The highs and lows of sole parenting experienced by Wāhine Māori

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Abstract

Wāhine Māori and their experiences of sole parenting is an important field of study although it is under-examined in the field of research. The topic is common in literature that is related to political, economic and educational issues of children being raised by a sole parent. An examination of the experiences of wāhine Māori sole parents is the focus of this study and is an area with very little academic research.

This research was conducted using a qualitative approach relevant in exploratory research that focuses on experiences and perceptions of people, in this research wāhine Māori. A kanohi ki kanohi interview process enabled the voices of the wāhine Māori to be heard, prompting their detailed lived experiences. Kaupapa Māori, Māori-centred research and a Mana wāhine approach guided and influenced this research.

The findings from this research showed that wāhine Māori identified the importance of education, therefore completing academic studies and seeking employment. Essentially they became role models for their tamariki. A major contribution was the significant supportive role played by the grandfathers who had fundamentally parented them then went on to manaaki their mokopuna. Other ‘good men’ had made an impact with the tamariki for example mentoring them through sporting ventures. A recognition for the wāhine Māori as sole parents was they were successful in parenting their tamariki for their future growth and development and therefore strived for the same outcomes as others in society. Finally, these insights provide the basis for recommendations to improve social services for wāhine Māori and principles to guide their future development.
He Mihi

I te taha o tōku whānau
Ko Tararua me Taranaki ōku maunga
Ko Punahau me Waitara ōku awa
Ko Kurahaupo me Tokomaru ōku waka
Ko Pariri me Manukorihi ōku hapū
Ko Kohutaroa me Owae ōku marae
Ko Muaupoko me Te Atiawa ōku iwi
Ko William Matipou Wall raua ko Erana Wall tōku tūpuna
Ko Taha Waitere raua ko Kuini Wirihana Waitere tōku tūpuna
Ko Te Manihera Matipou-Wall tōku papa, ka mate ia
Ko Sally Wall tōku mama
Tōku toru āku tamariki
Ko Mara te mātāmua
Ko Marty te tamaiti tuarua
Ko Ashdin te mātāmuri
Toku toru āku mokopuna
Ko Emphacy, Ko Delyric, Ko Contrea
Ko Ripeka Matipou tōku ingoa

Karakia

Whakataka te hau ki te uru
Whakataka te hau ki te tonga
Kia mākinakina ki uta
Kia mātaratara ki tai
E hī ake ana te atākura he tio
he huka, he hauhūnga
Haumi e! Hui e! Taiki e!
Tīhei mauri ora!
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This thesis is dedicated to all sole wāhine Māori who fight adversity to ensure their tamariki and themselves have good futures in education and employment. I would especially like to thank and acknowledge the six incredible inspiring wāhine who took part in this study and gave of their time generously and so willingly. Thank you so much for trusting me with your stories as without these stories this thesis, in this form, would not have been possible.

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