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Sex Typing, Self- Determination Theory and Psychological Well-Being

by

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Honours Thesis

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Abstract

This study is an examination of sex typing and psychological well-being from the perspective of Self-Determination Theory. This study will examine expectations to conform to gender stereotypic attributes (controlled sex typing), and whether this predicts poor psychological well-being. It is hypothesized that individuals who are autonomous, even those with sex-typical attributes, will be higher in overall psychological well-being than individuals high in controlled sex-typing. Three hundred and fifty-three participants, 156 females, and 187 males will be recruited using mTurk. Participants will be over the age of eighteen ($M=37.01$, $SD=11.88$), speak English predominantly and will reside in North America. They completed measures of overall autonomy versus controlled motivation in their life; actual, ideal and ought (expected by other people) measures of sex-typing; as well as psychological well-being and mood measures. Results provided clear support for Self-Determination Theory, as general autonomous motivation predicted better well-being. Bem's Sex Typing Theory was not supported, contrary to the hypothesis, as even controlled conformity to sex-typed attributes did not predict lower well-being. There was some support for it being advantageous to be consistent with gender related expectations, but only for women ideally wanting to possess feminine attributes, and only if they do it autonomously.

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Sex Typing, Self-Determination Theory and Psychological Well-being

Our society has come to label specific traits as being gender specific (see Bem, 1984). For example, an individual who thinks of the trait ‘assertive’ may mentally classify this trait as masculine. In comparison, an individual who thinks of the trait ‘nurturing’ may predict it to be consistent with femininity. These expectations serve as gender schemas (Bem, 1984) that lead us to classify information about other people and ourselves in terms of gender. Those who classify information as being consistent with specific genders, and who act according to this classification are said to be sex typed. Early research on sex typing described masculinity and femininity as incompatible and polar opposites along a single dimension. Sandra Bem presented a framework that challenged this, suggesting that people can possess both the stereotypic masculine and feminine attributes, and that such people will be psychologically healthier than sex-typed people who possess primarily the attributes stereotypic for their sex (Whitley, 1984).

This study will examine Bem’s ideas in addition to a more recent theory of motivation, Self-Determination Theory (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Based on this, the present study will investigate individuals who are sex typed in a controlled way (reflecting what others expect of them) relative to more autonomous sex-typing (reflecting the person’s own ideals), and how the development of these predict overall psychological well-being.

Sex Typing and Psychological Well-Being

Bem (1981) disputed that attributes seen as typical of males and females are universal, serving as a basic organizing principle for every human culture. Societies often assign adult roles on the basis of one’s own sex, and emphasize different attributes for men and women, ideas that are passed on through the socialization of children. The process by which a society comes to translate one’s biological sex into masculine and feminine attributes is referred to as sex typing.

Children assume these gender concepts through interactions with their parents, peers and other individuals who reinforce what attributes and behaviours are congruent with their gender (Bem, 1984). As a result, children may begin to evaluate themselves as a person in terms of the gender schema. Importantly, however, Bem suggested that not all people are raised by their parents in a way that emphasizes gender schemas, or results in them becoming sex-typed (i.e., masculine men, feminine women). Thus sex typed individuals are seen to differ from non sex typed individuals not primarily by how much masculinity or femininity they encompass, but in terms of whether or not their self-concepts, thinking and behaviours are organized on the basis of gender (Lubinski, Tellegen & Butcher, 1981). Bem's gender schema theory postulates that sex typed individuals are more likely to wish to behave in a way that is consistent with their gender and are more likely to feel discomfort or distress if they believe their traits and behaviours do not coincide with their gender. In contrast, individuals who are considered to be androgynous, having both masculine and feminine attributes, do not process information about their social world in terms of gender expectations. Since they do not utilize gender schematic processing, androgynous individuals do not experience internal pressure to conform to gender-based expectations, which is less limiting for them, and was predicted to be psychologically healthier (Bem, 1984).

Sex Typing and Cognitive Processing

There have been numerous studies conducted that demonstrate the differences in cognitive processing of sex typed individuals in comparison to androgynous individuals. Bem (1981) found that in a free recall task sex-typed individuals were more likely than non sex typed individuals to retrieve stimulus items from memory in masculine or feminine clusters. Sex-typed individuals displayed shorter remission periods when accepting sex-appropriate attributes or

rejecting sex inappropriate as self-descriptive, than when accepting or rejecting neutral attributes. In addition, when given a forced choice format, like multiple choice, sex-typed individuals were more likely to select answers that were sex-appropriate or neutral than answers that were sex-inappropriate.

Anderson & Bem (1981) hypothesized that sex typed individuals would be more likely than androgynous individuals to interact with others in a manner consistent with the culture's sex specific definitions of physical attractiveness, displaying more admiration, interest and excitement towards a more attractive person. As hypothesized, sex typed individuals were rated by independent observers as being significantly more responsive toward attractive than unattractive partners. Androgynous men did not differentiate on the basis of physical attractiveness, and androgynous women rated the more unattractive targets as more socially attractive than the supposedly attractive targets, thereby disconfirming the physical attractiveness stereotype. This also suggests that sex-typed individuals have a particular readiness to encode and organize information in terms of traditional stereotypes of what defines attractiveness in our society.

Research has provided some support for the idea that androgynous individuals do have better outcomes in life than those who are sex typed due to their lack of external pressure to conform. Baumrind (1982) assessed differences in childrearing practices, competency and adjustment between those who are androgynous and those who identify as sex typed. She found that males and females who were androgynous demonstrated more competence in their everyday life responsibilities, and displayed more flexibility. Androgyny and a child centered approach to parenting were linked, which ultimately predicted offspring who would reject sex typed characteristics. Parents who were androgynous were found to have children who were self-reliant, confident and successful. Androgynous men were more like androgynous women than

like masculine men in their child-rearing practices. They were unconventional and autonomous in their personal lives, as well as in their child rearing and socialization practices. In comparison, the children of parents who were sex typed did not show these tendencies.

To further illustrate this, Burchardt and Serbin (1982) performed two studies assessing undergraduate students and psychiatric inpatients. Each were administered the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) and the MMPI to measure psychological symptoms. Based on Bem's hypothesis, androgynous participants were expected to obtain scores associated with higher psychological adjustment than their sex-typed counterparts. The groups differed on a variety of measures in both the normal and clinical populations. Sex typed females were more likely to display psychiatric symptoms of depression, self-depreciation and suicidal thoughts and attempts, while sex-typed men were more prone to act in socially deviant ways and were more inclined to receive diagnoses of having a personality disorder. In sharp contrast, androgynous females were significantly lower on the depression and social introversion scales than feminine females and in the non-clinical sample they were also lower on the schizophrenia and mania scales. Androgynous participants displayed a continual pattern of being the most symptom free. These results support the notion that androgynous individuals may have fewer psychological problems than either masculine or feminine sex-typed individuals.

Bem's sex typing theory speaks to external pressures to conform to these stereotypic traits that our culture reinforces each gender to exhibit, however the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) does not directly measure these external pressures to conform. The BSRI was implemented to examine psychological androgyny and provide empirical evidence to show the advantage of possessing both masculine and feminine personality traits versus a sex typed categorization. The BSRI asks respondents to rate specific personality traits according to how

strongly they see themselves possessing certain traits on a Likert scale. Although the research described above suggests that categorizing people as sex-typed or androgynous based on the BSRI does reflect external pressure to conform to sex stereotypes, the measure does directly measure this aspect. The present study will examine personal and external tendencies toward masculinity and femininity more directly. We will also be doing this by studying external, controlled sex typing in relation to Self-Determination Theory (SDT), a theory that emphasizes autonomy as a basic human need.

Self-Determination Theory and Psychological Well-Being

Human beings can vary along a continuum of motivation, being proactive and completely engaged on one end, or passive, withdrawn and alienated in nature on the other. Humanistic Psychologists such as Carl Rogers (1961) argued that the fullest representations of humanity suggest that people are curious and self-motivated. At their best, individuals are consistently striving to learn more, and extend their abilities to reach their full potential. Individuals are driven to master new skills and apply their talents effectively and responsibly. Some social environments, however, can lead people to reject growth, responsibility and continuous learning. Recently these ideas have been extended in Self-Determination Theory (SDT), an approach to human motivation and personality that defines intrinsic and extrinsic sources of motivation (see Ryan & Deci, 2000, for an overview). Consistent with earlier humanist theories, the focus is on people's inherent growth tendencies and innate psychological needs that are the basis for their self-motivation and personality. SDT suggests that there are different types of motivation. Given this, people may vary not only with respect to their level of motivation but also in the quality of their motivation as well (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Intrinsic and extrinsic types of motivation have been widely studied and the distinction between them has shed important light on effective motivational strategies that produce psychological well-being. Intrinsic motivation remains an important construct in SDT, reflecting the natural human desire to learn, to be self-motivated and to be autonomous in their decisions. According to Deci and Ryan (2000) being intrinsically motivated refers to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable, reflecting one's own desires and values. In contrast, for those who are extrinsically motivated, the primary reason people are motivated to act is because the behaviours are prompted, modeled, or valued by significant others to whom they feel or wish to feel attached or related to. This is especially common after early childhood as the freedom to be intrinsically motivated becomes curtailed by social demands, roles and pressures. SDT postulates that extrinsic motivation can vary in the degree to which it is autonomous. For example, a student who does their homework every night because they fear parental sanctions for not completing it, is extrinsically motivated because they do not want to face the consequences from their parents. Similarly, a student who does their work because they believe that it is necessary for their future career is also somewhat extrinsically motivated because they too are doing it for its instrumental value rather than because they are interested or find it enjoyable. However, this latter example involves a personal choice and endorsement, whereas the former involves complying to the demands of others. The latter example is referred to as having an introjected style of motivation. This involves completing a task on the basis of external instruction, but it becomes something which you may come to value over time and come to want it for yourself as well (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The former, completely extrinsic example is referred to as controlled motivation.

Research suggests that individuals who are autonomous are more satisfied with their lives and are higher in overall psychological well-being, while individuals who are motivated by other people's expectations will be lower in psychological well-being. Some of this research examined autonomy in specific contexts, and others examined more general feelings of autonomy in one's life.

An example of research in a specific context comes from a study conducted by Carrasco, Campbell, Lopez, Poblete and Garcia-Mas (2013) whereby they analyzed psychological well-being in young professional tennis players. They also measured the tennis player's preferred coping strategies and perceived autonomy. Results revealed that the greater autonomy young athletes perceived while being engaged in professional sports was because of the coping strategies they utilized, such as active planning, cognitive restructuring, emotional calmness and seeking of social support. Results also confirmed that the greater perceived autonomy they had the higher the athletes' high levels of overall psychological well-being. Results also revealed that the relationship between autonomy and psychological well-being appeared to be bidirectional, and there was a feedback cycle between the two. When athletes felt more autonomous, they also perceived psychological well-being, and this is likely because they chose voluntarily, coping strategies that influenced their perceptions of being more autonomous.

Another example comes from research by Meyer, Enstrom, Harstveit, Bowles and Beevers (2007). They found evidence that, among a group of professional models who face scrutiny for how they physically convey themselves, the external pressure they feel to portray what is 'sexy' or 'attractive' led to a decrease in their self-actualization.

An example of research looking at more general feelings of autonomy was reported by Hodgins, Brown & Carver (2007). In a study of randomly selected adults they found that overall feelings of autonomy were significantly predictive of higher self-esteem, while low autonomy was predictive of decreased sense of self, and life satisfaction in general.

A study by Soohyun (2007) examined these issues in another culture, and in relation to parenting. They investigated how Korean parents' and teachers' motivating styles affect their students' school-related and psychological outcomes. More specifically, this study explored how the two core motivating styles proposed by SDT, autonomy and control, function in a Korean context. Results indicated that parents' and teachers' autonomy support was positively related to all student outcomes except for academic performance, whereas being controlling was negatively correlated with psychological need satisfaction. Students' reactions to autonomy support were also more positive than their reactions to control. This study supports the notion that the Korean adolescents benefit from motivational techniques that emphasize one's autonomy, but not control. These findings are generally consistent with research done in North America. Rudy, Sheldon, Awong and Tan (2007) attempted to understand cultural variations in motivation more specifically, doing the same study including several cultures. They also found that individual autonomy was associated with psychological well-being for European Canadians, Chinese Canadians and Singaporeans. This would be consistent with the claim in SDT that autonomy is a basic human need.

In addition to testing these ideas across cultures, Kasser and Ryan (1999) drew from SDT and hypothesized that well-being and health would be facilitated by greater personal autonomy, and perceived support for autonomy across the entire life span. Their sample included nursing home residents and primarily focused on the elderly population. They found that perceptions of

autonomy support from family, friends and staff, was associated with lower depression and increased well-being, vitality and life satisfaction. These findings further support the theoretical proposition that autonomy support represents a primary form of psychological nurturance that facilitates well-being. Those who were more autonomously motivated or self-determined to come to the nursing home felt more vital, and this even resulted in a lower mortality rate.

One study also suggests the relevance for SDT with respect to sex typing. Fiese and Skillman (2000) conducted a study where parents were asked to tell their son or daughter stories about themselves growing up. The stories told were coded for the strength of affiliation themes, which has been stereotyped to possess femininity, and for achievement themes, stereotyped as masculine. They were also coded for autonomy themes. Similar to the findings by Baumrind (1982) discussed above, androgynous parents told stories with stronger autonomy themes to their offspring. In addition, sons were more likely to hear stories with themes of autonomy than were daughters. An interaction was also found between gender typed parents and gender of the child for strength of achievement theme. Traditional gender-typed parents told stories with stronger achievement themes to their sons and non sex typed parents told stories with stronger achievement themes to their daughters. Higher levels of externalizing behaviours were found in boys whose parents endorsed strong masculine attitudes, and higher levels of internalizing behaviours were found in girls whose mothers told stories with high affiliation themes. Those who were told non-sex stereotypic stories that emphasized autonomy themes were reported to have higher psychological well-being than their sex typed counterparts. This illustrates that sex typed individuals receiving extrinsic influence display poorer functioning, while those who do not receive this controlled pressure do prove to be better off.

The Present Study

The present study will examine sex typing and psychological well-being in an adult sample. The measure used for sex typing asks not only what attributes people believe they possess, but also the extent to which they would ideally possess them, and feel that other people expect them to possess them. It was predicted that sex typing in a controlled way (reflecting what others expect them to be) is predictive of poorer overall psychological well-being. Those who are conforming to external pressures to reinforce traditional gendered stereotypes will show fewer positive emotions and more negative emotions.

More specifically, the predicted relationship between sex-typing and well-being in this study is expected to be found only for people who were sex typed in a controlled way. Individuals who are autonomous, even those with sex-typical attributes, will be higher in overall psychological well-being than individuals high in controlled sex-typing. In addition, participants will complete a measure of general feelings of autonomy versus controlled motivation in their lives. It is predicted that people who generally feel less autonomous will also be more likely to report higher controlled sex-typing.

Method

Participants

Participants involved in this study were recruited via an online website called Amazon Mechanical Turk (www.mturk.com). Analysis conducted on the validity of this website infer that individuals who complete questionnaires and surveys on mTurk are no more biased than if the study had been conducted face to face (Berinsky, Huber, & Lenz, 2012). This demonstrates that the responses are fairly representative of the greater population, and seem to replicate established findings. Participants were volunteers who chose to take part in the study. They were informed

that they were free to withdraw from at any time. Compensation for taking part in the study was \$1.50.

Participants were only to be selected to take part in the study if they adhered to the following standards: (1) The individual was 18 years or older (2) Resided in North America and (3) Spoke English fluently. Demographic information was collected from each participant (see Appendix A). In all, 353 participants were part of the study of which 156 (45.24%) were female and 187 (53.6%) were male. The eldest was 87 years old and the youngest was 18 years old ($M=37.01$, $SD=11.88$). Participants were primarily Caucasian, resided in North America and had College or University as their education level. Of the participants 51 (14.74%) had the equivalent of a high school level education, 94 (27.17%) participants had some College/University, 152 (43.93%) had a College/University level education and 49 (14.16%) had a post graduate education. After participants had filled out the questionnaires they were provided with a debriefing form, and compensated for their time.

Measures

The measures used in this study were completed in the following order: a demographic questionnaire (Appendix A), a measure of actual, ideal and ought sex -typing (see Appendix B, C and D respectively), and a questionnaire asking the extent to which participants believe traits are typical of males or females (see Appendix E), a Personal Motivation questionnaire (see Appendix F), the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Appendix G) and the Multiple Affect Adjective Questionnaire Revised (Appendix H). The major measures for this study are described in more detail below.

Sex Typing. The attributes that were used in the sex typing questionnaires were developed partially based on an earlier sex-role inventory developed by Bem (1984). However,

items have since been added to explore additional dimensions that may have been overlooked in the earlier measure. These include attributes that may pertain to both masculinity as well as femininity. The inventory includes three questionnaires that instruct participants to rate their actual, ideal and ought selves using a 7 point Likert Scale with 32 descriptive traits. Examples of traits included are “*adventurous*”, “*polite*”, “*emotional*” and “*assertive*”. Participants rated each attribute along the Likert Scale, where 1 indicates not at all descriptive and 7 represents extremely descriptive. The questionnaire asking about the gender-typicality of the traits also used a 7 point Likert Scale with ‘extremely descriptive of males’ and ‘extremely descriptive of females’ as the end points. A factor analysis will be performed on the 32 attributes to confirm which attributes load onto the masculinity and femininity measures. Most important for the current study’s predictions are ought masculinity and femininity, which are felt to reflect expectations that others impose on you, and therefore the extent to which the sex-typing is “controlled” using terminology from Self-determination Theory. A factor analysis was conducted on masculinity and femininity items, and as a result the rotated analysis gave evidence that supported two masculinity factors, assertiveness and adventurous. The rotated analysis also gave evidence to support two femininity factors as well, social nurturance and emotionality. A correlation analysis suggested that the two masculine factors correlated highly with one another $r=.61$ while the two femininity measures did not correlate significantly with one another $r= -.08$, *ns*. Therefore, to simplify the analysis, the masculinity dimensions will be combined. The emotionality measure did not produce meaningful results so for the purposes of this thesis, only the social nurturance measure will be reported. Therefore, social nurturance will be used as our primary femininity measure.

Overall Self- Determination. Immediately following the sex typing measures participants completed The Personal Motivation Questionnaire which has been constructed to assess why people may do various things in their life, measuring their personal motivational styles and goal directed behaviour. Participants were asked to describe why they behave the way they do, and why they make the choices that they do by using a 7 point Likert Scale for 14 questions. The ratings are as follows: 1 indicating strongly disagree, and 7 being strongly agree. Some examples of statements include: “*Because I will face consequences if I don’t follow the norm*”, “*Because I like it*”, and “*Because I will feel ashamed of myself if I don’t*”. This measure is then used to indicate the extent to which a person’s behaviour is autonomous (reflecting their own values and wishes) or controlled (primarily because it is what others want). A factor analysis was conducted, in which the rotated version demonstrated two factors that loaded highly, one being autonomy while the other was control. The two factors did not significantly correlate $r=.10$, *ns*. Therefore, the two will be treated as separate measures.

Psychological well-being. Participants then completed two measures that were used to gain a sense of the participant’s overall psychological well-being. The Satisfaction of Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larson, & Griffin, 1985) consists of five global statements that allow participants to evaluate their lives according to their own internalized perceptions for life satisfaction. Participants rate each statement on a Likert Scale where they indicate their level of agreement with each item, with strongly agree and strongly disagree as endpoints. Example questions include: “*In most ways my life is close to my ideal*”, “*The conditions of my life are excellent*”, and “*I am satisfied with my life*”. The final score is calculated by adding up the rating given to each item. Research has demonstrated that this scale shows strong internal validity and moderate temporal validity (Pavot & Diener, 1993). Cronbach’s alpha is $\alpha = .87$, and the test-

retrest coefficient for two months later is $a=.82$. Diener and Pavot (1993) also conclude that this scale demonstrates adequate convergent validity as it correlates well with other measures of well-being and negatively correlates with measures of depression and anxiety.

For a second way to examine well-being, participants also completed The Multiple Affect Adjective Questionnaire- Revised (Zuckerman & Lubin, 1965), which measures an individual's emotional state. Participants used a 7 point Likert Scale with 0 being 'almost never' and 7 being 'almost always' to indicate how often they experienced the 14 emotions listed. Emotions that were used include: "*Afraid*", "*Tense*", "*Shame*" and "*Calm*". All responses were added together, with positive emotion items reversed, to come up with an overall negative emotion score. If correlations with the psychological well-being measure are very high, an overall well-being measure will be computed combining the two measures. A factor analysis was conducted on both psychological well-being and mood. However, these two measures were not significantly correlated with each other, and will therefore be used as independent measures.

Procedure

This research was conducted online using Survey Monkey and mTurk. Participants were recruited using mTurk and were provided a link that took them to another website called Survey Monkey. All eight questionnaires had been previously uploaded onto Survey Monkey by the researchers. A recruitment poster was made available through Survey Monkey where participants were able to obtain a description of the current study and what to do if they would like to actively participate. Only participants who met the requirements for the study (North American, age 18 or older, and who spoke English as their primary language) were allowed to continue. Participants of interest were asked if they would like to take part in the study by giving their consent by clicking a button at the bottom of the screen. Participants were instructed that all

information provided would be kept confidential. Participants were also asked to fill out a form asking their age, gender, ethnicity and education level (see Appendix A). The eight questionnaires were then presented one after the other in the following order: the measures of actual, ideal, and ought masculinity and femininity, gender typicality, the Personal Motivation Questionnaire, The Satisfaction of Life Scale and then the Multiple Affect Adjective Questionnaire- Revised. It was necessary for participants to complete the current questionnaire before moving on to the next one, although this could mean leaving some or all of the questions unanswered. When participants completed the questionnaires they were presented a debriefing form that explained the purpose and nature of the study along with external resources they could utilize if they wanted to know more about the study. Participants were then paid \$1.50 through mTurk for their participation and it took them approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Results

Testing Self-Determination Theory Predictions

General Autonomy and Control

With respect to testing Self-Determination Theory, linear regression analyses were conducted using autonomy as the predictor variable and overall well-being and negative mood as criterion variables. It was found that autonomy significantly predicted overall well-being ($\beta(299) = .23, p < .01$), and negative mood ($\beta(292) = -.15, p < .01$). Linear regression analyses were conducted where control was the predictor variable and overall well-being and negative mood were the criterion variables. This relationship was not significant for well-being, but was significant for negative mood ($\beta(291) = .26, p < .001$). Multiple regression analyses with autonomy and control entered together predicting well-being again found only autonomy to be significant and for negative mood, both autonomy and control were significant. This suggests

clear support for SDT, which suggests autonomy to be a basic human need. Interestingly, the control measure predicted negative mood only, and did so independent of autonomy.

Autonomous and Controlled Attributes

To test whether there is a fundamental difference between autonomous attributes and controlled attributes the “Ideal” and the “Ought” measures were entered together as predictors in multiple regression analyses for our masculinity attributes as well as our femininity attributes for the entire sample (see the left column of Table 1). This was done based on predictions from Self Determination Theory, with autonomous being completely independent behaviour, and controlled being completely extrinsically motivated behaviour. When entered into the regression analysis simultaneously, the Ideal measure would reflect a person wanting to possess those attributes independent of what others expect, and the Ought measure would indicate what others expect independent of the person’s own wishes. This would indicate autonomous and controlled attributes, respectively.

For masculine attributes the Ideal and Ought measures were not found to be significant when predicting mood, meaning that neither measure predicts mood independently. Predicting well-being, in comparison, only those who possess masculinity attributes because they ought to were significantly higher in well-being, $\beta(292) = .14, p < .05$, contrary to what was predicted. This significant effect remained when either general autonomy or control were also entered as predictors, suggesting that this is due to something about these attributes themselves, not because of them being autonomous or controlled.

With respect to femininity, Ideal femininity was marginally significant predicting well-being ($\beta(286) = -.12, p < .10$) and is significant predicting less negative mood ($\beta(286) = -1.5, p < 0.5$). When the general autonomy measure is also entered as a predictor, Ideal

femininity is no longer significant, and, only autonomy remained as a significant predictor $\beta(134) = .30, p < .01$ for well-being, and $\beta(130) = -.24, p < .01$ for mood. This is consistent with the idea that the Ideal measure, independent of the Ought, reflects personal values, and that it is this autonomy that predicts better well-being.

Gender and Autonomous/Controlled Attributes

To test the role of autonomous and controlled gender typing, the regression analyses described above for masculine and feminine attributes were repeated separately for men and women (see the middle and right columns of Table 1). For our masculinity measure, women who felt as though they were pressured to possess masculine traits were higher in well-being ($\beta(136) = .24, p < .05$), but the Ideal masculinity measure was not significant. Neither predictor was found to be significant for men. Also, for negative mood none of the predictors were significant. Also, the significant effect for Ought masculinity for women remains significant when autonomy is included as a predictor, ($\beta(135) = .22, p < .05$).

Women who displayed feminine traits because that's who they are (Ideal) were higher in overall well-being ($\beta(135) = .21, p < .05$), whereas the Ought measure was not significant. For men, neither the Ideal or Ought femininity measures were significant predictors of well-being. This pattern was the same with negative mood as the predictor, with the only significant finding being the Ideal measure being significant for women ($\beta(131) = -.21, p < .05$). For both well-being and mood, when autonomy was added as a predictor the Ideal measure was no longer significant, and only autonomy remained as a significant predictor ($\beta(134) = .30, p < .01$) for well-being, and ($\beta(130) = -.24, p < .01$) for mood. These statistics can be viewed in Table 1.

Actual Masculinity and Femininity

Although not part of the main hypotheses for this study, analyses were also done examining the degree to which people actually report possessing stereotypic masculine and feminine attributes as predictors of mood and well-being. Table 2 presents these results. Possessing either types of attributes predicted better well-being and less negative mood. This is not surprising since both are positive attributes, but it is interesting that there are not strong sex differences.

Table 1: Regression Analyses Predicting Well-Being and Mood from Ideal and Ought Masculinity and Femininity Measures, Entered Simultaneously.

Well-being			
	<u>Entire Sample</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
Masculine Ideal	<i>n.s</i>	<i>n.s</i>	<i>n.s</i>
Masculine Ought	$\beta(292) = .14, p < .05$	<i>n.s</i>	$\beta(136) = .24, p < .05$
Feminine Ideal	$\beta(286) = -.12, p < .10$	<i>n.s</i>	$\beta(135) = .21, p < .05$
Feminine Ought	<i>n.s</i>	<i>n.s</i>	<i>n.s</i>
Mood			
	<u>Entire Sample</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
Masculine Ideal	<i>n.s</i>	<i>n.s</i>	<i>n.s</i>
Masculine Ought	<i>n.s</i>	<i>n.s</i>	<i>n.s</i>
Feminine Ideal	$\beta(286) = -.15, p < .05$	<i>n.s</i>	$\beta(131) = -.21, p < .05$
Feminine Ought	<i>n.s</i>	<i>n.s</i>	<i>n.s</i>

Table 2: Regression Analyses Predicting Well-Being and Mood from Actual Masculinity and Femininity

Well—being			
	<u>Entire Sample</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
Masculine Actual	$\beta(299) = .24, p < .001$	$\beta(299) = .33, p < .001$	$\beta(299) = .20, p < .05$
Feminine Actual	$\beta(298) = .29, P < .001$	$\beta(156) = .24, p < .01$	$\beta(138) = .33, p < .001$
Mood			
	<u>Entire Sample</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
Masculine Actual	$\beta(291) = -.18, p < .01$	$\beta(153) = -.25, p < .01$	<i>n.s.</i>
Feminine Actual	$\beta(290) = -.30, P < .001$	$\beta(152) = -.28, p < .001$	$\beta(134) = .33, p < .001$

Discussion

The present study set out to examine sex typing and Self-Determination Theory as they relate to psychological well-being. A major prediction from SDT is that autonomous motivation is associated with better psychological well-being, and controlled motivation with worse well-being. Extending this to sex-typing, it was hypothesized that extrinsic reasons for conforming to sex-stereotypic attributes would be associated with lower well-being.

Self-Determination Theory and Psychological Well-Being

With respect to testing Self-Determination Theory directly, results showed clear support for Deci & Ryan's (2000) theory. Overall autonomy was shown to significantly predict psychological well-being, and less negative mood. Likewise, the overall controlled behaviour measure significantly predicted more negative mood. This finding suggests that to be intrinsically motivated and autonomous in our decisions is psychologically healthier and more satisfying. This is consistent with the proposal from SDT that autonomy is a fundamental human need. Interestingly, controlled motivation significantly predicted negative mood but not psychological well-being. This finding may indicate that there is more complexity to Ryan & Deci's theory since the autonomy and control variables were not strongly negatively correlated, and may differ in how they affect people.

Autonomous and Controlled Sex Typing

The hypothesis that individuals who are sex typed in a controlled way (possessing sex typical traits based on external pressures to conform) will be lower in psychological well-being was not supported. The only significant finding involving the controlled motivation measures was that individuals who felt pressured to possess masculine traits, reflecting their Ought self, were significantly higher in psychological well-being. When analyzed separately for men and

women, it is only significant for women. This effect remained constant even when entering autonomy and control as predictors, suggesting that this relationship remains significant due to the attributes themselves, not because of extrinsic or intrinsic motivational pressures.

This finding was contrary to the first hypothesis. Although this finding was not expected, it may be interpretable in terms of culture. This finding may demonstrate a cultural shift that is occurring whereby females are more motivated and respected if they possess traits associated with masculinity because they are traits that our society has come to value. For example, women are more likely to want to be financially independent now, and therefore attributes such as independence and assertiveness may be needed to attain this. Burnett, Anderson & Heppner (1995) examined masculinity and femininity and the social pressures for each. Results suggested that there was stronger pressure for individuals to possess masculine than feminine characteristics. This suggests that a “masculine” environment is now dominant, however, more and more females are embodying masculine traits to adapt to our culture. Evidence for this cultural change also comes from a meta-analysis by Twenge (1997) who showed that women’s masculinity scores increased significantly between 1974 and 1997.

This cultural change may place women who are low in masculinity at particular risk for low self-esteem and psychological well-being. The fact that it is women who feel they are expected to have masculine attributes who are higher in self-esteem may reflect evolving family dynamics and structure. Perhaps these women were taught equality from a young age and so they have just been accustomed to the beliefs and stereotypes that their families have engrained in them. It is surprising, however, that this finding is independent of their own Ideals, suggesting that women who are expected to be higher in masculine attributes that is not what they wish for

themselves are highest in well-being. Maybe in this case the expectations are seen to be more social support rather than social pressure.

The other major significant finding was that females specifically, who possessed sex typed (feminine) attributes because it was reflecting their ideal version of who they are, had significantly higher psychological well-being. Interestingly, this relationship was mediated by autonomy. This finding supports the second hypothesis that individuals who are autonomous and sex typed will be higher in psychological well-being because they are reflecting their own personal ideals. This finding could also reflect a cultural shift happening, whereby females may internalize these sex stereotypic attributes as integral to who they are as a person, rather than because it is expected of them. Some women may intrinsically accept certain feminine attributes to characterize their personality, because it is a part of who they are, and this is associated with positive well-being. This is also consistent with Ryan and Deci's argument for the importance of autonomy.

There were no significant effects found for men on any of the Ideal or Ought measures. This could be suggesting that in our culture pressures to conform to stereotypic traits are more obvious for females. It could be possible that males don't necessarily internalize this pressure the same way that women do, and as a result are less influenced to possess sex typed traits. Women may receive more messages about what is expected of them, and are also possibly more sensitive to what others expect of them. The cumulative impact of media messages and expectations communicated by family and friends can contribute to females internalizing their sex typical attributes more than men. Both men and women who feel they actually possess masculine attributes and feminine attributes, were higher in well being (Table 2), so the difference described above is seen in motivation related to these attributes, not in actually possessing them.

Limitations

The first limitation of the present study is that it was correlational. Although there were some significant correlations found, it is difficult to make causal assumptions about these relationships. Autonomy and psychological well-being were significantly related but it cannot be said that one led to the other occurring without an experimental study. Likewise, Ought masculinity was found to predict psychological well-being in females but it cannot be said that feeling pressure to possess masculine traits leads individuals to be more satisfied. The same can be true for females who possess feminine attributes because it reflects their ideal self.

There could also be issues raised because the study was conducted online. It is difficult to determine if the sample of participants was representative of the general population. Although there has been some research demonstrating reliability of research recruiting from the mTurk website (Berinsky, Huber, & Lenz, 2012), the current study would have excluded individuals without access to the internet and therefore probably of a lower SES status as well. This study also revealed that the majority of participants had a university and college level of education. This may imply that our sample was a more educated sample and may not represent all different education backgrounds respectively. Furthermore, participants in the study may have given socially desirable answers or may have not given much thought to their answers.

Limitations can also be evident in the demographic information where this study was restricted to participants who only resided in North America. Although this sample may give a representation of how individuals in this Western culture view sex typing and human motivation, the results would not be generalizable to other cultures, especially cultures that may have different gender roles and traits.

Practical Implications

The results of this study supports the argument from SDT that autonomy is indispensable for our prosperity and happiness at the individual level. This research has also been beneficial in exploring gender stereotypes. These issues may be useful in a clinical and counselling context. The importance of autonomy for succesful therapy has been discussed since Rogers (1961) suggested that the exercise of autonomy is closely tied to what it means to be a fully functioning human being, and incorporated this into his client centered therapy. The present study adds gender-related issues as a speciific concern that therapists may sometimes find affecting their clients well-being. For example, results of this study suggest that a woman who has not been encouraged to express “masculine” attributes such as assertiveness will be lower in well-being, and similarly a woman who has not internalized feminine attributes as part of her ideal self will as well. A therapist who is knowledgeable in both the consequences and benefits of sex typical norms will be more likely to enhance their client’s understanding of who they are as a person strengthening their quality of life and personal autonomy.

Future Research

Future research and analyses should focus on specific demographic information more precisely, such as age and cultural differences. The current study included individuals who were 18-87 years old, with a mean age of 37. It would be interesting to investigate if age would impact the results. Different age cohorts may perceive sex stereotyped attributes differently, along with motivational styles associated with them. This could allow for preliminary examination of the speculation about changes in our culture discussed previously.

Future research could also explore different cultures. The current study utilized a North American sample only, and it is plausible that sex-typed attributes differ culturally, as well as the pressure to conform to them.

Although this data looked at the Ideal self and the Ought self to study gender-related motivation, it could be useful for later analyses to focus on the discrepancies between the actual self, ideal self and ought self for both masculine and feminine traits in relation to psychological well-being and Self-Determination Theory. Future research could also look more carefully at specific attributes that may be most important for well-being, it might be interesting to try adding different attributes that might be thought to differ for men and women, and possibly add behaviours as well.

Final Conclusion

In conclusion, the present study investigated the role of sex typing and psychological well-being from the perspective of Self-Determination Theory. It was found that individuals, and primarily women, who displayed masculine traits because they felt pressured to possess them were higher in psychological well-being. Also, women who felt autonomous in wishing to possess sex typical feminine attributes had higher psychological well-being. This relationship was mediated by autonomy. These findings may reflect a cultural shift occurring whereby it has become more socially acceptable, and is maybe even encouraged, for women to possess masculine traits, while perhaps still often being free to want feminine attributes as well. There was support for the need of autonomy in our decision making processes. Behaving in a way where the individual is intrinsically motivated appears to provide beneficial outcomes and gratification in many areas of our life, and this study suggests the importance of considering the role of cultural expectations as an influence on this.

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Appendix A

Participant Demographic Information

Please describe yourself by answering the following questions. Your responses will NOT be used to identify individuals or their responses, but only to describe the characteristics of the sample as a whole.

1. Gender: _____
2. Ethnicity: _____
3. Age: _____
4. Educational level achieved to date (check the highest level attained):
 - Less than High School
 - High School or equivalent diploma
 - Some College/University
 - College/University Degree
 - Post Graduate Degree

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND PARTICIPATION!

Appendix B

Characteristics That You Possess

Please indicate how descriptive each characteristic is of you using a number from the following scale:

Not at all Descriptive	1	2	3	4	5	6	Extremely Descriptive	7
Accepting				_____			Flighty	_____
Adventurous				_____			Forceful	_____
Ambitious				_____			Friendly	_____
Analytical				_____			Gentle	_____
Assertive				_____			Logical	_____
Bold				_____			Moody	_____
Caring				_____			Naïve	_____
Co-operative				_____			Nurturing	_____
Competitive				_____			Objective	_____
Concrete-thinking				_____			Perfectionist	_____
Controlling				_____			Polite	_____
Daring				_____			Risk-taker	_____
Dominant				_____			Social	_____
Driven				_____			Suspicious	_____
Emotional				_____			Trusting	_____
Empathetic				_____			Worried	_____

Appendix C

Characteristics That You Would Like to Possess

Please indicate how descriptive each characteristic is of you using a number from the following scale:

Not at all Descriptive	1	2	3	4	5	6	Extremely Descriptive	7
Accepting				_____			Flighty	_____
Adventurous				_____			Forceful	_____
Ambitious				_____			Friendly	_____
Analytical				_____			Gentle	_____
Assertive				_____			Logical	_____
Bold				_____			Moody	_____
Caring				_____			Naïve	_____
Co-operative				_____			Nurturing	_____
Competitive				_____			Objective	_____
Concrete-thinking				_____			Perfectionist	_____
Controlling				_____			Polite	_____
Daring				_____			Risk-taker	_____
Dominant				_____			Social	_____
Driven				_____			Suspicious	_____
Emotional				_____			Trusting	_____
Empathetic				_____			Worried	_____

Appendix D

Characteristics That Others Expect You to Possess

Please indicate how descriptive each characteristic is of you using a number from the following scale:

Not at all Descriptive 1	2	3	4	5	6	Extremely Descriptive 7	
Accepting			_____			Flighty	_____
Adventurous			_____			Forceful	_____
Ambitious			_____			Friendly	_____
Analytical			_____			Gentle	_____
Assertive			_____			Logical	_____
Bold			_____			Moody	_____
Caring			_____			Naïve	_____
Co-operative			_____			Nurturing	_____
Competitive			_____			Objective	_____
Concrete-thinking			_____			Perfectionist	_____
Controlling			_____			Polite	_____
Daring			_____			Risk-taker	_____
Dominant			_____			Social	_____
Driven			_____			Suspicious	_____
Emotional			_____			Trusting	_____
Empathetic			_____			Worried	_____

Appendix E

For each of the following traits please indicate which gender you think they are typical of and to what extent.

Extremely Descriptive of MALES		Equally Descriptive of Males and Females			Extremely Descriptive of FEMALES	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Accepting			_____	Flighty		_____
Adventurous			_____	Forceful		_____
Ambitious			_____	Friendly		_____
Analytical			_____	Gentle		_____
Assertive			_____	Logical		_____
Bold			_____	Moody		_____
Caring			_____	Naïve		_____
Co-operative			_____	Nurturing		_____
Competitive			_____	Objective		_____
Concrete-thinking			_____	Perfectionist		_____
Controlling			_____	Polite		_____
Daring			_____	Risk-taker		_____
Dominant			_____	Social		_____
Driven			_____	Suspicious		_____
Emotional			_____	Trusting		_____
Empathetic			_____	Worried		_____

Appendix F

Personal Motivation Questionnaire

*Below are some descriptions of reasons as to why people may do various things in their life. Generally thinking across many domains how often would you say each of these describes why you behave the way you do? Or why you make the choices you do? Please use the Likert scale below each question to indicate whether you agree or disagree, with (1) being strongly disagree, and (7) being strongly agree:

1. Because I will face consequences if I don't follow the norm

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. Because I want to understand myself

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. Because I like it

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. Because that is what I'm supposed to do

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. Because I will feel ashamed of myself if I don't

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. Because I want to learn new things about myself

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7. I do things so that my family/friends won't judge me

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8. Because I will feel bad about myself if I don't make that choice

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

9. To find out if I'm right or wrong

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

10. Because that is what society expects from me

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

11. Because I want other people to think I am normal

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

12. Because I think it's important to

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

13. So others won't see me as different

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

14. Because I want people to like me

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Appendix G

Satisfaction With Life Scale

Below are five statements that you may agree or disagree with. Using the 1 - 7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number on the line preceding that item. Please be open and honest in your responding.

- 7 - Strongly agree
- 6 - Agree
- 5 - Slightly agree
- 4 - Neither agree nor disagree
- 3 - Slightly disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 1 - Strongly disagree

____ In most ways my life is close to my ideal.

____ The conditions of my life are excellent.

____ I am satisfied with my life.

____ So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.

____ If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.

Appendix H

Multiple Affect Adjective Questionnaire- Revised

On the scale provided, please indicate how often you experience the emotions listed below:

1. Dissatisfied

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
almost never							almost always

2. Afraid

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
almost never							almost always

3. Happy

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
almost never							almost always

4. Tense

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
almost never							almost always

5. Shame

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
almost never							almost always

6. Unhappy

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
almost never							almost always

7. Calm

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
almost never							almost always

8. Panicky

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
almost never almost always

9. Pleasant

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
almost never almost always

10. Worrying

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
almost never almost always

11. Sad

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
almost never almost always

12. Nervous

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
almost never almost always

13. Joyful

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
almost never almost always

14. Hopeless

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
almost never almost always