

Running head: A POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF WELL-
BEING

A Positive Psychological Perspective of the Direct and Indirect Influences of
Gender Role Schema and the Experience of Childhood Trauma on
Psychological, Physical, and Social Well-Being in Adulthood: Vol. 1

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Declaration

I declare that the contents of this thesis are my own work. It contains no material produced by other authors, except where appropriate references are given in the text. Ethical clearance was granted for this research, and ethical principles and procedures for human research as specified by the Central Queensland University were followed. This thesis has not been previously submitted for the purpose of assessment and is currently being submitted for the Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

This research assessed psychosocial and cognitive factors influencing well-being, utilising a positive psychological perspective. The theoretical framework of this research was provided by two of the sub-theories of Self-Determination Theory – Basic Needs Theory and Organismic Integration Theory – along with Gender Role Theory, and Beck’s Cognitive Triad, with each of these theories relating differentially to the concept of control or self-determination. More specifically, the current research examined the relationship between gender role schema and the experience of childhood trauma with psychological, physical, and social well-being in adults. Two studies were conducted. Study 1 employed a random sample of 410 participants from Central Queensland, Australia, to develop the World Beliefs Inventory (WBI). This 21-item inventory was developed to assess world beliefs, based on a translation of Aerts et al.’s (1994) philosophical conceptualisation of world beliefs into common terminology. Developing the WBI enabled the assessment of world beliefs, which along with beliefs about oneself (operationalised as perceived control), and the future (dispositional optimism) constitute Beck’s (1976) cognitive triad. Statistical analyses indicated that the inventory provided a good representation of the world beliefs construct, as well as possessing favourable concurrent validity (e.g., positive views regarding the nature of the world were associated with decreased frequency of depressive symptoms experienced, and greater general psychological health and self-esteem). Study 2 was designed to investigate the direct and indirect relationships between gender role schema (masculinity and femininity) and the

experience of childhood trauma with psychological, physical, and social well-being, being mediated by (a) the satisfaction of the basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, (b) beliefs about the world, oneself, and the future, (c) the self-regulation of withholding negative emotion (SRWNE), and (d) somatic amplification. Study 2 employed a separate random sample of 605 participants from Central Queensland. Psychological, physical, and social well-being were each assessed independently to determine whether patterns of significant relationships were similar or different across the different types of well-being. In order to test the theories underlying the structural models of well-being, five hierarchical models of each type of well-being were analysed and compared. Satisfaction of the basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, and beliefs about the future (dispositional optimism) were found to play a role in the process via which masculinity, femininity, and the experience of childhood trauma influenced all three forms of well-being, while world beliefs were additionally found to influence social well-being, and the SRWNE additionally influenced physical well-being. Results therefore support Basic Needs Theory and provide partial support for Beck's cognitive triad. They also provide evidence of the utility of the concept of the SRWNE, which was developed in accordance with Organismic Integration Theory.