
Decolonizing Evaluation of Indigenous Guidance and Counseling Approaches: A Review of Selected Evaluated Programs

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Background: Colonialism seems to still has a strong hold on evaluation of indigenous counseling or therapeutic programs. This stronghold is observed on the methodological paradigms used to evaluate these indigenous counseling or therapeutic programs. While indigenous counseling program development and implementations were systematically culturally sensitive, the same could not be said for evaluations. The lack of culturally sensitive evaluations that do not consider the worldview, values, ontologies, ways of knowing and the relatedness of the indigenous people may impede benefits to the indigenous people for which the evaluation is conducted for.

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to analyze whether evaluations of Indigenous guidance and counseling or therapeutic programs were following decolonized and Indigenous paradigms of evaluation, or still adhering to colonial standards.

Setting: Not applicable.

Intervention: Not applicable.

Research Design: A qualitative approach where a systematic search of indigenous counselling or therapeutic programs were searched from different databases. An article/document review research design was followed.

Data Collection and Analysis: Seven journal articles were selected from 57 searches. The analysis of the 7 selected articles informed by the relational models of evaluation.

Findings: Very few evaluations are culture sensitive. An Indigenized approach is crucial in the evaluation of Indigenous guidance and counseling therapies to ensure that the outcomes of evaluations are effective in addressing community needs for well-being. Relational models of evaluation encourage evaluators to reconsider the philosophical foundations of their practice, which can be used to decolonize the theory, methods, and practice of Indigenous guidance and counseling.

Keywords: *decolonizing evaluation; Indigenous counseling therapies; decolonizing Indigenous counseling evaluation*

Background and Conceptions of Relationality and Counseling

Indigenous populations have existed for a considerable period prior to colonization. Shepherd and Graham (2020) note that these groups identify as descendants of forebears who inhabited their land long before them. In this study, the term “Indigenous” refers to African and other native populations of Australia, Canada, North America, and India, while excluding Western and European societies considered as mainstream (Wright et al., 2019). “Indigenous” is employed to denote a place-based ethnic culture that is not a settler or colonial population and has not migrated from its homeland (Stewart, 2018, p. 740). As such, the existence of Indigenous populations has resulted in the development of healing systems that can be contextualized and interpreted using the knowledge of these communities (Bhusumane, 2007, 2022).

Mkhize (2004, p. 28) suggests that prior to colonization, Indigenous people continued to create knowledge related to psychosocial and other areas as they encountered difficulties, such as illness and death, in their development. For instance, Indigenous people may have varying perceptions of death in the family, based on the cause of death and the associated consequences and challenges. While van Dyk and Matoane (2010) assert that illness may be connected to the supernatural anger of ancestors, Bhusumane (2007, 2022) examined the ways counselors in Botswana use Indigenous cultural practices and structures and maintained that causes of illnesses and other calamities are often linked to ancestors and powers beyond human imagination.

According to Mkhize (2004), a counselor must have an understanding of African human relationships and how Indigenous people view their responsibilities toward others, since healing, from an Indigenous perspective, is grounded in interconnectedness with others rather than in individual selves. This interconnectedness is evident in the way Indigenous people view illness and healing. Literature suggests that Indigenous people undergo processes to address psychosocial issues such as anxiety and grief (Bhusumane, 2007; Mkhize, 2004; Washington, 2010).

According to Bedi (2018), counseling and psychotherapy are Western Indigenous healing practices similar to other global Indigenous healing practices, viewed through the contextual model. Bedi emphasizes that the theory and techniques of counseling are not as significant as the mutual understanding and engagement between the client

and the counselor. The contextual model of healing considers a culturally appropriate healing environment, a trusting relationship between the client and the healer, a mutually agreed conceptual framework for healing, and the rituals or procedures for change based on the belief system, which is further supported by Chigangaidze (2021). According to Chilisa (2020), Indigenous research paradigms emphasize relational ontologies and epistemologies that respect the client’s relationship with participants, their shared worldview, and positive community change. It is believed that programs developed to address challenges faced by Indigenous populations are based on this background.

In Botswana, the Ministry of Education (1996) developed a national guidance and counseling program to address psychosocial and educational issues faced by learners in schools. The program covers learners’ personal, social, educational, and vocational aspects, and its implementation is flexible, providing an opportunity for Indigenous evaluation paradigms to be used. However, Bhusumane (2007, 2022) highlights the influence of Western supremacy on counselors in Botswana, even though the counselors themselves acknowledge the effectiveness of Indigenous healers in addressing Indigenous religious and cultural beliefs. The Guidance and Counselling Junior Secondary School Curriculum Guideline of 1998 states that the program is “a continuation of the traditional processes by which the young learn from the wisdom and experience of elders” (p. 5). However, the policy, curriculum guidelines, and evaluation process do not clarify how different elders from diverse geographic and ethical societies are involved.

While Indigenization of counseling is encouraged, it is important to couple Indigenization of counseling and guidance therapies with Indigenizing the evaluation of these therapies. Therefore, this study proposes using the Afrocentric worldview and the Ubuntu philosophy highlighted in Chilisa, Major, Gaotlhobogwe, and Mokgolodi’s (2016) study as a theoretical framework to guide the discussion and analysis of evaluations of Indigenous counseling programs.

Theoretical Perspective

Existing literature underscores that philosophical assumptions shape research approaches and suggests that researchers with an Indigenous perspective can learn and use a blend of Euro-Western knowledge, theoretical approaches, and paradigms that align with or focus on issues of

Indigenization (Chilisa, 2020; Shepherd & Graham, 2020). While Shepherd and Graham (2020) argue that current research techniques are indigenous to the West, Chilisa highlights how Indigenization can be achieved by measuring the “degree to which approaches, methods, measures, literature, and language of research are rooted in the culture of the societies being studied” (p. 94).

Relational Perspectives

The concept of relationality is rooted in the stories and interactions that Indigenous peoples have within their environment. According to Tynan (2021), relationships are not typically learned through reading, but rather through watching Indigenous elders engage in cultural activities or through “sitting with Country” (p. 597), which refers to a relationship with the land, including all living, non-living, and spiritual elements in Aboriginal country. In his book *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*, Wilson (2008) emphasizes the importance of relationality in Indigenous research paradigms. Although Wilson acknowledges that attempting to define a relationship may result in the loss of its original context, he argues that establishing a relationship between the researcher, the researched, and the idea being studied is essential for research outcomes that benefit Indigenous peoples.

Chilisa (2020) summarizes and elucidates relational Indigenous methodologies in Africa and Indigenous perspectives from Australia, Canada, and North America. Worldviews are fundamental in counseling and in all dealings with Indigenous peoples. In the African context, people are believed to be interconnected with both the living and non-living aspects of the earth and its contents, which has implications for healing. According to Chilisa et al. (2016), the Afrocentric worldview and the Ubuntu philosophy are essential in recognizing the ideals, priorities, and values of Africans as a frame of reference in the evaluation process. Additionally, the evaluation process must include Ubuntu philosophy traits of relatedness, such as collaboration, togetherness, cooperation, and consensus building within the processes of any evaluation that aims to decolonize or Indigenize evaluation research. Chilisa et al. (2016) outline the ideal community development evaluation framework, which considers a relational-based evaluation methodology and the adaptive evaluation approach as encapsulating the Ubuntu ideals, which Indigenous evaluators can follow. The emphasis in these approaches is on whether the evaluation proposed at any time is *relational* and

whether the evaluation *outcomes are to benefit the entire community*. In a relational-based evaluation methodology, the evaluation process needs to recognize the multiple realities brought about by the African perspective on what reality is. The evaluators should uphold the values of the Indigenous people and understand that healing, in an African perspective, takes into account the supernatural, spirits, and ancestors, which cannot be physically seen (multiple realities), or the metaphysical. These values are commonly observed across African Indigenous people, along with communality in carrying out essential activities such as healing. Van Dyk and Matoane (2010) argued that Ubuntu is based on a philosophy and worldview that emphasizes collectiveness and interdependence, which is observed from the Indigenous peoples’ beliefs about the causes of illness and healing. One may be sick or healed depending on the relationship or harmony one has with the ancestors.

Chilisa (2020) summarizes and explains that the beliefs and values of other Indigenous peoples, such as those in Australia and Canada, emphasize the importance of the relationship between people, spiritual connections with the environment, spiritual connections to higher beings, and the relationship with the cosmos (2020; Wilson, 2008). Furthermore, Chilisa (2020) discusses how the ontologies, epistemologies, and axiology of other Indigenous peoples, such as those in North America and Canada, have implications for evaluation. The relational ontology of these Indigenous nations is “informed by four principles of accountable responsibility, respectful representation, reciprocal appropriation, and rights and regulations” (p. 106). Thus, the research must demonstrate a respectful relationship between the topic of study, the researcher, and the participants, in a manner that shows “the sharing, growth, and learning” that is mutual. Consequently, the participants become coresearchers within the study. To evaluate a therapeutic program effectively, it is crucial to engage the participants for whom the program was designed and their communities for mutual growth and learning.

Analysis of Evaluations of Indigenous Therapeutic Programs

Indigenization of evaluation processes for Indigenous counseling and guidance therapies and programs is more likely when evaluators have an appreciation of the ontology and axiology of the people being evaluated. Empathy toward the

existence and reality of a people (ontology) and the values people attach to their reality (axiology) can be observed from their naming conventions, relationships with the environment, connections with living and non-living entities, traditional practices, and rituals (Chilisa, 2020; Washington, 2010). This understanding can assist evaluators of Indigenous therapeutic practices in comprehending the need for Indigenously influenced evaluation processes. Evaluation processes that are predisposed to Indigenization must consider a holistic view of psychological healing, including the wisdom of the elderly, interconnectedness, and relational characteristics, as perceived by Indigenous people (Ansloos, et al., 2022; Bhusumane, 2022; Gerlach, 2018; Mkhize, 2004).

In addition, investigators' knowledge of the community, its language, and its cultural activities such as rituals, metaphors, songs, orations, or other narrations can be critical. Cultural beliefs are often embedded in what is considered important. Clients in counseling may use metaphors or proverbs to explain their predicament and the pain they are experiencing or have experienced. Only someone who understands this aspect can truly appreciate the results of the evaluation. Therefore, it is important to consider "what should be considered real program outcomes, what knowledge measures that reality, and what values support the evaluation practice" (Chilisa et al., 2016, p. 323), as well as indications of mutual, respectful relationships with the living and non-living (Tynan, 2021). These factors were used to analyze studies that purported to evaluate Indigenous guidance and counseling therapies and programs.

Respectful relationships with the living and non-living are a common thread that cuts across African, Australian, Canadian, and North American Indigenous peoples. This implies that Indigenous people must have a deep understanding of the researcher, and the researcher must have a deep understanding of the researched, for mutual learning and growth (Chilisa, 2020). Therefore, the evaluation process or methods must be participatory and qualitative, involving the community. Table 1 provides a summary analysis of articles on evaluations of Indigenous counseling or therapeutic programs.

Criteria of Selection for Analysis

The search for Indigenous guidance and counseling therapeutic programs and activities was primarily conducted on Google Scholar, as it yielded titles also found in other databases, such as ProQuest

Dissertations and Theses Global. Additionally, PsycINFO was searched to identify more therapeutic programs. I searched for articles on the evaluation of Indigenous therapeutic programs or the evaluation of Indigenous counseling and guidance programs, with the term "in Africa" added as a search term. While not many articles were available for analysis, over 57 articles were systematically reviewed, and 7 articles that met the criteria for evaluations of guidance and counseling, counseling, or therapeutic programs were carefully selected for this study. The criteria for article selection included the following:

1. The program evaluated had to be a counseling and guidance or therapeutic program.
2. The program had to be intended for an Indigenous group of people to be considered an Indigenous program.
3. The article had to be an evaluation.

After observing similarities in the relational ontologies, epistemologies, and axiology of Indigenous people worldwide, I decided not to limit the study selection to Africans or Indigenous people of Botswana. I believed that including other Indigenous groups from various nations would strengthen the proposal for using Indigenous evaluation techniques to evaluate counseling, guidance, and therapeutic programs and activities.

Table 1. Summary Analysis of Indigenous Program Articles

Evaluation title	Purpose (Program outcomes – benefits to whole community?)	Methods of evaluation (Measures of knowledge? Participatory or consideration of multiple realities?)	Evaluator's knowledge of Indigenous group (What values support the evaluation practice / relationships?)	Consideration of view on counseling (or therapeutic / psychological healing); interconnectedness / interrelatedness with the living and non-living (communality, collectivism)	Strengths and areas needing development
<i>An Evaluation of the Guidance and Counselling program in the Botswana's Education System</i> (Montsi et al., 2000)	<p>The purpose of this evaluation was to evaluate the implementation process, effectiveness, and impact of the Guidance and Counselling (G&C) program.</p> <p>The program was developed in response to the breakdown of traditional social structures and services provided by the extended family network and other community agencies. One of the primary rationales for G&C, as stated by the Ministry of</p>	<p>This study employed traditional evaluation techniques, namely, a descriptive cross-sectional design and a stratified random sampling approach, which considered diverse geographical regions. The evaluation process also encompassed a range of data gathering methodologies, including questionnaires, focus group discussions, consultation meetings, and literature review.</p>	<p>The researchers involved in this study were native to Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland, possessing profound insights into the guidance and counseling development within these nations. They possessed prior experience in program evaluation and gender and development education. Nonetheless, the recommendations provided were generic in nature and failed to emphasize specific requirements based on the ontologies and epistemologies of the distinct ethnic groups</p>	<p>The evaluators demonstrated an understanding of the primary goal of Guidance and Counselling (G&C), as well as the requisite skills that school counselors should possess, such as social and cultural development skills. Nonetheless, their comprehension of the psychological healing and developmental aspects of G&C was not entirely clear.</p> <p>Furthermore, the interconnectedness between the research concept, the researchers, and the</p>	<p>The review's objectives were commendable and effectively addressed through the use of a descriptive design. However, the review's positive impact was undermined by the absence of community and parental involvement in the evaluation, which is crucial for learners to learn from their cultural backgrounds.</p> <p>While the policy, leadership, training, and implementation of G&C in schools were appropriately addressed, the program's impact was superficially discussed. The evaluation's emphasis on access to school counselors did not adequately capture the counseling process's healing potential. The review failed</p>

	<p>Education (1998), is <i>“the continuation of the traditional processes by which the young learn from the wisdom and experience of the elders”</i> (p. 5).</p> <p>The G&C program aims to cover all pupils and students in primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions, without discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, economic status, religion, or life orientation. Additionally, the program seeks to respond to the unique needs and circumstances of individual learners.</p>		<p>situated in various geographical regions. The axiology of Batswana in varying contexts was blended together with ease.</p> <p>Regrettably, the evaluation outcomes did not establish a clear picture of the mutual respect shared between the participants and the researcher.</p>	<p>participants was not well established.</p>	<p>to address the importance of community participation in the provision of guidance and counseling services, despite its central role. The interconnectedness between students and their parents in the healing process was also not emphasized.</p> <p>Furthermore, the evaluation did not provide specific details regarding the diverse ethnic groups present in Botswana and how their traditional processes and social structures could be incorporated. The recommendations were too general and failed to take into account Indigenous knowledge, resulting in a decontextualization of the experiences of students seeking guidance and counseling services (Chilisa, 2020).</p>
<p>“Effects of Murran System’s Indigence Knowledge on Maasai Youth’s School Attendance in Narok District, Kenya” (Ronoh et al., 2010)</p>	<p>The purpose of this study was twofold: first, to analyze the attributes of Indigenous knowledge (IK) within the Maasai Murran system in Kenya, with a focus</p>	<p>This qualitative study gathered data through respondent interviews and the analysis of primary and secondary documentary sources.</p> <p>The study utilized as its theoretical framework</p>	<p>All researchers involved in this study are affiliated with Egerton University in Kericho, Kenya. However, the article does not explicitly state whether the researchers are</p>	<p>The research targeted male Maasai elders, youths, and other community stakeholders. Based on the study’s theoretical framework and engagement with both elders and youth,</p>	<p>The study demonstrated a level of consideration for the Indigenous people’s way of knowing, as evidenced by the inclusion of the elderly population, who are expected to transfer knowledge to the younger generation.</p>

<p>on the acquired training and learning outcomes concerning values, skills, and attributes;</p>	<p>culture theory, which posits that culture is intentionally passed on from those who have previously learned it.</p>	<p>indigenous to the Maasai people or Kenya. Therefore, the relationship between the researchers and the researched can only be presumed.</p>	<p>it is assumed that the researchers aimed to comprehend the interrelatedness and interconnectedness of the community to facilitate positive change.</p>	<p>Given the inclusion of the elderly population, it can be assumed that the researchers maintained a respectful relationship with the participants.</p>
<p>and, second, to examine the impact of the Murran system and its IK training activities on the school attendance of male Maasai youths in the Narok District of Kenya.</p>	<p>To select participants, the study employed purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling strategy. This method was used to identify and recruit individuals who possessed knowledge and experience relevant to the research objectives.</p>		<p>One of the central themes of this study was the Maasai people's profound understanding of and relationship with their environment as pastoral farmers.</p>	
<p>The findings of this study could provide valuable insights into the reasons behind the Maasai people's general reluctance to accept change, particularly in the context of school-based education.</p>	<p>Given the study's qualitative approach, the research acknowledged the existence of multiple realities, and this was taken into account during data collection and analysis.</p>			
<p>The primary objective of the Murran system is to provide a formal training ground for male youths in readiness for community life. It is a barracks-style</p>				

	institution within the Maasai society.				
<p>“Evaluating an On-Reserve Methadone Maintenance Therapy Program for First Nations Peoples”</p> <p>(Poirier, 2015)</p>	<p>Evaluation of Cree Nations Treatment Haven’s methadone maintenance therapy program.</p>	<p>The participants in this study responded to a series of questionnaires related to their experiences during treatment. These questionnaires covered a range of topics, including demographic information, quality of life, psychological functioning, health, social functioning, alcohol use, criminal involvement, motivation and engagement, level of risk, satisfaction with services, and impression of improvement (p. 36).</p> <p>In addition to the quantitative questions, the study also included two qualitative questions that were analyzed statistically.</p>	<p>The evaluation did not provide clear evidence that the evaluator had a sufficient understanding of the Indigenous group. However, the study did acknowledge the challenges that needed healing and recognized the importance of using cultural activities for this purpose.</p>	<p>It appears that the evaluation did not involve the community in the study, but rather only focused on the experiences of the clients. This is notable because the intervention was originally developed with the participation of the community.</p>	<p>The On-Reserve Methadone Maintenance Therapy Program for First Nations is a culturally sensitive program that was developed with the input of the community.</p> <p>However, the evaluation methodology employed a positivist approach that does not consider the existence of multiple realities in knowledge measurement. The community was not involved in the evaluation of the program they helped to design.</p> <p>It is assumed that anyone could have conducted the evaluation without knowledge of the Indigenous participants.</p>
<p>“A School-Based Intervention Study of Urban and Rural Indigenous High School Students in the East Khasi Hills District, Meghalaya”</p> <p>(Viray, 2017)</p>	<p>The purpose of this study is to compare the efficacy of two versions of the Jiva model of career counseling program.</p>	<p>The study utilized a pre-and post-test design with a waiting-list control group. Data collection was conducted through the use of questionnaires.</p>	<p>Although the study had considered the cultural differences of the Indigenous students, the intervention was not specifically designed for this group.</p>	<p>The researchers emphasized the importance of cultural mediation in the formulation and delivery of career development services, stating that “the mediation of culture, therefore, emerges as</p>	<p>The evaluators acknowledged the limitations of the evaluation, which failed to account for the communal and relational nature of the Indigenous students’ way of life during the design and implementation of the intervention.</p>

<p>“Evaluation of a Native Youth Leadership Program Grounded in Cherokee Culture: The Remember the Removal [RTR] Program” (Lewis, et al., 2019)</p>	<p>The aim of the present study was to assess the effectiveness of an intervention program targeted at strengthening the empowerment of Indigenous youth, utilizing a community-based participatory research method with a qualitative approach.</p> <p>The main research question guiding the evaluation was “ How does the RTR program affect the lives of participants in areas of physical,</p>	<p>A qualitative, community-based participatory research method was used (with decolonizing theory and methodologies).</p> <p>Exploratory evaluation and focus group strategies were used to assess the outcomes of the RTR program</p>	<p>The evaluators engaged in a thorough community immersion process, demonstrated by their extensive consultation and discussions with program administration for more than a year to ensure that the project aligned with the community’s needs.</p> <p>The evaluators established a collaborative relationship with a tribal citizen/researcher, program staff, and community</p>	<p>a critical factor to be considered in the formulation and delivery of career development services” (p. 31).</p> <p>The use of questionnaires in data collection is individualistic and does not align with the communal nature of Indigenous peoples.</p> <p>Through the evaluation, it became apparent that the participants acknowledged the interconnectedness and interrelatedness of their experiences with the culture and its values. As stated by the participants, their engagement with the culture resulted in “improved physical, emotional, social, and cultural health, suggesting that cultural revitalization may be the key to reduce health disparities for Indigenous populations” (p. 21).</p>	<p>Furthermore, the intervention was solely based on a postpositivist approach, which did not account for the multiple realities and values of both Indigenous and urban students.</p> <p>The evaluation aimed to understand the diverse perspectives of the participants, using a participatory and exploratory research approach. This approach reflects the evaluators’ recognition and appreciation of the participants in the study, highlighting the importance of a relational philosophy of evaluation.</p>
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emotional, social, and cultural health and well-being?”

It is worth noting that the evaluation results were intended for the benefit of the community.

stakeholders to facilitate, evaluate, and showcase a successful project that was developed by the community. This partnership involved community partners at every stage of the research, highlighting the importance of inclusivity and community engagement.

The evaluators presented and coauthored publications in collaboration with the community, showcasing a joint effort and commitment toward promoting community empowerment and well-being.

“Assessing the Efficacy of a Cultural and Artistic Intervention for Indigenous Women Who Have Experienced Intimate Partner Violence”

“*Nato’ we ho win* (the art of healing) is a trauma-and-violence-informed artistic and cultural intervention for Indigenous women who have experienced

This research study aimed to evaluate the outcomes of the *nato’ we ho win* intervention for Indigenous women in Saskatchewan using both quantitative and qualitative methods over a longitudinal period.

The intervention under evaluation involved the participation of elders as knowledge keepers and included activities such as cultural teachings, arts-based and self-care activities, and peer support.

The evaluation methodology in this study only involved engagement with Indigenous women as the custodians of data. However, this approach may not fully consider the relational aspect of

The evaluation was grounded in the principles of both objectivity and multiple realities.

The researchers worked closely with the elders during the development of the evaluation tools, but did not involve them in the

(Giesbrecht et al., 2021)	<p>intimate partner violence" (p. 1).</p> <p>The intervention is aimed at improving the well-being of these women, which suggests that the benefits are specifically targeted toward them.</p>	<p>The data collected for the study was obtained through self-reports provided by the participants.</p>	<p>It is not clear whether the evaluators fully comprehended the participants' experiences; they made an effort to respect Indigenous ways of being and doing by closely collaborating with the knowledge keepers to develop the protocol tools.</p>	<p>Indigenous people. The reviewers noted this as a limitation and suggested that future studies should take into account cultural connectedness to ensure a more holistic approach to evaluation.</p>	<p>actual evaluation process. While this level of engagement suggests that the researchers valued the participants' views, the reviewers noted that it would have been beneficial to engage the elders in the evaluation as well.</p>
<p>"Suicide Prevention in Australian Aboriginal Communities: A Review of Past and Present Programs"</p> <p>(Ridani et al., 2015)</p>	<p>A review of Aboriginal suicide prevention programs was conducted to identify promising projects and strategies.</p> <p>The review did not assess the programs' impact on reducing suicide rates.</p>	<p>A content analysis was performed on grey literature to identify interventions that have been reported to be effective in reducing rates and behaviors of suicide.</p>	<p>The analysis was based on data obtained from project proposals and reports. It is unclear if the evaluators had a comprehensive understanding of the community despite relying on documentary evidence.</p>	<p>The reviewers acknowledged the participatory nature of the interventions with the community, but the evaluation of these programs lacked clarity in terms of the interconnectedness and participatory methodologies, which could suggest a lack of consideration for the communities and their environments.</p>	<p>The lack of clarity regarding the involvement of Indigenous people or their participation in the evaluation of the grey literature raises concerns about the decolonization of the evaluation of Indigenous suicide prevention programs and therapeutic interventions.</p>

Discussion

The objective of this study was to analyze whether evaluations of Indigenous guidance and counseling or therapeutic programs were following decolonized and Indigenous paradigms of evaluation, or still adhering to colonial standards. The analysis was conducted based on the relational model of evaluation, which emphasizes the nature of knowing, ways of knowing, and values of Indigenous peoples across various nations. The study evaluated the benefits of the outcomes of the programs to the Indigenous people, the researchers' views of counseling or psychological healing based on the available values for conducting the evaluation, and the methods used in the evaluation process. The study highlighted the strengths of the articles while also identifying areas for development. This study aimed to analyze whether evaluations of Indigenous guidance and counseling or therapeutic programs adhered to decolonized and Indigenous paradigms of evaluation or still followed colonial standards. The study used a relational model of evaluation, which considers the similarities in the nature of knowing, ways of knowing, and values of Indigenous peoples across Africa and other nations. The analysis assessed the benefits of the outcomes of the program to Indigenous people, the researchers' views on counseling or psychological healing based on available values for conducting the evaluation, and the methods used in the evaluation process. The study reviewed seven, six of which were culturally sensitive Indigenous guidance and counseling or therapeutic programs that involved the community and participation in cultural activities in their design, development, and implementation. Two articles, an evaluation of a Native youth leadership program grounded in Cherokee culture (Lewis et al., 2019) and a study of the effects of the Murran system's Indigenous knowledge on Maasai youth's school attendance in Narok District, Kenya (Ronoh et al., 2010), demonstrated an Indigenous focus in their execution, respecting the Indigenous ways of learning by engaging the community of elders with the youth and other stakeholders. However, the *evaluations* of other programs were *not* culturally sensitive, still following postpositivist paradigms that emphasize objective realities, evidenced in the use of questionnaires, quantitative methods, and statistical analysis rather than participatory methods that require evaluators to know and value the Indigenous peoples' interests.

The Indigenous guidance and counseling or therapeutic *programs* reviewed in this study *were*

culturally sensitive and involved community participation in cultural activities during their design, development, and implementation. Ridani, Shand, Christensen, McKay, Tighe, Burns, and Hunter (2015) suggested that most counseling programs follow curricula and culturally suitable activities, which was also observed in the analysis of the other articles used in this study. However, the school-based intervention evaluated by Viray (2017) did not take into account the Indigenous and non-Indigenous aspects of the participants in its design and implementation. The program was only interested in the effectiveness of the career counselling model, not the participants' values or worldviews. The evaluation of this program identified the gap created by not considering that Indigenous students' learning is interconnected with the learning of each other within their group and in relation to their communities. Viray recognized that an Indigenous student would learn when others alike were given the same opportunity, however, despite the awareness that the program was not culturally sensitive, postpositivist paradigms in the evaluation were still used. The implication is that the benefits to the Indigenous students may not have been a priority for the evaluation.

Despite the concerted effort to involve the community and use participatory methodologies in developing the programs, the same effort could not be said for the evaluations. This indicates that Indigenous guidance and counseling programs for Indigenous peoples are a stepping stone toward evaluating them using decolonized paradigms of evaluation.

DeLancey (2020, p.492) highlights the increasing interest by governments and service providers in using Indigenous evaluation methods and approaches that are culturally appropriate and responsive. Indigenous governments and organizations are also using these methods and approaches to inform their own program and service delivery. This is exemplified in Lewis et al.'s (2019) evaluation of a Native youth leadership program. Governments being proactive in ensuring the voices of their Indigenous people are heard and used to inform program implementation is a rare finding.

Lewis (2019), raises a crucial point regarding the purpose of conducting evaluations of programs. The benefits derived from such evaluations are only meaningful if they effectively address the needs of the community in question. However, most mainstream evaluators and Western literature tend to overlook the importance of culturally responsive Indigenous evaluation methods (Waapalaneekweew, 2018). Out of the seven

Indigenous program evaluations reviewed in this study, only two incorporated decolonizing theories and methodologies in their evaluation process. In contrast, the other five evaluations relied on postpositivist methodologies. Although the challenges of employing Indigenous methods are acknowledged (DeLancey, 2020), the outcomes from such evaluations can significantly improve Indigenous programs. The study of the youth program grounded in Cherokee culture (Lewis et al., 2019) used participatory evaluation methodology, and the evaluators immersed themselves in the community to understand its values and context. As a result, the outcomes of the study were likely to benefit the entire community. Another example, Poirier's (2015) evaluation of an on-reserve methadone maintenance therapy program for First Nations Peoples, highlights the importance of evaluating therapeutic programs from the clients' perspectives. Although the author suggests that more research is needed to confirm the findings, it is critical to appreciate the importance of culture in treatment effectiveness. Despite evaluators' awareness of the need for cultural sensitivity, this is not always evident in evaluations of Indigenous therapeutic interventions. Some evaluations still adhere to Eurocentric methodologies, such as quantitative approaches, under the pretext of ensuring quality. This highlights the conflict in methodological paradigms, where Indigenization emphasizes paradigms that enhance multiple realities, whereas Eurocentric methods in psychology prioritize objectivity over multiple realities (Dhillon-Stevens, 2012).

Implication for Evaluation of Indigenous Counseling Practices

According to recent research, it is crucial to consider cultural epistemic frameworks and incorporate them into evaluation, appraisal, and assessment procedures, regardless of where they are carried out (Chilisa, 2020; Sefotho, 2021). This highlights the importance of integrating cultural knowledge not only into clinical practices but also into the evaluation of these practices.

According to Dingwall and Cairney (2010) cited in Ansloos et al. (2022):

an Indigenizing approach to addressing assessment and diagnosis would require instructors to become familiarized with the current extant literature on the appraisals of psychometric testing with Indigenous peoples, attending to issues of validity, cultural

contextualization, cultural idioms of distress, and the tensions of norming within psychometric instrumentation (p. 551).

To achieve a comprehensive understanding of the meaning in counseling Indigenous peoples, evaluations should consider their worldviews of psychosocial healing. For instance, a non-Indigenous counselor who counsels a Motswana elderly individual and is told that they have psychosocial issues because "Badimo ba mphuraletse," meaning "the Gods have forsaken me," may miss out on the deeper meaning and implications of the idiomatic statement. This statement signifies that the individual's ancestral spirits (metaphysical) are not content with their life, leading to feelings of loneliness rather than being in their spiritual embrace.

The appropriateness of the methodology used in evaluations should be guided by the purpose of the evaluation. However, it is evident that the outcomes of evaluations using Eurocentric or postpositivist methodologies do not always serve the purpose when evaluating Indigenous guidance and counseling programs. The use of adapted methods or the usual methodologies may not be effective, and this could lead to continued mistrust from Indigenous people toward evaluators (DeLancey, 2020). It is crucial to have an Indigenized approach throughout the evaluation process, including the design, implementation, and evaluation stages, to ensure therapy that addresses community needs for effective well-being. Lack of such Indigenization may lead to exploitation and ethical concerns, particularly when evaluators do not understand the values of the community in question (Ho, 2021).

In order to ensure that clinicians offer context-based therapy, Indigenization should be incorporated into clinical and psychological education curricula (Ansloos et al., 2022). This is because cultural knowledge is essential in the treatment and healing of Indigenous people, considering an individual's spirit, heart, mind, and body (Fiedeldey-Van Dijk et al., 2017). Failure to incorporate Indigenization could lead to oppressive Eurocentric philosophies and actions, which ultimately diminish the value of the results obtained from evaluations (De La Torre, 2017). Literature also emphasizes the need for interventions and assessments that align with the cultural conditions of Indigenous people to promote well-being (Atilola & Ola, 2016; Bhusumane, 2022; Craig, 1979). For instance, a client in Botswana may attribute their well-being to both the physical and the metaphysical worlds, highlighting the importance of considering cultural

beliefs and practices in evaluations (Bhusumane, 2022).

An Indigenized approach is crucial in the evaluation of Indigenous guidance and counseling therapies to ensure that the outcomes of evaluations are effective in addressing community needs for well-being. Such an approach should encompass the entire evaluation process, including design, implementation, and evaluation, to ensure that therapy is context-based and considers cultural beliefs and practices.

Conclusion

This article proposes that evaluators should utilize relational models of evaluation in assessing Indigenous counseling programs to ensure that the conclusions drawn are meaningful and relevant to the Indigenous people being studied. These models prioritize participatory and culturally responsive approaches that align with the worldviews and values of the communities being evaluated (Ansloos et al., 2022; Chilisa, 2020; Tynan, 2021; Gerlach, 2018; Wilson, 2008). Therefore, rather than imposing Eurocentric evaluation methods on Indigenous counseling programs, evaluators should work collaboratively with these programs to ensure the research is conducted ethically and is useful to the community.

Relational models of evaluation encourage evaluators to reconsider the philosophical foundations of their practice, which can be used to decolonize the theory, methods, and practice of Indigenous guidance and counseling. Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous assumptions can influence the conceptualization, diagnosis, and approach to counseling, making it essential to incorporate cultural knowledge into the evaluation process (Bhusumane, 2022). By grounding the evaluation process in relational ontologies, epistemologies, and axiology of Indigenous peoples, the voices and experiences of the community can be prioritized, leading to more effective and decolonized evaluation practice in Indigenous counseling programs.

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