	4.385	3.534	5.236		.432	.024	.024*
General Self Efficacy	-.023	-.045	.000	.011	-.125		
Locus of Control	-.035	-.063	-.006	.014	-.151		
<b>Step 2</b>							
Interaction	.001	-.004	.005	.002	.085	.025	.000

*Note.* CI= confidence interval; LL=lower limit; UL=upper limit. \* $p < .05$

The third research question examined whether LOC and GSE predict passive entitlement and whether there is an interaction between the two predictor variables. Results indicated that LOC and GSE do not significantly predict passive entitlement,  $F(2, 287) = 2.057, p = .130$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .007$ , and neither predictor variable significantly predicted the dependent variable.

The fourth research question examined whether LOC and GSE predict revenge entitlement and whether there is an interaction between the two predictor variables. Results indicated that LOC and GSE significantly predict revenge entitlement,  $F(2, 287) = 17.82, p = .000$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .104$ , and both predictor variables significantly predicted the dependent variable. Higher levels of GSE and a more internal LOC were associated with higher levels of revenge entitlement. However, there was no significant interaction between LOC and GSE, as evidenced by an increase in total variation explained of 0.3%, which was not statistically significant  $F(1, 286) = 0.932, p = .335$ . Regression coefficients and standard errors can be found in Table 3.

**Table 3:** Multiple regression for revenge entitlement

Variable	B	95% CI for B		SE B	$\beta$	R <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$
		LL	UL				
<b>Step 1</b>							
Constant	2.514	1.595	3.432	.467		.110	.110**
General Self Efficacy	.049	.025	.074	.012	.239		
Locus of Control	-.041	-.072	-.011	.016	-.159		
<b>Step 2</b>							
Interaction	.003	-.003	.008	.003	.291	.113	.003

*Note.* CI= confidence interval; LL=lower limit; UL=upper limit. \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .001$

#### 4. Discussion

The current study sought to explore the relationship between GSE, LOC, and two different conceptualisations of entitlement. While prior research has suggested that individuals with an external LOC and low GSE display higher levels of a maladaptive, narcissistic conceptualisation of entitlement, this relationship has not been examined for the three components of entitlement described under the social psychology approach (Boswell, 2012; Carnes & Knotts, 2018; Sohr-Preston & Boswell, 2015). Furthermore, despite evidence that LOC and GSE are correlated with one another (Au, 2015; Georgescu et al., 2019; Judge et al., 2002; Kim & Lee, 2018; Roddenberry & Renk, 2010), research has not explored whether the two variables interact with one another in predicting entitlement.



An external LOC, in which an individual perceives rewards and other outcomes to be determined by variables outside of their control, has previously been found to be associated with a tendency to believe that they should receive desired outcomes without having to earn the reward (Carnes & Knotts, 2018; Sohr-Preston & Boswell, 2015). This makes conceptual sense, as both of these variables remove the sense of responsibility or agency from the individual in obtaining desired outcomes. Similarly, prior research has found that individuals with low GSE, or low beliefs about their ability to accomplish tasks, also demonstrate a high sense of entitlement from the personality psychology perspective (Boswell, 2012). This relationship follows similar logic, whereby individuals who do not feel capable of achieving an outcome have an expectation that they should receive the desired outcome without having to earn it. However, the current research found no relationship between the predictor variables of LOC and GSE and the outcome variable of entitlement from the personality psychology approach. This lack of support for the previously observed relationships is surprising and difficult to explain. The contradictory findings suggest that entitlement is a complex construct and that there is still much to learn about its correlates. There may be other personality characteristics that are more strongly associated with determining an individual's levels of entitlement beliefs.

While the results for the personality psychology approach to entitlement contradict prior research, there is no solid research base on which to base assumptions about the relationships between GSE, LOC, and the multidimensional social psychology approach to entitlement because the fundamental conceptual differences between the two approaches to entitlement make it difficult to generalise the extant literature to the social psychology approach. In the current study, the model examining active entitlement displayed a relationship between both predictor variables and the tendency to believe that one has the right to pursue and obtain outcomes they deserve and earn. Specifically, higher levels of GSE and a more external LOC were associated with lower levels of active entitlement. There was no significant interaction between the two predictor variables in the model. Based on the conceptual logic underlying these findings, one might have expected that an individual who feels competent to achieve their goals (GSE) and believes outcomes are within their control (internal LOC) would demonstrate more of a tendency to advocate for themselves to receive the rewards that they believe are due to them (active entitlement). While this logic is supported for LOC, the direction of the relationship for GSE is opposite what might be expected. Individuals who feel more competent to achieve their goals are less likely to demand what they believe they deserve. This relationship warrants further investigation to determine whether the same pattern holds true in different samples and identify possible other correlations that may influence the relationship.

Analysis of the model for passive entitlement indicated that neither GSE nor LOC was related to the belief that the community is responsible for providing for the needs of community members. Since passive entitlement, which embraces the sense of social responsibility to the community, is a construct that is more focused on society than on the individual, it is logical to conclude that the inward self-focus of GSE and LOC account for why no relationship was found. Instead, there may be other personality characteristics such as altruism, or the tendency to act selflessly for the benefit of others (Costa & McCrae, 1995), that play a greater role in predicting passive entitlement.

Finally, higher levels of GSE and a more internal LOC were associated with revenge entitlement. That is, individuals who feel competent to achieve their goals (GSE) and feel that they are in control of their own destiny (internal LOC) tend not to forgive others who have wronged them and are more likely to seek revenge (revenge entitlement). This may reflect that their GSE and internal LOC lead to a tendency to take things into their own hands and take action if they have been wronged.

#### **4.1 Limitations**

Several factors may have impacted the results of this study outside of the study variables. Data was collected using a self-report survey, which has the potential to be skewed by participants' lack of insight, self-perceptions, or attempts to respond in a socially desirable way. Recruitment through MTurk may also have resulted in a slightly skewed sample, as the sample was limited to individuals who have an MTurk account and were selected to participate in the survey. Finally, as a cross-sectional study, the researchers cannot ensure that the predictor variables, in fact, preceded the outcome variables or account for any changes that may have occurred across time.

## 4.2 Future Directions

Given the findings from this study, it appears that the pathways that influence entitlement are complex, and there may be multiple factors at play. Future research examining predictors and outcomes associated with entitlement should expand beyond GSE and LOC to examine what combinations of personality characteristics interact to contribute to an individual's tendency to display various components of entitlement and how these impact an individual's social and professional outcomes. Furthermore, research that measures each of the study variables using an objective third-person observer would address the limitations associated with self-report studies, and longitudinal research would permit a true examination of prediction rather than simply association. Finally, more work is needed to refine the definition of psychological entitlement and build consensus regarding entitlement's behavioural and psychological characteristics.

## 5. Conclusions

Overall, the current findings suggest that GSE and LOC are related to entitlement but that the nature of the relationships varies according to the different components of entitlement. In some cases, the direction of the relationship changes from one component to another, while some components do not show any relationships at all. Higher levels of GSE were associated with lower levels of active entitlement and higher levels of revenge entitlement. A more internal LOC was associated with higher levels of both active entitlement and revenge entitlement. Neither GSE nor LOC showed any significant relationship with the personality psychology approach to entitlement or passive entitlement, and no interactions were observed between GSE and LOC. Therefore, one can conclude that GSE and LOC are closely related to entitlement, but the nature of the relationship with each dimension of entitlement varies according to the unique characteristics of that dimension.

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