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MEANINGS OF A SECURE MĀORI IDENTITY THROUGH THE EYES OF RANGATAHI: A PHOTO-ELICITATION APPROACH


BACKGROUND

- Māori health and health promotion models have identified wider socio-cultural contributors of wellbeing including cultural identity.
- Durie (1995) proposed a secure Māori identity may predict better health outcomes. He presented seven characteristics of a secure Māori identity: Self-identification, genealogy, marae involvement, connection with hānau, access to tribal lands, interactions with Māori people, and proficiency in te reo Māori.
- In a survey of Māori secondary school students ($n = 1699$) by Williams et al. (2018) a secure Māori identity was associated with better rated wellbeing and less depressive symptoms.
- Erickson (1968) argued identity formation is the developmental goal of adolescence.


RESEARCH QUESTIONS/OBJECTIVES



Research question
What does it mean to have a secure sense of Māori identity?



Objectives:
Explore how rangatahi form a secure Māori identity
Identify factors that have promoted/ and or impeded Māori identity formation



Given the exploratory nature, no hypotheses are presented

METHOD

- Note: data collection is still ongoing.
- Participants: 7 rangatahi Māori (F=4 M=3) from Taranaki who have received immersion kaupapa Māori education ranging in ages from 13-17.
- Purposive sampling was used to select participants from among graduates of Te Kōpae Piripono.
- The research design utilized photo-elicitation, and kaupapa Māori research methods.
- Photo-elicitation has been shown to be a positive way of engaging young people in research. It has been used to discuss a range of topics involving indigenous teens (e.g. health, sports, sexuality).

METHOD CONT.

- To begin, participants attended a hui with the researcher or arranged for a visit at their home.
- Participants were given instructions about taking photos.
- Participants were given time (1 week-ongoing) to take photos on their smart phones.
- The photos were then developed and the participants were invited to attend an interview with the researcher.

Te rere ō Kāpuni – a place of spiritual importance to me and where I feel most connected to the maunga

The plough is a reminder of Parihaka and my peoples struggle for peace and resistance

Prompt Questions
What does it mean to you to have a 'secure Māori identity?
What objects, people, and places are important to your Māori identity?
What experiences have contributed to developing your Māori identity?
Etc.




METHOD CONT.

- Semi-structured interview with the researcher to discuss the photographs and experiences, whakaaaro etc.
 1. What does this photo show?
 2. Why did you take this picture?
 3. Would you like to caption this photo?
 4. Which are your favourite photos?
 5. Can you tell me how this photo depicts your cultural identity /tukiri?
 6. What things about your cultural identity do you wish adults understood more about?
- Interviews followed the hui process outlined by Lacey et al. (2011)
- Interviews were conducted in person or via zoom

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Please enjoy some of the photos and quotes (raw data)! The data once fully collected will be analysed using thematic analysis.



"Identity to me is my whakapapa, you know, my bloodline, where I come from, not necessarily what I look like or you know my fingerprint, like that is part of identity but from the way I've grown up... Identity to me is being part of a whānau and knowing who they are... for me I can feel that my tipuna are behind me and when I look at this photo I can just see them there."

Tapaka Ruakere-Papuni

"That is rauhota o Tapairu, that was the rock that guided Taranaki to where he stands now, that guided him home. I used to live there (Punihopa) so he was a big part of me growing up... it felt like he was guiding me too."

Te Ngaru Waiwiri



"I know that I could always come back to this whare and always feel like tangata haukainga instead of a manuhiri."

"The roof that will always cover me and I'll always have over my head would be my reo and my culture"

Sapphire Barrett



"It's crazy how you can see that all the way from Mokau, it's really comforting to know that even from far away you can still see home, and then when I come back from long trips... I couldn't even see the maunga but I was like yes I'm home. It's funny how I feel that way about here and not anywhere else... It's like a pou in my whare that helped me become me."

Sapphire Barrett



WHAT NEXT?

- Complete data collection and analysis
- Host an exhibition with whānau and friends of the participants to showcase their work.
- Identify themes related to identity formation that may inform further research and interventions that targets promoting Māori identity formation in rangatahi.
 - Do these align with currently available identity scales?
- Identify contemporary ways that young people engage in culture

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