



Helping Others Facilitates Well-Being For First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Leaders and Mentors Living with HIV/AIDS



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Introduction

Living with a chronic illness (i.e., HIV/AIDS) can pose challenges to psychological well-being; despite this, many Indigenous peoples living with HIV/AIDS (IPHA) continue to live well.

Indigenous knowledges and previous research (Jackson et al., 2021) suggest that helping others facilitates well-being through the development of the spiritual, mental, physical, and emotional aspects of the self. Self-determination theory and previous research (Weinstein & Ryan, 2010) suggests that helping others facilitates well-being through the satisfaction of the basic psychological needs of autonomy, relatedness, and competence.

The **current study** used two-eyed seeing to determine how helping others facilitates well-being among IPHA.

Primary Research Objective: To explore how helping others is associated with the spiritual, mental (including autonomy and competence), emotional (including relatedness), and physical aspects, and well-being for IPHA.

We expected that helping others will be positively associated with well-being, and that this relationship will be mediated by the four aspects.

Methodology

Methodology and Design: Community-engaged approach, UNAIDS GIPA Principles, decolonizing methodologies, and an Indigenous research paradigm. Convergent parallel mixed methods design with secondary data collected by Communities, Alliances, and Networks.

Relatives: Quantitative ($n = 117$), and qualitative ($n = 9$), consisting of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit leaders and mentors living with HIV/AIDS in Canada. Participants identified as female, male, Two-Spirit/non-binary.

Measures: IPHA leadership experiences, the Self Determination Scale, the Awareness of Connectedness Scale, the MOS Social Support Survey, the Measurement of Indigenous Racism Survey, the HIV Stigma Scale, and the Strengths-Based Resilience Scale.

Qualitative Analysis: Reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) coupled with a medicine wheel approach (Jackson et al., 2021) in NVivo 12.

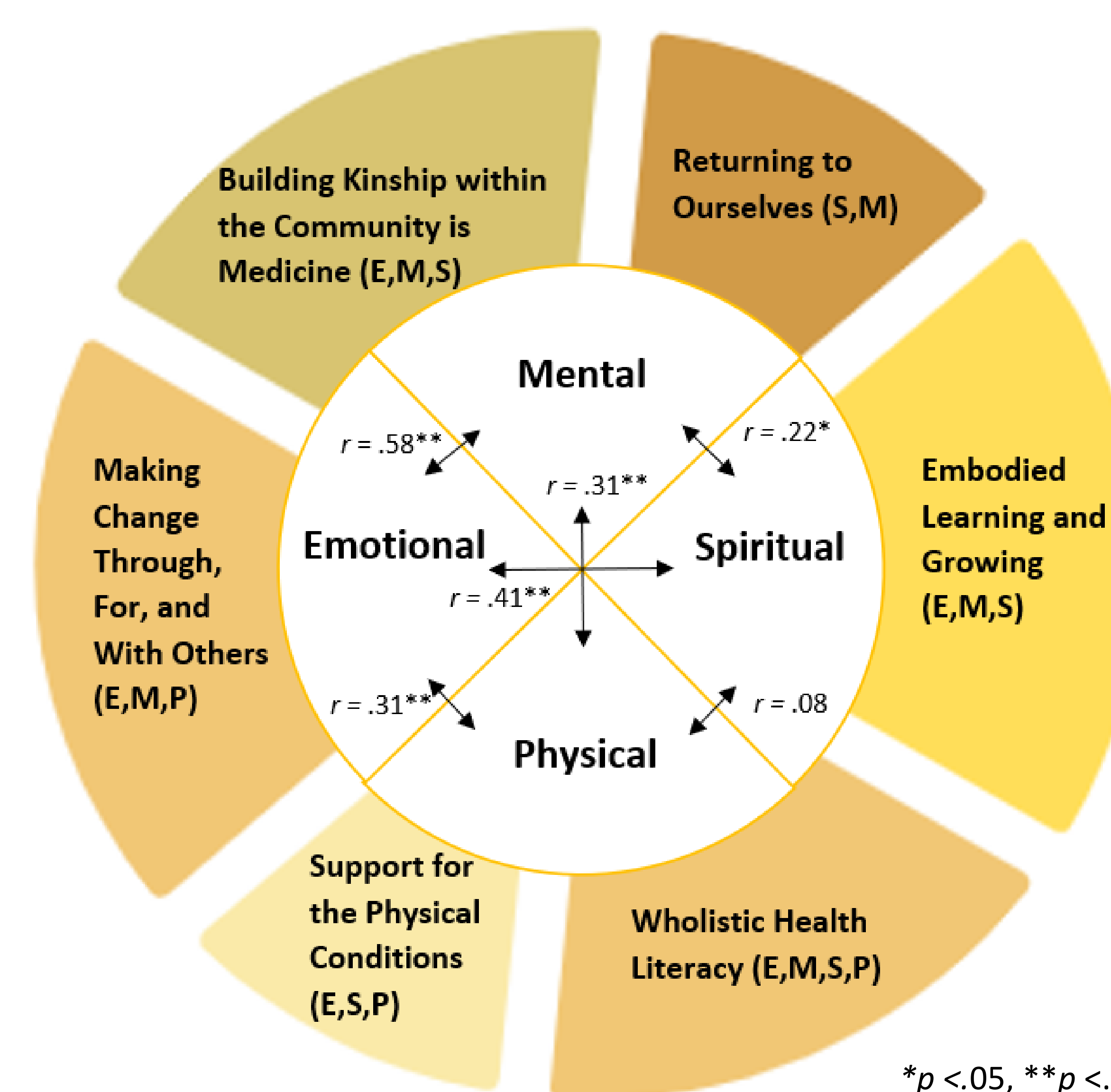
Quantitative Analysis: Parallel multiple mediation model using the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2013) with IBM SPSS (Version 29.0).

Six Major Themes

"[Culture] gives you that base that you need to do whatever you want to do. If you are an addict or an alcoholic or have HIV, being in groups of other people like yourself and have that community is strength. There's power. It gives you that foundation to stand on, a footing that's much more stronger than standing by yourself" (Kaden).

"I'd rather step down and have an Inuit there, an Inuit woman, who will be more efficient in delivering the services or even advocating at the national level [...] So I had to step back so we could empower another cultural group, the Inuit" (Kegan).

"My supervisors, they're all Indigenous, and they're so supportive and caring and nurturing and positive" (Sam).



* $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$

"I don't think the word mentorship I guess, I look at it as just the way I think the red road is. I think it's the way that our ancestors have always done it and our ancestors have said it's time that we do this again in this way. It's to stand up. We are taking, we are Indigenous our lives again [...] we are bringing back what our ancestors have kept safe for us" (Jesse).

"I'm with an Elder here quite a bit and I talk with them [...] The best part I like is eating the bannock after having the soup, and we're all sitting around chuckling around. They all tell stories [...] They're not there in a role as a teacher, but by them sharing what they've experienced [...] they help us with how to be a good person and to live your life" (Alex).

"I need to be balanced. I need to be emotionally balanced, spiritually balanced and physically balanced [...] So there's that balance act that one needs to understand their limits" (Kegan).

Parallel Multiple Mediation Model

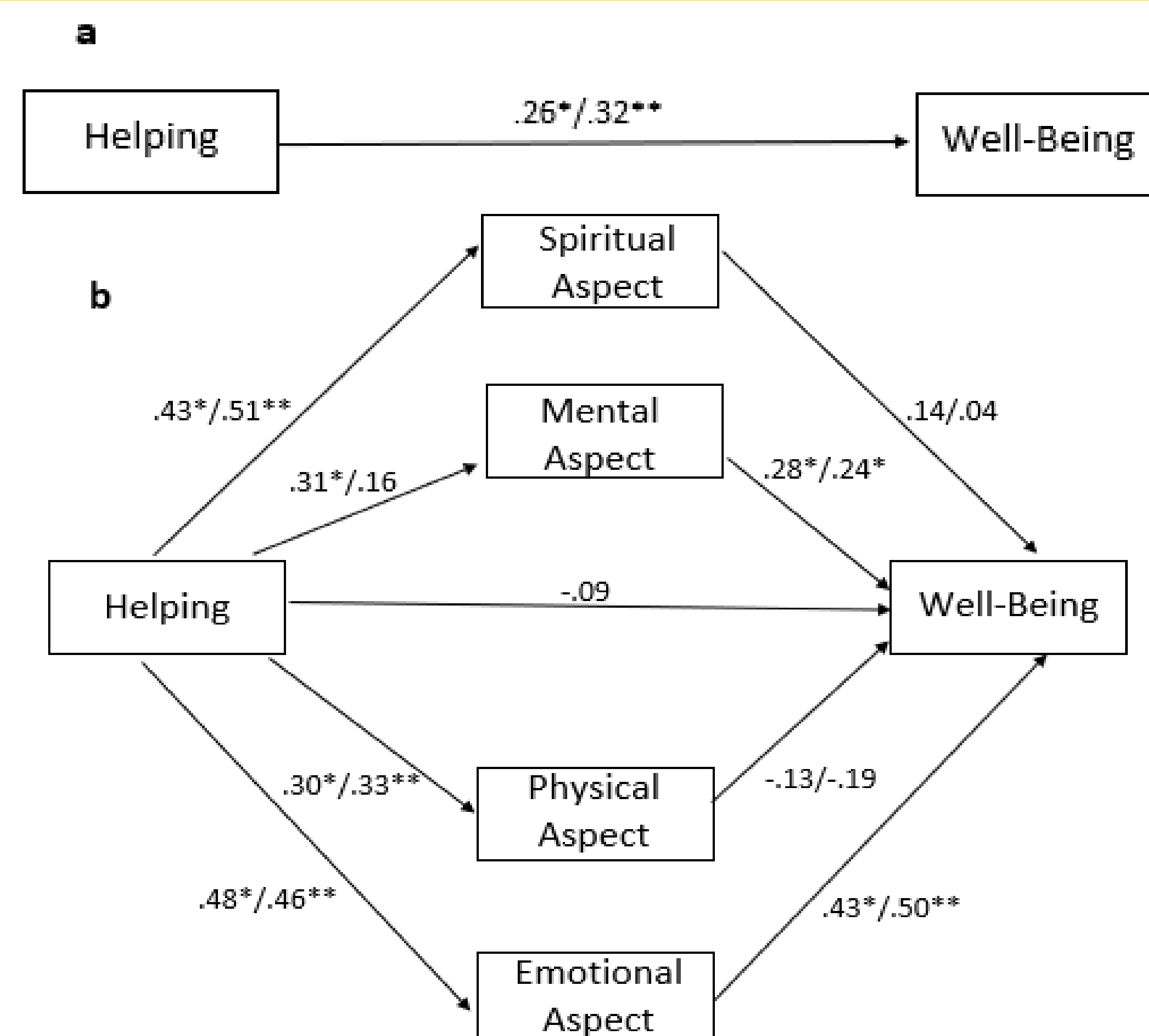


Figure 1. (a) The direct relationship of helping and well-being. (b) The mediation model with the four aspects as mediators between helping and well-being. Listwise and pairwise results reported. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$.

Discussion

This study extends previous research that found helping others facilitates well-being among IPHA (Hatala et al., 2018; Jackson et al., 2021) and non-IPHA (Weinstein & Ryan, 2010), by elucidating the mechanisms of this relationship.

Helping others was found to facilitate well-being through the emotional and mental aspects within the quantitative mediation model, and through all four aspects within the qualitative thematic analysis. Most themes reflected multiple aspects, which mirrors the quantitative results that found the aspects to be correlated (small to medium, Cohen, 1988).

Limitations: For the mediation analysis, the small sample size after listwise deletion reduced statistical power, with correlations among mediators influencing tests of indirect effects. For the mediation and thematic analysis, the limited Métis and Inuit representation limits generalizability.

Future research should utilize wholistic well-being measures (i.e., Fiedeldey-Van Dijk et al., 2021), test mediators as distinct simple mediation models, and replicate results with a larger and more diverse sample.

Acknowledgements and Funding

Thank you to the relatives for sharing their stories of living with HIV/AIDS. This research was supported by the Jamie Cassels Undergraduate Research Awards, University of Victoria.

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