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Whitiwhitia i te ora!

Culture and Occupational Therapy: A Māori Case Study

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Māori Studies at Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand.

Masters in

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New Zealand.

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KARAKIA WAEREA

Whitiwhitia i te ora!
Whitiwhitia i te ora!
Ka ea ki runga
Ka ea ki raro
He tipua he tawhito
He ioio nui, he ioio roa
He ioio atua Tane te Wananga
Houhia te uru ora
He ueue tawhito, he ueue tipua
He ueue atua
Rongomai atua
E hua to tino
E hua to aro
E hua to ariki ē
Kia tapatapa tu
Kia tapatapa rangi
Ki nga rangi nao ariki
Ki nga rangi tatara
Kia eke tiritiri o nga rangi
Tuturu o whiti whakamaua kia tina, tina
Haumi e, hui e, tāiki e!¹ (Jury in Wairarapa Moana Trust, 2007).

This karakia waerea was gifted to me by whānau to use in this research. It was used by Te Matorohanga to clear the marae ātea when the Māori Parliament met at Papawai in the mid 1800's. It was recorded by my great great Uncle Whatahoro Jury (Ngāti Muretu, Ngāti Moe) (Whatahoro) as part of mātauranga Māori he wrote down in te reo over that time. This karakia threads right through the thesis as does the influence of my whānau especially Whatahoro. The journey he took in walking in two worlds that of his Māori mother and Pākehā father has inspired me in my journey and in my use of dual - cultural clinical practice in occupational therapy.

¹ This karakia has not had macrons inserted as the original did not have them. To gain the right meaning the karakia must be listened to and left to the hearer to interpret along with whenua understandings. This also has not been translated and has meanings in the Wairarapa but these belong to te ao Māori and so remain in te reo.

ABSTRACT

This master's research reports the findings of a mixed methodology study based on qualitative and quantitative data that considers culture in occupational therapy practice from a Māori perspective.

Health perspectives of Māori and occupational therapy are explored and similarities identified. Tangata whaiora responsive practice (client-centred), holistic and wairua (spiritual) views are mutual themes. Whenua/taiao and environment also held great significance for both Māori and the profession, though occupational therapy modified the environment to enable safety, whereas Māori negotiate with the environment prior to making it safe. The major differences, in perspectives, were the recognition of whānau and the interdependent relationships so critical to whānau and whānau ora, with occupation identified as a significant perspective not supported as so significant to Māori practitioners. The implications of these differences were explored in this dissertation.

Eighteen occupational therapists self-selected to participate in a questionnaire given out at a professional conference workshop on culture, and this was forwarded to further participants who expressed an interest. Some of the respondents self-identified as Māori. Five specialists were identified to interview: three occupational therapists, two Māori health specialists, one an occupational therapy specialist who was Pākehā. A professional workshop of around 24 participants, self identifying as Pākehā, also contributed to the identification of health perspectives. The final source of information came from the researcher's participation in numerous hui of varying sorts where Māori health was forwarded. Where appropriate, and in order to provide greater substance and depth to the research, selected quotes from these sources are used. These are further designed to bring a more personal feel to the research and to illustrate how the various concepts impact on lives and ultimately influence practice.

Traditional practice and Māori understandings of occupation were also explored as were the development needs of Māori occupational therapists as minor themes to the key findings.

Providing holistic occupational therapy care to Māori in a respectful and collaborative way will provide opportunities for the profession to have a positive impact on the health of individuals, their whānau and, in turn, their communities, hapū and iwi.

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This thesis has been a journey of discovery not only for me but also for my family, and when whānau work to support a dream it is amazing what can happen.

Thank you John my husband for all you did and to my children Huia, Stephanie and Robert for allowing me the time I took to do this research. Dad thanks for all the editing and Mum would have been proud of this!

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I would also like to thank especially the participants of this study without whom there would be no research. It was exciting having each one of you as part of my research with your varied thoughts and insights.

This research is an offering to Kaiwhakaora Ngangahau (Māori Occupational Therapists) for having a passion to provide culturally relevant practice to Māori whānau.

Jane Hopkirk

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