

## Supporting a values-filled approach in Aotearoa through Indigenous Tourism

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### Introduction

This conceptual study is based on a review of literature and a critical review of the Māori tourism product through digital and published materials. As it is exploratory the limits of this work currently are recognized. It offers an insight into the example of Māori tourism in Aotearoa which illustrates how indigenous tourism can demonstrate a “values-filled” approach. A search of the literature followed by examples of indigenous tourism business in Aotearoa add strength to the discussion. Māori engagement with tourism is based on Māori culture and values and this shapes tourism in distinct ways. These values include: *whanaungatanga* emphasizing attaining and maintaining relationships; *kaitiakitanga* referring to guardianship, care and protection and *manaakitanga* defined as hospitality and is manifested as caring and/or sharing with others. Our analysis builds on this and is supported with illustrative cases from the industry in Aotearoa.

### Literature Review

Due to its richness in meanings and applications, the concept “culture” is a difficult word to define. Ritzer (2016) believes that, in essence, culture encompasses “the ideas, values, norms, practices, and objects” and it allows a group of people or a society to live collectively with a maximum of harmony. Based on this assumption, culture, in a tourism context, plays a fundamental role in shaping the attitudes of people and communities, either as visitors or hosts, and in providing a basis of comprehension for cross-cultural encounters. When discussing New Zealand culture, Māori culture is an inextricable and distinctive component (Metge, 2013). Known as *tangata whenua* (people of the land), Māori comprise a number of *iwi* (tribes), *hapu* (subtribes), and *whanau* (extended family units) but they share in the rich tradition of songs, dance, art and oral literature (Butler, 2010). In order to construct an appropriate understanding of the Māori culture, three values call for attention: *whanaungatanga* (relationship), *manaakitanga* (hospitality) and *kaitiakitanga* (guardianship of natural resources).

*Whanaungatanga* acknowledges the significance of attaining and maintaining relationships and may be defined as “a relationship through shared experiences and working together which provides people with a sense of belonging” (Boulten & Brannelly, 2015). O’ Carroll (2013) states that *whanaungatanga* is a process in which people collectively get involved in order to enhance relationships. In real world, it is a high frequency term, both directly used or indirectly referred to, in a wide variety of contexts (McNatty & Roa, 2002, as cited in Boulten & Brannelly, 2015). In a modern, business setting, *whanaungatanga* may be expressed in many ways, such as the design of systems and structures, the development of plans and strategies, the use of networks, or the management of human resources (Spiller, 2012). But it should be noted that *whanaungatanga* is never a linear relationship that confines the connection between one person and another, rather it

reviews and renews the shared experience the Māori people of the past, the present and the future (Mitchell & Mitchell, 2007).

One important aspect of managing and sustaining *whanaungatanga* is *manaakitanga*, which is also one of the most important values in understanding the Māori culture on *marae* (a Māori meeting house serving for social and ceremonial functions). Gagné (2013) suggests that *manaakitanga* refers to “befriending holistically and demonstrating extreme kindness with the utmost respect”, which begins when the guests arrive and finishes when all guests depart (p. 152). Gifford and Boulton (2015) point out that the concept of *manaakitanga* is well entrenched in Māori society and is manifested as caring and/or sharing with others: being generous, taking care of others’ needs, and fostering relationships. In summary, *manaakitanga* is characterised as an amalgam of responsibility, hospitality and mutual respect. Ministry of Tourism (2007) defines it as “sharing exceptional and natural hospitality, knowledge, and beliefs, on the basis of mutual respect between host and visitor”. Huia and Liu (2012) further enforces this definition by stating that *manaakitanga* reveals the importance of interdependence between hosts and guests in Māori culture, exemplified by the proverb “*he tangata takahi manuhiri, he marae puehu*” (p.141), that proper and kind treatment of guests is vital for maintaining the life force of a *marae*.

According to Rhodda (2012), *kaitiakitanga* is a “Māori philosophy describing guardianship, care and protection, and providing a basis for our approach to sustainably managing our natural, cultural, and built environment for current and future generations” (p.120). Underneath this philosophy is the traditional Māori belief that people are a part of the natural order and are, therefore, not superior to it (Te Ahukaramu, 2009). *Kaitiakitanga*, as a traditional value, underscores the importance of responsible and respectful interactions between people and offers guidance to issues and challenges facing today’s Māori people (Mcintosh, Maly & Kittinger, 2014). It should be noted that *kaitiakitanga* both “had inspired a range of conservation and restoration efforts throughout New Zealand” (p. 80) and “remains a major source of conflict” (p. 80) arising from different interpretations of it by the English and the Māori (McGrinnis, 2016). Nonetheless, after exploring a great diversity of business practices fostered by *kaitiakitanga*, from the radically designed eco-lodges to cutting-edge ventures, Bangs (2008) comes to a conclusion that this ancient Māori concept gives rise to an ever popular eco-friendly movement that characterises the modern identity of New Zealand.

As observed by McIntosh, Zygadlo and Matunga (2008), the published definitions of Māori tourism mainly focuses on three themes: the control of the business, the nature of tourism product, and the unique cultural values. Early definitions of Māori tourism attach great importance to the first two themes by arguing Māori tourism is defined by either ownership or participation or the nature of the product. For instance, the Aotearoa Māori Tourism Federation (AMTF) explains that Māori tourism means “an opportunity provided within the composite tourist product for the tourist to have contact with Māori culture” (Aotearoa Māori Tourism Federation, 1996, p.5), which includes both *pākehā* owner-operated tourism providers of Māori cultural product and Māori-owner operated business. Ingram (1997) similarly defined Māori tourism as “tourism products that utilize culture, historical, heritage or natural resources that are uniquely Māori with substantial Māori ownership and control of the business” (p.2). In the same way, Bennet (1997, as cited in Barnett, 1997) has believed that Māori tourism refers to “any contact that the visitor has with Māori culture” (p. 472-473). This is inclusive of direct contact of Māori people, as well as indirect contact

of Māori cultural product. To sum up, the essence of Māori tourism is first understood as the involvement of Māori people and/or the offering of the product.

McIntosh et al. (2008) challenges this conceptual mapping of Māori tourism by arguing that the lack of clarity regarding the extent of ownership, the level of control and/or involvement, and the extent of culture-related content leads to a fuzzy understanding of the term. It is proposed by them, therefore, to distinguish Māori participation, or say involvement, tourism from value-based Māori tourism, whereas the latter incorporates the Māori values into tourism development, and thus could also be named Māori-centred tourism. Horn (2007), when researching into the way to foster rural Māori tourism business, finds that “this value-based definition is seldom seen as part of a working definition for people supporting Māori business” (p.7). However, Horn (2007) also agrees that the Māori cultural values are vital for Māori tourism business, since they affect the management, operation and development of Māori tourism operators. This argument is reinforced by the research done by Rigby, Mueller and Baker (2011), who recognise a growing interest in Māori traditional and cultural practices as people gradually realise the benefits that they bring to business in terms of sustainability, environmental friendliness and corporate social responsibility. As suggested by Tourism New Zealand (2015), Māori culture now is second only to the landscapes as the prime reason attracting visitors, especially international visitors. It is also predicted that the tourism business will have “a winning combination” if the tourism experiences provided could incorporate both the nature and the Māori culture in an authentic way.

In the past decade, Māori tourism witnessed a steady growth, largely due to the fact that the stakeholders’ concerted effort (Tourism New Zealand, 2015). In the past, Māori tourism is criticised of being pigeonholed in Rotorua, but now, while Rotorua still held the position as the centre of ethnic tourism, other parts of the country have also seen emerging Māori tourism businesses and tourist attractions (Diamond, 2014). Accompanying this dispersion development are the growth in the number of Māori tourism businesses operating in New Zealand and a noticeable percentage of tourists experiencing Māori cultural activities (Diamond, 2014). Māori tourism connects the Māori with the cultures of the tourists other than that of the Pākehā. A Māori Tourism chief executive Pania Tyson-Nathan, of Rongomaiwahine and Ngāti Kahungunu descent, commented that one of the major benefits for the Māori is that these tourists are from culturally rich countries (Rerekura, 2015). A prior in-depth field research conducted by Poharama, Henley, Smith, Fairweather and Simmons (1998) proved to be supportive of this assertion. Love and Love (2005 cited in Foley, 2008) identified five common features of Māori business including tourism as below:

1. They have management control (*control of their lives*)
2. Responsibility and accountability exists to a broader range of beneficiaries and stakeholders
3. *Tikanga* (cultural practices) is applied in the business environment
4. There are obligations to an extended family group as opposed to focusing solely on individual advancement
5. The business has an ethos that mirrors the broad goals, values and aspirations of the Māori world.

### **Values-Filled Approach**

Tourism Educators Future Initiatives (TEFI, 2015) has a mission “to be the leading forward-looking network that inspires, informs and supports tourism educators and students to passionately and courageously transform educators and students to passionately and courageously transform the world for the better.” This values based approach to tourism education aims to broaden and deepen tourism education to incorporate humanist values necessary for mindful decisions. (TEFI) values are based on five overlapping dimensions.

1. Stewardship: Exercising an ethic of care by upholding principles associated with sustainability, responsibility, and service to the community
2. Knowledge: Developing critical thinking, innovation, creativity, and networking, and appreciating different sources and types of knowledge about tourism
3. Professionalism: Aspiring to the highest standards of professional practice underpinned by leadership, practicality, services, relevance, timeliness, reflexivity, teamwork, and partnerships
4. Ethics: Engaging in good action and decision-making, underpinned by honesty, fairness, transparency, and authentic dialogue
5. Mutual respect: Embracing a humanistic approach to tourism, including a respect for diversity, inclusion, equity, humility, and collaboration (Dredge, Schott, Daniele, Caton, Edelman, & Munar, 2015).

The value filled approach fits well with indigenous tourism businesses in Aotearoa. The values that are culturally important to Māori are those which are also important to a culturally authentic sustainable tourism industry. Indigenous tourism in Aotearoa is currently growing year on year. Stewardship as part of the principles of TEFI fits well with Māori culture. The importance of maintaining, protecting and conserving the natural resources is part of Māori heritage. Care and protection for future generations is also part of Māori culture and to conserve and respect is embedded within it. To give further clarification are a number of indigenous tourism business examples below.

### **Examples of the Values-Filled Approach in Aotearoa**

#### **Whale Watch Kaikōura**

Whale Watch Kaikōura has become a model for indigenous tourism as an example for improving the socio-economic base for many Kaikōura residents including the local Māori community. It is also leading the sector in its environmental sustainability characteristics and protection of the beliefs and values that underpin Māori culture. Whale Watch Kaikōura a Māori owned and managed business, is an example of an indigenous tourism business that models the values of Māori in its vision, values, practice and planning. The *Tiaki* promise to protect the people and the lands now and for future generations, is part of the vision and values of this business. It's company values also include the 5 Cs, Customer (*Manaakitanga*), Company (*Tino Rangatiratanga*), Community (*Iwi Whanui*), Conservation (*Kaitiakitanga*), Culture (*Whakapapa*). A direct link with Whale Watch Kaikōura and *kaitiakitanga* include the following; all Whale Watch vessels are specially designed for whale watching. The modern catamarans are powered by inboard diesel engines and equipped with Hamilton propulsion units that minimise underwater noise. All on-board toilets are self-contained and never allowed to pollute the sea. Detailed records are kept for each trip, covering personalised identification of every whale seen, its location and

any unusual whale behavior. This information is part of the on-going contribution to scientific research by Whale Watch. Some Sperm Whales that visit Kaikōura regularly appear to recognise and trust the Whale Watch boats and do not mind being approached. Whale Watch skippers recognise individual whales and adjust operations to suit each whale. Whale Watch Kaikōura also support the local *marae* and youth of this community. They support and provide training and education to enable youth to gain work with the company and increase their likelihood of future employment elsewhere. The principles of *whanaungatanga* are modelled in this business with a view to taking care of the people and the land for now and for future generations (Whale Watch Kaikōura, 2019). This indigenous tourism organisation not only provides a sustainable tourism attraction it also highlights the value of Conservation (*Kaitiakitanga*).

The values filled approach is the collaboration between the indigenous tourism business and the visitors and other stakeholders. The visitors leave from their experience with a richer knowledge of Māori culture, environmental protection and an insight into the stories and that are embedded and underpin the whale watch operation based on Māori legend.

### Kapiti Island Nature Tours

This is a whanau company providing a nature and cultural tourism experience on traditionally Māori owned land. The business operates the ferry business to and from Kapiti Island, offering guided walks, overnight stays and kiwi spotting tours. Whanau guides interpret the history, culture, wildlife and environment of the island for visitors through their knowledge and ties to the whenua.

A growing and profitable business Kapiti Island Nature Tours is imbued with inherent Māori values, including *manaakitanga* and *kaitiakitanga*. Kapiti Island has been part of the whanau for eight generations and the business takes it's role as *kaitiaki* of the land very seriously. Whanau guides are proud to share the island's precious native fauna and a genuine Māori cultural experience with visitors from all around the world (Kapiti Island Tours, 2019). Stewardship is part of the guiding principles of a value- filled approach and this organisation recognizes this in it's everyday practices throughout it's tours.

### Indigenous experience through Air bnb

New Zealand Māori tourism is encouraging Māori hosts to consider providing accommodation and cultural experiences through Air bnb where visitors are hosted and engaged in indigenous cultural activities during their stay. Currently this is being piloted in Queenstown. Experience examples could be: collecting local *kai* (food) and preparing it; taking the visitors for a bush walk and collecting native kawakawa leaves then returning home and making a balm that can be used by them; introducing visitors to the local *marae*(meeting house) and *urupa* (family burial plots) to pass on the cultural stories and protocols that are attached to these places; And engaging in some traditional Māori crafts such as flax weaving or showing them how to use the poi. These experiences offer visitors a form of values- filled tourism by engaging and connecting them with Māori culture and traditions . This also models *manaakitanga* to the visitors through their stay with the Māori hosts (New Zealand Māori Tourism, 2019). Integrating the indigenous Māori culture into the accommodation experience through these

kinds of engagement and participation will support a values-filled approach to tourism in a meaningful way.

## **Conclusion**

Indigenous tourism businesses such as Whale Watch Kaikōura, Kapiti Island tours and Māori Air bnb, align with the findings of Love and Love (2005 cited in Foley, 2008) and the dimensions of TEFI . These indigenous tourism businesses model a values approach and embed the principles of *kaitiakitanga*, *manaakitanga* and *whanaungatanga* in their vision, goals and delivery on a daily basis. The ethos and importance of sharing cultural values through these indigenous tourism businesses provides a more engaging and meaningful experience for the visitors. Active participation and engagement supported by indigenous tourism organisations such as Whale Watch Kaikoura, Kapiti Island Tours and Māori Air bnb are examples of indigenous tourism businesses that can maintain cultural integrity and ensure that visitors leave Aotearoa understanding more about the Māori culture when they leave, than when they arrived. Further to this, make them more thoughtful of their own values by encouraging them to be more hospitable, act as custodians and aware of their web of relationships.

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