DEMANDINGNESS, DESERVINGNESS, AND SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING:
THE ROLE OF ENTITLEMENT IN PREDICTING RELIGIOUS/SPIRITUAL STRUGGLES

by

JOSHUA B. GRUBBS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Dissertation Advisor: Julie J. Exline, PhD

Department of Psychological Sciences
CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY

January, 2017
We hereby approve the thesis/dissertation of

Joshua B. Grubbs

Candidate for the degree: Doctor of Philosophy

(signed) Julie J. Exline

(Chair of committee)

Arin Connell

Heath Demaree

Timothy Beal

(date) December 8th, 2014

*We also hereby certify that written approval has been obtained for any proprietary materials contained therein.
To my advisor, Julie Exline,

without whose guidance, mentoring, and friendship, I would not have achieved these long-held dreams.

To my children, Brantley and Peyton,

whose adoring eyes and youthful innocence both inspire me and keep me grounded.

Lastly,

to my greatest cheerleader, toughest critic, most demanding proof-reader, biggest supporter, truest confidant, best friend, and deepest love, Kimberly:

We did this together.
Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background and Literature Review</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypotheses</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## List of Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 1</td>
<td>Descriptive Statistics for Included Variables</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2</td>
<td>Item Statistics And Factor Loadings† for the Spiritual Entitlement</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scale</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3</td>
<td>Unstandardized Residuals (Below the Slash) and Standardized Residuals (Above the Slash) for IRT Analyses</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4</td>
<td>Correlations between Included Personality Measures</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5</td>
<td>Correlations between Included Personality Measures and Spiritual Struggle</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6</td>
<td>Hierarchical Regression Predicting R/S Struggle</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**List of Figures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Confirmatory factor analysis of the Spiritual Entitlement Scale</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Total test information ($\theta_1 = \text{Positive Expectations}$, $\theta_2 =$ Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Total expected score as a function of latent traits ($\theta_1 = \text{Positive Expectations}$, $\theta_2 =$ Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Confirmatory factor analysis of the two-factor structure for the Spiritual Entitlement Scale.</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Indirect effect of psychological entitlement on divine struggles through maladaptive spiritual entitlement.</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Item information and standard error for item 1, “God will always give me what I want,” ($\theta =$ Positive Expectations).</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Item information and standard error for item 2, “God should give me good things,” ($\theta =$ Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Item information and standard error for item 3, “I deserve more spiritual blessings,” ($\Theta =$ Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Item information and standard error for item 4, “I deserve to get things from God because I’m special,” ($\Theta =$ Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Item information and standard error for item 5, “People like me deserve extra blessings from God,” ($\Theta =$ Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Entitlement).

Figure 11: Item information and standard error for item 6, “I insist on getting the spiritual blessings that I deserve,” (Θ = Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).

Figure 12: Item information and standard error for item 7, “I insist on getting what I want out of my spiritual life,” (Θ = Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).

Figure 13: Item information and standard error for item 8, “I expect God to make me happy all the time,” (Θ = Positive Expectations).

Figure 14: Item information and standard error for item 9, “I expect to be blessed, no matter what I do,” (Θ = Positive Expectations).

Figure 15: Item information and standard error for item 10, “God owes me,” (Θ = Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).

Figure 16: Category characteristic curves: Item 1, “God will always give me what I want,” (Θ = Positive Expectations).

Figure 17: Category characteristic curves: Item 2, “God should give me good things,” (Θ = Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).

Figure 18: Category characteristic curves: Item 3, “I deserve more spiritual blessings,” (Θ = Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).

Figure 19: Category characteristic curves: Item 4, “I deserve to get things from God because I’m special,” (Θ = Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).

Figure 20: Category characteristic curves: Item 5, “People like me deserve
extra blessings from God,” (Θ = Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).

**Figure 21** Category characteristic curves: Item 6, “I insist on getting the spiritual blessings that I deserve,” (Θ = Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).

**Figure 22** Category characteristic curves: Item 7, “I insist on getting what I want out of my spiritual life,” (Θ = Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).

**Figure 23** Category characteristic curves: Item 8, “I expect God to make me happy all the time,” (Θ = Positive Expectations).

**Figure 24** Category characteristic curves: Item 9, “I expect to be blessed, no matter what I do,” (Θ = Positive Expectations).

**Figure 25** Category characteristic curves: Item 10, “God owes me,” (Θ = Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).

**Figure 26** Item characteristic curve: Expected score for item 1, “God will always give me what I want,” (Θ = Positive Expectations).

**Figure 27** Item characteristic curve: Expected score for item 2, “God should give me good things,” (Θ = Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).

**Figure 28** Item characteristic curve: Expected score for item 3, “I deserve more spiritual blessings,” (Θ = Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).

**Figure 29** Item characteristic curve: Expected score for item 4, “I deserve to get things from God because I’m special,” (Θ = Maladaptive
Figure 30  Item characteristic curve: Expected score for item 5, “People like me deserve extra blessings from God,” (\(\Theta =\) Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).

Figure 31  Item characteristic curve: Expected score for item 6, “I insist on getting the spiritual blessings that I deserve,” (\(\Theta =\) Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).

Figure 32  Item characteristic curve: Expected score for item 7, “I insist on getting what I want out of my spiritual life,” (\(\Theta =\) Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).

Figure 33  Item characteristic curve: Expected score for item 8, “I expect God to make me happy all the time,” (\(\Theta =\) Positive Expectations).

Figure 34  Item characteristic curve: Expected score for item 9, “I expect to be blessed, no matter what I do,” (\(\Theta =\) Positive Expectations).

Figure 35  Item characteristic curve: Expected score for item 10, “God owes me,” (\(\Theta =\) Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).
Acknowledgements

I would like to gratefully acknowledge the support of the John Templeton Foundation
(Grant #: 36094) in funding this project.
Demandingness, Deservingness, and Spiritual Well-Being: The Role of Entitlement in Predicting Religious/Spiritual Struggles

Abstract

By

JOSHUA B. GRUBBS

A growing body of research has illustrated the prevalence of religious and spiritual (r/s) struggles among adults in the U.S. In response to this new line of research, there is now a growing interest in examining those factors that might predispose one to experience r/s struggles. One such factor is psychological entitlement, which has emerged as a robust predictor of certain struggles. The present work sought to build upon this finding, examining how spiritual entitlement, a domain specific manifestation of psychological entitlement, predicted a variety of religious and spiritual struggles. Using a large, cross-sectional sample of adults (N = 747), the structure of the Spiritual Entitlement Scale was tested using both confirmatory factor analyses and item response theory, revealing two dimensions of spiritual entitlement. The first dimension—Positive Expectations—reflected an optimistic attitude toward one’s spiritual life and was wholly unrelated to r/s struggle when psychological entitlement was held constant statistically. The second dimension — Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement—reflected demanding attitudes toward deity and a sense of unmerited deservingness in one’s spiritual life. This second dimension was robustly predictive of r/s struggles with the divine, but not with any other r/s struggles. The implications of these findings are discussed.
Demandingness, Deservingness, and Spiritual Well-Being: The Role of Entitlement in Predicting Religious/Spiritual Struggles

The impact of religion and spirituality on mental health is often considered to be positive (Koenig, Pargament, & Nielson, 1998; Miller & Thoresen, 2003; Powell, Shahabi, & Thoresen, 2003; Siegel, Anderman, & Scrimshaw, 2001). Religion often provides a means of coping with various life difficulties (Pargament, Koenig, & Perez, 2000), and many individuals view the divine as a source of comfort during times of difficulty or suffering (Pargament et al., 1990; for a review, see: Ano & Vasconcelles, 2005). However, a growing body of research now suggests that religion may also present individuals with unique struggles (for reviews, see Exline, 2013; Exline & Rose, 2005, 2013; Pargament, 2007; Pargament, Murray-Swank, Magyar, & Ano, 2005). Individuals may experience anger at God in response to suffering (Exline, Park, Smyth, & Carey, 2011), unmet expectations (Exline & Grubbs, 2011), or even in response to their own personal transgressions (Grubbs & Exline, in press). Similarly, people may also experience struggles related to fears of evil supernatural beings, conflict around personal morality, difficulty finding ultimate meaning, conflicts with other religious individuals, or religious doubts and crises of faith (Exline, Pargament, Yali, & Grubbs, 2014). Collectively, these types of difficulties or conflicts are known as religious and spiritual (r/s) struggles. In each of the aforementioned examples, there is also evidence that r/s struggles are also associated with indicators of poor mental and physical health (for reviews, see Ano & Vasconcelles, 2005; Exline, 2013; Pargament, 2007). As such, examining such
struggles empirically and understanding those factors that predict them is warranted.

Various personality traits and dispositional characteristics predict greater instances of r/s struggle. Traits such as neuroticism (Ano & Pargament, 2012) and trait anger (Wood et al., 2010) are both associated with higher levels of r/s struggle, particularly struggles with the divine. Conversely, traits such as agreeableness (Grubbs, Exline, & Campbell, 2013; Wood et al., 2010) and humility (Grubbs & Exline, 2014a) are associated with lesser amounts of r/s struggle. Notably, one trait has emerged across several studies as a robust and unique predictor of divine struggles: psychological entitlement (e.g., Wood et al., 2010; Grubbs et al., 2013; Grubbs & Exline, 2014a). Entitlement is a consistent predictor of generalized anger toward God (Wood et al., 2010), anger at God in the context of suffering (Grubbs et al., 2013), and fears of divine condemnation and wrath (Grubbs & Exline, 2014a). As such, it is reasonable to consider entitlement a relevant focus when examining factors that may predispose individuals to experience r/s struggle.

A growing body of research suggests that entitlement, characterized by feelings of unmerited deservingness and demandingness, is a distinct and influential personality trait affecting numerous areas of individual functioning (Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, & Bushman, 2004). Entitlement is associated with more relational conflict (Moeller, Crocker, & Bushman, 2009), interpersonal aggression (Reidy, Zeichner, Foster, & Martinez, 2008), aggressive driving (Schreer, 2002), sexism (Grubbs, Exline, & Twenge, 2014; Hammond, Sibley, & Overall, 2013), and many other negative attitudes and behaviors. Recent research suggests that
entitlement may also have domain-specific manifestations. For example, in university settings, academic entitlement is often examined as a domain-specific form of entitlement more generally (Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Ciani, Summers, & Easter, 2008; Kopp, Zinn, Finney, & Zurich, 2011; Greenberger, Lessard, Chen, & Farrugia, 2008). In such settings, academic entitlement emerges as a better predictor of academic outcomes (e.g., cheating, course performance, disrespect of professors) than psychological entitlement more broadly (Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Ciani et al., 2008). Similar patterns have been studied for domain-specific forms of entitlement such as romantic entitlement (Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011) and sexual entitlement (McNulty & Widman, 2013; Widman & McNulty, 2010). In keeping with this trend, the focus of the present work was to examine another domain-specific entitlement: spiritual entitlement (Grubbs & Exline, 2014b; Grubbs et al., 2014).

In considering entitlement as a predictor of r/s struggle, it is possible that it may manifest itself in a domain-specific manner. Preliminary research in this area has suggested that spiritual entitlement is indeed a measurable construct among religious and spiritual individuals (Grubbs & Exline, 2014b; Grubbs et al., 2014). Furthermore, given that psychological entitlement broadly predicts a range of r/s struggles, spiritual entitlement should also logically predict such struggles. As such, the purpose of the present work is to further examine the relationship between entitlement and r/s struggle broadly and to evaluate spiritual entitlement as a domain-specific manifestation of entitlement that could predict various forms of r/s struggle.
Background and Literature Review

Religion and Spirituality

Before examining the concept of religious and spiritual struggles, a brief examination of the topics of religion and spirituality themselves is warranted. Although both religion and spirituality (or related words; e.g., spiritual) have been used in common vernacular for hundreds of years (Smith, 1998), it has only been within recent years that psychologists have made a conceptual distinction between the two (Pargament, 1999; Zinnbauer et al., 1997). Historically, psychologists (James, 1902/1961; Freud, 1927/1961) and sociologists (Berger, 1967), have devoted much time and thought to defining and discussing religious experience (Smith, 1998). Comparatively little has been devoted to discussing the notion of spirituality. More recent research (e.g., Hill et al., 2000; Zinnbauer, Pargament, & Scott, 1999) has sought to define both, noting that there are important distinctions between the two. Indeed, as religious commitment has declined in the Western world and individualism has risen (Berger, 1967), an increasing number of writings have focused on distinguishing between religion and spirituality (Fuller, 2001).

Religion is often thought of as a corporate institution that represents the social and ritualized aspects of personal belief (Pargament, 1999). By contrast, spirituality is often thought of as a private endeavor, typically concerned with the search for meaning or the process of seeking transcendence (Pargament, 1999). However, these distinctions are not often entirely clear in the real world (Hill & Pargament, 2003) and may not be the appropriate way to conceptualize either religion or spirituality (Pargament, 1999).
In the public’s eye, religion and spirituality often do not differ in practical terms (Pargament, 1999). Although many people do identify as spiritual but not religious (Saucier & Krzypińska, 2006), a larger proportion of people tend to identify as both religious and spiritual (Pargament, 1999). More succinctly, many do not seem to find a need to distinguish between religion and spirituality. Although distinguishing between the two can be of theoretical importance (Saucier & Krzypińska, 2006), in the lives of many individuals, the functional distinction between the two is not often pronounced (Hill et al., 2000; Zinnbauer et al., 1997).

It is also important to note that commonly discussed distinctions between religion and spirituality are often inappropriate (Hill & Pargament, 2003). For example, the notion that religion is purely institutional and that spirituality is purely personal fails to account for the fact that religious practices are often aimed at propagating spiritual ideals in the personal lives of adherents (e.g., meaning making, sense of community and belonging, feelings of transcendence; Pargament, 1999; Hill & Pargament, 2003) and that spiritual experiences simply cannot exist in a societal vacuum (Berger, 1967). Both religion and spirituality bear personal and institutional manifestations. Similarly, in much the same way that Berger (1974) notes that operational definitions or narrowly defined parameters for religion simply ignore the complexities of religious experience, operational definitions of spirituality often do the same (Pargament, 1999). Attempts to systematically define either religion (Berger, 1974) or spirituality (Pargament, 1999) tend to belie the fact that both involve well-understood emotional and cognitive processes and much more poorly understood searches for transcendence and connection to something
greater than the self. This is not to say that religion and spirituality cannot be defined, but rather that a rigid emphasis on the differences between the two is likely unwarranted and harmful to an appropriate understanding of either (Pargament, 1999).

Despite the well-noted difficulties in distinguishing between religion and spirituality, both are known to be sources of struggle in peoples’ lives (Exline, 2013; Hill & Pargament, 2003). In recent years, there has been a growing interest in difficulties in r/s life (e.g., McConnell, Pargament, Ellison, & Flannelly, 2006; for reviews, see Exline, 2013; Exline & Rose, 2005, 2013; Pargament, 2007; Pargament, Murray-Swank, Magyar, & Ano, 2005). Although many studies have demonstrated that r/s beliefs are often psychological and social resources during times of difficulty (Pargament et al., 1998; Tix & Frazier, 1998; for reviews, see Ano & Vasconcelles, 2005; McCullough, Hoyt, Larson, Koenig, & Thoresen, 2000), recent work has shown that r/s beliefs may also be a source of physical, psychological, and social distress (e.g., Ai, Seymour, Tice, Kronfol, & Bolling, 2009; Bryant & Astin, 2008; Exline & Grubbs, 2011; Exline, Yali, & Sanderson, 2000; Grubbs, Exline, Pargament, Hook, & Carlisle, 2014). Collectively, these difficulties or conflicts around spiritual life are known as r/s struggles (for recent reviews, see Exline, 2013; Exline & Rose, 2013; Pargament, 2007).

**Types of Religious and Spiritual Struggle**

Numerous aspects of religious and spiritual life can present people with struggles. People may feel internal conflict about certain religious beliefs, interpersonal conflict over religious practices, spiritual turmoil in response to
chronic illness or human suffering, distress over violating religious mores, or any number of other types of distress. However, recent research (Exline et al., 2014), has noted that r/s struggles often fall into three broad domains involving six categories: supernatural (divine struggles, demonic struggles), interpersonal, and intrapersonal (moral struggles, struggles of ultimate meaning, and struggles of doubt). Although r/s struggles may extend beyond or across these six categories, such a categorization of struggle can be helpful in conceptualizing the broad variety of struggles an individual might experience.

**Supernatural struggles.** The first category of supernatural struggle is divine struggle. Broadly speaking, divine struggles refer to any number of conflicts or difficulties related to a person’s concept of deity (Exline, 2013). These struggles may involve anger at God (e.g., Pargament et al., 2000), disappointment with God (e.g., Hall & Edwards, 1996; Wood et al., 2010), or feeling abandoned, unloved, or punished by God (Pargament et al., 2000). They may also include fears of disappointing God or doing something that would cause God’s disapproval (Exline et al., 2001). Divine struggle may also include doubt about God’s existence (Exline, Grubbs, & Homolka, in press).

Another way of conceptualizing divine struggles is in relational terms. Many religious people, particularly those from western faith traditions, view deity in personal and relational terms (e.g., Beck & McDonald, 2004; Davis, Hook, & Worthington, 2008; Hall & Edwards, 1996, 2002; Rowatt & Kirkpatrick, 2002). As such, divine struggles often represent conflicts or fractures within this perceived relationship or feelings of instability in one’s perceived relationship with God (Beck
Feelings of anger toward God, disappointment in God, doubt regarding God’s existence, or even fear of divine retribution may all be thought of as fractures in the individual’s perceived relationship with God. These fractures can be thought of as types of divine struggle.

Another form of supernatural struggle is demonic struggle (Exline et al., 2014; Exline & Rose, 2005, 2013). These struggles are best thought of as feelings of oppression or persecution by evil forces, dark spiritual beings, or malevolent spiritual entities. This struggle is less prevalent than divine struggle (Exline et al., 2014), but it is still a salient struggle for many individuals. Although religious people are more likely to believe in benevolent supernatural forces (e.g., God or angels) than they are malevolent forces, large numbers of individuals do believe in supernatural evil forces (Baker, 2008; Denton, Pearce, & Smith, 2008). Beliefs about such malevolent forces may vary across theological traditions, but a number of people do attribute suffering to demonic forces (Pargament et al., 2004). Furthermore, among devoutly religious individuals, this struggle is particularly salient (Baker, 2008; Exline et al., 2014).

**Interpersonal struggle.** The second broad domain of r/s struggle is interpersonal struggle (Exline et al., 2014). These types of struggles are focused on negative experiences with other people related to religious beliefs, conflict with religious or spiritual individuals that might arise as a part of religious belief, or negative experiences with religious institutions. Although explicitly conceptualizing such conflicts as types of r/s struggles is a relatively recent idea, interpersonal conflicts about religious and spiritual beliefs are a well-documented phenomenon.
These conflicts might be personal in nature, involving only a few specific individuals in arguments over personal belief, or they may also involve anger at organized religion or at religious leaders or entities (Exline et al., 2014). Furthermore, both religious and non-religious individuals report experiencing conflict with other people related to personal beliefs (Exline et al., 2014).

**Intrapersonal struggle.** The final broad domain of r/s struggle is intrapersonal struggle. These are struggles that are characterized by internal conflicts or distress related to religious/spiritual beliefs. Moral struggles are characterized by internal conflict regarding beliefs about what is right or wrong (Exline et al., 2014). These struggles are often characterized by feeling as if one is struggling to determine right from wrong, struggling to follow one’s moral compass, or experiencing extreme guilt as a result of moral failures. These struggles may include things such as transgressions or sins (McMinn, Ruiz, Marx, Wright, & Gilbert, 2006), but they may also include difficulty in discerning right from wrong or conflict regarding the morality of personal decisions. Notably, these moral struggles are evident in a variety of contexts often involving sexual values (Ahrold, Farmer, Trapnell & Meston, 2011; Grubbs et al., 2014a; Grubbs, Sessoms, Wheeler, & Volk, 2010), scruples about various behaviors (Abramowitz, Huppert, Cohen, Tolin, & Cahill, 2002), and general anxieties about maintaining spiritual appearances (Shrieve-Neiger & Edelstein, 2004). Furthermore, such struggles are related to
mental health concerns such as anxiety (Abramowitz et al., 2002) and pathological interpretations of behaviors (Grubbs et al., 2014a).

Another type of intrapersonal struggle is struggle of ultimate meaning (Exline et al., 2014). Much like interpersonal struggles, these struggles have only recently been conceptualized as a type of r/s struggle specifically. However, struggles related to the process of making meaning have been studied for many years (for a review, see Park, 2010) and are associated with a wide variety of physical and mental health symptoms (e.g., Park, 2007; Park, Edmonson, Fenster, & Blank, 2008). In many cases, meaning-making research has focused on the ability to make meaning of specific events (e.g., Park, 2010; for a review, see Park, 2005, 2013; Silberman, 2005), and there are often struggles in one’s ability make meaning of various life circumstances (Park & Folkman, 1997; Wortmann & Park, 2009). However, some people also struggle to find deeper meaning in life itself (Exline et al., 2014; Steger & Frazier, 2005; Steger, Frazier, Oishi, & Kaler, 2006). Both religious and non-religious people report experiencing difficulty making meaning of various events or, on a grander scale, finding meaning or purpose in life altogether (Exline et al., 2014; Steger, Kashdan, Sullivan, & Lorentz, 2008). These difficulties are often associated with mental health symptoms (Exline et al., in press) as well as diminished life satisfaction over time (Steger & Kashdan, 2007).

Finally, within the domain of intrapersonal struggle, there are struggles of doubt (Exline et al., 2014). Doubts about religious beliefs, teachings, or experiences are common in a variety of settings (e.g., Galek, Krause, Ellison, Kudler, & Flannelly, 2007; Krause, 2003, 2006; Krause & Wulff, 2004). These doubts may arise in
response to a variety of life circumstances (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1997) or as a part of personal development throughout the lifespan (Denton et al., 2008). To some individuals, these doubts are considered a part of spiritual life and are not viewed as sources of distress or struggle (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1997). For example, for individuals high in quest religious orientation, doubt may be an integral part of what they consider their spiritual experience to be (Batson & Schoenrade, 1991).

However, at times, feelings of religious or spiritual doubt can be distressing and may be associated with a variety of mental and physical health symptoms (Krause, 2006; Krause & Wulff, 2004). In such cases, feelings of doubt might be considered as a type of r/s struggle (Exline et al., 2014).

**Mental and Physical Health Correlates of R/S Struggle**

As was mentioned with many of the specific struggles described, r/s struggles tend to be associated with a wide variety of mental and physical health symptoms and outcomes (see Exline, 2013, for a recent review). For example, feelings of depression, anxiety, and general discontent have been linked to r/s struggles (e.g., Ano & Vaconcelles, 2005; Exline et al., 2000, in press; Harris et al., 2008, 2012). Suicidality has also been linked to greater struggle (e.g., Exline et al., 2000; Molock, Puri, Matlin, & Barksdale, 2006; Rosmarin, Bigda-Peyton, Öngur, Pargament, & Björgvinsson, in press). Similarly, poorer recoveries from physical illness are also associated with struggles (Fitchett, Rybarczyk, DeMarco, & Nicholas, 1999; Pargament et al., 1998; Krause & Wulff, 2004; Exline et al., 2011). In some cases, these associations are cross-sectional (e.g., Exline et al., 2011; Molock et al., 2006), which might indicate that these struggles might arise in response to stresses
in both physical and mental health. However, in some cases, these struggles are actually predictive of poor mental and physical health outcomes (Benore & Pargament, 2008; Krause, 2006; Pargament et al., 2004; Park, Brooks, & Sussman, 2008; Trevino et al., 2010). Over time, r/s struggles can predict such things as higher mortality rates (Pargament, Koenig, Tarakeshwar, & Hahn, 2001), diminished recovery from illness (Fitchett, Rybarczyk, DeMarco, & Nicholas, 1999), and greater reports of depression and anxiety (Harris et al., 2012; for a review, see Exline, 2013). These associations with both physical and mental health highlight the importance of understanding the nature of these struggles. As such, there is a need to better understand those factors that might make a person particularly vulnerable to struggle. This need is the focus of the present work.

**Individual Differences and R/S Struggle**

In considering the various factors that may predict r/s struggle, social, environmental, and characterological factors are all of interest. However, the primary foci of the present work are the individual-difference variables that might be associated with struggle. A substantive body of research has linked spiritual beliefs and practices to individual differences (for reviews, see: Piedmont, 2005; Piedmont & Wilkins, 2013; Rose & Exline, 2012; Saroglou, 2002, 2010). Not surprisingly then, a number of studies have found that a variety of personality traits are associated with r/s struggles. In terms of the Big Five factors of personality, neuroticism is a known correlate of struggles broadly (Ano & Pargament, 2013). Lower levels of trait agreeableness also predict higher levels of divine struggle (Grubbs et al., 2013), and openness to experience has been linked to higher levels of
religious and spiritual doubts (Kelley, Athan, & Miller, 2007; Simpson, Newman, & Fuqua, 2010). Other traits have also demonstrated links with r/s struggles. Trait anger is linked with a variety of divine struggles (Exline et al., 1999; Grubbs et al., 2013; Wood et al., 2010). There is also evidence suggesting that impression management/socially desirable responding is negatively associated with lower reports of r/s struggles (Exline et al., 2011; Grubbs et al., 2013), as is religiousness (Exline et al., 2011; Pargament et al., 1998). Finally, numerous studies have confirmed that psychological entitlement is a robust predictor of struggles with the divine (Grubbs, Exline, & Campbell, 2013; Grubbs & Exline, 2014; Wood et al., 2010).

For the present work, this final association was the primary focus.

**Psychological Entitlement**

For many years, entitlement has been studied as a facet of narcissism. Kernberg’s (1974, 1985) and Kohut’s (1971) seminal writings on the narcissistic personality included discussions of the attitudes of unmerited deservingness that characterize the narcissistic personality type. Similarly, with the inclusion of Narcissistic Personality Disorder in the DSM-III, entitlement was again highlighted as an important facet of the narcissistic personality (Akhtar & Thomson, 1982; Levy, Ellison, Reynoso, 2011). Subsequent factor analyses of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory-40 revealed that entitled attitudes were central to the narcissistic personality structure (Emmons, 1984, 1987; Kubarych, Deary, & Austin, 2004; Raskin & Terry, 1988). However, more recently, entitlement has become a focus of empirical concern as a distinct trait.
Psychological entitlement is best thought of as a personality trait characterized by a sense of unmerited deservingness and general demandingness (Campbell et al., 2004). Entitled individuals may hold narcissistic notions of the self as special or privileged (Campbell et al., 2004), but more importantly, they often think of themselves as deserving of special goods, services, and treatment (Bishop & Lane, 2004; Bushman, Moeller, & Crocker, 2011). For entitled individuals, the expectation of receiving better-than-average treatment is a foundational aspect of personal identity. Most often, these feelings of deservingness are not associated with any effort to actually earn or become meritorious of special treatment (Campbell et al., 2004). Rather, entitled individuals tend to expect good things to come to them, regardless of their efforts.

Put simply, entitled individuals “want it all” (Bushman et al., 2011; Campbell et al., 2004). Controlled laboratory studies with undergraduate populations have found that entitled individuals indicate greater desire for expensive and decadent foods, fine alcohol, and sexual pleasure than their non-entitled peers (Bushman et al., 2011). Entitled individuals also often report having a strong desire to receive such good things, even when they do not actually like or enjoy those things (Bushman et al., 2011). As such, it appears that, for entitled individuals, the desire to receive special goods, treatment, and services is actually stronger than personal preferences. Even so, above all else, entitled individuals seem to crave boosts to their self-esteem (Bushman et al., 2011; Moeller et al., 2009). When rating the perceived appeal of various desirable things, including praise and self-esteem-affirming feedback, entitled individuals pursue self-esteem above other rewards.
(Bushman et al., 2011). This is likely due to entitled individuals’ drive to maintain and strengthen their own positive self-image (Moeller et al., 2009). Unfortunately, these strivings are often associated with negative outcomes.

Entitlement is associated with a wide range of volatile reactions in response to threats to self-image and perceived slights. For example, when criticized on academic tasks, entitled individuals are more likely to physically “punish” the perceived source of the criticism (Campbell et al., 2004; Reidy et al., 2008). Similarly, when entitled individuals are denied something they believe themselves to deserve, hostility and anger are likely results (Besser & Priel, 2010). Not surprisingly, the volatile reactions and demanding tendencies that characterize entitlement also affect social relationships.

In close relationships, entitlement is again associated with poor outcomes (Campbell et al., 2004; for a review, see Widman & Micnulty, 2011; Brunell & Campbell, 2011). More specifically, in romantic relationships, entitled individuals are likely to experience a variety of problems. Entitled individuals are more likely to be unfaithful to a romantic partner ( Hunyady, Josephs, & Jost, 2008), more likely to put their own desires above those of their partner (Campbell et al., 2004), and more likely to terminate the relationship (Moeller et al., 2009). Cross-sectional research has found that entitled individuals are more likely to endorse misogynistic ideals (Grubbs et al., 2014; Hammond et al., 2013) and more likely to endorse hostile values in sexual relationships (Baumeister, Cantanese, & Wallace, 2002). Entitled individuals are also likely to experience conflicts with others as a result of their own self-image strivings (Moeller et al, 2009). For entitled individuals, efforts to enhance
the self are often made at the expense of others, which results in dysfunctional or failed relationships (Moeller et al., 2009).

Beyond fostering aggression and conflict in relationships, entitlement also appears to be associated with feelings of victimization (McCullough, Emmons, Kilmatrict, & Mooney, 2003; Zitek, Jordan, Monan, & Leach, 2010). When asked to actively record instances in which they were transgressed against over a given time period, entitled individuals reported more instances than their non-entitled counterparts (McCullough et al., 2003). Simply put, entitled individuals felt that they were transgressed against much more often than non-entitled individuals felt. Entitled individuals also remembered those transgressions as more severe and malignant than their non-entitled counterparts (McCullough et al., 2003). Not surprisingly then, entitled individuals are prone to maintain grudges and choose not to move past an offense (Exline et al., 2004). In sum, entitled individuals tend to report feeling wronged or transgressed against much more often than their non-entitled counterparts and to have particular difficulty moving past those offenses.

Consistent with the previously reviewed literature linking entitlement to poor interpersonal outcomes, entitlement is also linked to the externalizing of blame for negative events (Harvey & Martinko, 2009). Whereas narcissism as a whole is associated with an inflated sense of personal control (Watson, Sawrie, & Biderman, 1991), entitlement specifically is associated with greater belief in an external locus of control (Chowning & Campbell, 2009). Entitled individuals perceive the world around them as often unjustly denying them the things to which they are entitled. In the instance of transgressions against the self, entitled individuals tend to place the
blame squarely on the perceived transgressor (Exline et al., 2004). In instances of transgressions committed, entitled individuals tend to place the blame on the victim (Hill & Fischer, 2001). In sum, then, entitled individuals tend to have difficulty accepting personal responsibility for inappropriate or aggressive behaviors and tend to externalize blame for negative events.

To summarize, entitlement is characterized by pervasive feelings of deservingness of special treatment, goods, and services. These feelings of deservingness are not based on any dutifully earned right or meritorious action. Rather, these feelings arise as an aspect of self-identity and are often accompanied by an insistence on receiving those perceived rights. Not surprisingly, then, entitlement is associated with a wide variety of negative consequences in multiple domains. Relational conflict, aggression, externalized blame, unforgiveness, feelings of victimization, and generalized hostility are all notable correlates of this trait. More simply, entitled individuals are likely to approach the world with a “chip on the shoulder,” feeling as if the world does not recognize their right to get the things they want. Given the impact that entitlement has on multiple domains of functioning, recent research has begun to extend this focus to domain-specific manifestations of this trait.

**Domain-Specific Entitlements**

In response to the increased interest in psychological entitlement, there has also been a growing focus on domain-specific manifestations of entitlement. For example, a number of studies have examined academic entitlement (e.g., Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Kopp et al., 2011). Within academic settings, there is a growing
interest in students who feel entitled to good grades and positive outcomes without commensurate effort (Boswell, 2012; Singleton-Jackson, Jackson, & Reinhardt, 2010, 2011). These feelings of deserving positive academic outcomes without adequate effort expended are known as academic entitlement. This construct is highly correlated with psychological entitlement, but it also is an excellent predictor of specific negative outcomes within academic settings (Kopp et al., 2011). Although such outcomes are indeed correlated with psychological entitlement more broadly, measures such as the Academic Entitlement Questionnaire (Kopp et al., 2011), which includes items such as “Because I pay tuition, I deserve passing grades” or “It is the professor’s responsibility to make it easy for me to succeed,” tend to predict domain-specific outcomes better than psychological entitlement. As would be expected, students exhibiting high levels of academic entitlement often act in hostile ways toward authority figures (Chowning & Campbell, 2009), disrespect instructors and professors (Kopp & Finney, 2013), report spending less time studying (Kopp et al., 2009), describe cheating as a viable means of attaining what they want (Shapiro, 2012) and fall short of their expected outcomes (Ames & Kammrath, 2004). In sum, academic entitlement predicts a range of negative behaviors and outcomes in academic settings.

Another example of a domain-specific manifestation of entitlement would be romantic entitlement (Tolmacz, 2011). Romantic entitlement is characterized by excessive deservingness and demandingness in the context of romantic relationships (Tolmacz & Miculincer, 2011). More specifically, entitled individuals view their personal needs as primary within the context of a relationship and
demand that their partners meet their needs, without any reciprocal actions (Campbell et al., 2004; Tolmacz, 2011). Clearly, such attitudes of demandingness and deservingness are in keeping with the global construct of entitlement more broadly. Yet, in comparison to measures of psychological entitlement, measures of romantic entitlement that specifically ask questions about participant’s entitlement within the confines of a romantic relationship (e.g., “I insist on getting what I deserve in my relationship,”) are often much greater predictors of relational outcomes correlated with entitlement (Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011). For example, romantic entitlement is strongly correlated with poor marital adjustment, anxious attachment styles, and lower positive affect within relationships (Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011).

Yet another example of this domain-specific focus on entitlement is sexual entitlement (Hurlburt, Apt, Gasar, Wilson, & Murphy, 1994; McNulty & Widman, 2013; Widman & McNulty, 2010, 2011; Wryobeck & Widerman, 1999). Entitlement has been postulated as a risk factor for sexual aggression and sexual violence for many years (e.g., Baumeister et al., 2002; Bouffard, 2010; Bushman, Bonacci, Van Djik, & Baumeister, 2003; Zeigler-Hill, Enjaian, & Essa, 2013). However, more recent work has found that sexual entitlement is often a better predictor of sexual aggression and more malignant sexual intentions than entitlement broadly (Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrel, & Dunkel, 2011; Widman & McNulty, 2010). Individuals who endorse very specific notions of sexual entitlement (e.g., “In a relationship where I commit myself, sex is a right,” Wryobeck & Wiederman, 1999, p. 331) are much more likely to endorse sexually aggressive attitudes (Widman & McNulty, 2010) and
are more likely to have committed rape (Jewkes et al., 2011). Moving further, sexually entitled individuals are also prone to disappointment and sexual dissatisfaction in their relationships (McNulty & Widman, 2013). The expectations and demands of a sexually entitled individual are not often fully satisfied, resulting in greater relationship dysfunction (McNulty & Widman, 2013). In sum, then, sexual entitlement is correlated with poor outcomes in the sex lives of those people who carry such notions.

Collectively, research related to academic, romantic, and sexual entitlement shows that domain-specific manifestations of entitlement are often salient research interests, powerfully predicting negative outcomes in their respective domains. The present work seeks to extend this domain-specific focus to the realm of religion and spirituality.

**Spiritual Entitlement**

In recent years, narcissism has been studied in regards to the impact that it might have on religious and spiritual functioning (e.g., Hart & Hugget, 2005; Grubbs et al., 2013; Grubbs & Exline, 2014a; Wink, Dillon, & Fay, 2005; for a review, see Sandage & Moe, 2011). Similarly, Hall and Edwards (1996, 2002) examined and validated the notion of spiritual grandiosity, a type of domain-specific vanity that is related to spiritual and religious matters. The spiritually grandiose person often holds notions of the self as special to deity, enviably pious, and spiritually blessed (Hall & Edwards, 1996, 2002). Perhaps not surprisingly, then, spiritual grandiosity is positively correlated with narcissistic grandiosity more globally (Hall & Edwards, 2002). Furthermore, spiritual grandiosity is also related to unstable views of the
divine and feelings of r/s struggle (Hall & Edwards, 1996, 2002), as well as poor mental health (Lester, 2012). In keeping with this research, it is possible that other aspects of narcissism may also be related to spiritual functioning.

As previously reviewed, entitlement predicts a wide range of poor relational outcomes, as well as interpersonal hostility and aggression. Given that a number of religious individuals view deity as a being with whom they have a personal relationship (Hall & Edwards, 1996, 2002), it stands to reason that entitlement would predict difficulties in such a relationship. Previous studies have repeatedly found that psychological entitlement is indeed related to spiritual functioning, showing robust relationships with the experience of divine struggle (e.g., Wood et al., 2010; Grubbs et al, 2013; Grubbs & Exline, 2014a). Entitlement is associated with both anger toward and disappointment with God (Wood et al., 2010; Grubbs et al., 2013). Entitlement also predicts fears of divine condemnation or divine retribution (Grubbs & Exline, 2014a). Such findings are consistent with the body of research surrounding the relational impacts of entitlement. In sum, previous work examining the links between psychological entitlement and r/s struggle has found that entitlement is indeed related to greater struggles.

**Pilot Studies**

Building upon research regarding domain-specific manifestations of entitlement, the present work seeks to examine if entitlement might be similarly understood in the religious and spiritual realm. In defining spiritual entitlement, much attention was given to how an entitled individual might carry certain spiritual or religious beliefs that could be seen as domain-specific manifestations of the trait
more broadly. For example, whereas an entitled individual might endorse ideas such as “I am owed positive experiences,” the spiritually entitled individual might endorse attitudes such as “God owes me.” Similarly, the spiritually entitled individual may also demand happiness, positive life circumstances, or “blessings,” as a right. In sum, then, spiritual entitlement would be characterized by feelings of excessive deservingness and demandingness in one’s spiritual life.

In preparation for this endeavor, two pilot studies (Grubbs & Exline, 2014b; Grubbs et al., 2014b) were conducted to determine whether spiritual entitlement can indeed be observed among religious and spiritual individuals. These studies ($N_1 = 556; N_2 = 256$), involving three undergraduate samples, found that many individuals do endorse attitudes consistent with the notion of spiritual entitlement (Grubbs & Exline, 2014b; Grubbs et al., 2014a). Specifically, many religious and spiritual individuals reported thinking of themselves as deserving special treatment and “blessings” as a result of their beliefs (Grubbs & Exline, 2014b, Grubbs et al., 2014a). Many respondents endorsed attitudes such as feeling as if God owed them something, believing that their faith entitled them to positive experiences, and expecting God to make them happy at all times (Grubbs & Exline, 2014b). From these studies, the Spiritual Entitlement Scale was derived (Grubbs et al., 2014a; See Table 2 for full scale). Not surprisingly, spiritual entitlement was strongly correlated with psychological entitlement ($r = .60, p<.001$; Grubbs & Exline, 2014b). It also demonstrated positive associations with narcissism ($r = .24, p<.001$) and spiritual grandiosity ($r = .43, p<.001$) and negative associations with humility ($r = -.49, p<.001$) and religiousness ($r = -.27, p<.001$). Collectively, these findings lend
credibility to the notion of spiritual entitlement as a domain-specific manifestation of psychological entitlement more broadly.

**Hypotheses for the Current Study**

Building on this research examining the notion of spiritual entitlement, the present study examined how this construct might be related to spiritual functioning. Specifically, given prior research linking domain-specific entitlements to struggles within those domains, there is also reason to expect to find a similar pattern in the spiritual domain. Psychological entitlement should be generally associated with a number of r/s struggles, as outlined below. Furthermore, as domain-specific entitlements often mediate the link between trait entitlement and domain-specific struggles, it was expected that spiritual entitlement would often emerge as a mediator between psychological entitlement and r/s struggles. However, given the wide variety of possible spiritual struggles, these relationships were expected to vary by the type of struggle being predicted.

**Supernatural Struggles**

In considering entitlement’s role in predicting struggles, it is helpful to think of the six categories of struggle as elaborated upon by Exline and colleagues (2014). Given previously established links between psychological entitlement and divine struggles (e.g., Grubbs et al., 2013; Wood et al., 2010), the same relationship was expected in the present study. Entitled individuals are prone to demand more out of their life experiences and to expect to receive good things from the world around them. For religious individuals, deity is viewed as the position of ultimate power within the universe and responsible for a wide variety of life events, both positive
and negative (Beck & Taylor, 2008; Exline et al., 2011; Gray & Wegner, 2010; Turell & Thomas, 2001). Given entitled individual’s proneness to demand more than they can reasonably expect (Campbell et al., 2004; Bushman et al., 2011), it is likely that the entitled individual will experience events in which they feel they are denied things that they deserve. In these circumstances, anger at God and struggles with the divine are likely consequences, as has been shown in prior work (Grubbs et al., 2013; Grubbs & Exline, 2014). However, given spiritual entitlement’s domain-specific focus, it was expected that spiritual entitlement would emerge as a unique predictor of divine struggles, largely mediating the known relationship between psychological entitlement and divine struggles.

Demonic struggles are characterized by feelings of oppression, victimization, or persecution at the hands of malevolent spirit or evil beings. Given entitlement’s relationship with externalized blame and perceptions of the self as a victim (McCullough et al., 2003), psychological entitlement was predicted to emerge as a predictor of demonic struggles. For the entitled individual, demonic forces offer another scapegoat for negative events or happenings that would allow the individual to avoid taking personal responsibility for those events. Furthermore, given the specialized focus of spiritual entitlement on the individual’s spiritual life, it was also assumed that that spiritual entitlement would better predict demonic struggles. Spiritual entitled individuals believe that they are entitled to positive happenings in their lives. For persons who expect such positive outcomes as the result of spiritual belief, blaming evil spiritual forces for negative events would naturally follow. Furthermore, as entitlement broadly predicts feelings of
victimization, it would stand to reason that spiritual entitlement would predict feelings of spiritual victimization at the hands of malevolent forces. Finally, past research (Sandage & Crabtree, 2012) has linked spiritual grandiosity, a known correlate of spiritual entitlement, to demonic struggles, further indicating that spiritual entitlement would likely be a predictor of this struggle. As such, spiritual entitlement was expected to mediate the relationship between psychological entitlement and demonic struggle.

**Interpersonal Struggle**

Given entitlement’s association with a wide variety of interpersonal conflicts and general volatility within relationships, psychological entitlement was predicted to emerge as a robust predictor of interpersonal struggles. The volatility characteristic of the entitled person’s close relationships should also extend to relationships within religious and spiritual communities. However, given the focus of spiritual entitlement on deity and personal spirituality, it is expected that spiritual entitlement specifically would be largely unassociated with interpersonal r/s struggles.

**Intrapersonal Struggle**

In considering the role of entitlement broadly in predicting the final domain of struggle—intrapersonal struggle—there was less evidence to indicate that it would emerge as a predictor of any of these three struggles. Moral struggles focus on feelings of guilt and internalized conflict regarding moral decision-making. Struggles of doubt and ultimate meaning are also largely internalized conflicts regarding the purpose of life or deeper spiritual beliefs. Although such struggles are
likely to be salient to many individuals, they are also likely to be associated with internalized distress. Feelings of internal conflict or distress are largely inconsistent with the entitled individual’s quest to maintain a positive self-image. Given that psychological entitlement is associated with self-image strivings and a general desire to maintain positive self-esteem, entitlement should be largely unaffiliated with intrapersonal struggles. Furthermore, this lack of affiliation should extend to spiritual entitlement as well.

In sum, it was hypothesized that psychological entitlement would be a predictor of supernatural (divine and demonic) struggles, as well as interpersonal struggles. It was further expected that spiritual entitlement would emerge as a predictor of supernatural struggles, mediating the link between psychological entitlement and these struggles. Finally, to ensure that the hypothesized relationships were robust and not the product of other known personality trait predictors of r/s struggles, covariates would be included in analyses. It was expected that the relationships between spiritual entitlement and supernatural struggles would be robust, persisting when psychological entitlement itself, known personality predictors of struggle (e.g., neuroticism, agreeableness) and relevant covariates (e.g., religiousness, impression management, spiritual grandiosity) were held constant.

**METHOD**

**Participants**

Participants for the present study were recruited from Amazon’s Mechanical Turk (mTurk) workforce database. The mTurk database consists of approximately
500,000 individuals in numerous English-speaking countries who contract to perform small tasks online in exchange for monetary compensation. In recent years, a number of empirical studies in various psychological disciplines have determined that survey research conducted using this particular source is valid. Rigorous analyses have found that the mTurk database can be effectively used to conduct research in social, experimental, and clinical psychological disciplines (Behrend, Sharek, Meade, Wiebe, 2011; Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011; Mason & Suri, 2012; Shapiro, Chandler, & Mueller, 2013). Furthermore, numerous prior studies have relied on samples derived from this source to study religious and spiritual phenomena (e.g., Gervais & Norenzyan, 2012; Johnson, Labouff, Rowatt, Patock-Peckham, & Carlisle, 2012), including r/s struggles (Exline et al., 2014) and psychological entitlement more broadly (Miller, Price, Gentile, Lynam, & Campbell, 2012; Piff, 2013).

For the present study, participants ($N = 1,041$) were limited to adults who currently reside in the United States. Although feelings of spiritual entitlement could potentially be extended to a variety of cultural contexts and faith traditions, as this is still preliminary work, limiting our analyses to a more homogenous sample is a necessary step before broadening the work to other contexts.

Given the present study’s focus, only those who identified as either spiritual or religious in some capacity were included in analyses ($N = 747$, $M_{age} = 34.4$, $SD = 10.9$, $Range = 18-70$; 276 men, 472 women, 3 other/prefer not to say). Practically speaking, those who identify as atheists (e.g., having no belief in God, spiritual phenomena, or supernatural events) were excluded from analyses and did not
complete measures inappropriate for those without r/s belief. Participants predominantly identified as Protestant or Evangelical Christian (44%), followed by no specific affiliation (31%), Catholic (15%), New Age/Pagan/Wiccan/Pantheistic (5%), Jewish (2%), Muslim (1%), Buddhist (1%), and Hindu (1%). Participants were predominantly white or Caucasian (77%), followed by black or African-American (11%), Latino or Hispanic (7%), Asian or Pacific Islander (6%), Native-American or Alaska Native (3%), Middle-Eastern (1%), and other/prefer not to say (2%).

**Procedure**

An advertisement for the current study was placed on the mTurk website. In this advertisement, participants were invited to participate in a survey study examining personality and beliefs in exchange for monetary compensation ($3.00). To avoid potential self-selection biases, the initial advertisement avoided language specifying that the study was specifically concerned with religious or spiritual phenomena, instead inviting potential participants to complete a survey entitled “Personality, Beliefs, and Behavior.” Within the advertisement, a link to the study was provided. Upon indicating interest in participating in the study, individuals were directed to an informed consent page further clarifying the purpose of the study and the potential risks and benefits involved. Notably, as mTurk keeps workers’ identities private, absolutely no identifying information was collected.

**Key Measures**

In addition to basic demographic information (e.g., age, sexual orientation, gender, education, income, relationship status), participants were directed through a serious of questionnaires related to personality, religious belief, and personal
behaviors. Below, key measures are described. Unless otherwise indicated, scale scores were taken by averaging across items.

**Big five factors of personality.** The Big Five Inventory-44 (John, Donahue, & Kentle, 1991) was included to account for general personality structure. The BFI-44 assesses the major factors of personality on five subscales: Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Neuroticism, and Openness to Experience. This 44-item scale requires participants to rate their agreement with items describing aspects of their personality on a scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Participants responded to the prompt, "Do you agree that you are someone who ...?" by rating agreement with various items such as “is helpful and unselfish with others” (Agreeableness), “is a reliable worker” (Conscientiousness), “is talkative” (Extraversion), “can be tense” (Neuroticism), and “is curious about many different things” (Openness).

**Psychological entitlement.** The Psychological Entitlement Scale (PES; Campbell et al., 2004) was included. This nine-item scale required participants to rate their agreement with items such as, “If I were on the Titanic, I would deserve to be on the first lifeboat,” on a scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

**Narcissism.** The Narcissistic Personality Inventory-13 was included (NPI-13; Gentile et al., 2013). Adapted from the longer NPI-40 (Raskin & Hall, 1979, 1981; Raskin & Terry, 1988), the NPI-13 (Gentile et al., 2013) is a forced-choice measure in which participants must choose between two options: a non-narcissistic answer (e.g., “I take my satisfactions as they come.”) and a narcissistic answer (e.g., “I will never be satisfied until I get all that I deserve.”). Four items on the NPI-13 assess
notions of authority and leadership (“I have a strong will to power.”), four items assess vanity (e.g., “I will usually show off if I get the chance.”), and five items assess notions of exploitative entitlement (e.g., “I insist upon getting the respect that is due me.”). Narcissistic responses were summed.

**Impression management.** The Marlowe-Crowne Scale of Socially Desirable Responding (Reynolds, 1982) was included. This 13-item measure requires participants to indicate whether prompts such as “I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favors of me” are true or false of them. Socially desirable answers were summed.

**Religiousness.** Religiousness was assessed using a combination of measures, as has been done in prior work (e.g., Exline et al., 2011; Grubbs et al., 2014b). Participants completed five items assessing religious belief salience (adapted from Blaine & Crocker, 1995). Participants rated agreement with items such as “Being a religious/spiritual person is important to me” on a scale of 0 (*strongly disagree*) to 10 (*strongly agree*). Participants also completed five items assessing religious activity and involvement adapted from Exline and colleagues (2000). These items required participants to indicate the weekly frequency with which they engage in certain religious activities, such as prayer or reading of sacred texts, on a scale of 0 (*not at all*) to 5 (*more than once per day*). To calculate a total religiousness index, responses on both measures were standardized and averaged together.

**Spiritual entitlement.** The Spiritual Entitlement Scale (SES; Grubbs & Exline, 2014b; Grubbs et al., 2014) was included to assess notions of spiritual entitlement. This 10-item measure required participants to respond to the following
prompt: “Please indicate your agreement with the items below. On many of the items, the word ‘God’ is used. Please feel free to substitute a word that captures whatever that word means to you. For example, you may see God as a Higher Power, a Divine Being, a Great Spirit, Nature, a Positive Energy, Providence, or Fate. You might see God as an imaginary being or a real one.” In response to this prompt, participants rated their agreement with items such as “God owes me” and “God should make me happy all the time” on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Confirmatory analyses of the 10-item inventory in a sample of college students (N = 556) indicated a good fit for the measure (CFI = .98, TLI = .98, RMSEA = .049, SRMR = .025).

**Religious and spiritual struggle.** The Religious and Spiritual Struggles Scale (RSS) was included (Exline et al., 2014). This 26-item scale assesses r/s struggles in six domains: divine (5 items; e.g., “felt angry at God”), demonic (4 items; e.g., “felt attacked by the devil or evil spirits”), interpersonal (5 items; e.g., “felt rejected or misunderstood by religious/spiritual people”), moral (4 items; e.g., “felt guilty for not living up to my moral or religious standards”), ultimate meaning (4 items; e.g., “felt as though my life had no deeper meaning”), and doubt (4 items; e.g., “felt confused about my religious/spiritual beliefs”). Participants rated their agreement with each statement on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (a great deal). Consistent with the proposed hypotheses and analytic plan, only the Divine, Demonic, and Interpersonal sub-scales were included in analyses.

**Results**

“Remember that all models are wrong; the practical question is how wrong do they
have to be to not be useful.” - George Box (Box & Draper, 1987, pg. 74)

**Confirmatory Analyses (CFA and IRT)**

Prior to testing the main hypotheses for the current studies, latent-trait analyses examining the functioning of the Spiritual Entitlement Scale were conducted. Both confirmatory factor analysis and an item response theory approach were employed. All latent analyses were conducted using R Statistical Software (R Development Team, 2008). Confirmatory factor analyses were conducted using the Lavaan package for R (Roseel, 2012). IRT analyses were conducted using the mirt package (Chalmers, 2012) for R statistical software. Item statistics are available in Table 2.

**Confirmatory factor analyses.** CFA using robust diagonally weighted least squares\(^1\) (RDWLS; Flora & Curran, 2004; Wang & Cunningham, 2005; Yang-Wallentin, Jöreskog, & Luo, 2010) estimation was conducted. Results revealed good fit for a one-factor model, in which the latent trait *Spiritual Entitlement* was defined by the items of the Spiritual Entitlement Scale (CFI = .979, TLI = .965, RMSEA = .065, SRMR = .035). The results of this model are summarized in Figure 1.

**Graded response model.** Item Response Theory (IRT) seeks to provide the probability of an individual responding a certain way on a given test item based on

---

\(^1\) Although many sources agree that RDWLS is the most appropriate choice for latent variable analyses using ordered polytomous responses (e.g., Likert data; Flora & Curran, 2004; Wang & Cunningham, 2005; Yang-Wallentin, Jöreskog, & Luo, 2010), some controversy exists regarding the use of this estimator as opposed to maximum likelihood (ML) estimation (Beauducel & Herzberg, 2006; Myung, 2003) or simple diagonally weighted least squares estimation (DWLS; Jöreskog, 1990; Mindrila, 2010). As such, analyses were also conducted using ML and DWLS estimation, revealing highly similar results. ML estimation revealed a slightly poorer, but still acceptable, fit; DWLS revealed a slighter better fit.
the presence of the latent trait (θ) being examined (de Ayala, 2008; Embretson & Reise, 2000; Reise, Widaman, & Pugh, 1993). In the present endeavor, IRT analyses provide the relative probability of an individual providing a certain response to certain items on the SES based on the presence of the latent trait, Spiritual Entitlement. Although developed for testing in educational realms using dichotomous answer choices, there are now numerous IRT models for assessing a wide range of psychological constructs using polytomous response formats. For the present work, the Graded Response Model (GRM; Samejima, 1969, 1997) was used.

The GRM is a popular model for ordinal polytomous data (e.g., Likert scale data; de Ayala, 2008). Although several models exist for evaluating ordered polytomous data (e.g., Rating Scale Model [RSM], Partial Credit Model [PCM], Generalized Partial Credit Model [GPCM]), the GRM was selected for the present work for several reasons. Primarily, the GRM is a robust procedure that is commonly used in the evaluation of ordered polytomous data, including personality assessment (e.g., Likert scales; Embretson & Reise, 2000; Ostini & Nering, 2006; for examples, see: Chernyshenko, Stark, Chan, Drasgow, & Williams, 2001; Edelen & Reeve, 2007; Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000; Gray-Little, Williams, & Hancock, 1997). A central foundation of the GRM is the notion that the chief goal of measurement is to test whether or not a model accurately reflects the psychological construct that produced the data received (Ostini & Nering, 2006; Samejima, 1996, 1997). More simply, the GRM is based on the assumption that the most accurate model is the one that reflects the data obtained. In contrast, many alternative methods are extensions of the Rasch model (de Ayala, 2008; Ostini & Nering, 2006),
which emphasizes parsimony of fit and requires specific objectivity in specifying a model. Following from these requirements, Rasch-based models (e.g., RSM and GPCM) require equal discrimination across items for the sake of parsimony (de Ayala, 2008). More simply, Rasch models assume that each item of the inventory performs equally well as all other items. In contrast, the GRM allows for differential item discrimination parameters (de Ayala, 2008; Samejima, 1997). In applications such as the present, where certain items might better discriminate between different levels of the hypothesized latent trait (spiritual entitlement), such freedom is desirable. Finally, several empirical examinations of the different IRT models for ordered polytomous data suggest that the functional difference in outcomes if often of little practical importance (de Ayala, 2008; Ferrando, 1999; Ostini & Nering, 2006). In essence, in many situations, the choice of model (e.g., GRM vs. RSM vs. GPCM) is not likely to dramatically affect outcomes or decisions about the testing instrument. This is particularly true in low-stake testing environments, or those scenarios in which the test is not being used to make substantive decisions about the future of a respondent (e.g., achievement testing, IQ testing).

Prior to the calculation of item information and response category characteristics, unidimensionality was tested using the mirt package for R (Chalmers, 2012). For the purpose of this analysis, a two-dimensional, exploratory GRM model was tested in comparison with the original one-dimensional model indicated by CFA analyses. The factor loadings of this exploratory two-dimensional model are available in Table 2. Notably, items 1 (“God will always give me what I want”), 8 (“I expect God to make me happy all the time”), and 9 (“I expect to be
blessed, no matter what I do”) loaded together on a second dimension which appeared to reflect positive expectations regarding one’s spiritual life. Based on these findings, a confirmatory model specifying a two-dimensional structure was computed with items 1, 8, and 9 representing one dimension and items 2-7 and 10 representing the second dimension. Loadings of this confirmatory model and item discrimination indices are also available in Table 2. Comparison of this new confirmatory model with the original one-dimensional solution revealed a substantially better fit for the two-dimensional model ($X^2_{diff} = 79.0, p < .001$).

Comparison of Bayesian Information Criteria (BIC) indicated that the two-dimensional model was a substantially better fit than a one dimensional model (BIC - BIC$_{\text{min}} = 18.23$; Kass & Rafferty, 1995). Finally, comparison of Akaike Information Criteria (AIC) also indicated a substantially better fit for a two-dimensional model than a one-dimensional model (AIC - AIC$_{\text{min}} = 61.05$; Burnham & Anderson, 2002).

Based on these analyses, item information curves for the two-dimensional model were plotted (Figures 6-15). These curves graphically demonstrate how much information is provided by each item as a function of the latent trait being assessed. As a general trend, the majority of the total information supplied by each item was provided for cases in which the presence of the trait (e.g., ability level) was greater than zero ($\theta > 0$). This is visually seen by the peak of each curve falling beyond the midpoint ($\theta > 0$) with the majority of the area of the curve covering an area that is also beyond the midpoint. This pattern of information distribution is consistent with item means that fall below the midpoint and is indicative of a possible floor effect. These findings indicate that the scale provides the most
information for respondents that exhibit moderate to high levels of each latent trait, and relatively little information for respondents that are low in each trait. The cumulative effect of these trends is seen in the test information curve. (See Figure 2.)

Category characteristic curves (Figures 6-15), category characteristic curves (Figures 16-25), and item characteristic curves (Figures 26-35) were also calculated for the items of the SES scale. These curves demonstrate the relative likelihood of a respondent with a certain level of each latent trait (positive expectations = \( \theta_1 \), maladaptive spiritual entitlement = \( \theta_2 \)) responding to each particular question in a particular way (i.e., which category of the 7-item Likert scale will be chosen). Again, these results were consistent with each item demonstrating a mean below the midpoint. These analyses revealed that, for most items, the likelihood of selecting an option greater than 1 (strongly disagree) only increased after the respective latent trait began to increase substantially (e.g., \( \theta > 0 \)). The cumulative effect of these ICC curves is seen in the test characteristic curve (Figure 3).

Standardized residuals were calculated (see Table 3) to provide some indication of item fit. Results revealed a normal distribution of residuals that were very small in absolute value (e.g., < .20), which is indicative of good item fit. However, residuals alone are an inadequate determinant of item fit (Lai, Cella, Change, Bode, & Heinneman, 2003; Ostini & Nering, 2006). Given the twodimensional structure, \( \chi^2 \) indices of fit were not available in the mirt package for R. This is a noted weakness of this package for multi-dimensional IRT (Chalmers, 2012) and of multidimensional IRT more broadly (Zhang & Stone, 2007).
Multidimensional IRT is a relatively new statistical approach that has only gained popularity in recent decades (Reckase, 1997). As such, at present, there are very few resources for evaluating item fit for multidimensional IRT models (Zhang & Stone, 2007). Furthermore, those resources that have been discussed are not often available in popular commercial or open-source packages (Zhang & Stone, 2007).

Given that a two-dimensional model was heavily indicated by GRM analyses, confirmatory factor analyses using RDWLS\(^2\) estimation were again conducted using lavaan, testing the alternative two-factor structure for the SES (see Figure 4). Results indicated a very good fit for this model (CFI = .985, TLI = .980, RMSEA = .053, SRMR = .029). Furthermore, comparisons of the original model with the two factor model revealed that the two-factor model demonstrated substantially better fit (\(X^2_{\text{diff}} = 23.4, p < .001\)). Given the statistical superiority of the two-dimensional structure and the interpretability of the two dimensions, the two-factor solution reflecting the latent traits Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement and Positive Expectations was retained (see Table 2). Based on these findings, a total score and two sub scale scores were computed for the SES (see Table 1) and integrated into subsequent analyses.

**ANOVA**

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to compare both maladaptive spiritual entitlement and positive expectations on the basis of religious affiliation. Only those groups for which there were at least 10 respondents were included (e.g.,

\(^2\) These analyses were also duplicated using ML and DWLS estimation, again revealing highly similar results.
Protestant/Evangelical, Catholic, religiously unaffiliated, Jewish, and New Age/Pagan/Pantheist). ANOVA results did not reveal any differences between religious affiliations for maladaptive spiritual entitlement, $F(4, 721) = 2.20$, $p = .067$. Results did reveal reliable differences for positive expectations, $F(4, 721) = 7.05$, $p < .001$. Bonferroni corrected post-hoc comparisons revealed that the religiously unaffiliated scored significantly lower ($M = 1.9$, $SD = 1.0$) than both Catholic ($M = 2.6$, $SD = 1.3$) and Protestant/Evangelical ($M = 2.3$, $SD = 1.3$) Christians.

**Correlational Analyses**

Pearson correlations were conducted for all included personality variables. These results are summarized in Table 4. Notably, both positive expectations and maladaptive spiritual entitlement demonstrated positive associations with both psychological entitlement and narcissism. Subsequent analysis of the correlations between included personality variables and r/s struggle (See Table 5) revealed that both maladaptive spiritual entitlement and positive expectations were positively associated with divine and demonic struggles, as predicted, but were not associated with interpersonal struggles, again as predicted. Psychological entitlement broadly was positively associated with all three r/s struggles, as hypothesized.

Partial correlations were conducted examining the relationship between spiritual entitlement and relevant struggles while controlling for psychological entitlement and general religiousness, as both had demonstrated significant associations with both facets of spiritual entitlement and with aspects of r/s struggle. Results indicated a small but significant association between maladaptive spiritual entitlement and divine struggles ($r = .20$, $p < .001$). No further associations
between either aspect of spiritual entitlement and r/s struggle were observed. Given the lack of a relationship between spiritual entitlement and demonic and interpersonal struggles, these findings cast doubt on the hypothesized unique relationships between these variables.

**Regression Analyses**

Following upon correlational analyses, regression analyses were conducted to determine the unique role of spiritual entitlement in predicting the previously discussed struggles. In the first step of the analysis, the Big Five factors of personality, religiousness, and socially desirable responding were introduced. In the second step of the analyses, narcissism and psychological entitlement were introduced. In the final step of the analyses, the components of spiritual entitlement were introduced to determine their unique contribution to struggle, above and beyond the aforementioned control variables. The results of these analyses are available in Table 6.

Regarding divine struggles, in the first step of the analyses, agreeableness emerged as an inverse predictor and neuroticism emerged as a positive predictor. In the second step of the regression, psychological entitlement emerged as a direct predictor of divine struggle, while agreeableness and neuroticism maintained their predictive roles. In the final step of the analysis, only maladaptive spiritual entitlement emerged as a predictor of divine struggle, while agreeableness and neuroticism maintained their predictive roles. The association between psychological entitlement and divine struggle was reduced to insignificance when Maladaptive spiritual entitlement was introduced.
Regarding demonic struggles, religiousness and neuroticism both emerged as positive predictors during the first step of the analysis. During the second step, only narcissism emerged as a positive predictor of demonic struggles. Finally, during the third step of the regression, neither aspect of spiritual entitlement contributed any unique variance in predicting demonic struggles.

Regarding interpersonal struggles, during the first step of the regression, openness emerged as a positive predictor and agreeableness and conscientiousness emerged as negative predictors. In each successive step, no other variables contributed unique variance in predicting interpersonal struggle.

**Analysis of Indirect Effect**

Although initial hypotheses suggested that spiritual entitlement would emerge as a unique predictor of both divine and demonic struggles, results from correlational and regression analyses strongly indicated that only the relationship between maladaptive spiritual entitlement and divine struggle was unique. As such, only analyses of the indirect effects of psychological entitlement on divine struggle through maladaptive spiritual entitlement were conducted.

Indirect effects were calculated using the PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2013). Results of these analyses were duplicated using the Lavaan package for R Statistical Software, revealing identical results. These results are summarized in Figure 5. Consistent with regression analyses, the inclusion of maladaptive spiritual entitlement reduced the relationship between psychological entitlement and divine struggles to nonsignificance. Results indicated the presence of a reliable and small-to-moderate sized (Preacher & Kelley, 2011) indirect effect of psychological
entitlement on divine struggle through spiritual entitlement (indirect effect = .10, 95% CI = [0.06, 0.15]; Sobel's Z = 4.9, p < .001; Κ² = .12, 95% CI = [0.07, 0.17]).

Discussion

At the outset of this study, it was proposed that spiritual entitlement would emerge as a distinct construct that predicted unique variance in the experience of r/s struggles. In the subsequent section, findings are summarized and implications are discussed.

The Spiritual Entitlement Scale

Although not articulated as a specific hypothesis for this study, the integrity of spiritual entitlement as a psychological construct was extensively tested using a variety of robust latent variable analyses. Prior work (e.g., Grubbs & Exline, 2014b; Grubbs et al., 2014) had suggested that spiritual entitlement was indeed a distinct psychological construct that was reasonably measured by the Spiritual Entitlement Scale. The results of the present work are consistent with prior findings but also provide more nuance to prior understandings.

Consistent with prior confirmatory analyses of the Spiritual Entitlement Scale (Grubbs et al., 2014), CFA analyses in the present study revealed acceptable fit for a one-factor structure of the SES. However, subsequent latent trait analyses using an item response theory framework cast this conclusion under suspicion. Specifically, IRT analyses suggested that the SES may represent two separate latent traits that are important to differentiate from one another.

The primary trait comprising spiritual entitlement is maladaptive spiritual entitlement. This trait appears to be closely related to the original conception of
spiritual entitlement more broadly, reflecting attitudes of deservingness and demandingness in one’s spiritual life, particularly in one’s perceived relationship with the divine. By contrast, the second trait comprising spiritual entitlement is positive expectations. This trait seems to reflect a generally optimistic attitude about one’s perceived relationship with the divine. Rather than reflecting demanding or unjustly meritorious attitudes, this trait seems to reflect the general expectation of blessings and happiness in one’s spiritual life. Notably, this subscale did not correlate with any r/s struggle when general psychological entitlement was controlled for in partial correlations, and it did not demonstrate a predictive relationship with any aspect of r/s struggle when placed into a hierarchical regression.

The conceptual distinction between these two facets of spiritual entitlement is consistent with an understanding of positive self-concept more broadly. Prior work has made a distinction between an optimistic self-concept and more pathological narcissistic or entitled views (Campbell, Rudich, & Sedikides, 2002; Sedikides, Rudich, Gregg, Kumashiro, & Rusbult, 2004). Although extremely high self-concept can be problematic (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, & Vohs, 2003; Leary & Baumeister, 2000), it is often the more maladaptive aspects of inflated self-concept, such as entitlement, that predict interpersonal and interpersonal struggles (Bouffard, 2010; Fossati, Borroni, Eisenberg, & Mafei, 2010; Reidy et al., 2008). In a similar fashion, distinguishing between an optimistic view of one’s spiritual life and a more entitled, demanding view seems to be of importance, particularly when examining relationships between entitlement and struggle.
Results of IRT analyses also indicated that both facets of the present scale are much more useful for providing information about individuals higher in spiritual entitlement as opposed to lower or moderate levels. Across all items, the mean values were below the midpoints of the scale, giving the scale a slight positive skew. Consistent with this trend, IRT analyses found that individuals were only likely to endorse values greater than the minimum when they exhibited moderate to high levels of the trait. These findings collectively suggest that the scale is most useful for distinguishing between individuals with moderate levels of spiritual entitlement versus those who have high levels and is not very sensitive to distinguishing between those that are low-to-moderate in the trait. More simply, a high score on the SES would indicate a high level of spiritual entitlement, but a low score would not provide enough information to distinguish between low or moderate levels of the trait. This is a weakness of the scale, but it is consistent with prior attempts at measuring psychological entitlement itself (e.g., Campbell et al., 2004), in which the scale mean is known to consistently fall below the midpoint of the scale.

**Spiritual Entitlement and R/S Struggle**

The primary hypotheses for the present work were that psychological entitlement would emerge as a robust predictor of various r/s struggles and that the relationships between entitlement and struggles would be largely accounted for by entitlement’s domain-specific manifestation, *spiritual entitlement*. These hypotheses were only partially supported.

In reference to divine struggles specifically, psychological entitlement emerged as a robust predictor across several analyses. This relationship persisted, even when
a number of other known predictors of divine struggles (e.g., religiousness, agreeableness, neuroticism) were held constant statistically. These findings are consistent with prior studies that demonstrate entitlement’s relationship with divine struggles such as anger at God (Grubbs et al., 2013; Grubbs & Exline, 2014a; Wood et al., 2010). Despite this robust relationship, one facet of spiritual entitlement—maladaptive spiritual entitlement—fully accounted for the relationship between general entitlement and divine struggle. In hierarchical regression analyses, the introduction of maladaptive spiritual entitlement as a predictor of divine struggles reduced the relationship between psychological entitlement and divine struggles to a level that was not statistically significant.

These links between spiritual entitlement, a domain-specific manifestation of entitlement, and struggles within that domain are consistent with the body of research regarding other domain-specific entitlements (e.g., Kopp et al., 2009; Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011). In much the same fashion that academic entitlement accounts for the link between entitlement and academic struggles (Kopp et al., 2009), maladaptive spiritual entitlement accounted for the link between entitlement and divine struggles. Similarly, just as entitlement maintains indirect effects on struggles in romantic relationships through romantic entitlement (Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011), psychological entitlement maintained a significant indirect relationship with divine struggles through maladaptive spiritual entitlement. These similarities confirm the nature of spiritual entitlement as a distinct, domain-specific manifestation of entitlement more broadly.

Notably, neither aspect of spiritual entitlement emerged as predictive of
demonic struggles or interpersonal struggles. These findings were inconsistent with original hypotheses but may be understood in light of the structure of the SES. Both facets of the SES are particularly oriented toward deity in general and do not include any mention of evil supernatural forces. More simply, the SES does not directly assess any attitudes toward demons or the devil. Two of three items on the Positive Expectations sub-scale and four of seven items on the Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement sub-scale include specific use of the word “God.” Given this divine focus, it is likely that spiritual entitlement is most relevant for theistic faith traditions and most directly assesses attitudes of entitlement in a perceived relationship with deity. This is also consistent with a greater body of research that points toward an understanding of entitlement as a socially expressed trait (Campbell et al., 2004; Moeller et al., 2009; Tolmacz, 2011; Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011).

Although entitlement is a personal attitude or trait, the consequences of entitlement are often most visible in social contexts. Fractured relationships, interpersonal conflict, and social aggression are common associates of entitlement (e.g., Campbell et al., 2004; Moeller et al., 2009). More simply, entitlement typically entails attitudes of deservingness from and demandingness toward some entity outside the self (Campbell et al., 2004). For individuals maintaining a belief in God, entitlement is likely to be directed toward deity (Grubbs et al., 2013). Deity is often seen as the ultimate authority within the universe, the source of all life occurrences, and the centering object around which many individual’s religious and spiritual experiences are focused (Graham & Haidt, 2010). This central position of ultimate authority could place deity at the crux of unreasonable demands from the spiritually
entitled individual. At its core, entitlement is concerned with the acquisition of good things without commensurate effort or merit. Spiritual entitlement, then, would be directed toward the perceived source of good spiritual things or blessings. By contrast, an individual is not likely to view evil supernatural forces or other religious people as an appropriate place to focus spiritual entitlement, as they would not be the source of spiritual goods or blessings. This may explain the absence of an association between spiritual entitlement and demonic or interpersonal struggles.

**Implications**

Collectively, our findings suggest that psychological entitlement broadly and maladaptive spiritual entitlement specifically may play key roles in the experience of divine struggles. Given past work implicating entitlement as a predictor of divine struggles (Grubbs et al., 2013) and developing research implicating entitlement as a causal factor in the development of divine struggles (Grubbs, Exline, Wilt, Pargament, & Lindberg, 2014), the present work suggests that maladaptive spiritual entitlement may also play a key role in experience of divine struggles.

From a research perspective, the present findings further the body of research regarding domain-specific manifestations of entitlements. In much the same way that academic entitlement predicts struggles in one’s academic pursuits and romantic entitlement predicts struggles in one’s romantic pursuits, maladaptive spiritual entitlement appears to predict struggle in one’s spiritual life. These findings are particularly concerning in light of a body of research indicating that entitlement is on the rise in Western cultures (e.g., Trzesniewski & Donnellan, 2010; Twenge & Campbell, 2008; Twenge & Foster, 2008, 2010; Twenge, Konrath, Foster,
As entitlement rises, it is possible that commensurate rises in divine struggles may also occur, which is a possibility that should be of interest to researchers and clinicians alike.

In applied settings, the present work is also of importance. Entitlement is already a known associate of numerous indicators of psychological distress (e.g., anxiety, Kopp, 1989; Watson & Biderman, 1993) and social difficulties (e.g., fractured relationships, Moeller et al., 2009). Domain-specific manifestations of entitlement, such as maladaptive spiritual entitlement, also present individuals with the potential for r/s struggles, which may in turn predispose the individual to experience more distress. Given the substantive body of literature linking divine struggles to a variety of negative mental and physical health outcomes (for a review, see Exline, 2013), understanding those factors that may be related to the development and experience of such struggles is of utmost importance. Regarding assessment, should struggles with the divine be identified as a key problem in a therapeutic setting, assessing for the presence of maladaptive spiritually entitled attitudes may be of importance.

Limitations and Future Directions

As is the case with much research regarding the psychology of religion and spirituality, particularly more recent research examining notions of r/s struggle, our findings are limited to a Western sample that reflects predominantly theistic faith traditions (e.g., Christianity & Judaism). Although such homogeneity may be desirable for an initial study of a newly defined construct, the generalizability of the present findings is not known. Even so, much research has shown that psychological
entitlement is on the rise in Western societies. The limited sample for the present study limits generalizability but does not preclude the importance of understanding these constructs within Western societies. As spiritual entitlement appears to be a domain-specific manifestation of entitlement more broadly, assessing this construct in Western culture is a logical first step in the understanding this construct.

Another limitation of the present work is the divinely oriented nature of spiritual entitlement. Simply put, SES seems to capture demanding attitudes and unmerited deservingness in one’s perceived relationship with God. Although some of these attitudes may extend to all areas of one’s r/s life, in its present form, the SES appears to only measure those aspects of spiritual entitlement that are focused on the divine. This limits the ability of the scale to be used in non-theistic faith traditions, which again hampers generalizability outside of certain cultural contexts.

The present work relies on self-report data, the limitations of which are well-known (Chan, 2009; Podsakoff, McKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Even so, self-report measures are often valuable tools for the assessment of various constructs, particularly those that deal with personal beliefs and attitudes that may not be accessible via other methodologies (Chan, 2009). Given that the present study is concerned with one’s attitudes and beliefs about religious and spiritual matters, self-report is likely the best method for assessing such constructs.

Finally, the present work was purely cross-sectional in nature. Although some emerging work has implicated entitlement as a predictor of r/s struggles longitudinally (Grubbs, Exline, Wilt, et al., 2014; Wilt, Exline, Grubbs, Pargament, & Lindberg, 2014), the present study allows for no definitive causal inferences. As a
personality trait, it is certainly plausible that entitlement would precede the experience of divine struggle. However, it is also possible that both spiritual entitlement and divine struggles may be preceded by a third variable such as stressful life events. Feelings of victimization are known causes of entitled attitudes (Zitek et al., 2010). Perhaps individuals who experience suffering which they blame on deity both feel conflict with deity (leading to divine struggles) and feel that deity owes them something for their suffering (leading to entitled attitudes). Given these potential confounds, future work is needed examining the relationships between these variables and other potential causes of r/s struggle.

**Conclusion**

Recent research has suggested that psychological entitlement is often manifested in domain-specific ways. The present study extended this body of research by demonstrating that spiritual entitlement appears to function as a domain-specific manifestation of psychological entitlement more broadly. Using a large, cross-sectional sample of adults, the structure of the spiritual entitlement scale was tested, revealing two latent facets of the scale: Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement and Positive Expectations. Subsequent analyses demonstrated that maladaptive spiritual entitlement is robustly predictive of r/s struggles with the divine. By contrast, positive expectations were not related to any facet of r/s struggle when entitlement and general religiousness were held constant statistically. Collectively, these findings indicate that maladaptive spiritual entitlement may play a key role in the experience of divine struggles.
### Descriptive Statistics for Included Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Year 1 (N = 750)</th>
<th>( M )</th>
<th>( SD )</th>
<th>Skew</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
<td>-0.6</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
<td>-0.6</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>-0.6</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entitlement</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narcissism</td>
<td>1-13</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socially Desirable Responding</td>
<td>1-13</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>-0.7</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religiousness</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>-0.8</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief Salience</td>
<td>0-11</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>-0.5</td>
<td>-1.1</td>
<td>.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>1-6</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Entitlement</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maladaptive Spir. Ent.</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Expectations</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSS Divine</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSS Demonic</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSS Inerpersonal</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSS Moral</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSS Ultimate Meaning</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSS Doubt</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2

*Item Statistics And Factor Loadings*† for the *Spiritual Entitlement Scale*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Skew</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
<th>Exploratory Factor Loadings</th>
<th>Conf. Factor Loadings</th>
<th>Item Slope Parameters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. God will always give me what I want.</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>- .83</td>
<td>- .03</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. God should give me good things.</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>-0.9</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I deserve more spiritual blessings.</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I deserve to get things from God because I’m special.</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>-.26</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. People like me deserve extra blessings from God.</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I insist on getting the spiritual blessings that I deserve.</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
<td>-.23</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I insist on getting what I want out of my spiritual life.</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>-0.9</td>
<td>-.24</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I expect God to make me happy all the time.</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>-.58</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I expect to be blessed, no matter what I do.</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
<td>-.55</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. God owes me.</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>-.26</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

†Multidimensional IRT model with oblimin rotation
Table 3

Unstandardized Residuals (Below the Slash) and Standardized Residuals (Above the Slash) for IRT Analyses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Item 1</th>
<th>Item 2</th>
<th>Item 3</th>
<th>Item 4</th>
<th>Item 5</th>
<th>Item 6</th>
<th>Item 7</th>
<th>Item 8</th>
<th>Item 9</th>
<th>Item 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item 1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>-.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 2</td>
<td>-158.77</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>-.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 3</td>
<td>-148.83</td>
<td>-189.61</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>-.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 4</td>
<td>-132.86</td>
<td>-178.06</td>
<td>-166.51</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>-.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 5</td>
<td>-129.19</td>
<td>-134.76</td>
<td>-148.48</td>
<td>-197.15</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 6</td>
<td>-167.91</td>
<td>-164.70</td>
<td>-198.57</td>
<td>-150.45</td>
<td>-136.51</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>-.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 7</td>
<td>-133.41</td>
<td>-179.76</td>
<td>-143.51</td>
<td>-176.59</td>
<td>-152.31</td>
<td>199.62</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>-.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 8</td>
<td>-129.77</td>
<td>-119.63</td>
<td>-150.26</td>
<td>-153.80</td>
<td>-167.38</td>
<td>-148.05</td>
<td>-169.07</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 9</td>
<td>-125.90</td>
<td>-83.15</td>
<td>-173.66</td>
<td>-123.44</td>
<td>-99.10</td>
<td>-176.22</td>
<td>-147.63</td>
<td>-147.71</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 10</td>
<td>-93.25</td>
<td>-121.11</td>
<td>-162.67</td>
<td>-111.36</td>
<td>108.31</td>
<td>-167.42</td>
<td>-125.04</td>
<td>126.38</td>
<td>-122.66</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Openness</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Conscientiousness</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Extraversion</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td>.20**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Agreeableness</td>
<td>.07*</td>
<td>.37**</td>
<td>.19**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Neuroticism</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.48**</td>
<td>-.31**</td>
<td>-.36**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Entitlement</td>
<td>.09*</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.12**</td>
<td>-.16**</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Narcissism</td>
<td>.19**</td>
<td>-.07*</td>
<td>.37**</td>
<td>-.27**</td>
<td>-.08*</td>
<td>.48**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Soc. Des</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.35**</td>
<td>.10**</td>
<td>.52**</td>
<td>-.39**</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.11**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Religiousness</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.17**</td>
<td>.16**</td>
<td>.26**</td>
<td>-.17**</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.16**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Spir. Entitlement</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.10**</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.68**</td>
<td>.35**</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.18**</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Mal. Spir. Ent.</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.08*</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.67**</td>
<td>.34**</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.16**</td>
<td>.97**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Pos. Expectations</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.11*</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.54**</td>
<td>.30**</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.21**</td>
<td>.84**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). * Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Table 5

*Correlations between Included Personality Measures and Spiritual Struggle*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>RSS Divine</th>
<th>RSS Demonic</th>
<th>RSS Interpersonal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.15**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>-.19**</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.25**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>-.22**</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.26**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>.30**</td>
<td>.15**</td>
<td>.21**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entitlement</td>
<td>.20**</td>
<td>.09*</td>
<td>.08*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narcissism</td>
<td>.09*</td>
<td>.09**</td>
<td>.11**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socially Desirable Responding</td>
<td>-.19**</td>
<td>-.12**</td>
<td>-.22**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religiousness</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.41**</td>
<td>-.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Entitlement</td>
<td>.24**</td>
<td>.13**</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mal. Spir. Ent.</td>
<td>.26**</td>
<td>.11**</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Expectations</td>
<td>.13**</td>
<td>.14**</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05; **p < .01
Table 6

Hierarchical Regression Predicting R/S Struggle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Divine Struggles</th>
<th>Demonic Struggles</th>
<th>Interpersonal Struggles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td>Step 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>β</td>
<td>β</td>
<td>β</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>- .03</td>
<td>- .04</td>
<td>- .03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extroversion</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>- .13**</td>
<td>- .10*</td>
<td>- .10*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>.24**</td>
<td>.23**</td>
<td>.23**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religiousness</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Desirability</td>
<td>- .02</td>
<td>- .03</td>
<td>- .04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Entitlement</td>
<td>.17**</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narcissism</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>- .02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pos. Expecations</td>
<td>- .05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mal. Spir. Entitlement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.29**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ΔR²</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Value</td>
<td>11.8**</td>
<td>10.8**</td>
<td>24.6**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05; **p < .01
Figure 1. Confirmatory factor analysis of the Spiritual Entitlement Scale.
Figure 2. Total test information ($\theta 1$ = Positive Expecations, $\theta 2$ = Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).
Figure 3. Total expected score as a function of latent traits ($\theta 1 =$ Positive Expectations, $\theta 2 =$ Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).
Figure 4. Confirmatory factor analysis of the two-factor structure for the Spiritual Entitlement Scale.
Figure 5. Indirect effect of psychological entitlement on divine struggles through maladaptive spiritual entitlement.
Figure 6. Item information and standard error for item 1, “God will always give me what I want,” ($\theta =$ Positive Expectations).
Figure 7. Item information and standard error for item 2, “God should give me good things,” (θ = Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).
Figure 8. Item information and standard error for item 3, “I deserve more spiritual blessings,” ($\theta =$ Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).
Figure 9. Item information and standard error for item 4, “I deserve to get things from God because I’m special,” ($\Theta = $ Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).
Figure 10. Item information and standard error for item 5, “People like me deserve extra blessings from God,” ($\Theta$ = Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).
Figure 11. Item information and standard error for item 6, “I insist on getting the spiritual blessings that I deserve,” (Θ = Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).
Figure 12. Item information and standard error for item 7, “I insist on getting what I want out of my spiritual life,” (Θ = Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).
Figure 13. Item information and standard error for item 8, “I expect God to make me happy all the time,” ($\Theta =$ Positive Expectations).
Figure 14. Item information and standard error for item 9, “I expect to be blessed, no matter what I do,” (Θ = Positive Expectations).
Figure 15. Item information and standard error for item 10, “God owes me,” (Θ = Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).
Figure 16. Category characteristic curves: Item 1, “God will always give me what I want,” (\(\Theta = \text{Positive Expectations}\)).
Figure 17. Category characteristic curves: Item 2, “God should give me good things,” ($\Theta =$ Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).
Figure 18. Category characteristic curves: Item 3, “I deserve more spiritual blessings,” \( (\Theta = \text{Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement}) \).
Figure 19. Category characteristic curves: Item 4, “I deserve to get things from God because I’m special,” (Θ = Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).
Figure 20. Category characteristic curves: Item 5, “People like me deserve extra blessings from God,” ($\Theta = \text{Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement}$).
Figure 21. Category characteristic curves: Item 6, “I insist on getting the spiritual blessings that I deserve,” \((\Theta = \text{Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement})\).
Figure 22. Category characteristic curves: Item 7, “I insist on getting what I want out of my spiritual life,” (Θ = Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).
Figure 23. Category characteristic curves: Item 8, “I expect God to make me happy all the time,” (Θ = Positive Expectations).
Figure 24. Category characteristic curves: Item 9, “I expect to be blessed, no matter what I do,” ($\Theta =$ Positive Expectations).
Figure 25. Category characteristic curves: Item 10, “God owes me,” ($\Theta = \text{Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement}$).
Figure 26. Item characteristic curve: Expected score for item 1, “God will always give me what I want,” (Θ = Positive Expectations).
Figure 27. Item characteristic curve: Expected score for item 2, “God should give me good things,” ($\Theta = \text{Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement}$).
Figure 28. Item characteristic curve: Expected score for item 3, “I deserve more spiritual blessings,” ($\Theta =$ Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).
Figure 29. Item characteristic curve: Expected score for item 4, “I deserve to get things from God because I’m special,” (Θ = Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).
Figure 30. Item characteristic curve: Expected score for item 5, “People like me deserve extra blessings from God,” (Θ = Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).
Figure 31. Item characteristic curve: Expected score for item 6, “I insist on getting the spiritual blessings that I deserve,” ($\Theta =$ Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).
Figure 32. Item characteristic curve: Expected score for item 7, “I insist on getting what I want out of my spiritual life,” (θ = Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).
Figure 33. Item characteristic curve: Expected score for item 8, “I expect God to make me happy all the time,” ($\Theta =$ Positive Expectations).
Figure 34. Item characteristic curve: Expected score for item 9, “I expect to be blessed, no matter what I do,” (Θ = Positive Expectations).
Figure 35. Item characteristic curve: Expected score for item 10, “God owes me,” (Θ = Maladaptive Spiritual Entitlement).
References


Baumeister, R. F., Campbell, J. D., Krueger, J. I., & Vohs, K. D. (2003). Does high self-esteem cause better performance, interpersonal success,
happiness, or healthier lifestyles? Psychological Science In The Public Interest, 4, 1-44.


as predictors of perceived addiction to pornography. Archives of Sexual Behavior. Advance online publication.


Twenge, J. M., Konrath, S., Foster, J. D., Keith Campbell, W., & Bushman, B. J. (2008). Egos inflating over time: A cross-temporal meta-analysis of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory. *Journal of Personality, 76*, 875-902.


