INDIGENOUS PROGRAM EVALUATION APPROACHES, FRAMEWORKS AND MODELS: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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Indigenous program evaluation frameworks have been gaining recognition over the past two decades as a recommended alternative to traditional Western mainstream evaluation approaches by evaluators for Indigenous communities from the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Indigenous evaluation frameworks have been generally described as participatory, culturally responsive, and reflecting community contexts. However, there remains a gap in knowledge about Indigenous evaluation conceptualizations, appropriate application of inquiry methods, and current and historical tensions that may limit the use and capacity of this emerging framework. Previous reviews on Indigenous program evaluation have limited their scope to health and wellness programs, extent of literature, and have not explored issues of power and policy regulations often imposed by outside funding agencies. In this systematic review of 39 articles, I provide a comprehensive summary of major and minor themes found to conceptualize Indigenous program evaluation approaches, frameworks, and models. Additionally, I identified Indigenous and Western mainstream methods that are used and recommended by Indigenous evaluation practitioners. Lastly, I explore issues of power and tensions that have shaped theory and practice, and how those critical issues are framing the future of Indigenous evaluation. The analysis of literature selected for this systematic review will help non-Indigenous evaluators, policy makers, and funding agencies become familiar with Indigenous community protocols and contextual factors important for relationship building and utilization. This dissertation concludes with recommendations for advancing
an Indigenous evaluation framework that is responsive to community needs and satisfies funding agencies requirements.