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Toward a positive psychology of indigenous thriving and reciprocal research partnership model

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ABSTRACT

There are many examples of Indigenous success in the current Australian context. However, little is known about how to identify, measure, and emulate these successes more broadly. Partly, this can be attributed to an array of theoretical and methodological limitations that have plagued Indigenous Australian research. The latter include a lack of concerted research being founded upon the voices and agency of Indigenous children, youth, and communities and a lack of large-scale quantitative research. Hence, Indigenous Australian research has often failed to yield a translational evidence-base resulting in meaningful policy and impacts of salience to Indigenous Australians. Simultaneously, positive psychology, with its emphasis on explicating how individuals can thrive and get the most out of life, has become an increasingly important part of contemporary scientific psychology. Rather than replacing conventional psychology, positive psychology adds to it, broadening the study of human experience. Many tenants of positive psychology are aligned with Indigenous conceptualizations of human experience, especially those emphasizing the wholeness and interrelatedness of human experiences. In addition, positive psychology focuses on strengths, and Indigenous leaders, organizations, and community members' prefer approaches, whereby Indigenous strengths are identified so that they can be emulated more broadly. In this paper, we describe our implementation of a *reciprocal research partnership model of Indigenous thriving*, utilizing a research framework founded upon both positive psychology principles and holistic Indigenous Australian worldviews. This model prioritizes the voices and agency of Indigenous people and proposes that research be conducted in partnership as opposed to research being imposed on Indigenous communities, and it focuses on Indigenous Australian strengths as opposed to deficit approaches. After acknowledging the disadvantages that Indigenous Australians face, we describe this strengths-based approach and how its utilization of Indigenous research methodologies in combination with Western approaches can contribute to a new approach to translational research of salience to Indigenous Australians. We then review extant theory and research that supports elements of the proposed model. We further suggest its potential for practical innovation in Australia and how, if successful, this new approach may also find application in other Indigenous populations and, more broadly, for disenfranchised groups around the globe.

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"A new generation of Indigenous people are turning dreams into reality: Education; economic participation, self-esteem and success are part of this new Indigenous world, and there is no going back" (Langton, 2013a).

"There are plenty of examples of Indigenous success; we just have to recognise it and replicate it" (Dodson, 2009).

There are a growing number of Indigenous people not just attaining success but triumphing and thriving in a new Indigenous Australia. Yet at the same time, too many Indigenous Australians are failing to thrive. Indeed, Australian governments in the last two decades have acknowledged that Indigenous Australians are the most disadvantaged Australians across all socioeconomic indicators and one of the most disadvantaged populations in the world (Australian Government, 2015). Craven and Parbury (2013) have also lamented the waste of Indigenous talent and emphasized the need to harness Indigenous Australians' full potential to not just succeed, but to flourish and that: "we have much to learn and gain from empirically synthesising and analysing what … successful Indigenous Australians, and other Indigenous people, identify as drivers of their

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success" (p. 372). It is therefore critically important to identify what the drivers of Indigenous thriving are so that they can be utilized to augment this success more broadly (Craven & Parbury, 2013; Dodson, 2009). Yet despite its importance, there is a paucity of empirical research concerning the drivers of wellness, resilience, and thriving that have enabled some Indigenous Australians to triumph and ultimately reap the rewards and satisfactions of engaging in and contributing to Australia's educational and economic life (Craven & Parbury, 2013).

The purpose of this article is to present a potentially potent new *reciprocal partnerships model of Indigenous thriving*. This strengths-based model entails a research agenda focused on enabling Indigenous Australian thriving using positive psychology principles and holistic Indigenous Australian worldviews to develop a positive psychology of Indigenous thriving. We do not assume that what we offer is the only research approach available when working with Indigenous Australians, or that this integrated approach should necessarily replace other approaches which are important for interrogating specific issues salient to specific Indigenous Australian communities. Rather the model intends to broaden research paradigms available for Indigenous people, researchers, service providers, and other stakeholders who desire to see Indigenous Australians attain their full potential. The focus of positive psychology is on how individuals can thrive and flourish given the right skills, strengths, and social context (Hayes & Ciarrochi, 2015). Although some positive psychology approaches have proven effective with non-Indigenous populations, it cannot be assumed that its success will readily apply to Indigenous people, or at least to the same degree that it does to the non-Indigenous population, although recent research evidence is promising (e.g., Bodkin-Andrews, Craven, Yeung, Dillon, & O'Rourke, 2012; Craven & Yeung, 2015; Yeung, Craven, & Ali, 2013).

Our proposed model seeks, in fact, to integrate Western and Indigenous methodologies, particularly those emphasizing the importance of embracing Indigenous knowledge, values, self-concepts, and autonomy, in new synergistic ways to yield translational research of salience to Indigenous children, youth, and communities. We propose this new interplay of methods for a number of important reasons. Research with Indigenous Australian community members has emphasized that they would value the opportunity to have access to the advances generated by Western research methods and have expressed concern that they have not been informed about what such methods can offer (e.g., Craven & Parente, 2006). Research focusing on Indigenous issues in Australia (and elsewhere in the world) has failed to attract our leading non-Indigenous researchers. It has also failed to attract the attention of many crucial disciplines including psychology, and there is an underwhelming reporting of advances in research with Indigenous populations in the leading research journals in the social sciences and an associated lack of frequently cited leading scholars in the field internationally. This is unfortunate as advances in international research theory, methods, and practice have not been capitalized upon to advance issues of salience and benefit to Indigenous Australians. Further, combining Indigenous and Western methods offers the potential to reciprocally enrich and advance traditional research methods in new ways by enriching it with Indigenous perspectives and constructs.

To ensure integration of Indigenous and Western approaches and to safeguard against overstating the claims of positive psychology principles for Indigenous people, Indigenous and non-Indigenous authors have developed this new approach in partnership (e.g., with three of our authors being Indigenous). The collaborative approach between Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars in developing the proposed model, research framework, and approach toward a positive psychology of Indigenous thriving, reflects the approach we advocate for working in partnership—one of collaboration and genuine knowledge sharing between Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers as well as research paradigms that prioritize the agency and voice of Indigenous children, youth, and communities. We also suggest that past reliance on single paradigms or methodological approaches has not achieved the gains that Indigenous Australians hope for. For example, many albeit well-intentioned approaches in education and psychology targeting Indigenous Australian populations have failed to penetrate beyond the classroom door. Clearly, a new approach and addition to our research arsenal is needed.

In this paper, we propose a fresh strengths-based approach with broad implications for enabling Indigenous Australian children, youth, and communities to thrive. We first make the case that Indigenous Australian disadvantage is a critical issue of our time, and present a rationale for the need to harness Indigenous people's full potential to flourish. We then describe how incorporating positive psychology principles and methods that are consistent with Indigenous holistic worldviews and build on successes can lead to a new reciprocal partnership model of Indigenous thriving futures and a unifying research framework to enable translational research of salience to Indigenous Australians. This new perspective includes both Indigenous voices and methods in combination with selected approaches from positive psychology and Western research that may facilitate Indigenous empowerment, motivation, and positive self-concepts. While we do not assume that this perspective will be equally applicable to all Indigenous populations, we suggest that the basic framework is flexible enough to serve as a blueprint that can be adapted more broadly. Third, we present an overview of extant theory and research that support elements of the proposed framework. We conclude by posing a new psychology of Indigenous thriving as a potentially influential platform for launching a new generation of research to help to enable Indigenous Australian children, youth, and community to thrive.

1. The benefits of a positively-oriented approach

1.1. The problematic nature of deficit discourse in Australia

Indigenous Australian research has often relied on a deficit approach that emphasizes Indigenous people's relatively low socioeconomic status and ethnic characteristics to explain the gap in health and well-being between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians (Fforde, Bamblett, Lovett, Gorringe, & Fogarty, 2013). This approach fails to recognize or focus on strengths and the provision of opportunities that facilitate growth and thriving. A reliance on deficit approaches has a number of adverse impacts on Indigenous children and youth that carries across the lifespan. First, it serves to perpetuate the deficits. For example, Australian teachers sometimes praise Indigenous students for substandard achievements, hiding the fact that they are not performing to mainstream national standards (Stronger Smarter Institute Limited, 2014). Such deficit thinking and low expectations among teachers implies that Indigenous children are less able to learn than their non-Indigenous counterparts (Sarra, 2008) and can be "self-perpetuating, where preconscious patterns of assumption and thinking facilitate 'out of awareness' searching for evidence to reinforce them" (Stronger Smarter Institute Limited, 2014, p. 25). Indeed, attitudes that assume deficits can create the conditions for what has been referred to as 'stereotype threat' (Steele & Aronson, 1995), which has been associated with underachievement (e.g., Hartley & Sutton, 2013).

Second, deficit approaches fail to take into account the strengths of Indigenous children, youth, and communities. There has been a general research focus on "how best to help Indigenous students fit into the system, rather than exploring what Indigenous students may bring with them as strengths to the learning experience"

(Stronger Smarter Institute Limited, 2014, p. 2). Researchers have claimed that Australian research and educational policy have perpetuated deficit discourse when it comes to Indigenous education because the focus has primarily been on what Indigenous students 'lack' rather than their strengths and positive values (Fforde et al., 2013). An example is the current Australian government's emphasis on closing the statistical 'gap' between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students' achievement levels (Australian Government, 2016).

Finally, deficit approaches focused on socioeconomic factors, ethnicity, and cultural differences have failed to yield effective solutions to 'close the gap' and have contributed to enduring perceptions that "the disparity in educational outcomes of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students has come to be viewed as 'normal' " (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training, and Youth Affairs, 2006, p. 16). We are not suggesting that no attention be given to socioeconomic factors, but additional approaches to research with Indigenous Australians are needed that acknowledge strengths rather than weaknesses, successes rather than failures, that focus on what works rather than what does not and, most importantly, are inclusive of Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing.

1.2. What positive psychology is (and what it is not)

Positive psychology represents a fresh perspective in which the focus is on developing people's strengths rather than on reducing deficits. Several theories of positive psychology are consonant with Indigenous worldviews, and thus such a perspective can be very useful for research with Indigenous populations. Although several definitions of positive psychology have been offered, the one proposed by the *International Positive Psychology Association* (IPPA) is widely accepted. International Positive Psychology Association (2010) states: "positive psychology is the scientific study of what enables individuals and communities to thrive." Three elements can be underscored from this definition: Positive psychology focuses on: 1) science; 2) the determinants of thriving; and 3) both individuals and communities. The inclusion of communities is especially important, given the central role of family and community in Indigenous conceptions of wellness and thriving. The IPPA definition also highlights what positive psychology is not. It is not a 'rosy' view of life where 'wishful thinking' makes things positive, nor is it a 'pop' psychology. Rather, positive psychology is firmly anchored in a scientific approach to the determinants of being successful and thriving. In addition, positive psychology does not exclusively focus on what is positive to the neglect of what is negative. Both are important, although the focus is on developing strengths and positive potentials rather than merely the amelioration of deficits.

Positive psychology also emphasizes the importance of conducting empirical research to assess whether various factors, techniques, and interventions are indeed effective in promoting thriving and success in life. Positive psychology is not only a vibrant subfield of psychology where several hundreds of studies are being conducted every year, but also a field where several determinants of thriving have been reliably identified (see Donaldson, Dollwet, & Rao, 2015; Rusk & Waters, 2013; Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005).

1.3. Is positive psychology applicable to indigenous Australians?

While there are some important differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians (e.g., Indigenous Australians have a history of being colonized and discriminated against, and some live in remote parts of Australia that are poorly serviced and resourced, with very few opportunities for employment or appropriate education), we assert that Indigenous and non-Indigenous people share much in common. Supportive of our position is the claim of Indigenous scholar Lorraine Muller (2014): "the challenge is for non-Indigenous people to accept that our traditions and knowledge are not that different from the dominant group's knowledge base" (p. 69). Recognition of the commonality is important, because theory, meta-theory, and methodology are interconnected and are the product of the worldview that informs the research process (Muller, 2014). This offers confidence that many of the research methods (strategies) and methodologies (approaches) emanating from the western perspective are potentially very applicable to work with Indigenous people.

Further support that positive psychology is likely to be applicable to Indigenous Australian thriving comes from research that demonstrates positive psychology is applicable to cultures beyond that of the Westernized culture. For instance, McGrath (2015) has shown that there is substantial similarity in the character strengths of 75 countries that include Canada, the USA, China, Russia, North and South Korea, Cameroon, Vietnam, and Australia among others. Similarly, in what was described as a first representative sample of the "planet Earth," Diener, Ng, Harter, and Arora (2010) reported results of a world Gallop poll drawn from 132 nations showing that satisfaction of basic psychological needs was the most robust predictor of positive affect. Further, research including some conducted in Australia has shown that school strengths-based positive psychology programs are effective at the primary school level (Madden, Green, & Grant, 2011) and can be implemented in a variety of subjects (Patston & Waters, 2015; Seligman et al., 2005). In fact, research by Adler and Seligman (in press) with over 6500 students in Bhutan has shown that incorporating positive psychology principles in the high school curriculum led to an increase in psychological well-being and performance in standardized national exams both after the program and 12 months after the intervention ended. Thus, the proposed positive psychology strengths-based approach has strong empirical and theoretical support and could apply to research with Indigenous Australian populations.

1.4. Defining success: thriving within positive psychology

The concept of success is quite controversial, clearly culturally relative, and requires clarification. Within a cultural group such as Indigenous Australians, it can take on different meanings for individuals, families, and communities. In this context, the assumption that Indigenous Australians are a homogenous group has too often resulted in government programs being designed for administrative convenience rather than being centered on the diverse needs of individuals (Shergold, 2013). Conversely, drawing on positive psychology principles, the aim of research is to enable people to attain optimal human functioning (Wright & Lopez, 2011). With respect to Indigenous Australian people, the aim of a positive psychology approach is not about a preconceived notion of success, but rather to allow their autonomous perspectives to be considered among the drivers of thriving.

In positive psychology, thriving is not a unitary concept. Several multidimensional perspectives on thriving have been proposed and focus on different elements that are reflective of overall thriving. For instance, Vallerand (2013) has proposed a multidimensional perspective termed *Optimal Functioning in Society* (OFIS). OFIS involves high levels of psychological well-being, physical health, positive relationships, high performance in one's main field of endeavor (e.g., work or study), and contributing to one's community or society as a whole. These elements all seem to have potential application to Indigenous cultures given their holistic conceptualization of life. In addition, research with Indigenous populations suggests that an optimally functioning individual is someone who is fully part of society and cares for his or her immediate community and society at large

(Kickett-Tucker & Coffin, 2011; Priest et al., 2013). Thus, although little research has focused on the construct of contributing to society from a psychological perspective, we feel that this fifth element needs to be incorporated in the definition of optimal functioning in society and has salience for Indigenous populations and Indigenous worldviews.

It is important to underscore that people can achieve different levels of thriving, from low to high on each dimension of a multidimensional thriving model. Thus, while some individuals may reach high levels of functioning on some elements (e.g., educational achievement, contributing to the local community), they may score low on others (e.g., relationships, psychological well-being, contributing to others, or physical health). Such a multidimensional perspective on thriving has much in common with holistic Indigenous worldviews and paves the way for new applications of positive psychology to promote Indigenous thriving, as will be seen in the next section.

2. Indigenous thriving research: a new approach

We propose it may be possible to enable Indigenous people and communities to better thrive if: 1) We can engage the expertise of the very best Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers to collaborate in forging a new research agenda aimed at facilitating Indigenous children, youth, and communities to not just succeed but thrive; 2) this research capitalizes on and prioritizes Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing to explicate, measure, and augment more broadly the drivers of thriving that have already resulted in Indigenous people triumphing; 3) this research employs strengths-based approaches instead of deficit modeling; 4) this research leverages both the most advanced Indigenous and Western research methods to forge and test new paradigms, conceptual frameworks, models, and measurements.

2.1. Indigenous worldviews and methodologies

Hart (2010) describes worldviews as "cognitive, perceptual, and affective maps that people continuously use to make sense of the social landscape and to find their ways to whatever goals they seek … They are encompassing and pervasive in adherence and influence" (p. 2). Indigenous worldviews contain of a set of values, morals, and lore, which dictate and guide behavior, attitudes, and perceptions. Collectively, Indigenous Australians' worldviews are based on the principles of relationships, respect, connectedness, and meaning—principles that are highly compatible with many positive psychology principles. An Indigenous worldview provides ancient yet relevant Indigenous ontology (perspectives of reality) and Indigenous epistemology (Indigenous ways of thinking about reality). Indigenous Australian experiences and perceptions have meaning that is unique and related to all living things. These meanings are influenced by the values as reflected in the Dreaming (see Harrison, 2012). Briefly, The Dreaming, as described by Flood (2006), is a "complex network of faith, knowledge and ritual that dominates all spiritual and practical aspects of Aboriginal life" (p. 38), while Muller (2014) suggests that it refers to "Aboriginal spirituality, philosophy, creation and Country" (p. 61). For many Indigenous Australians, they live and perceive the world according to the values, beliefs, and knowledge passed down from generation to generation. Giving voice to Indigenous people is necessary as "the best results in engagement and outcomes arise when learning is linked to local community aspirations and values, respects Indigenous languages and perspectives, and involves local people in its development" (Fogarty, 2013) and "the evidence is clear that nothing happens in Indigenous communities unless there is local ownership of any change process" (Langton, 2013b). Thus, Indigenous people must be active agents in the research process: "We don't want to be consulted; we want to be at the table" (Mungabareena Aboriginal Corporation & Women's Health Goulburn North East, 2008, p. 8).

Slowly, academia is recognizing Indigenous research methodologies as not only legitimate but crucial to engaging in meaningful research (see Muller, 2014). Indigenous Australian research methods often emphasize yarning (e.g., storytelling). Storytelling is very significant for Indigenous people because this has been the way in which knowledge has been passed down to each new generation and how culture is maintained. Geia, Hayes, and Usher (2013) state: "for Indigenous people stories and storytelling is an integral element in people's lives … it is the way we make sense of our lived experience" (p. 15). As such, utilizing yarning and storytelling can provide meaningful insights into Indigenous epistemology and provide a way of recording information in a culturally sensitive way that integrates Indigenous worldviews.

The holistic nature of Indigenous culture, combined with the preparedness and ability of researchers to value Indigenous methodologies and worldviews constitute a powerful relationship that can change the way academics work with Indigenous communities to assist in seeding success and self-determination. We advocate that advances in research with Indigenous populations can be best made by capitalizing on Indigenous worldviews and methodology together with Western scientific research methods to create a new powerful substantive synergy. But how do we see the way forward to advance research in this field?

3. Reciprocal research partnership model of indigenous thriving futures

3.1. Conceptual framing

> "I have been impressed with the urgency of doing. Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Being willing is not enough; we must do" (Leonardo da Vinci).

Zimbardo (2008) has suggested that how issues are framed is more important than the arguments that take place within the boundaries of such framing. Rather than applying conventional models, we reframe what is valued by Indigenous people into a new synergistic *Reciprocal Research Partnership Model of Indigenous Thriving Futures* (RRPM) (Fig. 1).

The RRPM is grounded in Indigenous worldviews of the interrelatedness of all things (Graham, 2008; Grieves, 2009), and in Indigenous ways of being, doing, and knowing (depicted by the interconnecting wavy lines in Fig. 1; see Martin, 2003). Indigenous worldviews provide the basis of a framework that allows for living, learning, surviving and thriving (Craven, 2011). According to Arabena (2008), worldviews are "interconnected, interrelated systems including constellations of concepts, perceptions, values and practices that are shared by a community and direct the activities of its members." Collectively, Indigenous Australians' worldviews are based on the principles of relationships, respect, responsibility, and reciprocity. As noted earlier, Indigenous worldviews provide ancient yet relevant Indigenous ontology epistemology that are salient to Indigenous people and capitalize upon Indigenous ways of thinking. The RRPM takes these factors into account, prioritizing local knowledge systems and local knowledge holders' perceptions of Indigenous thriving to ensure that the particular ethical requirements of working at the 'cultural interface' are respected, accounted for, and importantly capitalized upon to identify strengths-based approaches that are meaningful to Indigenous people in diverse sociocultural contexts. This approach is characterized by working genuinely and reciprocally in partnership with Indigenous communities on research that is community-led approaches as opposed

to top-down approaches that impose research on Indigenous communities.

3.2. The unifying EMU framework

> "There are plenty of examples of Indigenous success; we just have to recognise it and replicate it" (Dodson, 2009, p. 3).

We propose the EMU framework as a unifying framework for the conduct of research programs aiming to enable Indigenous children, youth, and communities to thrive (Fig. 1). The EMU framework consists of three unique pathways:

1) *Exemplars*: Undertaking research to identify exemplars and drivers of Indigenous thriving that are valued by Indigenous people, employing a strengths-based approach, and capitalizing on what is already working for Indigenous people rather than using deficit approaches.
2) *Measurement*: Developing and identifying psychometrically sound quantitative and qualitative measures that employ the strongest available Indigenous and Western research methods to assess the drivers of thriving, and to evaluate their impact on a wide range of outcomes important to Indigenous thriving in diverse contexts.
3) *Utilization*: Applying the derived models and drivers to augment thriving in other Indigenous socio-cultural contexts. This involves working in genuine partnerships with Indigenous individuals and communities to create local solutions to augment thriving (as opposed to top-down or one-size-fits-all approaches) and testing their saliency, adaptability, impact, and generalizability for Indigenous children and youth, their families, and communities.

The EMU framework thereby focuses on strengths that are already valued by Indigenous people (E), employs holistic Indigenous and Western measures (M); and tests the effectiveness of augmenting of the research-identified drivers of thriving more broadly and with scalability (U). Hence, the EMU framework can inform the development and evaluation of new research models that aim to yield research that enables Indigenous people to thrive.

3.3. Model characteristics and holistic approaches

3.3.1. Model characteristics

RRPM comprises dynamic and interrelated characteristics. The RRPM prioritizes Indigenous values for the development and conduct of research: respect, responsibility, reciprocity, and relationships. These four values are seen by The Australian National Health and Medical Research Council (2003, pp. 10–16) as:

> *Respect* is about respectful research relationships which are built on the recognition of the contribution of others and the consequences of the research; *Responsibility* is about doing no harm and accountability. Therefore the research much be ethical and truthful with a congruency between the researchers and the community so that information sharing is maintained and protected; *Reciprocity* requires the researcher to demonstrate a return (or benefit) to the community that is valued by the community and which contributes to their cohesion and survival; and *Relationships* require ongoing attention to cumulative decisions of participating communities and to the engagement of individual while being cognisant that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples may place different values on the research benefits and processes than the researchers do. RRPM also capitalizes on Indigenous worldviews and agency with a focus on children and youth, and employs contextually responsive research approaches. Hart (2010, p. 3) describes some underlying principles of Indigenous worldviews: knowledge is holistic and cyclic, there are important relationships connections to living and non-living bodies; there no one truth; the land is sacred; there is a significant relationship between people and the spiritual world.

The RRPM comprises four interrelated and interdisciplinary research programs, all underpinned by strengths-based approaches: educational, physical, psychological, and family and community thriving. We suggest these four, integrated research programs are

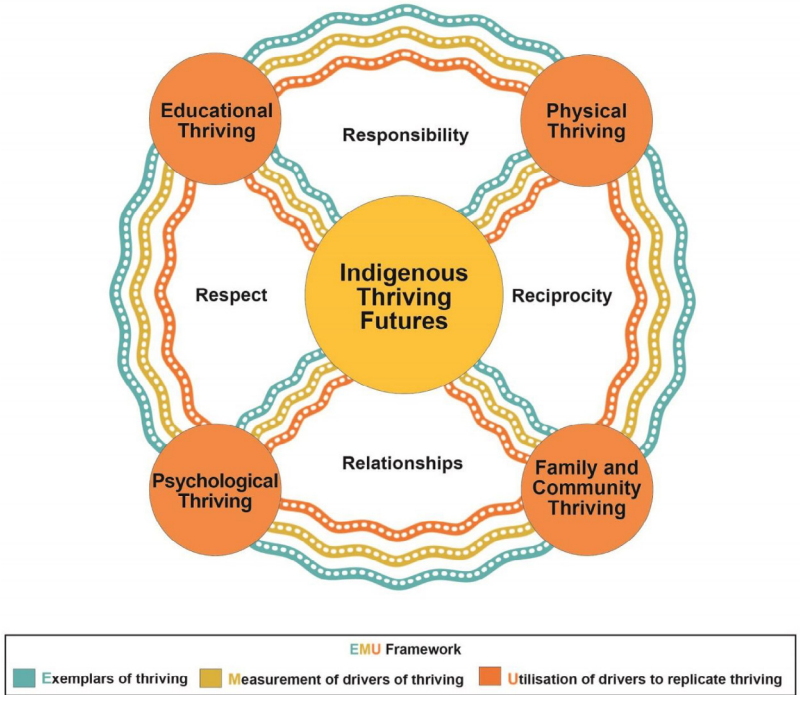

Fig. 1. Reciprocal Research Partnership Model (RRPM) of Indigenous Thriving Futures.

fundamental to enable Indigenous children and youth to get the most out of life. The RRPM also employs the unifying EMU framework across the research programs.

3.3.2. Holistic approaches

In a holistic Indigenous Australian worldview, the interdependence of teaching and learning with cultural identity, physical, spiritual and mental health, and family and community belonging means that to have relevance, any intervention in one area must include all others. Three decades of concentrated research has not closed the gap to the extent expected because of two inter-related problems: Research has generally been small-scale, project-based, and isolated by discipline boundaries, and much of the research has been by non-Indigenous researchers without true collaboration and buy-in from Indigenous researchers, children, youth, and communities. Therefore, we believe the only approach that promises real success in Indigenous, as well as Western, terms is an interdisciplinary, intercultural, holistic, and multi-modal one in which Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers, service providers, Indigenous children, youth, and communities collaborate fully. From a strengths-based approach, we also believe that focusing on identifying and replicating what works rather than what does not will build on and will expand existing successes rather than simply present another attempt to ameliorate deficits. This bold undertaking requires more than a single discipline or organization can offer alone. Hence, the RRPM is also underpinned by a holistic approach to the conduct of research.

First, the RRPM prioritizes Indigenous children, youth, and communities' voices and agency, whereby research is conducted in genuine partnership with communities, is conducted with communities (not on communities), and prioritizes local knowledge systems and local knowledge holders' perceptions, all of which are necessary preconditions for the conduct of research with communities (Langton, 2013a). Therefore community-led models and ways of conceptualizing thriving are paramount. Capitalization on holistic Indigenous worldviews incorporating values such as reciprocity and relationships also ensures Indigenous agency and simultaneous consideration of endogenous and exogenous influences.

Second, this holistic research approach is multimodal. It is characterized by intercultural collaborative research partnerships where the perspectives, expertise, and fellowship of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers are genuinely welcomed and valued to capitalize upon and stimulate enriched intercultural approaches. For instance, Western methodologies and theories can provide powerful tools to build upon and amplify Indigenous knowledge to evolve new substantive-methodological synergies (Marsh & Hau, 2007), and the holistic nature of Indigenous worldviews (Arabena, 2008; Graham, 2008; Grieves, 2009) can highlight new variables and emphases within of interdisciplinary research and the value of its interconnectedness.

Third, this holistic approach also employs multi-sector collaboration whereby partnerships of Indigenous communities, organizations, government, industry, and researchers enable translational research of salience to Indigenous Australians that is not limited in scale, scope, and impact by the bounds of one organization.

Fourth, strengths-based approaches are preferred by Indigenous Australian communities (e.g., Craven & Parente, 2006) and are consistent with positive psychology principles on strengths. Hence, the EMU framework builds on what is already of salience to and valued by Indigenous Australian children, youth, and communities and aims to emulate such success more broadly while also using positive y principles.

Together, the characteristics of RRPM and the research approaches underpinning the conduct of research culminate in a strengths-based approach to the forging and conduct of Indigenous Australian research, to deliver a new research paradigm that is innovative, transformative, and methodologically robust in combining and leveraging in new ways Indigenous and Western research methodology.

3.4. Purpose

The RPRM is designed to contribute a new research paradigm to helping to stimulate a new research agenda that aims to:

1. Identify the principal drivers of Indigenous Australian optimal functioning in education, health, and well-being in diverse socio-cultural contexts. Identifying these features utilizes Indigenous as well as traditional epistemologies, both in data collection (e.g., yarning as well as surveys) and interpretation;
2. Work in partnership with Indigenous Australian communities to explicate which policies, practices, new innovations, and services work in empowering Indigenous children, youth, and communities to thrive and provide evidence-based advice to agencies and policy-makers; and
3. Replicate and test the impact of drivers of thriving more broadly in diverse Indigenous Australian socioeconomic and geographical contexts to result in a real difference in the lives of Indigenous children, youth, and communities through effective, targeted, interventions.

Each of these aims is accomplished within each of the four research pillars of the RPRM. We thus turn to each of these pillars and the rationale for their salience in RPRM.

3.5. Research pillar I: educational thriving

> "We need education to set us free—free of dependence, unemployment, welfare, and victimhood. Education has set billions of human beings free; it can do the same for us" (Anderson, 2013, p. 345).

Being educated predicates life's opportunities, and therefore access to quality education is vital if young Indigenous people are to be empowered and self-reliant (Purdie & Buckley, 2010). Beyond schooling, education can lead to higher life satisfaction, self-efficacy, self-concept, and better functioning at critical life transitions (Biddle, 2014). Importantly, Indigenous people who are educated in high-quality schools achieve outcomes commensurate to their non-Indigenous peers (Craven & Mooney, 2013). However, better evidence is needed to inform the development of innovative education policies and practices because not enough is known about what drives Indigenous educational achievement. This research program within RPRM endeavors to make a substantial contribution to Indigenous education and well-being by: 1) identifying drivers of Indigenous Australian children and youth thriving in education, taking account of inside and outside of school factors, and community impact; 2) augmenting these key drivers in diverse socio-cultural contexts including rural and remote locations where students are in the most danger of not reaching minimum national standards for numeracy and literacy (Hughes & Hughes, 2012); and 3) testing their effectiveness and scalability (Purdie & Buckley, 2010).

3.6. Research pillar II: psychological thriving

Psychological health and wellness is a foundation of thriving. Yet, although the greater exposure of Indigenous Australian children to mental health stressors has been well documented, much less researched are the drivers of resilience and wellness within Indigenous communities (Zubrick et al., 2005). Further, "While the occurrence of these stressors appears to be at crippling levels, there is little systematic research to determine the exact nature, rates and

responses required to address their underlying issues" (Zubrick et al., 2005, p. xxii). Within RRPM, we propose a positive psychology focus toward building the inner resources and the external infrastructure (e.g., thriving families and communities) that allow individuals to thrive within their environments. Among the key elements of psychological thriving are vitality, self-confidence, coping skills, positive self-beliefs, and sense of autonomy and purpose, all of which can be enabled in Indigenous children, youth, and communities (Craven & Dillon, 2013).

Research in Pillar II should seek to: 1) identify determinants of psychological well-being for Indigenous people from an exemplar approach, including understanding the drivers of successful youth and elders, including factors facilitating identity, self-confidence, and belonging; 2) refine the measurement and tracking of factors that enable Indigenous people's psychological strengths and inner resources to flourish as well as external infrastructure support (e.g., families and communities) to thrive; and 3) test and replicate successful exemplar initiatives and programs that enable Indigenous people to develop strong Indigenous identity and thrive. This research program thus provides a fresh blueprint to enhance Indigenous psychological strengths and well-being and make a potentially potent contribution to international Indigenous theory, research, practice, and tangible progress.

3.7. Research pillar III: physical thriving

> "To us, health is about so much more than simply not being sick. It's about getting a balance between physical, mental, emotional, cultural and spiritual health" (Mackean, 2008, p. 54).

The health of Indigenous peoples in Australia is significantly worse than that of other Australians (Biddle & Taylor, 2012). Most strikingly, life expectancy among Indigenous Australians remains 10–20 years below that of non-Indigenous counterparts. Critically, the spectrum of chronic ill health and premature mortality within Indigenous Australians is far closer to childhood and early adulthood than seen in the rest of the Australian population; and therefore a number of key drivers of health and ill-health can still be leveraged and manipulated. In simple terms, this means that for Indigenous Australians, there is much more to be gained from understanding the mechanisms for promoting vitality and health in younger individuals so that they can make a healthy transition into adulthood.

In Australia, lack of physical activity is a leading cause of death and disability that costs our economy $13.8b per annum (Medibank Private, 2008). Among children, the health benefits of physical activity are extensive and include reduced risk of obesity and type II diabetes, improved bone strength (Strong et al., 2005), and enhanced psychological well-being (Brown, Pearson, Braithwaite, Brown, & Biddle, 2013). There is also emerging evidence that physical activity increases students' engagement with school and their educational achievement (Singh, Uijtdewilligen, Twisk, van Mechelen, & Chinapaw, 2012). Despite Australia's reputation as a sporting nation, 75% of Indigenous Australians lead inactive lifestyles, and this is 1.5 times higher than found among non-Indigenous people (Gray, Macniven, & Thomson, 2013). Further, Indigenous people are 7 times more likely than non-Indigenous people to experience chronic disease because of inactivity (Australian Bureau of Statistics & Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2008). The aims of this program are thus to: 1) identify early interventions that result in physical thriving and a healthy start to life; 2) identify strategies and programs that increase Indigenous youth's levels of physical activity and engagement in a healthy lifestyle, and; 3) identify and replicate the key characteristics of healthy communities that intrinsically promote healthy lives.

3.8. Research pillar IV: family and community thriving

> "Positive role modeling by parents, families, and carers encourages compassion, autonomy, self-reliance and early learning" (Commonwealth of Australia, 2013, p. 32).

Indigenous thriving takes place within a context (families and communities) that supports positive outcomes. Positive parenting is critical to ensure Indigenous children and youth thrive. The quality of parenting has a major effect on child development (Turner, Richards, & Sanders, 2007) and can serve to reduce or increase risks to Indigenous children's physical and psychological well-being. For Indigenous children living in families with poor quality parenting (25%), the risk for clinically significant emotional or behavioral problems is four times higher than in families with good quality parenting (Zubrick et al., 2005). It is vital that Indigenous families and communities have access to the best quality parenting supports. For example, research in Indigenous Australian populations demonstrated that behavioral family intervention programs are effective in reducing family risk factors associated with children's behavioral problems (Turner et al., 2007).

Essential for thriving communities are opportunities for employment, which for many remote Indigenous communities are missing. The 2011 census data (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012) shows 16% of the Indigenous Australian population as unemployed compared to a national rate of 5.2%. Of major concern, in Australia is that "no progress has been made against the target to halve the employment gap within a decade (by 2018)" (Australian Government, 2014, p. 6). Sustained employment and business enterprise also have a powerful impact on multiple facets of a person's life, such as increases in income, skill development (human capital), social networks (social capital), and psychological well-being. The socioeconomic impact of continued employment and successful enterprise reaches far beyond individuals and their families, and can enable whole communities to thrive. The large percentage of Indigenous Australian adults who remain unemployed or underemployed has led to long-term Indigenous disadvantage (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision, 2014). Although we see the approach being offered here as having much potential, we do not hold the unrealistic belief that a comprehensive psychological intervention can by itself completely solve the problems of unemployment and low socioeconomic status. Rather, we believe that the comprehensive approach will help maximize the gains achieved from other government interventions and inputs.

This research program in RRPM focuses on positive family and socioeconomic community contexts that support Indigenous children and youth thriving. This research will identify the key characteristics of positive parenting and healthy communities that enable Indigenous children and youth to thrive and interventions that enhance family and community life. The aims of the research program are to: 1) test the efficacy of positive parenting interventions; 2) identify the conditions which result in Indigenous families and communities prospering economically and socially including through access to employment; and 3) identify the successful strategies that enable Indigenous communities to grow healthy communities.

3.9. Summary

In sum, the four interrelated research pillars of RRPM provide a platform for potentially yielding research that can enable thriving futures for Indigenous children, youth, and communities. RRPM aims to simultaneously reflect Indigenous worldviews and Indigenous epistemology yet capitalize on advances in the science of positive psychology to frame a new research agenda based on exemplars of thriving and success in the new Indigenous world.

4. Applying theories within positive psychology to indigenous thriving

Having identified the multiple foci of the RRPM approach, and the unifying EMU framework, how can positive psychology be applied to enrich these approaches? In turn how can positive psychology be reciprocally enhanced by knowledge derived from the RRPM? We now turn to three important theories from a positive psychology framework that has potential congruence with RRPM and EMU and promise in application to issues in Indigenous thriving.

4.1. Self-determination theory, basic needs, and indigenous populations

In shaping the EMU framework to test RRPM, we specifically made extensive use of *self-determination theory* (SDT; Ryan & Deci, 2000) as a tool for developing measures and interventions based on Indigenous exemplars. Many writers have emphasized the importance of supporting Indigenous self-determination (e.g., Corntassel, 2008; Kuokkanen, 2012; Luciano, 2009). SDT echoes these concerns with its emphasis on supporting the voice, choice and values of all individuals and groups (Chirkov, Sheldon, & Ryan, 2011). Noteworthy is that among the most central concepts within SDT are those of autonomous motivation and autonomy support. SDT defines autonomy as self-governance (rather than independence or separateness) and thus autonomously motivated actions are those that are based in one's own abiding interests and values (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Autonomous acts are those that the person fully endorses and that are experienced as volitional and willingly done (Ryan, 1995). The opposite of autonomy is heteronomy, or being governed or controlled by forces alien to the self. For Indigenous flourishing to occur, SDT would argue that it would need to be through autonomous actions, a blossoming of values and ideas accepted by the Indigenous participants and experienced as congruent with other internalized values.

Within SDT, supporting autonomous motivation begins by taking the *internal frame of reference* of all participants, and respecting the perspectives, values, and concerns therein (e.g., Assor, Kaplan, Feinberg, & Tal, 2009). The central idea that all research and interventions be centered on the participants' views is consistent with EMU's search for sources of thriving within the Indigenous community. Rather than simply applying pre-existing theories and concepts to Indigenous people where the failure to consider contextual factors can often result in programs and services thrust on them, EMU seeks to capture, through both narrative and quantitative methods underpinned by an Indigenous worldview, the voices and choices of successful Indigenous individuals and communities. Hence, while being guided by an Indigenous worldview, EMU begins by considering the pathways identified and developed by members of the community who have found ways to thrive.

Furthermore, SDT supports maximal input and choice in all interventions. According to the theory, the extent that any behavior or goal is experienced as something imposed upon or externally controlled, the less likely it is to be internalized and sustained over time (Deci, Ryan, & Guay, 2013). In fact, SDT articulates that any prescribed approaches, even those that may derive from models of successful Indigenous persons, be applied in a way that is not experienced as controlling or pressured by those who might be targets of intervention. It is only when autonomy is supported that people will be likely to accept and internalize any ideas, values or practices, new or traditional (Ryan & Deci, 2011). In this sense, even practices based on the pathways previously taken by successful Indigenous people could be forced or imposed on other members of the community, and thereby thwart their efficacy.

Another reason for utilizing SDT in relation to Indigenous thriving research is that it offers metrics and measures that assess the experience of being externally pressured or induced to act, as well as experiences of feeling initiative, congruence, and self-valuing. These measures are essential, we believe, to fostering intervention approaches that have the highest likelihood of being successfully adopted and willingly practiced by those exposed to them. SDT argues that the issue of *autonomy* is a universal concern, cutting across all cultural groups (Chirkov et al., 2011). That is, although it is clear that human values and norms vary widely between and within human communities, across all communities the issue of volition versus external control is salient and important. Although the contents of cultures vary widely, in every culture people want to feel ownership and initiative in acting, and do not want alien others controlling them or telling them how to act (e.g., see Chirkov, Ryan, Kim, & Kaplan, 2003). This sensibility is of great importance to all EMU derived interventions, and a central criterion for us is to implement them in ways that are neither coercive nor pressuring. Far too often, even well-meaning practitioners have failed to attend to the process of supporting autonomy in promoting change. In addition, identifying where and how Indigenous people experience greater autonomy and the consequences of this will be informative for both practical intervention and theoretical reasons.

SDT's perspectives on motivation further suggest two other universal psychological needs beyond autonomy, these are the needs for competence and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Regarding *competence*, SDT suggests that all interventions be done in ways that allow people to feel control and efficacy in their actions. This suggests that once behaviors and attributes associated with thriving are identified, they can then be introduced and disseminated in ways that can be effectively implemented by individuals. This means structuring tasks in ways that maximize a person's success. Scaffolding skill development and communicating ideas in meaningful ways are thus part and parcel of an SDT approach (Jang, Reeve, & Deci, 2010). In this sense, the issue of autonomy support, which is central in SDT, is directly in line with the notion of listening to and learning from Indigenous voices. Self-perceptions of competence (see below), operationalized as self-concept, are closely related to the need for competence satisfaction in SDT (along with need for autonomy and need for belonging), which postulates that this need is a major reason why people seek out optimal stimulation and challenging activities (Deci & Ryan, 2012).

The third basic psychological need articulated in SDT is that of *relatedness*. Although the character and practices of groups differ, SDT argues that all persons desire to feel a sense of belonging and connection with their social groups. In the past, many interventions directed toward Indigenous groups have, either wittingly or unwittingly, had the effect of dividing and separating persons from their groups and traditions, thus harming relatedness. Thus, the spirit of EMU is not only to base interventions on pathways discovered by Indigenous people but also to foster a sense of community by helping people to connect with positive role models and the ideals that emanate from them. This use of Indigenous exemplars is expected to both strengthen pride and affiliation with Indigenous communities as well as to facilitate internalization (autonomy) and competence. Considerable empirical evidence indeed supports the cross-cultural importance of self-determination theory (see Chirkov et al., 2011; Diener et al., 2010).

4.2. Self-concept constructs within positive psychology

Positive self-beliefs are at the heart of the positive psychology movement (Bandura, 2008a, 2008b; Bruner, 1996; Hunter & Csikszentmihalyi, 2003; Marsh & Craven, 2006). Self-beliefs are widely accepted as a universal aspect of being human and central to understanding the quality of human existence (Harter, 2008; Marsh & Craven, 2006; Schunk & Pajares, 2005). Positive self-concepts have been demonstrated "to impact on a wide range of

critical wellbeing outcomes and serve as an influential platform for enabling full human potential" (Craven & Marsh, 2008, p. 104). For example, the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (Barr et al., 2008) emphasizes that students should "have a sense of self-worth, self-awareness, and personal identity that enables them to manage their emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical wellbeing" (p. 9).

In line with SDT, the development of a broad positive self-concept and a sense of competence may be more beneficial and a stronger driver of thriving in a rapidly changing modern world than developing specialized skills that may become obsolete. For example, Marsh et al. (2008) have demonstrated that high school academic self-concept contributed to the prediction of educational attainment eight years later beyond the effects of school, standardized achievement tests, IQ, and socioeconomic status. Numerous studies have also identified strong relations between self-concept and a range of outcomes such as well-being (Marsh, Trautwein, Lüdtke, Köller, & Baumert, 2006), coursework selection, completion of high school, adaptive academic behaviors, coping mechanisms, enhanced academic achievement, and reduced mental health problems (Marsh & Craven, 2006; Marsh & Yeung, 1997a, 1997b; Sommer & Baumeister, 2002). Self-concept and performance are known to be reciprocally related (Möller, Pohlmann, Köller, & Marsh, 2009), whereby they share a dynamic causal relation (Marsh & Craven, 2006). Substantial support has been garnered for the generalizability of such effects over age, nationality, different self-concept instruments, and ways of measuring achievement (e.g., Marsh, 2007; Marsh & Craven, 2006). For example, Valentine and colleagues (Valentine & DuBois, 2005; Valentine, DuBois, & Cooper, 2004) reported that the effect of prior self-beliefs on subsequent achievement, after controlling for prior achievement, was highly significant and positive in 90% of the studies they considered.

Craven and colleagues (e.g., Arens, Bodkin-Andrews, Craven, & Yeung, 2014; Chandrasena, Craven, Tracey, & Dillon, 2014; Yeung et al., 2013) have conducted multiple studies over the past decade that have consistently demonstrated the benefits of having a high self-concept among Indigenous Australian students for outcomes such as better behavior, increased school performance, and higher psychological well-being. For example, Bodkin-Andrews, Dillon, and Craven (2010) demonstrated that enhancing Indigenous Australian students' academic self-concept was effective in increasing engagement and enjoyment of school, aspirations to complete Year 12, and decreased absenteeism.

In sum, self-concept is dynamic in facilitating a range of desirable educational outcomes and psychological attributes that benefit personal development (e.g., happiness, academic motivation, career aspiration, resilience when faced with difficulty, etc.). By enhancing one's self-concept about how well one can do, one may excel and exceed in what seems to be not easily achievable. Hence, self-concept serves as an influential platform for facilitating life potential and getting the most out of life.

4.3. Passion in positive psychology

Research has underscored the importance of motivational engagement in the positive development and thriving of youth (see Lerner et al., 2011). Passion is a construct that captures such a full engagement in a meaningful activity. The *Dualistic Model of Passion* (DMP; Vallerand, 2015; Vallerand et al., 2003) defines passion as a strong inclination toward a specific object, activity, concept or person that one loves, highly values and invests time and energy in on a regular basis, and importantly, is part of one's identity. Given the importance of identity to Indigenous well-being (Wexler, 2009), further discussion of this important psychological construct—passion—is warranted.

In line with SDT, the DMP proposes that people engage in various activities in the hope of satisfying basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. After some time, people will focus on one or two activities that will facilitate such needs and the activities will be internalized in identity. However, further in line with SDT, the way the activity is internalized leads to the existence of one of two types of passion. An autonomous internalization (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Vallerand, 1997) leads to a *Harmonious passion* that refers to a strong inclination to autonomously engage in the beloved activity. The person is thus expected to be in control of the activity. As such, individuals can decide when to and when not to engage in the activity. With harmonious passion, the activity occupies a significant but not overriding part of the person's identity. As a result, the activity is in coherence and well-integrated with other aspects of the person's life. Therefore, when harmonious passion predominates, individuals should show more openness while engaging in the activity (Hodgins & Knee, 2002) and experience more adaptive outcomes.

Obsessive passion originates from a controlled internalization (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and refers to an uncontrollable urge and pressure to partake in the activity that one loves. As such, individuals lose control over the activity leading to rigid activity involvement. With obsessive passion, the activity occupies a significant space in the person's identity that prevails over other aspects of the person's life. As a consequence, to the extent that obsessive passion is at play, individuals show defensiveness (Hodgins & Knee, 2002) and experience negative outcomes such as negative affect and conflict with other life activities (Vallerand, 2010, 2015).

Research supports the validity of the DMP. First, strong support exists for the Passion Scale (Marsh et al., 2013; Vallerand et al., 2003) and the construct of harmonious and obsessive passion in a number of different countries and cultures and with individuals across the lifespan (see Vallerand, 2010, 2015 for reviews). Second, although both harmonious and obsessive passion represents passion for an activity, they nevertheless relate differently to the various elements of the thriving construct. Specifically, (1) harmonious passion is positively related, whereas obsessive passion is either unrelated or negatively related to psychological well-being (e.g., Donahue et al., 2012; Fernet, Lavigne, Vallerand, & Austin, 2014; Houlfort, Vallerand, Laframboise, Fernet, & Koestner, 2015; Vallerand, 2012); (2) harmonious passion is positively related to indices of positive health, whereas obsessive passion is positively related to health problems and injuries (St-Louis, Carbonneau, & Vallerand, in press); (3) harmonious passion is positively related, whereas obsessive passion is either negatively related or unrelated to the development and maintenance of positive relationships (Jowett, Lafrenière, & Vallerand, 2013; Lafrenière, Jowett, Vallerand, & Carbonneau, 2011; Philippe, Vallerand, Houlfort, Lavigne, & Donahue, 2010); (4) both types of passion are positively related to persistence (Bonneville-Roussy, Vallerand, & Bouffard, 2013) and objective indices of performance (Vallerand et al., 2008); however, only obsessive passion is related to indicators of rigid persistence in ill-advised activities such as gaming addiction (Lafrenière, Vallerand, Donahue, & Lavigne, 2009; Wang & Chu, 2007) and pathological gambling (Philippe & Vallerand, 2007; Ratelle, Vallerand, Mageau, Rousseau, & Provencher, 2004; Vallerand et al., 2003, Study 4); finally (5) both harmonious and obsessive passion are positively related to societal contribution and community involvement (see Vallerand, 2015).

Of importance is the fact that here is considerable empirical support for the cross-cultural application of the DMP (Vallerand, 2015). For instance, research supports its application in dozens of countries such as Italy, Spain, France, the US, Canada, and others where a collectivistic approach is favored such as China (Zhao, St-Louis, & Vallerand, 2015) and Russia (Burke, Astakhova, & Hang, 2014). Research in organizations also reveals that programs that facilitate strengths at work lead to increases in well-being and

performance at work (Dubreuil, Forest, & Courcy, 2014) through their impact on harmonious (but not obsessive) passion. Hence, it appears that strengths-based programs' effectiveness is due to their impact on harmonious passion, at least in work settings. It would be important to determine if such is the case in educational settings.

It is important to underscore that between 75 and 84% of people are passionate for at least one activity in their life (Philippe, Vallerand, & Lavigne, 2009; Vallerand et al., 2003). So, passion is not for the happy few. Especially important in the EMU approach will thus be identifying exemplars of harmonious passion, and the passions that are particularly embraced by Indigenous youth. What if we were able to create school environments where the autonomy support of school principal, teachers, and curriculum is consonant with that of the Indigenous community and conducive to the development of a positive self-concept and passion for learning in students? In line with research reviewed herein in education (see Marsh et al., 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Vallerand, 2016), then a variety of positive educational and personal outcomes would be experienced. Students who develop a passion toward an envisioned profession that resonates with their self-concept and identity (that may incorporate their past, present, and future as an Indigenous individual) would be more likely to persist and eventually thrive at school and in life. This is what the present perspective seeks to accomplish with respect to Indigenous education.

5. Conclusions: toward a positive psychology of indigenous thriving

Using Australia as an exemplar, we suggested that Indigenous disadvantage is a critical and global social justice issue of our time. We further emphasized that to simply eradicate such deficits is not sufficient and we should seek to promote the thriving of the Indigenous population. We also highlighted that there is a new Indigenous world where some Indigenous Australian children, youth, and communities are thriving and much can be gained from identifying what underlies such successes and augmenting and extending them. To address these issues, we have proposed the RRPM to stimulate strengths-based research in relation to key drivers of life potential that is conducted in partnership with Indigenous communities. We also identified the unifying EMU framework as useful for advancing theory, research, and practice and accounting for Indigenous Australian worldviews and for reciprocally enriching positive psychology with Indigenous sources of knowledge. We advocated that researchers capitalize on and combine the best available Western and Indigenous research methodologies, especially strength-based perspectives drawn from positive psychology, within the RRPM and EMU approaches. We particularly highlighted the utility of three current positive psychology approaches, self-determination theory, the dualistic model of passion, and self-concept research to a strengths-based model of Indigenous thriving, and the congruence and synergism of these positive psychology approaches with Indigenous values, voices, and methodologies. Further, all three of these positive psychology perspectives we have highlighted have been applied in multiple domains that correspond well to our multidimensional approach in RRPM and EMU to Indigenous thriving. Indigenous wisdom would also enrich these theories in relation to community thriving such as via community need satisfaction and self-concept.

Taken together, these elements represent a new approach that we term *Positive Psychology of Indigenous Thriving* that both advance research on Indigenous Australian issues and, reciprocally, extend positive psychology and Indigenous perspectives and methods by seeking to integrate the two. This new positive psychology of Indigenous thriving thus differs from more general positive psychology approaches in that the focus of research is grounded on Indigenous knowledge and epistemologies even as it applies the most current psychological models of motivation, achievement, passion, and wellness. It focuses and builds upon what is already working with successful Indigenous people and communities who are optimally functioning. Hence, a positive psychology of Indigenous thriving enables Indigenous success to be identified, measured, and more broadly augmented, therefore extending the translational impact of research. The potential for paradigm shift and practical innovation is profound. More importantly, such a positive perspective provides a new research agenda for augmenting the thriving of Indigenous Australians, and if successful in Australia, may find application for other Indigenous peoples and more broadly for disenfranchised groups.

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