A STRENGTH-BASED APPROACH TO DEVELOP PĀSIFIKA STUDENTS' CULTURAL IDENTITES AND MATHEMATICAL DISPOSITIONS

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Rosemary Curwen

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ABSTRACT

This study examines cultural identity and mathematical disposition development of Pāsifika students aged 11-13 years from a strengths-based perspective. It builds on previous work that advocates for culturally responsive mathematics teaching in collaborative learning environments built around Pāsifika values. Current research also urges pedagogical actions of promoting students' use of home languages and connecting students' "lived" lives to the mathematics classroom. These teaching practices have been described to affirm student identities as well as foster stronger relationships with mathematics.

A case study approach utilizing qualitative design from a socio-cultural perspective was implemented. Data was collected through group interviews with students and individual interviews with students and teachers. The Year 8 students and their teachers within the study were from two urban Auckland schools that have participated in professional development and learning opportunities focused on culturally responsive inquiry classrooms. Coded analysis of interview transcripts was used to uncover the perspectives of students and teachers and formulated the findings of this research.

Findings revealed that home language use, connecting cultural contexts to the mathematics class, drawing on Pāsifika values to promote mathematical practices and social norms, and the role of the responsive and caring teacher validated students' cultural identities and supported the development of positive mathematical dispositions. The findings provide insights into how culturally responsive mathematics teaching can draw upon the cultural languages and values of Pāsifika students to affirm their identities and mathematical dispositions.

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