# MASCULINITY, HARDINESS, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING IN MALE STUDENT VETERANS

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by

# GREGORY CLIFFORD ALFRED

Glenn E. Good, Ph.D., and Roger L. Worthington, Dissertation Supervisors

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# The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the dissertation entitled

# MASCULINITY, HARDINESS, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

# IN MALE STUDENT VETERANS

presented by Gregory C. Alfred a candidate for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

Glenn E. Good, Ph.D. Co-Advisor
Roger L. Worthington, Ph.D. Co-Advisor
Jeni Hart, Ph.D., External Member
Joe Johnston, Ph.D.

Alex Waigandt, Ph.D.

I want to first thank God, without whom this work would not be possible.

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I dedicate this to the memory of my grandparents, MAJ(Ret.) Robert and Anna Belle Williams, and Richard and Lorraine Alfred and my extended families, the Williams, the Alfreds, the Bushrods, and the Bushes for their love, support and well-wishes. I am grateful to my parents, LTC(Ret.) Dirett and Valarie Alfred, who taught me to lead by example and believe in myself. I appreciate the sacrifice, support, and love you've given me through the years. And thank you to my brother and best friend, Jerald R. Alfred, for keeping me laughing when I got too serious.

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#### **ABSTRACT**

American colleges are experiencing a surge of veterans and active-duty students who attend school at least part time. Little research exists on positive characteristics which facilitate their academic attainment. This study seeks to understand how conformity to traditional masculine norms and psychological hardiness affect the psychological well being of male student-veterans in higher education. One-hundred and seventeen college-attending veterans and active-duty service members completed an Internet survey including the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory, Psychological Well-Being Scales, and the Dispositional Resilience Scale-30. Conformity to masculine norms was found to be negatively associated with psychological well being, but hardiness fully mediated the relation between masculinity and psychological well being. Implications for research and practice with male student-veterans were addressed.

#### **CHAPTER I**

#### Introduction

This chapter provides a review of the literature related to relations between masculinity, hardiness, and psychological well being. The first section of this chapter provides an overview of student-veterans in U.S. higher education. It will also provide a unique description of masculinity and masculine socialization as observed in the military. The second section provides definitions of masculinity, hardiness, and psychological well being as they relate to each other in the scholarly literature. The third section provides a rationale for this study. The hypothesis that hardiness may mediate the relations between masculinity and psychological well being is also discussed, with the associated mediational model also being presented.

# **Student Veterans in U.S. Higher Education**

To date over 2 million soldiers have served in support of the Global War on Terror and other operations. Many of these personnel decide to join the military for educational benefits (Griffith, 2008; Kleykamp, 2006). As of 31 May 2011, over 2.5 million have separated from the service since their return home (U.S. Senate, 2011), with trends from previous wars indicating that many of these personnel will use their benefits to pursue higher education. Many of today's servicemen look towards higher education as a means to begin new careers, or enhance their promotion and career opportunities in the military (Covert, 2002). Studies have shown soldiers often choose to leave the military because job requirements hamper their educational attainment (Covert, 2002; Hummel, 2000). As a result, colleges and universities are seeing a surge in the number of veterans and active-duty personnel who are attending college at least part time. In

addition, recent improvements in educational benefits will likely lead to increased numbers of current and former military personnel in college.

The expected influx of veterans requires colleges and universities to prepare for their homecoming much differently than in previous wars. Following World War II and the Vietnam War, relatively little attention was given to the unique needs and characteristics of former service members returning to college (DiRamio, Ackerman, & Mitchell, 2008). However, recent literature has begun addressing the unique ways in which the military socializes and trains its members (Ehrenreich, 1997; Grossman, 1995). Nonetheless, limited literature describes veterans' transition out of the service and into civilian life. Only recently has attention shifted to reintegrating veterans into higher education (e.g., Alvarez, 2008; Porter, 2008; Rumann & Hamrick, 2010), and their challenges are coming to light. In addition to the lack of structure inherent to civilian life, veterans may experience difficulty securing the jobs, housing, and health benefits the military previously provided. Service-connected injuries, such as loss of limbs, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and traumatic brain injuries (TBI) may add additional stressors and challenges (Black, Westwood, & Sorsdal, 2007; Bowling & Sherman, 2008; Hoover, 2011). Any and all of these obstacles can hinder veterans' attainment of their educational objectives.

The original GI Bill, passed in 1944, enabled over 2 million veterans to reintegrate into civilian life and receive an education following their military service (Alvarez, 2008; Myers, 1990). As with previous conflicts in WWII, Korea and Vietnam, combat operations in Southwest Asia will likely correspond with more veterans enrolling in school once they return home from the war (DiRamio, Ackerman, & Mitchell, 2008).

A large percentage of these veterans are college-age men aged 18-34 who joined the military for educational benefits (Griffin, 2008; Kleykamp, 2006; Myers, 1990). Veterans consider higher education as a means to begin new careers, or enhance their promotion and career opportunities in the military (Covert, 2002). In addition, lack of job opportunities, non-transferable military skills, and difficult financial times means military veterans have limited employment opportunities in the civilian sector, leading more to pursue post-secondary and vocational training (De Aenelle, 2009). As a result, colleges and universities are beginning to see a surge in the number of veterans and active-duty personnel who are attending college at least part time.

Soldiers often use the military educational benefits as part of a plan to achieve their educational goals. Further, attaining advanced training and education are hypothesized to heavily influence many high school students' initial decision to enlist (Bachman, Segal, Freedman-Doan, & O'Malley, 2000; Kleykamp, 2006). Education has also shown to be a key to veterans' occupational attainment after they leave the military (Cohen, Segal, & Temme, 1992). Although many veterans desire to pursue higher education, often they do not have the fiscal means. Since the 1990s, tuition costs have risen at a pace faster than personal income. In addition, decreases in financial aid and scholarships have influenced students to take on more debt to finish school. The military's GI Bill provides financial means in exchange for soldiers' service, along with technical training and practical experience that might be helpful in civilian life.

Many soldiers enlist because they initially lacked interest in college, were bored with school, had poor test scores, or did not want to enter the civilian workforce. Yet others procrastinate during the college application process and cannot get into schools

due to missed admissions deadlines (Alvarez, 2008; Bachman, Segal, Freedman-Doan, & O'Malley, 2000). Regardless of their pre-service situations or attitudes towards college, what is clear is that many soldiers choose to pursue higher education during and after the military. Among the reasons they cite for increased promotion opportunities in the civilian sector, general love of learning, and an enhanced sense of self-efficacy (Covert, 2002; Maclean, 2008).

Many soldiers cite the stress and danger of multiple deployments as factors in their decision to leave the service, with the decision to separate from the service life becoming more common. It has been suggested that this transition from the armed forces to military life could be viewed as a sort of cross-cultural transition (Black, Westwood, and Sorsdal, 2007; J.L. Hart, personal communication, 27 February 2009; Rumann, Rivera, & Hernandez, 2011). Unfortunately, there is a dearth of empirical literature regarding the experiences of veterans in higher education (Chancellor's Task Force for a Veteran-Friendly Campus, 2007; Hermann, Raybeck, & Wilson, 2008). The bulk of existing literature consists of information based on veterans entering college after WWII (cf. Bauer, 1947; Donahue, 1946; Shaw, 1947; Wilkinson, 1949). Currently there are over 450,000 veterans using military educational benefits, and over 270,000 using the new 9/11 GI Bill (Sewall, 2010). Of those, 40% attend community colleges, and 40% attend traditional four-year institutions (Alvarez, 2008). Veterans often have difficulty getting into colleges related to financial concerns. The GI Bill has not kept up with the constantly rising cost of college, even at community colleges or state schools (Myers, 1990). Many veterans must still find full or part-time employment to pay their remaining educational expenses and take care of their families.

Financial problems notwithstanding, many other obstacles hinder veterans' educational pursuits. For instance, many soldiers entered the military right out of high school, and were told what to wear and where to live during their entire enlistment. As a result many vets find it difficult to live independently without structure (Fisher, 2008). They may also experience PTSD or TBI, which affects sleep and concentration, thus hindering their academic performance. Their past military experience may influence them to distrust of authority, impacting the way they interact with administrators and professors. Married veterans may experience difficulty securing housing and employment for their families. And they may also experience other physical and psychological problems, such as substance abuse, intimacy problems, depression, and grief/loss related to combat (Black, Westwood, & Sorsdal, 2007; Huebner, 2008). They may also experience rejection, suspicion, hostility or isolation from faculty and students due to their military service (Rumann et al., 2011). Thus, veterans often find themselves unable or unwilling to relate to civilian collegiate peers in meaningful ways, leading to a culture gap between the two groups (Bachman, Freedman-Doan, Segal, and O'Malley, 2000). Veterans may face difficulties balancing multiple roles as veteran, parent, spouse, student, employee, or breadwinner, and therefore may experience emotional and physical distress, in addition to premature withdrawal from school (Gray, 2007). They may question whether they fit in, especially if they are significantly older than their peers. These obstacles are often compounded by colleges' lack of preparedness to deal with their unique emotional, social, financial, and academic needs (Associated Press, 2008; Chancellor's Task Force for a Veteran-Friendly Campus, 2007; Hermann, 2008).

Nevertheless, veterans are a welcome presence on many campuses (Chancellor's Task Force for a Veteran-Friendly Campus, 2007; Fisher, 2008). They are perceived to have life experience and unique qualities their younger classroom peers lack (Black et al.,, 2007). These traits include maturity, an understanding of cultural differences, and practical experience which enables them to provide rich contributions to academic discussions (Alvarez, 2008; Porter, 2008). In addition, veterans are often perceived as having clearer goals, a sense of responsibility, and higher commitment to their education than younger peers (Donahue & Tibbits, 1946; Myers, 1990).

As stated earlier, one of the reasons veterans seek higher education is because doing so helps provide a bridge into civilian life. As one veteran described his experience, "The Marines come first, and the mission comes first, but [my education] is going to be the stepping stone for the rest of [my] life" (Porter, 2008). With this perspective in mind, it seems necessary to describe the military environment that soldiers leave behind when they separate from the military service and go to college. Understanding their military backgrounds may help underscore the way in which soldiers approach college and civilian life.

# **Military Service**

As of September 30, 2010, there were 1.4 million soldiers on active duty and 1.1 million soldiers in the various reserve components of the United States armed forces, for a combined total of 2.5 million personnel (Department of Defense, 2011a; 2011b). There are myriad reasons people choose to join the military. Among these reasons are: a sense of patriotism and duty, social and economic advancement, a lack of other viable employment options, and as means to achieve personal and educational goals. In

addition, prospective soldiers are often told that military service helps instill discipline, pride, confidence, and will help them become men (Eisenhart, 1998). Regardless of the motivation for joining, military service is undoubtedly life-changing (Elder, Gimbel, & Ivie, 1991). Black and colleagues (2007) describe it as "a one-way door to a different way of being. Once you go in, you can never go back to the way you were before" (p. 5).

However, joining the military is a mutual decision. Prospective soldiers decide to join, but only after a rigorous legal, mental, and physical screening process will the military allow them to begin basic military training. Basic training, often called "boot camp," has been acknowledged as the cornerstone of battlefield performance (Drea, 1998). The goals of basic training are: (1) humble recruits, highlight their shortcomings, and make them conform to the requisite standards, norms, and behaviors of service; (2) teach the specialized knowledge, skills, and values needed to perform his military specialty, including the ability to kill when necessary; and (3) put them through harsh and challenging training scenarios to enhance courage, teamwork, intelligence and imperviousness to physical discomfort (Cockerham, 1998; Grossman, 1995; Jolly, 1996). To accomplish these tasks, the military seeks to strip trainees of their unique civilian identities so they can be rebuilt to the military standard (Harrison, 2003).

Most of the instruction given during boot camp is taught using behavior modification and Pavlov's psychological conditioning techniques (Eisenhart, 1998; Grossman, 1995; Jolly, 1996). Soldiers are taught a task and required to perform it repeatedly until it is done properly, all the while receiving verbal feedback and either punishment (e.g., pushups, peer pressure, retraining, failure to graduate) or rewards (e.g., increased privileges, promotion, awards) based on their performance. The culture shock

and the extreme emotional, physical, and intellectual demands placed on trainees during training can be traumatic. In fact, many basic trainees often fail to complete their initial training due to low stress tolerance, poor adjustment, or behavioral problems (Carbone, Cigrang, Todd, & Fiedler, 1999; Cigrang, 2003).

Officers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs) are responsible for designing training; providing instruction and evaluation; and monitoring soldiers' health, safety, fitness, and discipline at every level of the military. In small military units, organizations generally consisting of 200 or fewer soldiers, leaders serve as mentors and surrogate parents for their subordinates (Arkin & Dobrofsky, 1978; Drea, 1998). Just as parents provide young children with life lessons, small unit leaders teach values, tasks and norms expected of each soldier. Many of these ideals involve masculine norms unique to the military.

### **Military Masculinity**

The past four decades have seen a surge in the literature on gender socialization and its potential impact on girls, women, boys, men, and society. However, scholars have only begun examining gender socialization in the military during the past decade (Hearn, 2003; Higate, 2001, 2003a). Although the body of military masculinity literature is growing (c.f. Higate, 2003a), no quantitative studies currently exist that measure the level of endorsement of Western masculine norms in a military or veteran population. The following section provides an overview of the literature involving military masculinity as it pertains to psychological processes.

Eisenhart (1998) postulated that combat training has three implicit and interlocking components: (1) acceptance of psychological control, (2) the equation of

masculine identity with positive military performance, and (3) the equation of the military's mission with raw aggression. That is, as trainees are molded into soldiers, the psychological control exerted by their superiors also allows their conception of masculinity to be shaped. In other words, many of the strongest tenants of traditional North American masculinity are taught and reinforced during military training. For example, among the masculine themes inculcated during military training is that of dominance: superiors dominate the trainees; successful soldiers dominate the enemy (or lose their lives); and trainees must dominate their fears and weaknesses to earn the right to become soldiers (Ehrenreich, 1997; Rueb, Erskine, & Foti, 2008; Woodward, 2003). Recruits who cannot "hack it," meaning perform and behave according to the masculine military norms, become the target of violence and derision (Eisenhart, 1998).

The psychological control and structure necessary for successful training increases soldiers' susceptibility to implicit masculine norms passed down from their superiors and peers. In addition, most soldiers have limited ability to experiment with alternative ideas and values during their first few years in the service. The military intentionally limits these opportunities because it places a high premium on obedience, common values, and conformity (Glover, 1984). This fact together with the military's general success at socialization, suggests that initial entry trainees are likely to accept whatever values and norms they were taught during basic training, values that are reinforced once they get to their duty stations and subsequent assignments. While many masculine norms are beneficial to military service, such as courage, grit, and perseverance, soldiers may not be familiar with the psychological costs for incorporating

and enacting an emotionally-stunted conception of masculinity (Mahalik, Talmadge, Locke, & Scott, 2005).

The media often portrays the military as a monolithic group of people who are universally tough, stoic, and aggressive. Although military training transmits such masculine values, multiple masculinities exist within the military (Higate, 2003b). The magnitude of endorsement of those values often depends on soldiers' military occupational specialty (MOS). For example, soldiers in combat specialties like infantry (foot soldiers) and artillery (cannon and rocket soldiers) endorse the warrior ideals of physical fitness, aggressiveness, mental toughness, and violence. Other soldiers in supply or personnel administration specialties may view planning, organization, and efficiency as hallmarks of performance. Both groups of soldiers aspire to traits that can be associated with masculinity. However, within the structure of the military, most soldiers to perceive the infantry soldier as higher in masculinity than the personnel soldier because office work is perceived as a more feminized role (Higate, 2003b).

In *The Forty-Nine Percent Majority*, David and Brannon (1976) defined four traditionally masculine roles espoused by American and Western men. They are: "No Sissy Stuff," which involves the stigmatization of anything feminine; "The Big Wheel," involving the pursuit of status, respect, and success; "Give 'Em Hell," describing the ability to project aggression and ability to inflict violence; and important to this work, "The Sturdy Oak," which describes a courageous, confident, stoic, and tough man. It is widely acknowledged in the masculinity literature that men are taught from an early age to hide weakness and to appear invulnerable (Balswick & Peek, 1976). Projecting invulnerability and displaying certain emotions like as anger and rage are encouraged

because they are characteristics of the "masculine warrior ideal." This ideal involves being among other things, "disciplined... [and] physically and mentally tough" (Department of the Army, 2006, p. 4-10). Many of these traits are subsumed by the gender role of "The Sturdy Oak," described as manliness, physical courage, confidence, and toughness (David & Brannon, 1976). Men who ascribe to this role desire to be seen as competent, self-reliant, and calm in stressful situations. These men are unimpressed by danger and remain stoic when other men falter. Not only do they possess a marked lack of emotion where others lack self-control, but "Sturdy Oaks" actually look forward to challenges in order to prove their manhood to themselves and others (Stouffer, 1976).

Interest is growing in the ways that masculinity is portrayed and enacted in men, as well as how masculinity impacts the way men deal with stress (Addis & Cohane, 2005; Mahalik et al, 2003). Rosen, Weber, and Martin (2000) found that within a sample of military personnel, higher levels of positive masculinity traits were related to higher levels of psychological well-being. Although it is well known that the military is a male dominated profession, little empirical information exists about the level of to which soldiers conform to these masculine roles. Despite the common perception of hypermasculinity within the armed forces (Rosen, Knudson, & Fancier, 2003), multiple masculine identities exist within the military (Higate, 2003b). To date, only one study has examined the degree to which a military sample conforms to masculine norms (J. Mahalik, personal communication, 27 April 2009).

Understanding the range and scope of masculine identities has potential implications for assisting men deal with problems (Tager & Good, 2005), and specific to this work, helping male veterans cope with the transition from the military to higher

education. Military personnel often have a stigma on mental health treatment and help-seeking, likely due to the outward perception of weakness and internal belief that they are unable to care for themselves and others. This perception is widely endorsed in society and especially in the military, and therefore the number of soldiers and veterans with psychological difficulties may be vastly underrepresented (Britt, Greene-Shortridge, & Castro, 2007). Such attitudes necessitate creative approaches to assist transitioning veterans that are more in line with their military and male experience, like a mentor or transition coach (Good & Wood, 1995). While the military aspires to develop toughness through physical training and combat simulations, there is no such method of preparing them for the much different stressors they will face in civilian life and college.

## **Hardiness: The Ability to Perform under Duress**

The effect of stress on soldiers has been of much interest to the military (Doyle, 2000; Eden, 1999; Kirkland, 1998). Indeed, the relation of stress to performance is important to the military because of the highly demanding environment associated with military activities. Outside of the armed services, only a few professions such as firefighting and law enforcement have such a high potential for risk or harm (Driskell, Salas, & Johnston, 2006). A common saying in such hazardous professions is, "If you react, you live; if you think, you die." Therefore, learning to perform despite stressful situations seems an important part of military training. Much of the training that soldiers receive teaches them to distance themselves from any emotions or thoughts that might interfere with their mission as fighting men (Grossman, 1996). In a study conducted on an Army post, trainees were shown to adjust to the psychological stressors of basic training over an 8-week period (Davis Martin, Williamson, Alfonso, & Ryan, 2006).

During a study of Israeli war veterans, Solomon, Mikulincer, and Flum (1988) found that those veterans who possessed numerous coping strategies were able to endure more severe stressors than those who used fewer strategies. Additionally, a lower level of psychological distress was associated with greater distancing of oneself from the problem, greater social support seeking, greater problem-focused coping, and less emotion-focused coping.

What traits, beliefs, or attitudes enable soldiers and veterans to cope successfully with challenging and difficult situations, such as combat and the subsequent transition to civilian life? Some psychologists might describe it as a trait called "hardiness," which is a concept gaining attention in the positive psychology literature. Positive psychology emphasizes positive states, traits, and institutions that can support and facilitate a better quality of life. Positive psychology aims to look at the strengths people share and how those strengths help them cope with difficult situations. Psychologists developed this field of study as a strengths-based alternative to the deficit/disease model common to modern psychology. Hence, this field is sometimes referred to as the study of what goes right in life, rather than what goes wrong. It examines how individual traits such as interpersonal skill, courage, talent, wisdom, and perseverance help to make life worth living (Matthews, 2008; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Although positive psychology achieved prominence at the beginning of the new millennium, leaders and researchers in psychology have called for such a perspective since before World War II (Vaillant, 2000).

Within the field of positive psychology, the study of resilience describes a series of traits that help people resist psychopathology within the face of stressful and tragic

situations (Vaillant, 2000). People who are resilient "bend but don't break" (Fredrickson, 2001, p. 222). Research in this area initially focused on the internal resources children used to survive and thrive despite negative life experiences (Bissonette, 1998). Work on resilience also focuses on the internal mechanisms that allow people to understand how people adapt to trauma (Campbell-Sills, Cohan, & Stein, 2006). For instance, studies of Korean and WWII veterans found that veterans who were low on pre-combat levels of resilience experienced more long-term emotional and behavioral problems than those with higher levels (Elder & Clipp, 1989).

Hardiness is a psychological trait studied within the area of resilience. It has been described as a set of attitudes and beliefs that provide the courage and motivation to turn difficult situations into growth opportunities, and the ability to remain healthy despite high levels of stress (Kobasa, 1979; Maddi, 2004, 2006). Kobasa first described this characteristic after studying middle-level managers at a large public utility company that experienced a major upheaval over several years. She found that increased levels of stress often brought opportunities for personal growth and potential resources. While people tended to avoid situations of increased stress, they might also lose opportunities to better their lives.

Hardiness is theorized to have three main components (Kobasa, 1979, Kobasa, Maddi, & Kahn, 1982). The first component, control (vs. powerlessness), is the belief that people can influence their surroundings and life situation. People who are high on this measure have a strong internal locus of control. Commitment (vs. alienation), describes the ability to remain involved in life's activities. Individuals who are high in this construct have high levels of self-worth and purpose in life. The final component is

challenge (vs. threat), or the anticipation of change as an opportunity for growth. High levels of challenge indicate a lower need of security and lower fear in making mistakes, which fosters personal growth (Bissonette, 1998, Mathis & Lecci, 1999).

Studying hardiness in a military and veteran population seems appropriate because the military is mainly comprised of people who are young, healthy and relatively free of pathology (Matthews, 2008). Not only do the armed forces prepare men (and women) to defend the country, but they also help soldiers develop physical, mental, and character strengths they can take with them after service. Relevant to this study, among Army personnel, greater hardiness was associated with better mental health and lower levels of anxiety and depression one and five months after returning from overseas deployment (Adler & Dolan, 2006; Bartone, 1999). Hardiness also predicted the success of Special Forces (Green Beret) candidates during a difficult selection course (Bartone, Roland, Picano, & Williams, 2008). Within the veteran population, hardiness was found to have an inverse correlation with PTSD (King, King, Fairbank, Keane, & Adams, 1998; Zakin, Solomon, & Neria, 2003).

There are several pertinent findings about hardiness in college student populations. First, hardiness was associated with higher levels of long-term adjustment and mental health, as well as academic performance (Cress & Lampman, 2007; Maddi, Harvey, Khoshaba, Fazel, & Resurreccion, 2009; Mathis & Lecci, 1999, Sheard & Golby, 2007). Hardiness was also positively associated with graduation rates (Lifton, Seay, & Bushko, 2000). Related to this work, Bartone (1999) found that cadets at the United States Military Academy who were high in hardiness had stronger academic performances despite the multitude of stressors in their educational experience. In a

related study, Kelly, Matthews, and Bartone (2005) found that hardiness was a significant predictor of military performance and attrition within in a longitudinal study of West Point cadets.

### **Psychological Well Being**

Hardiness is related to a third construct pertinent to this study, which is psychological well-being. Psychological well-being is one of the most frequently studied in the psychological literature (Schmutte & Ryff, 1997). For many years the literature conceptualized psychological well-being as the pursuit of happiness, but in the recent years focus has shifted to the degree to which people are able to reachtheir full potential (Ryff, 1989). Psychological well-being takes a strengths-based towards mental health, as it focuses on meaning in life and the degree to which a person is fully functioning (Ryan & Deci, 2001). This construct has been found to be significantly related to an individual's perception of quality of life (Ring, Hofer, McGee, Hickey, & O'Boyle, 2007). Ryff (1989) holds that there are six main aspects of psychological well-being: (1) selfacceptance, or the characteristic of self-actualization or optimal functioning; (2) positive relations with others, which describes the ability to identify with and empathize with others; (3) autonomy, which describes individuals' ability to resist enculturation and allows the freedom to govern their lives; (4) environmental mastery, the characteristic of shaping individuals' environment so it is suitable to their own conditions; (5) purpose in life, or the ability to develop and implement a plan to achieve one's own goals; and (6) personal growth, or a person's openness to challenges and new experiences. A search of the literature returned several results pertinent to this study. Psychological well-being has been shown to be an important trait in military personnel because it is used to screen for

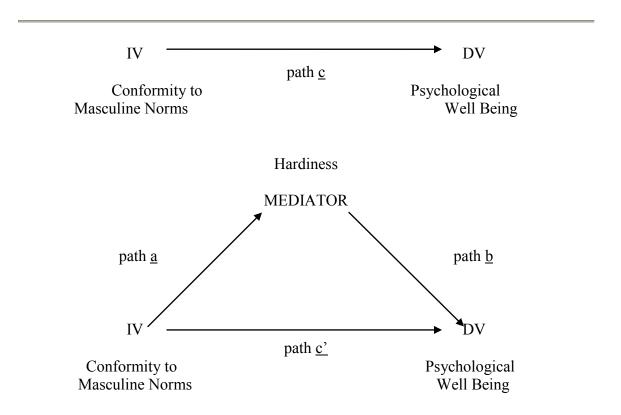
selection and suitability for military service (Sumer & Sumer, 2007). It has also been shown that high levels of psychological well being were correlated to increased job satisfaction and social support among soldiers at an isolated military base (Limbert, 2004).

### **Rationale for the Present Study**

Several important gaps exist in the extant literature. For example, only one study links conformity to masculine norms and psychological well being. Specifically, Tager and Good (2005) found only one significant association between aspects of conformity to masculine norms and aspects of psychological well-being (self acceptance). Further, only one unpublished dissertation examines conformity to masculine norms with a military or veteran population (J. Mahalik, personal communication, 27 April 2009). In addition, while several studies have examined hardiness in students or military populations, none exist in which hardiness is measured within a sample of student veterans. And no studies have examined the potential mediating role that hardiness may play in the relation between masculinity and psychological well-being.

This gap in the literature leaves several unanswered questions. These questions include: What is the relation of masculine norms to hardiness in male student-veterans? What is the relation of hardiness to psychological well being in male student-veterans? What is the relation of traditional masculine norms to psychological well being in male student veterans? Does hardiness mediate the relation between masculine norms and psychological well being in male student-veterans?

The present study sought to examine the hypothesis that hardiness mediates the relation between conformity to masculine norms and psychological well-being in male student veterans (see Figure 1 below). This potential relation will be examined through a series of regression analyses.



<u>Figure 1.</u> General hypothesized model, with hardiness fully mediating the relations between conformity to masculine norms and psychological well being.

The following hypotheses are of interest to this study. First, masculinity as measured by the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (CMNI; Mahalik et al., 2003) is hypothesized to be significantly related to psychological well-being as measured by the Psychological Well Being Scales (PWBS; Ryff, 1989). This relation will be examined through regression analysis. Second, masculinity as measured by the CMNI is

hypothesized to be significantly related to hardiness as measured by the Dispositional Resilience Survey (DRS; Bartone, 1989). This relation will be examined by regression analysis. Third, hardiness as measured by the DRS is hypothesized to be associated with psychological well-being as measured by the PWBS scales. This relation will be examined by regression analysis. Fourth, as noted above, the potential role of hardiness in mediating the potential relation between conformity to masculine norms and psychological distress will be examined by a series of regression analyses.

#### **CHAPTER II**

#### **Methods**

This section will be divided into four subsections. First, the characteristics and methods of recruiting participants will be described. The second section involves the psychometric properties of each instrument to be used in the study. The Dispositional Resilience Scale-30 (DRS-30) will be used to measure psychological hardiness and resilience. The Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (CMNI) will be used to measure participants' conformity and/or nonconformity to traditional masculine beliefs. The Psychological Well-Being Scales (PWBS) will be used to measure psychological well-being. The third section will discuss the statistical analyses employed.

## **Participants**

Following receipt of approval for the study from the university institutional review board, participants were recruited via e-mail from public and private universities, military colleges (e.g., Virginia Military Institute) and technical schools across the US. The Student Veterans of America, a coalition of student veterans groups from college campuses across the United States, also sent requests for participation across their listsery. Within the body of the email, participants could begin the survey by clicking on the hypertext link to the QuestionPro website. After reviewing the purpose of the study and statement of consent, participants consented to take part in the study by clicking the "continue" button. Participants then completed the demographic section and the three instruments (i.e., the CMNI, DRS-30, PWBS). After completing the survey, participants arrived at the debriefing section which included contact information for the lead investigator if they had questions or wanted to receive the study findings.

Two hundred and nineteen individuals responded to the survey. Participants with more than 5% missing data were removed further consideration in the analyses. As a result, 98 of the original 219 participants were removed from further consideration. Among these remaining 121 participants, small amounts of missing data (less than 5% on any subscale) were addressed using the subscale-mean substitution procedure. Potential univariate outliers were examined using the z-scores for each of the overall scales (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). No outliers were found for the CMNI, Hardiness, and Well-Being overall scales, as well as the following subscales: Winning, Emotional Control, Risk-Taking, Dominance, Playboy, Self-Reliance, Disdain for Homosexuals, Pursuit of Status, Personal Growth, and Purpose in Life. A total of 4 cases across Violence, Primacy of Work, and Emotional Mastery subscales were outliers at p < .001(i.e., z-scores above 3.29). Thus, these cases were removed from subsequent analyses. To check for multivariate outliers. Mahalanobis distances among the variables were examined (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001); with one individual being identified and removed (p < .001; Mahalanobis distance > 39.49).

Hence, participants for the study were 117 male self-identified student veterans who were recruited from public and private higher education institutions across the US. The mean age of the sample was 28.6 years, with a range from 19 to 52 years of age. The majority of the sample was white (n = 98; 83.8%). Other racial/ethnic groups represented in the sample were biracial/multiracial (n = 10; 8.5%), black (n = 2; 1.7%), Asian/Pacific Islander (n = 2; 1.7%), Native American (n = 2; 1.7%), and Hispanic (n = 2; 1.7%). In terms of relationship status, 54 participants (46.2%) identified themselves as single, 50

identified themselves as married (42.7%), 11 identified themselves as divorced (9.4%), and 2 identified themselves as separated (1.7%).

In terms of their military service, 46 participants identified the Army as their primary branch of service (39.3%), 27 identified themselves as Marine Corps veterans (23.1%), 26 identified themselves as Navy veterans (22.2%), and 17 identified themselves as Air Force veterans (14.5%). One participant did not identify a branch of service (.9%). Mean number of years in service was 6.7 years, with a range between 1 and 24 years of service. The majority of respondents were junior non-commissioned officers, pay grades E5-E6 (n = 58; 49.6%), and with the next largest group being enlisted soldiers, grades E1-E4 (n = 47; 40.2%). Other pay grade groups involved in the sample were junior officers, grades O1-O3 (n = 7; 6.0%), senior officers, grades O4-O6 (n = 3; 2.6%), and warrant officers, grades W1-W2, and senior non-commissioned officers, grades E7-E9 (both groups n = 1; .9%).

About one-third (n=39; 33.4%) of respondents identified their primary occupation as directly combat related (combat arms: n=34; 29.1%; special operations forces: n=5; 4.3%). Other occupations represented in the sample included support or service occupations such as engineering/technical (n=19; 16.2%); electronics/electrical repair (n=12; 10.3%), and health care (n=7; 6.0%). The majority of participants reported at least one deployment during their military service (n=92, 80.3%). Fifty participants served in Operation Iraqi Freedom only (42.7%), with participants serving in both Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan (n=28; 23.9%), Operation Enduring Freedom only (n=7; 6.0%), other military operations/deployments (n=4; 3.4%), the Persian Gulf War of 1990-91 (n=2; 1.7%), and the Korean War (n=1)

1; 0.9%). Twenty-three respondents reported no deployments or operations (n = 23; 19.7%).

#### **Instruments**

The first measure was a demographic questionnaire created by the author. Participants' demographic information included: age, race, marital status, branch of service (e.g., Army or Marines), military specialty (job description as explained by the U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics, "Job Opportunities in the Armed Forces," found at http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos249.htm), rank (i.e. officer or enlisted, using the military O and E ranking system), years of service, total months of deployment to peacekeeping or combat operations, number of overseas deployments, school type (e.g., public, private, trade, online), current academic classification (e.g., 1 = freshman, 2 = sophomore, 3 = junior, 4 = senior, 5 = graduate student, 6 = professional/medical student), and location of their current school.

The Dispositional Resilience Scale-30 (DRS; Bartone, 1991; Bartone, Ursano, Wright, & Ingraham, 1989; Sutker, Davis, Uddo, & Ditta, 1995) was used to assess hardiness. This 30-item inventory taps the characteristic manner that individuals use to approach and interpret life experiences. The DRS has three subscales: commitment (CM), or sense of meaning, purpose, and perseverance attributed to one's existence; control (CO), or sense of autonomy and ability to influence one's destiny and manage experiences; and challenge (CH), or perceptions of change as exciting growth opportunities. Participants use a four-point Likert scale ranging from 0 - 3, answering each question with 0 = "not at all true" to 3 = "completely true." Fifteen items are positively scored and 15 items are negatively scored. Bartone (1991) noted that the

subscales lacked good internal consistency. Thus the total DRS-30 score was employed in the present study. This instrument is derived from a 45-item parent scale which was normed on a group of predominantly white married college-educated male army officers with a median age of 34 years. Evidence supporting the reliability of the DRS-30 is supported by coefficient alphas of .70 - .85 depending on the sample (Bartone, 1991).

The Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (CMNI; Mahalik et al., 2003) measures traditional masculinity based on conformity or non conformity to 11 masculine role norms found in the dominant US culture. These norms are Winning (competition), Emotional Control, Risk-Taking, Violence, Dominance, Playboy (promiscuity), Self-Reliance, Primacy of Work, Power over Women, Disdain for Homosexuality, and Pursuit of Status. Participants respond to the 94 items using a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 0 = strongly disagree to 3 = strongly agree. Internal consistency estimates range from .64 to .92 for the subscales and .94 for the total instrument. This instrument was normed on a group of predominantly single heterosexual white college-attending males averaging 20 years old. Evidence supporting the validity of the CMNI is provided by its significant correlations with other measures of masculinity, such as the Brannon Masculinity Scale, the Gender Role Conflict Scale, and the Masculine Gender Role Stress Scale (Mahalik, Talmadge, Locke, & Scott, 2005).

The Psychological Well-Being Scales (PWBS; Ryff, 1989) were designed to assess individuals' positive self-concept and acceptance of self. The current study utilized the Personal Growth, Purpose in Life, and Environmental Mastery subscales (each consisting of 14 items) due to their theorized relation to the hardiness construct. The PWB uses a 6-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree). The

Personal Growth subscale measures respondents' attitudes towards new experiences and self-improvement (e.g., "With time, I have gained a lot of insight about life that has made me a stronger, more capable person"). The Purpose in Life subscale measures respondents' outlook on life and whether they have reasons to live (e.g., "I enjoy making plans for the future and working to make them a reality). The Environmental Mastery subscale measures respondents' beliefs about their ability to manage their lives, affairs, and opportunities (e.g., "In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live"). Ryff (1989) reported good internal consistency for the Environmental Mastery subscale (.86), Personal Growth subscale (.85), and Purpose in Life subscales (.88). The scales were developed using a research sample of 321 men and women divided among young, middle-aged, and older adults. For purposes of this study, the scores of these three subscales were combined to yield a total score indicating of respondents' psychological well-being.

#### **Statistical Analyses**

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 19 for Windows, was employed for all analyses. Data entry, missing data points, and outliers were identified. Descriptive statistics were then produced for the questionnaire measures, and univariate analyses were conducted. Finally, multiple regression analyses were conducted to test the main hypotheses of the study regarding the mediational analyses proposed.

The guidance provided by Barron and Kenny (1986) and Frazier, Tix, and Barron (2004) was used to guide the mediational analyses. Four conditions were used to establish mediation for the main hypotheses and post-hoc analyses, using three multiple

regression equations. The first was to establish the relation between conformity to masculine norms and psychological well being. Failure to establish the relation would make further analysis irrelevant; masculinity and psychological well being must be significantly associated in order to establish that hardiness mediates the relation between the two variables. It was hypothesized that masculinity would significantly predict psychological well being scores.

The second equation was to establish a relation between masculinity and hardiness. This condition is necessary to show a significant association between which the effect of masculinity on psychological well being could be linked. If this relation was not established, then further analysis would not be warranted because a link between the independent variable (masculinity) and the mediator (hardiness) must be established.

The third equation tested the remaining two associations by entering masculinity and hardiness into the model as predictors of psychological well being. Each predictor's *t*-test and standardized beta coefficient for this particular equation represented the effect of each predictor on psychological well being after accounting for the effect of the other predictor. This means the significance of the association between masculinity and psychological well being was tested while accounting for hardiness, and the significance of the association between hardiness and psychological well being was tested while accounting for masculinity.

This last equation had two purposes, one to establish significant relations between hardiness and psychological well being above and beyond the effect of masculinity. This relation effectively rules out the possibility that hardiness and psychological well being were correlated solely because they were associated with masculinity. With this

possibility eliminated, an association between hardiness and well being would indicate a direct and significant effect of hardiness on well being was present through which to pass the effect of masculinity. This association would lend support for the hypothesis of a significant association between hardiness and well being after accounting for masculinity. The second purpose would be to note any change in the relation between masculinity and well being once the effect of hardiness had been removed. Reduction in this association between masculinity and well being would suggest mediation by hardiness. A non-significant finding in this second equation would indicate total mediation by hardiness of the relationship between masculinity and well being.

#### **CHAPTER III**

#### **Results**

This section consists of three parts. First, descriptive statistics regarding the variables employed in the study will be presented, with a particular focus on variable distributions and statistical outliers. Second, univariate analyses will be presented regarding the demographic variables and instruments. Third, the results of the primary analyses examining the hypotheses will be presented.

#### **Descriptive Statistics**

Table 1 shows the sample means, standard deviations, minimum and maximum values, and the coefficient alphas for the total scores of the three questionnaire measures, as well as the subscales of the CMNI and PWBS. It is important to note that descriptive statistics were obtained by dividing total scores for each scale by the appropriate number of items in that scale. This data was then used to conduct the statistical analyses. Examination of the distributions of the total scores using stem and leaf displays demonstrated that the total scores of the CMNI, DRS, and PWBS were generally normally distributed.

The means for the CMNI and its subscales are generally comparable to those in a study of college-attending men reported by Mahalik et al (2003). Specifically, CMNI total score was134.45, while a mean of 144.76 was found in this sample. Winning was reported to be 16.91, while a mean of 16.30 was found in this sample. Risk-Taking was reported to be a mean of 16.58, while 17.00 was found in this sample. Violence was reported as 12.32, while a mean 15.84 was found in this sample. Power over Women was reported as a mean of 10.59, while this sample reported 9.45. Dominance was found to

be a mean of 5.84, while 6.28 was found in this sample. Playboy was reported as 12.06, while this sample reported a mean of 14.28. Self-reliance was reported to be 6.63, whereas a mean of 7.62 was reported in this sample. In Primacy of Work was reported as a mean of 8.97, while this sample reported 10.64. Disdain for Homosexuals was a mean of 17.74, while this sample reported 16.70. Pursuit of Status was reported as a mean of 11.85, while 11.04 was found in this sample. However, the mean of 14.89 for Emotional Control was lower than the mean of 19.36 found in the current sample. For the DRS-30, this study noted a mean total score of 58.20, while Bartone (1991) noted a range of 52.44-67.04 for several military samples and 61.33 for male undergraduates.

### **Univariate Analyses**

As shown in Table 2, zero-order Pearson correlations were conducted among the CMNI and its subscales, the DRS-30, and the PWBS, with significant associations being observed between the CMNI and both the DRS and PWBS. The CMNI was negatively correlated with the PWBS (r = -.31, p < .05). The CMNI was negatively correlated with the DRS-30 (r = -.29, p < .05). In addition, the DRS-30 positively correlated with the PWBS (r = .70, p < .001). Thus, preliminary support for the possibility of mediation was established.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Averages of Total and Subscale Scores on Questionnaire Measures

Measure	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Alpha
CMNI Total	1.54	.26	.82	2.09	.93
CMNI Winning	1.63	.44	.70	2.70	.87
CMNI Emotional Control	1.76	.51	.55	3.00	.92
CMNI Risk-Taking	1.70	.40	.70	2.90	.85
CMNI Violence	1.98	.42	.50	2.88	.80
CMNI Power Over Women	1.05	.44	.00	2.00	.87
CMNI Dominance	1.57	.49	.25	3.00	.72
CMNI Playboy	1.19	.58	.00	2.67	.92
CMNI Self-Reliance	1.27	.57	.00	2.67	.90
CMNI Primacy of Work	1.33	.45	.13	2.50	.82
CMNI Disdain for Homosexuals	1.67	.61	.20	2.90	.93
CMNI Pursuit of Status	1.84	.43	.50	2.83	.71
DRS-30	1.94	.27	1.33	2.60	.75
Total PWBS	4.71	.65	3.21	5.88	.94
PWBS Emotional Mastery	4.34	.81	2.00	6.00	.90
PWBS Personal Growth	4.97	.61	3.14	6.00	.86
PWBS Purpose in Life	4.82	.75	2.86	6.00	.88

*Note.* CMNI = Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory; DRS = Dispositional Resilience Survey; PWBS = Psychological Well Being Scale

Zero-Order Correlations between Conformity to Masculine Norms, Hardiness, and Psychological Well Being

Table 2

		2	3	4	5	9	7	8	6	10	11	12	13	14
1. CMNI Total	ŀ													
2. Winning	**09	:												
3. Emotional Control	**65.	.23*	1											
4. Risk Taking	.48**	.25*	*61.	1										
5. Violence	.45**	.19*	.27*	.33**	1									
Power Over Women	.63**	.15	.19*	.18	.19*	1								
7. Dominance	**65.	**95	.13	.31*	.19*	.36**	1							
8. Playboy	.61**	.27*	.21*	.22*	.12	.53**	.32*	;						
9. Self-Reliance	.62**	.29*	.45**	.31*	.28*	.34**	.23*	28*	1					
10. Primacy of Work	*85	*61.	Ξ.	.15	05	.07	.13	.02	.04	1				
<ol> <li>Disdain for Homosexuality</li> </ol>	.56**	.21*	.34**	.02	.17	.41**	.26*	60.	.31*	.00	ı			
12. Pursuit of Status	.37**	.42	01	.04	.13	.15	.40**	14	60.	.23*	11.	1		
13. DRS Total	29**	03	17	.00	90	46**	16	25*	29*	.16	34**	.12	1	
14. PWBS Total	31*	.07	15	13	09	52**	15	30*	33**	.12	23*	.00	.71**	1

Note. CMNI = Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory; DRS = Dispositional Resilience Survey; PWBS = Psychological Well Being Survey.

\* p < .05, \*\* p < .001.

#### **Primary Analyses**

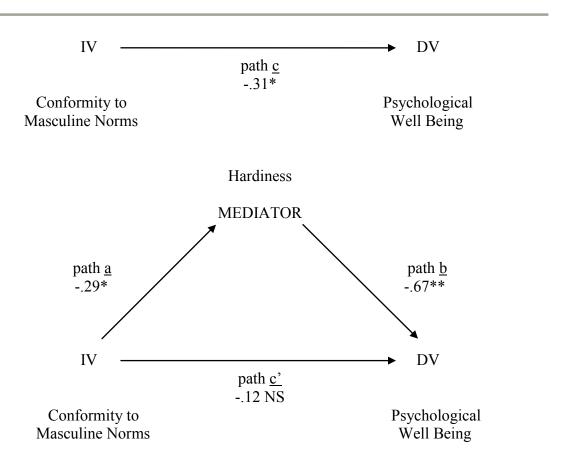
This section begins with a brief review of the hypotheses of the current study.

This is followed by presentation of the results of the analyses bearing on these hypotheses for the mediational model.

The hypotheses of this study were four-fold. First, it was hypothesized that masculinity as measured by the CMNI was related to psychological well-being as measured by the PWBS. Second, it was hypothesized that masculinity as measured by the CMNI was related to hardiness as measured by the DRS. Third, it was hypothesized that hardiness as measured by the DRS was associated with psychological well being as measured by the PWBS. Fourth, it was hypothesized that hardiness would mediate the relation between masculinity and well being.

As shown in Figure 2, the first hypothesis was supported because greater conformity to masculine norms was significantly negatively correlated with psychological well being (r = -.31, p < .05). The second hypothesis was supported in that higher levels of conformity to masculine norms was significantly negatively correlated with hardiness (r = -.29, p < .05). The third hypothesis was supported in that hardiness was positively related to psychological well being (r = -.67, p < .001).

Hardiness was found to mediate the relation between conformity to masculine norms and well being. Specifically, the standardized beta coefficient for the CMNI's ability to predict well being decreased from -.31 to a non-significant relationship of -.12 once the mediational impact of hardiness on well being was entered into the model. These data support the conclusion that hardiness completely mediated the relations between masculinity and psychological well-being.



<u>Figure 2.</u> Multiple regression model, with hardiness fully mediating the relations between conformity to masculine norms and psychological well being.

Note: 
$$R^2 = .50$$
. \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .001$ 

### **Post-hoc Mediational Analyses**

The results of the primary regression analyses supported the main study hypotheses that hardiness mediated the relationship between masculinity and psychological well being. Additional regression analyses were conducted to understand which specific traits of masculinity were related to well being, and whether hardiness mediated these relations as well. Examination of the correlation table showed that 7 of 11 CMNI subscales were not significantly associated with well being (see Table 3). The

role of hardiness as a potential mediator of the relation between the other 4 CMNI subscales (Power over Women, Playboy, Self-Reliance, and Disdain for Homosexuality) and psychological well being was investigated.

Table 3

Regression Analyses Indicating Non-Significant Associations between CMNI Subscales and Well-Being

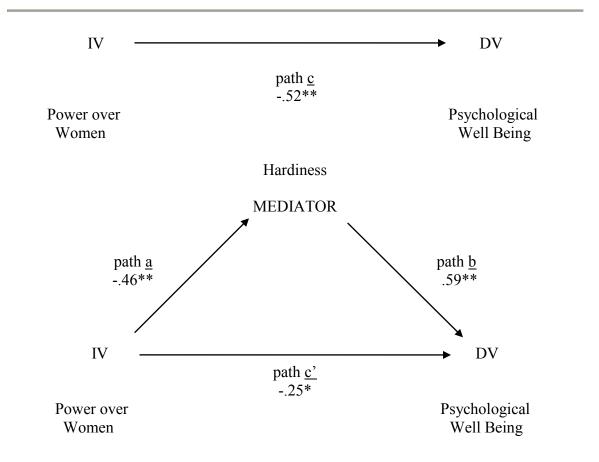
CMNI Subscale (IV)	Pearson's r	Significance
Winning	.07	.43
Emotional Control	15	.12
Risk-Taking	13	.17
Violence	09	.33
Dominance	15	.11
Primacy of Work	.12	.20
Pursuit of Status	.02	.83

Note. CMNI = Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory.

Four sets of multiple regressions were conducted, one for each combination of CMNI subscale, hardiness, and well-being. All four models revealed significant associations between the CMNI subscale, hardiness, and well being. The analyses of each of the four models suggested different levels of mediation by hardiness. In the model involving the CMNI subscale of Power over Women and well-being (see Figure 3), the subscale significantly predicted scores on both hardiness and well being. The Power over Women subscale remained a significant predictor of well-being scores when added to the regression model. Specifically, the standardized beta coefficient for the

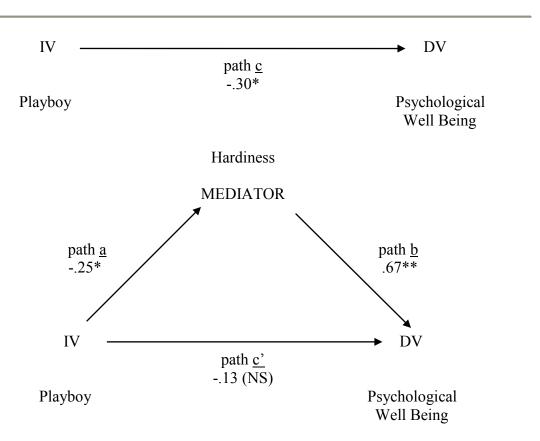
Power over Women subscale in its ability to predict well-being decreased from -.52 to -.25, and remained statistically significant (p < .05). This finding supports the conclusion that hardiness partially mediated the relations between Power over Women aspect of conformity to masculine norms and psychological well-being.

The model involving the Playboy subscale and well being showed full mediation by hardiness (see Figure 4). The Playboy subscale significantly predicted scores on both the hardiness and well-being scales. In a multiple regression analysis of the Playboy subscale and hardiness on well-being, Playboy scores did not add any additional variance to the model, suggesting full mediation by hardiness.



<u>Figure 3.</u> Multiple regression model, with hardiness partially mediating the relations between Power over Women and psychological well being

Note:  $R^2 = .54$ . \* p < .05; \*\* p < .001

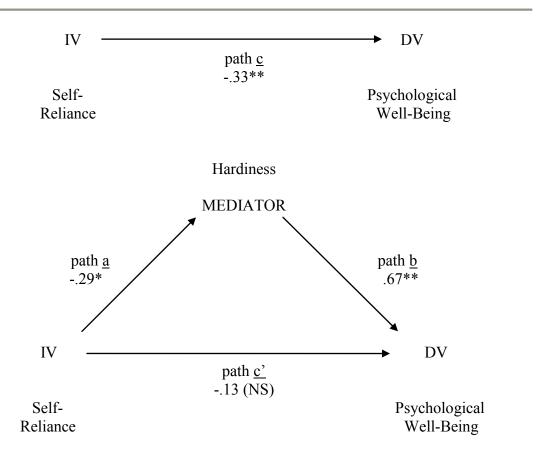


<u>Figure 4.</u> Multiple regression model, with hardiness fully mediating the relations between Playboy and psychological well being

Note:  $R^2 = .51$ . \* p < .05; \*\* p < .001

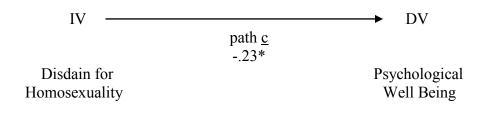
The model involving the Self-Reliance subscale and well-being supported full mediation by hardiness (see Figure 5). The Self-Reliance subscale significantly predicted well-being and hardiness scores. In a multiple regression analysis of the Self-Reliance subscale and hardiness on well-being, Self-Reliance scores did not add any additional variance to the model, suggesting full mediation by hardiness

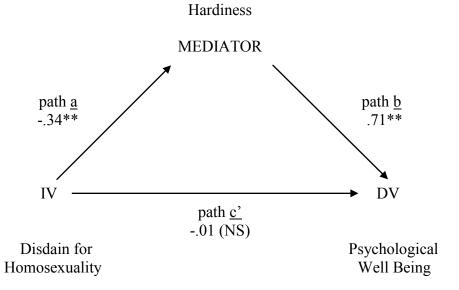
The final model involved the Disdain for Homosexuality subscale and well-being (see Figure 6). This model also suggested full mediation by hardiness. The Disdain for Homosexuality subscale significantly predicted scores on both hardiness and well-being scales. However, in a multiple regression analysis of the Disdain for Homosexuality subscale and hardiness on well-being, Disdain for Homosexuality scores did not add any additional variance to the model, suggesting full mediation by hardiness.



<u>Figure 5.</u> Multiple regression model, with hardiness fully mediating the relations between Self-Reliance and psychological well being

Note:  $R^2 = .51$ . \* p < .05; \*\* p < .001





<u>Figure 6.</u> Multiple regression model, with hardiness fully mediating the relations between Disdain for homosexuality and psychological well being

Note:  $R^2 = .49$ . \* p < .05; \*\* p < .001

#### **CHAPTER IV**

#### **Discussion**

This section consists of two parts. First, the major findings of this research will be addressed and interpreted as they relate to the hypotheses. The second section will address the strengths and limitations of the study and implications for counseling male student veterans.

### **Major Findings of the Study**

This study sought to elucidate the extent to which hardiness mediated the relations between conformity to masculine norms and psychological well being. It was hypothesized that hardiness would mediate the relations between masculinity and psychological well being. Consistent with the hypotheses, a significant association was found between masculinity and well being. Similar support was found suggesting that hardiness and well being were significantly related. This study adds to the literature because it found that hardiness completely mediates the association between masculinity, hardiness, and well being. In other words, the findings suggest that male student veterans who endorse more traditional masculine norms are more likely to have lower psychological well being. However, veterans who report greater hardiness seem to be protected from some of the negative effects of masculinity and thus have increased well being.

For veterans, it is plausible that conforming to masculine norms is protective because it prepares them for the rigors of military service (Cockerham, 1998; Grossman, 1995, Jolly, 1996). As previously stated, many masculine norms, such as physical toughness, courage, teamwork, competence, coping with stress, discipline, and dealing

with pain and physical discomfort are traits necessary to the difficult job of fighting, surviving and accomplishing a wartime mission. Masculine norms closely align with values emphasized during basic training in military service basic training, thus allowing them to be viewed as performing well by their superiors and to be accepted by their peers (Drea, 1998). In other ways, however, conformity to masculine norms can be detrimental. Research has found that masculine norms are associated with lower self esteem, higher rates of depression and anxiety, and other psychological symptomology (c.f., Cournoyer & Mahalik, 1995; Good & Mintz, 1990; Hayes & Mahalik, 2000; Sharpe & Heppner, 1991).

Consistent with these studies, the current study suggests conformity to masculine norms was negatively related to psychological well being among student veterans. The findings supported full mediation by hardiness in the relation between conformity to masculine norms and psychological well being. This finding suggests that strong commitment to the task at hand, a sense of situational control, and openness to challenging experiences can buffer the less positive aspects of masculinity that impact male student veterans' mental health. Specific to this study, it seems likely that hardiness facilitates student veterans' transition to college life and culture despite the numerous financial, social, academic and systemic challenges they may face.

Additionally, the four facets of masculine norms -- power over women, playboy, self-reliance, and disdain for homosexuality--were associated with both hardiness and psychological well being. Hardiness fully mediated the relations between each of these aspects of masculine norms and psychological well being. According to Mahalik et al. (2003), greater endorsement of masculine norms associated with antifemininity

(restricted emotionality, lack of connectedness to others, lack of help seeking) is associated with interpersonal and emotional disconnection and restricting affectionate behavior with other men. These findings resonate with the military's value for emotional control, independence, and its stricture on male-to-male intimacy. Hence, these findings support the "Sturdy Oak" perspective of masculinity, in which men maintain a façade of invulnerability and independence, and reject help-seeking and close emotional relationships with other men. This stance toward optimal masculinity may place student veterans in a double bind. They need help to achieve their educational goals, but asking for assistance violates their self-image as independent and capable of managing stressful situations. Thus, student veterans may tend to isolate themselves and suffer in silence.

Hardiness partially mediated the relations between the masculine norm of power over women and psychological well being. This particular subscale relates to antifemininity and subordinating women. The partial mediation indicates that veterans may endorse some aspects of masculinity but not others; or perhaps some aspects of femininity but not others. Specific to this work, student veterans may isolate themselves from others and perceive themselves as independent and capable of managing college life. However, they may view female partners or friends as supportive confidantes on whom they can depend and to whom they can disclose their emotional distress.

These findings seem to suggest that some of the coping strategies veterans learn through service may actually do them a disservice outside the military. Specifically, much of the training veterans receive teaches them to distance themselves from emotions which may interfere with their performance (Grossman, 1996). Due to beliefs about maintaining their independence, maintaining emotional distance, and resisting

vulnerability, they may not seek help or use the coping strategies essential for a successful transition or accomplishing their goals. To wit, veterans have reported being less engaged in integrative and reflective learning, less engaged with peers, less engaged with faculty, and they perceive less support from their campus environment (NSSE, 2010). Past research has shown that veterans who engaged in social support seeking, problem focused coping, and emotion focused coping were able to endure stressful situations better than those who had fewer or no strategies (Solomon et al, 1988). Accordingly, these veterans also had a lower level of psychological distress.

### **Implications for Research and Practice with Student-Veterans**

The findings of this study support previous research linking masculine norms to negative psychological well being. However, replication is needed to establish confidence in the relationship between masculinity, hardiness, and well being. The author of the hardiness measure used in this study (the DRS-30) recommended that the instrument's subscales not be used to conduct research due to a lack of internal consistency on one of the subscales (Bartone, 1991). Thus the total hardiness score was used. However, its parent instrument, the DRS-45, has sufficient subscale internal consistency to examine the three components of hardiness, challenge, control, and commitment and would provide a richer understanding of the mechanisms underlying hardiness in this study.

Those unfamiliar with the military experience who read the literature might view veterans as a troubled group of people. Indeed, much of the research highlights veterans' increased stress, multiple deployments, substance abuse, PTSD, latent aggression, TBI, and suicide. The strength of the current study lies in its attempt to highlight protective

aspects of veterans' psychological experience. For a more balanced understanding, more research is needed to understanding the positive aspects of veterans' mental health. In this vein, the current study is a good beginning for examining the military and veterans from a positive psychology perspective, although clearly additional research is needed to more fully understand their experience.

While this study provides a much needed initial glimpse into a void in the literature, it is not without limitations. First, the participants of this study were predominantly young white males, so these findings may not be applicable to the larger and more diverse population of student veterans. Masculinity may have different meanings to veterans of different ethnic backgrounds, ages, and sexual orientations, so research is necessary to examine the generalizability of this study to men of color and various sexual orientations. Secondly, almost two-thirds (62.4%) of the respondents served in either the Marine Corps or Army, branches of service with direct ground combat roles and potentially more traditional masculine views of service based on physical fitness and ability to withstand distress. Other services may have a different perspective on masculinity more focused on efficiency, organization, and competence. Third, the design of this study was correlational, so causality should not be inferred among the constructs investigated

The implications of the current study suggest that universities may benefit from further consideration of their approaches to the experience of student veterans. On one hand, many veterans clearly need help with the transition to college. They often present on campus with conditions unfamiliar to universities, such as combat-related PTSD and TBI (Fogg, 2010). A recent study of student veterans showed that about 1 in 5 student

combat veterans reported at least one disability, compared to about 1 in 10 nonveterans (NSSE, 2010.) Another study showed they have a suicide attempt rate six times higher than the average college student (Lipka, 2011). As noted before, student-veterans are less likely to engage on campus and more likely to perceive the academic environment as unsupportive (NSSE, 2010). Administrators, professors, advisors and health care providers unfamiliar with veterans' concerns may refer struggling student-veterans to mental health services. This approach, while warranted and motivated by best intentions, is often resented by veterans due to stigma about psychological treatment. It furthermore implies they are broken and defective, which reinforces the perspective that "civilians don't understand veterans." In addition, it fails to account for the fact that universities are generally unprepared to meet veterans' needs (DiRamio, 2011).

Colleges would benefit from consultation with current veterans and/or military transition specialists to develop bridges between academia and the military. Among other things, this consultation may explore student veterans' perception of support, engagement, and challenges in the university community. Pertinent to this study is a strength-based perspective highlighting veterans' resilience and adaptability to challenges. As one veteran said "We are more than capable of success in the classroom, just as we were on the battlefield. We are hardwired to complete missions quickly and efficiently, but we need universities to understand and anticipate our unique circumstances. We are here to fulfill a new mission. It just happens to be a degree (Horton, 2011)." Male student-veterans (and veterans in general) arrive from a unique culture with values, languages, and experiences quite different from traditional college students. Their dreams of advancement and attainment are no different than other unique

populations. Most universities develop programs to facilitate the recruitment and retention of specific populations like international students, and boast of faculty members, host families, cultural centers, organizations and activities for that population. Veterans would benefit from the same level of attention and investment.

# **DEMOGRAPHICS QUESTIONNAIRE**

- Age:
  - o (WRITE IN SPACE)
- Which best describes your ethnicity/race (please select all that apply)?:
  - o White/Caucasian
  - o Black/African-American
  - o Asian-American
  - o Native American
  - o Bi-racial
  - o Multi-racial
  - o Other (please describe)
    - (WRITE IN SPACE)
  - Prefer not to answer
- Which best describes your marital status?
  - o Single
  - o Partnered/Married
  - Divorced
  - o Separated
  - o Prefer not to answer
- Please select your religious preference:
  - o Judaism
  - Christianity
  - o Protestant
  - o Muslim
  - o Buddhist
  - o Hindu
  - o Chinese Folk
  - o Tribal Religions
  - o New Religions
  - o Non-religious
  - o Atheist
  - o Agnostic
  - o Other
    - (WRITE IN SPACE)
  - Prefer not to answer
- Were you ever deployed to a combat zone or conflict? (select all that apply)
  - No (served in peacetime or stateside during a conflict)
  - o WWII
  - o Korea
  - Vietnam

- o Persian Gulf War (1990-91)
- o Operation Iraqi Freedom (2003-present)
- Operation Enduring Freedom (2001-present)
- o Other (please describe:)
  - (WRITE IN SPACE)
- Prefer not to answer
- Branch of service
  - Air Force
  - o Army
  - Coast Guard
  - Marine Corps
  - o Navy
  - Prefer not to answer
- Grade (O & E system)
  - o E-1 through E-4
  - o E-5 through E-6
  - o E-7 through E-9
  - o W-1 through W-2
  - o W-3 through W-5
  - o O-1 through O-3
  - o O-4 through O-6
  - o O-7 through O-10
  - o Unknown
  - o Prefer not to answer
- Which best describes your most recent military occupational specialty?
  - o Administrative occupations
  - Combat specialty occupation
  - Special forces/special operations occupation
  - Construction occupation
  - Aviation/pilot occupation
  - o Electronic/electrical repair occupation
  - o Engineering/science/technical occupation
  - o Executive, administrative, and managerial occupation
  - Health care occupation
  - Human resource development occupation
  - o Machine operator and precision work occupation
  - Media and public affairs occupation
  - Protective services occupation
  - Support services occupation
  - o Transportation and material handling occupation
  - Vehicle/machinery mechanic occupation
  - o Unknown

- Prefer not to answer
- Total months of military service:
  - o (WRITE IN SPACE)
- Total number of months deployed/stationed overseas:
  - o (WRITE IN SPACE)
- Did you experience hostile action at any time during your service, to include hits or near misses by explosive devices, artillery, sniper fire, or missiles?
  - o Yes
  - o No
  - o Unknown
  - o Prefer not to answer
- Are you currently using any services offered by the Department of Veterans' Affairs?
  - o Yes
  - o No
  - o Unknown
  - Prefer not to answer
- Which selection best describes your current educational institution?
  - Trade/craft school
  - o Community college
  - o Public four-year
  - o Private four-year
  - o Online (e.g., Capella or Phoenix)
  - o Other (Please describe)
    - (WRITE IN SPACE)
- Which would best describe your enrollment status?
  - o Full-time
  - o Part-time
  - o Unknown
  - Prefer not to answer
- In which state/territory is your current school located?
  - o (List of states and US territories)
  - o Unknown
  - o Prefer not to answer

- Current education level
  - o Freshman
  - SophomoreJunior

  - o Senior
  - o Graduate
  - o Professional
  - PostgraduateUnknown

  - o Prefer not to answer

# CONFORMITY TO MASCULINE NORMS INVENTORY (Mahalik et al, 2003)

The following pages contain a series of statements about how people might think, feel or behave. The statements are designed to measure attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors associated with both traditional and non-traditional masculine gender roles.

Thinking about your own actions, feelings and beliefs, please indicate how much you personally agree or disagree with each statement by circling SD for "Strongly Disagree", D for "Disagree", A for "Agree", or SA for "Strongly agree" to the left of the statement. There are no right or wrong responses to the statements. You should give the responses that most accurately describe your personal actions, feelings and beliefs. It is best if you respond with your first impression when answering.

1. It is best to keep your emotions hidden	SD	D	Α	SA
- ·				
2. In general, I will do anything to win	SD	D	A	SA
3. If I could, I would frequently change sexual partners	SD	D	A	SA
4. If there is going to be violence, I find a way to avoid it	SD	D	A	SA
5. It is important to me that people think I am heterosexual	SD	D	A	SA
6. In general, I must get my way	SD	D	A	SA
7. Trying to be important is the greatest waste of time	SD	D	A	SA
8. I am often absorbed in my work	SD	D	A	SA
9. I will only be satisfied when women are equal to men	SD	D	A	SA
10. I hate asking for help	SD	D	A	SA
11. Taking dangerous risks helps me to prove myself	SD	D	A	SA
12. In general, I do not expend a lot of energy trying to win at things	SD	D	A	SA
13. An emotional bond with a partner is the best part of sex	SD	D	A	SA
14. I should take every opportunity to show my feelings	SD	D	A	SA
15. I believe that violence is never justified	SD	D	A	SA
16. Being thought of as gay is not a bad thing	SD	D	A	SA
17. In general, I do not like risky situations	SD	D	A	SA
18. I should be in charge	SD	D	A	SA
19. Feelings are important to show	SD	D	A	SA
20. I feel miserable when work occupies all my attention	SD	D	A	SA
21. I feel best about my relationships with women when we are equals	SD	D	A	SA
22. Winning is not my first priority	SD	D	A	SA

23. I make sure that people think I am heterosexual	SD	D	A	SA
24. I enjoy taking risks	SD	D	A	SA
25. I am disgusted by any kind of violence	SD	D	A	SA
26. I would hate to be important	SD	D	A	SA
27. I love to explore my feelings with others	SD	D	A	SA
28. If I could, I would date a lot of different people	SD	D	A	SA
29. I ask for help when I need it	SD	D	A	SA
30. My work is the most important part of my life	SD	D	A	SA
31. Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing	SD	D	A	SA
32. I never take chances	SD	D	A	SA
33. I would only have sex if I was in a committed relationship	SD	D	A	SA
34. I like fighting	SD	D	A	SA
35. I treat women as equals	SD	D	A	SA
36. I bring up my feelings when talking to others	SD	D	A	SA
37. I would be furious if someone thought I was gay	SD	D	A	SA
38. I only get romantically involved with one person	SD	D	A	SA
39. I don't mind losing	SD	D	A	SA
40. I take risks	SD	D	A	SA
41. I never do things to be an important person	SD	D	A	SA
42. It would not bother me at all if someone thought I was gay	SD	D	A	SA
43. I never share my feelings	SD	D	A	SA
44. Sometimes violent action is necessary	SD	D	A	SA
45. Asking for help is a sign of failure	SD	D	A	SA
46. In general, I control the women in my life	SD	D	A	SA
47. I would feel good if I had many sexual partners	SD	D	A	SA
48. It is important for me to win	SD	D	A	SA
49. I don't like giving all my attention to work	SD	D	A	SA
50. I feel uncomfortable when others see me as important	SD	D	A	SA
51. It would be awful if people thought I was gay	SD	D	A	SA
52. I like to talk about my feelings	SD	D	A	SA
53. I never ask for help	SD	D	A	SA
54. More often than not, losing does not bother me	SD	D	A	SA
55. It is foolish to take risks	SD	D	A	SA
56. Work is not the most important thing in my life	SD	D	A	SA
57. Men and women should respect each other as equals	SD	D	A	SA
58. Long term relationships are better than casual sexual	SD	D	A	SA

#### encounters 59. Having status is not very important to me SD D Α SA 60. I frequently put myself in risky situations SD D Α SA 61. Women should be subservient to men D SD Α SA 62. I am willing to get into a physical fight if necessary SD D Α SA 63. I like having gay friends SD D Α SA 64. I feel good when work is my first priority SD D SA Α 65. I tend to keep my feelings to myself SD D Α SA 66. Emotional involvement should be avoided when having sex SD D Α SA 67. Winning is not important to me SD D Α SA 68. Violence is almost never justified SD D SA Α 69. I am comfortable trying to get my way SD D SA Α 70. I am happiest when I'm risking danger SA SD D Α 71. Men should not have power over women SD D Α SA 72. It would be enjoyable to date more than one person at a time SD D SA Α 73. I would feel uncomfortable if someone thought I was gay SD D SA Α 74. I am not ashamed to ask for help SD D SA Α SD SA 75. The best feeling in the world comes from winning D Α 76. Work comes first SD D Α SA 77. I tend to share my feelings SD D SA Α 78. I like emotional involvement in a romantic relationship SD D SA Α 79. No matter what the situation I would never act violently SD D SA Α 80. If someone thought I was gay, I would not argue with them SD D SA Α about it 81. Things tend to be better when men are in charge SD D Α SA 82. I prefer to be safe and careful SD D SA Α 83. A person shouldn't get tied down to dating just one person SD D SA Α 84. I tend to invest my energy in things other than work SD SA D Α 85. It bothers me when I have to ask for help SD D SA A 86. I love it when men are in charge of women SD D SA Α

93. I prefer to stay unemotional	SD	D	A	SA
94. I make sure people do as I say	SD	D	A	SA
CMNI-94				

# DISPOSITIONAL RESILIENCE SCALE-30 (DRS; Bartone, Ursano, Wright, & Ingraham, 1989)

Following are some statements about life that people often feel differently about. Circle a number to show how you feel about each one. Read the items carefully, and indicate how much you believe each one is true in general. There are no right or wrong answers, just your own honest opinions.

0	1	2		3		
Not at all true	A little true	Quite true	C	omplete	ly true	
1. Most of my life get	ts spent doing things the	at are worthwhile	1	2	3	4
2. Planning ahead can	help avoid most future	e problems	1	2	3	4
4. No matter how hard nothing	d I try, my efforts usual	lly accomplish	1	2	3	4
5. I don't like to make	changes in my everyd	ay schedule	1	2	3	4
6. The "tried and true"	" ways are always best		1	2	3	4
7. Working hard does	n't matter, since only th	ne bosses profit by it	1	2	3	4
8. By working hard ye	ou can always achieve	your goals	1	2	3	4
10. Most of what hap	pens in life is just mear	nt to be	1	2	3	4
13. When I make plan	ns, I'm certain I can mal	ke them work	1	2	3	4
15. It's exciting to lea	rn something about my	rself	1	2	3	4
17. I really look forwa	ard to my work		1	2	3	4
19. If I'm working on	a difficult task, I know	when to seek help	1	2	3	4
20. I won't answer a q	question until I'm sure I	clearly understand it	1	2	3	4
21. I like a lot of varie	ety in my work		1	2	3	4
22. Most of the time,	people listen carefully	to what I say	1	2	3	4
24. Thinking of yours	self as a free person just	t leads to frustration	1	2	3	4
25. Trying your best a	at work really pays off		1	2	3	4
26. My mistakes are u	usually very difficult to	correct	1	2	3	4
27. It bothers me whe	n my daily routine gets	interrupted	1	2	3	4
29. Most good athlete	es are born that way, no	t made	1	2	3	4
30. I often wake up ea	ager to take up my life	wherever it left off	1	2	3	4
31. Lots of times, I do	on't really know my ow	n mind	1	2	3	4
32. I respect rules bed	cause they guide me		1	2	3	4
33. I like it when thin	gs are uncertain or unp	redictable	1	2	3	4

34. I can't prevent it if someone wants to do me harm	1	2	3	4
36. Changes in routine are interesting to me	1	2	3	4
39. Most days, life is really interesting and exciting for me	1	2	3	4
41. It's hard to imagine anyone getting excited about working	1	2	3	4
42. What happens to me tomorrow depends on what I do today	1	2	3	4
45. Ordinary work is just too boring to be worth doing	1	2	3	4
DRS-30				

# PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING SCALES (PWBS; Ryff, 1989)

Below are some statements which describe the way a person might feel about himself or his life experience. Think about how you feel right now, and using the scale below (1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly disagree), please indicate how much you agree with each sentence. Please try to answer the questions as honestly as you can.

1	2	3	4	5	i		6		
Strongly	Moderately	Slightly	Slightly	Mode	rately	S	Strongl	y	
Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Agı	ree		Agree		
1. In general,	I feel I am in cha	arge of the situa	ation in which I	1	2	3	4	5	6
live.									
2. I am not int	erested in activi	ties that will ex	pand my	1	2	3	4	5	6
horizons.									
3 I feel good v	when I think of v	what I've done i	n the past and	1	2	3	4	5	6
what I hope to	do in the future	· .							
4 The demand	ls of everyday li	fe often get me	down.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5 In general, I	feel that I conti	nue to learn mo	re about myself	f 1	2	3	4	5	6
as time goes b			Ž						
	ie day at a time a	and don't really	think about the	1	2	3	4	5	6
future.	3	,							
7. I do not fit	very well with t	the people and t	the community	1	2	3	4	5	6
around me.	J	1 1	J						
	d of person who	likes to give no	ew things a try.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	ous on the presen			1	2	3	4	5	6
	me problems.	.,	j						
, .	e good at manag	ing the many re	esponsibilities o	f 1	2	3	4	5	6
my daily life.	. 8	<i>S y</i> -							
	nt to try new way	s of doing thin	gsmy life is	1	2	3	4	5	6
fine the way it		, s or wome viiii	85 1117 1114 15	-	_		-		Ü
•	nse of direction	and purpose in	life	1	2	3	4	5	6
	el overwhelmed			1	2	3	4	5	6
	important to ha			1	2	3	4	5	6
	you think abou			•	_	J	•	J	Ü
	ctivities often se			1	2	3	4	5	6
me.	otivities often se	on thivial and	anniportant to		_	5	•	J	O
	unhappy with m	v livino situatio	n I would take	1	2	3	4	5	6
effective steps		y mynng situatie	ii, i would take		_	5	•	J	O
_	nk about it, I hav	ven't really imn	roved much as a	a 1	2	3	4	5	6
person over th		tone roung map	10 rea muem as (	n 1	_	J	Т	J	U
	e a good sense o	f what it is I'm	trying to	1	2	3	4	5	6
10 I don t navi	e a good sense o	1 WIIMU IU IO I III	4 J 111 6 10	1	_	5	т	J	U

accomplish in life						
accomplish in life.  19. I generally do a good job of taking care of my personal	1	2	3	4	5	6
finances and affairs.	1	2	2	4	_	-
20 In my view, people of every age are able to continue growing and developing.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21 I used to set goals for myself, but that now seems like a	1	2	3	4	5	6
waste of time.			_		_	-
22 I find it stressful that I can't keep up with all of the things I have to do each day.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23 With time, I have gained a lot of insight about life that	1	2	3	4	5	6
has made me a stronger, more capable person.						
24 I enjoy making plans for the future and working to make	1	2	3	4	5	6
them a reality.	1	2	3	4	5	6
25 I am good at juggling my time so that I can fit everything in that needs to get done.	1	2	3	4	3	O
26 I have the sense that I have developed a lot as a person	1	2	3	4	5	6
over time.						
27 I am an active person in carrying out the plans I set for	1	2	3	4	5	6
myself. 28 My daily life is busy, but I derive a sense of satisfaction	1	2	3	4	5	6
from keeping up with everything.		_	-	-		
29 I do not enjoy being in new situations that require me to	1	2	3	4	5	6
change my old familiar ways of doing things.	1	2	3	4	5	6
30 Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them.	1	2	3	4	3	6
31 I get frustrated when trying to plan my daily activities	1	2	3	4	5	6
because I never accomplish the things I set out to do.						
32 For me, life has been a continuous process of learning,	1	2	3	4	5	6
changing, and growth.  33 I sometimes feel as if I've done all there is to do in life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
34 My efforts to find the kinds of activities and relationships	1	2	3	4	5	6
that I need have been quite successful.	1	_	3	•	3	O
35 I enjoy seeing how my views have changed and matured	1	2	3	4	5	6
over the years.	1	2	2	4	_	_
36 My aims in life have been more a source of satisfaction than frustration to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
37 I have difficulty arranging my life in a way that is	1	2	3	4	5	6
satisfying to me.						
38 I gave up trying to make big improvements or changes in my life a long time ago.	1	2	3	4	5	6
39 I find it satisfying to think about what I have	1	2	3	4	5	6
accomplished in life.	-	_		•		Ü
40 I have been able to build a home and a lifestyle for myself	1	2	3	4	5	6
that is much to my liking.  11 There is truth to the saying you can't teach an old dog new.	1	2	3	4	5	6
41 There is truth to the saying you can't teach an old dog new	1	2	3	4	3	O

tricks.

42 In the final analysis, I'm not so sure that my life adds up 1 2 3 4 5 6 to much.

RPWBS: EM, PG, PIL

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## **VITA**

Greg Alfred was born on 20 December 1973, in Frankfort, Kentucky. A native of Talladega, AL, he graduated from Talladega High School in 1992. Greg earned a B.S. in psychology from the United States Military Academy in 1996 and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Army after graduation. He served in many different leadership capacities before resigning his commission and being honorably discharged in 2007. Greg received an M.S. in Counseling and Counselor Education from Indiana University in 2003. He entered the doctoral program in Counseling Psychology at the University of Missouri in 2003 and completed his pre-doctoral internship at The Ohio State University's Counseling and Consultation Service. Greg is completing a post-internship fellowship at the Counseling and Consultation Service.