Relational Well-Being and Wealth: Māori Businesses and an Ethic of Care

Manu Ao
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Doctoral Research Objective

To understand and explain how Māori cultural tourism businesses create authentic and sustainable well-being.
Case selection and Methodology

Qualitative using grounded theory

Māori research principles

Data analysis using Nvivo

Within-case analysis, case narratives then cross-case analysis
Practicing an Ethic of Care

People are called into being through relationships. In serving others, one is serving one’s extended self. Self actualization occurs in relationship.
Kapowairua

To hold the spirit is to belong
Ethical Failures

• Many businesses do not appear to practice an Ethic of Care and the “I think therefore I am” way of being in the world can lead people towards dissociation and unfettered ‘self-interest’ that generates an individualist, instrumentalist view of relationships.
What is the problem?

Yet I exist in the hope that these memoirs, in some manner, I know not how, may find their way to the minds of humanity in Some Dimension, and may stir up a race of rebels who shall refuse to be confined to limited Dimensionality. (Abbott, 1884: 107)
"O day and night, but this is wondrous strange"

FLATLAND

A ROMANCE OF MANY DIMENSIONS

By A Square

(Edwin A. Abbott)

"And therefore as a stranger give it welcome."

BASIL BLACKWELL • OXFORD

Price Seven Shillings and Sixpence net
In Flatland there are only two kinds of people
In Flatland there is only one language

Money is all that matters
In Flatland there is only one distribution system.
In Flatland there is only one approach to market

The price and product approach
Reification

- Reduces people and places to ‘things’, objectifies them, i.e., typologies
- Economic processes induce reification (Lukács)
- Reification linked to a loss of reciprocal relationships of respect (Honneth)
The antidote to reification is to build reciprocal relationships of respect (Honneth, 2008)
Living values in business creates authentic and sustainable well-being
Being Kaitiaki (caretakers) through a Five Wellbeings Approach

C. Spiller 2009
Bringing Forth Our Reality
“Give of yourself … the purpose of life is to serve others”

“Your wairuatanga (spirituality) is inside that rongoa (medicine)”

By remembering and consciously practicing compassion and kindness our interactions become a healing medicine
Take Time for Reflection

- Put customers in touch with a deeper experience

“I think we lost so many things on our way to success”

Practice taking time for reflection and encourage others to also do this
“It’s the feeling of love, of being loved through the manaakitanga, through the consideration, through the warming… That’s what they are lacking, that’s what they are looking for”
Get to Really Know Others

“It wasn’t just about making money…it’s more about: ‘Okay, we want to take care of you...’ ”
Economic Success from the “Māori edge”

The “Māori edge” is relational.

Value created in relationships accrues to foster economic well-being.

Value-creating vs. profit-maximising.

Profit needs to be processed into purpose i.e. well-being.
Te Ao Mārama is the world of enlightenment, of what has been learned in reflexivity with Te Kore, the world of potential (Porter, 2009). Beyond Flatland, in Te Ao Mārama, people are ever becoming authentic in a sustainable world.
“One of the most powerful forms of protest is to capture a space and transform it into something else”

- Teanau Tuiono (in Bargh, 2007, p. 128)

• Continue to look beyond conventional business paradigms

Fulbright Senior Scholar Research
Kia ora!


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