ROUROU MĀORI METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH TO RESEARCH

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Abstract

This paper explores the process of embedding Māori cultural ideas and values within the Rourou Māori methodological approach to research. This methodological approach was created during the conduct of doctoral research focused on exploring the underlying values of rongoā Māori. The paper outlines the approach and, drawing on the findings from the doctoral research, provides examples of the description and use of the Rourou Māori methodological approach to research. Implications for the inclusion of Māori and indigenous cultural values in indigenous research methodologies more broadly are considered.

Keywords

kaupapa Māori, indigenous methodology, indigenist research

Introduction

This article discusses the means by which Māori cultural values and beliefs, particularly the value of collectivity, were embedded within a three-year doctoral research study. Specifically, the article explores how the utilisation of a whakataukī provided a Māori methodological

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approach and data analysis framework for the research. The aim of this article is to privilege Māori indigenous ways of being in research and illustrate at least one way in which Māori have participated in the construction, validation and legitimisation of Māori research processes (Bishop, 2005). In developing the framework the researcher participated in the reconstruction and reorientation of Māori research processes that were meaningful to the participants and, in doing so, demonstrated the importance of including indigenous values in research with, and for, indigenous people.

Kaupapa Māori research is a way of conducting research that is based on Māori cultural practices and principles (Powick, 2002). Kaupapa Māori acknowledges Māori ownership of knowledge and control over Māori-led research, recognising the absolute right of Māori to conduct research according to Māori customs and traditions (Bishop, 1999; G. H. Smith, 2003; L. Smith, 1999; Walker, Eketone, & Gibbs, 2006). As an approach to research practice, kaupapa Māori focuses on the self-determination of indigenous peoples in research processes (G. H. Smith, 2003; L. Smith, 1999). Notwithstanding the philosophical imperative that Māori have to design and conduct research which may solely be of use to Māori, addressing questions of interest only to Māori, Māori also recognise there is room for both Māori and Western research approaches to co-exist, and ultimately be used for the pursuit of knowledge and understanding (Rata, 2012).

One of the objectives of science is to create a process for developing and representing knowledge systems. For Māori, knowledge comes from the utilisation of Māori cultural values and beliefs, and including Māori knowledge within the Māori research process is paramount. The re-imagination (Mila-Schaaf & Hudson, 2009) of indigenous epistemology as a central operating system within science is paramount. The aim of the Rourou Māori framework of data analysis is to encapsulate the Māori worldview within the research process

and in doing so acknowledge that Māori science is owned and legitimised by Māori processes of thought, worldviews, knowledge, sharing and teaching that has always existed for Māori but is not always recognised (Bishop, 2005; Cram, 2001; Powick, 2002; L. Smith, 1999; Walker et al., 2006).

Study context

The research methodology (including the epistemological assumptions, research question, data collection and analysis tools, as well as considerations of how validity and rigour would be maintained) were all derived from the principle of undertaking kaupapa Māori research. As part of the re-imagining process in this kaupapa Māori study, thought was given to designing a uniquely Māori data analysis framework which would assist in ordering and making sense of the data that emerged. As a Māori female researcher committed to undertaking research that would benefit study participants, it was imperative that Māori cultural values formed an intrinsic part of the study, enveloping and enshrouding all aspects of design.

The desire to create an indigenous methodological approach through which to analyse research data became a way to utilise scientific research methods inherent within Māori knowledge systems. Further impetus to develop a more inclusive approach to research was driven by the researcher's need to include all contributions to the research, the participants' views, and the researcher's analysis, as well as the mix and fusion of perspectives between the two. Such an approach to research would necessarily incorporate the collective worldview of Māori, which is to allow all involved to make a contribution. The inclusive nature of this methodological approach—the "Rourou Māori" approach described below—while drawing on key tenets of kaupapa Māori research, also draws from the hermeneutic phenomenology approach to research. Hermeneutic phenomenology focuses on lived human experience,

attempting to understand the world through participants' own subjective experiences. According to Laverty (2003), all participants in the research are involved in the research process and analysis.

The creation of the Rourou Māori framework is presented from doctoral research that explored the underlying philosophies of rongoā Māori (RM), the traditional healing system of the indigenous Māori of Aotearoa New Zealand. The study was conducted under the academic discipline of health psychology and focused on concepts of Māori healing and the impacts of these concepts on Māori health. Narrative interviews were conducted with 17 Māori healers about their understandings of RM and focused on the research question of "What are the underlying philosophies of rongoā Māori?" Each participant in the study was given a pseudonym which was derived from combining their stated meaning of healing and their iwi. Data analysis was conducted in a three-step process using an approach created specifically for the research entitled the Rourou Māori framework of analysis (Mark, 2012). In this article, interview data from one participant will be provided to illustrate the steps of the Rourou analysis process. The remainder of the paper outlines how the framework of analysis was conceptualised and utilised to analyse and make sense of data elicited from a group of Māori traditional healers.

Rourou Māori cultural framework of data analysis

There were several aspects of kaupapa Māori research utilised throughout this particular study into RM. Kaupapa Māori guidelines ensured that Māori values, beliefs and knowledge were upheld and respected throughout each phase of the research process. One such example is the deliberate process of whakawhanaungatanga that was encouraged by the researcher throughout the study. Whakawhanaungatanga was fostered to create a sense of whānau amongst the study participants and with the researcher. The process of whakawhanaungatanga included following rituals of encounter (Irwin, 1994), the sharing of whakapapa, listening more than talking, and using non-verbal body language to build rapport when conducting interviews.

In alignment with kaupapa Māori research principles, a Rourou data analysis framework was created based on the following whakataukī: "Nāu te rourou, nāku te rourou, ka ora ai te iwi". This proverb is literally translated as "With your basket of food, and my basket of food, the people will be fed". Originally, this whakataukī was used to signify the concept of manaakitanga meaning the care and feeding of the people. In the context of this research, the food being gathered is likened to the collection of knowledge, ideas and concepts. Therefore the proverb is reinterpreted into a metaphor as follows: "Through your basket of knowledge (Nāu te rourou) and my basket of knowledge (nāku te rourou), the collective basket of knowledge will expand (ka ora ai te iwi)". This proverb was selected because it enabled the collective inclusion of all contributing perspectives.

The Rourou framework encompasses the Māori cultural values inherent in the whakataukī "Nāu te rourou, nāku te rourou, ka ora ai te iwi". The aim of the framework is to provide a Māori exploratory structure to the data analysis, allowing the views of all those involved in the research interviews, both individually and collectively, to be incorporated, in order to derive a broad, overall perspective on RM.

In the Rourou Māori framework, each phase of the data analysis process impacts and influences each other (see Figure 1). The interconnectedness of all involved in this research process is a feature of the analytical framework.

It is noted that the use of this same whakataukī has also been used in research on the oceanic, indigenous, postcolonial and New Zealand comparative contexts of Māori writing in English (Somerville, 2006). Somerville's (2006) use of the whakataukī differs considerably from
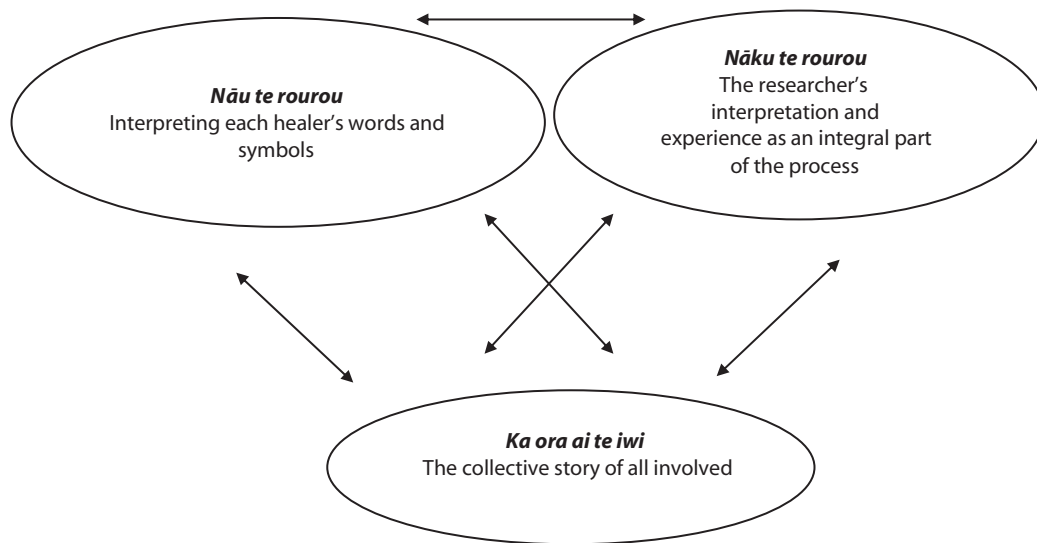
FIGURE 1   The Rourou Māori framework of data analysis.

that described here, in that she created different metaphorical meanings so that "nāu te rourou" meant non-Māori approaches, text and literature, whereas "nāku te rourou" focused on Māori perspectives. In addition, in Somerville's use of the whakataukī, the "rourou" represents the theoretical/critical offerings, orientations and perspectives of the content and the methodological and institutional dimensions of her research. Therefore, the foundation of Somerville's (2006) use of this whakataukī focused on a split between Māori and non-Māori research perspectives.

In contrast, the Rourou Māori framework developed for this doctoral work focuses solely on the inclusion of Māori values into research. Each part of the whakataukī has been utilised to represent the researcher, the participants and the contribution of the knowledge of all involved. Even though the Rourou Māori methodological approach is informed by non-Māori research perspectives, the focus is on including Māori perspectives in research.

One key aim of the framework was to focus and guide analysis and sense-making at each step of the research process. The analytical steps required the researcher to explore and understand the healers' experiences of RM healing practices, and to extend these understandings

to a broader perspective (Josselson, 2011). The following steps describe how the Rourou framework was used in the process of data analysis and how each step of the process contributed to the overall sense-making that was required of the study.

Step 1: Nāu te rourou

The use of "nāu te rourou" provided a way of acknowledging each participant's unique perspective. In Step 1, each participant's perspective is explored by analysing their stories. Bishop (1999) writes that traditional research epistemologies have developed methods of research located with cultural preferences, but which still retain Western concepts of research. Several aspects of narrative analysis phenomenology informed the Rourou Māori framework, such as the use of narrative interviews with participants. Narrative interviews were used to encourage participants to share their experiences in story form, rather than by answering multiple questions, as a culturally appropriate form of data collection.

Narrative analysis, which is concerned with the subjective experience of participants (Crossley, 2007), was used to assist the researcher with analysing and understanding

the healers' perspectives on their RM healing practices. In this study, each participant's subjective experience was respected and maintained as unique by presenting individual responses in near raw data form as a part of reporting on the first step of the data analysis process, as noted in this excerpt:

> The second healer had a strong focus on the herbal aspect of rongoā Māori as a relationship with the plants and trees. He shared the process that occurred when picking rongoā, which involved mutual communication with plants, and he described the plants with great reverence.
>
> He believed that the underlying philosophy of rongoā was that the plants, which he referred to as tuakana denoting a relationship that was senior to humans, would always have the answers for any disease. The respect he held for the plants was evident in the way he referred to them as though they were the wisdom holders of the power of rongoā, rather than the healers themselves.
>
> He chose the mamaku fronds as symbolic of his healing because they represented the never ending cycles of life and is represented by the term *"Mamaku cycles of life fronds from Ngāpuhi"*. (Mark, 2012, p. 67)

The first step in the Rourou framework of analysis was to examine each healer's interview and elicit what was unique to their understanding of the meaning of RM healing in their experience. An exclusive focus on each healer's input was considered appropriate in analysis of this first step, to acknowledge each healer's unique perspective and contribution to this research as a taonga in itself. The emphasis on individual healers at this stage was also a way to begin the interpretation process.

Each participant's interview was analysed in the same order the interviews were conducted. Analysis in this step was initially and intentionally focused on each interview in its entirety without reference to other interviews. The analysis focused on three main aspects of the interviews that specifically related to the research question. Firstly, the elements of healing that each healer considered important were analysed. This was either explicitly stated or was implied through constant reference through their interview. Secondly, what they clearly stated, or what was considered to be the understanding of each healer of the underlying philosophy of RM, was noted. Thirdly, every healer was asked to choose a particular symbol or object that represented their experience of healing. This first step in the process provided a concise and initial exploration of the individual opinion of each healer on the underlying philosophies of RM.

In practice, researchers who wish to conduct these steps in future research need to focus on the data gathered for each individual and focus on the core message that each participant gives. Each participant talks about many different parts of their lives, some relevant to the research and others not so relevant to the research, so this step is about uncovering the main message of what they were talking about and what seemed most meaningful to them and their lives.

Step 2: Nāku te rourou

The addition of the researcher's input in the second step, titled "nāku te rourou", serves to inform the interpretation of the participants' words and stories. This aspect of the analysis acknowledges the researcher's thought processes behind the interpretation of each story (Josselson, 2011). The inclusion of the researcher's thinking in the analysis process acknowledges that there is no demarcated insider–outsider researcher line, and includes the researcher's interpretation of the words of each healer during data analysis. Kaupapa Māori provided the methodological approach that would encourage an inclusive method of

data analysis, and the researcher's perspective has been included as an intrinsic aspect of the research. The cultural principle of whakapapa knowledge describes the unbounded collection of theory, observation and experience as seen through Māori eyes (Edwards, 2009). The aim of the researcher is to take the theory, observation and experience of participants and "see" their stories, through Māori eyes. In keeping with the philosophy of the whakataukī (that is, nāu te rourou, nāku te rourou), it is clear both the individual and collective perspectives are necessary to collate the whole. It is asserted that the individual researcher interpretation is key for the collective knowledge-making process in the Rourou methodological approach to research. This stance is not unlike the hermeneutic phenomenology principle of the researcher including their interpretive process in the research (Laverty, 2003).

Step 2 draws on the phenomenological tenet that the researcher both describes and interprets the data, a characteristic of phenomenology which assumes that the researcher is able to make sense of the personal and cultural meanings of participants, and that this then informs the researcher's account (Crossley, 2007). In the Rourou framework of data analysis, this process is presented as an integral aspect of the interpretation process, and is considered within the context of RM and interpreted by the perspective of the researcher (Lyons, 2007). The excerpt below demonstrates the input of the researcher in this next step of the analysis framework:

> The contribution of healer *Mamaku cycles of life fronds from Ngāpuhi* on understanding RM was the unique relationship that healers have with plants through communication which indicated mutually beneficial interactions for both healers and plants. (Mark, 2012, p. 67)

In this research, the interaction between the researcher and the data during the interpretation process is inclusive of the collective nature of the Māori worldview. Without the participant's words, there would be no material. However, without the researcher's own worldview and perceptions, there would be no interpretation process to collate the data together. Step 2 acknowledges the perception of the researcher of the meaning of the stories of healers as an intrinsic part of the data analysis process (Powick, 2002).

In Step 1, the data analysis revealed each healer's understandings of RM. In Step 2, the researcher focused on analysing the elements of healing that each healer considered important, and the understanding each healer possessed of the underlying philosophy of RM. The researcher then constructed generic categories from the individual accounts of healers that represented an understanding of the ideas and concepts behind their stories. At this point the researcher was also attempting to determine the context underlying each healer's experiences and the values that were inherent within the stories they shared. Understanding these values was crucial to understanding the meaning within the stories themselves.

The researcher then took the broad categories created from the responses of each healer and compared these across healers to note the similarities of these broader categories, as well as their differences. This process involved some minor changes to the broad categories, but each healer's unique perspective was maintained, even where a healer had a perspective that was not shared with others. The researcher aimed to ensure that the interpreted analysis emerged from healers' stories, while the data were being abstracted into the general categories.

In practice, researchers need to be aware of their perceptions and experiences which might be colouring their interpretative process during Step 2. There is a need to take the original data from each participant in Step 1 and ask, "How does this relate to the greater message of the whole?" Researchers must constantly refer to the original data of each participant and begin

to compare each one's contribution to the others as the mid-step between the individual and collective whole of the knowledge gathered from everyone.

Step 3: Ka ora ai te iwi

The contribution of each healer was then considered relative to the collective whole in the third step, titled "ka ora ai te iwi". Narratives are described as shaping and maintaining personal identity and are set within the social context of being considered alongside other points of view, dialogue and interactions (Murray, 2003). Narrative research aims to capture the lived experience of people according to their own meaning-making processes and to theorise this process. Consequently, narrative research involves creating a constructed account of the participants' experiences rather than presenting a factual record (Josselson, 2011). Step 3 of the Rourou Māori framework of data analysis involved creating a constructed account of the combined experience of all RM healers.

The focus of the data analysis was to derive the meaning of healers' stories, rather than reducing their talk into smaller themes. Consequently, each healer's story was added to the greater whole, and expanded the knowledge able to be derived from each story. This process created a collective story across all healers on each finding or theme. The Rourou Māori framework of data analysis was similar to narrative analysis, in that it was intended to "understand and appreciate the personal and cultural meanings conveyed within oral or written texts and to explicate the socio-cultural resources utilized in this process" (Crossley, 2007, p. 142). Step 3 involved consideration of how the experiences of healers were impacted and influenced by their own personal perceptions as well as considering Māori cultural values and beliefs underlying their healing practices.

As shown in previous excerpts from Healer 2, *Mamaku cycles of life fronds from Ngāpuhi*, some of the data focused on the relationship between the healer and the plant as a vital aspect of RM. The data from Healer 2 were collated together with similar data from other participants into one of the nine findings of the research, titled "The Synergy of the Alliance Between Healers and Plants". The data from healers were described, as in this excerpt:

> Māori healers described the process of picking and preparing plants in RM healing as a mutual relationship between healers and plants. Plants were viewed as living entities and communication was conducted between healers and the plants which created a synergy between the two that helped to enhance the healing. Even after being picked, the life force of the plant was described as returning to the people in a reciprocal process of exchange. This process was conducted in respect, honour and aroha shared between healers and plants throughout the entire process of preparation of herbal remedies in RM. (Mark, 2012, p. 98)

Further excerpts provided support for this finding, which were discussed in relation to the literature.

This methodological approach acknowledges that Māori knowledge is a collective and collaborative process, where participation from all involved contributes to the whole process.

As in Step 2, the healers' interviews were analysed in the same order that the interviews were conducted. Sections of the interview data were reviewed and analysed and compared with similar texts from other healers' narratives. When several healers had stories in common about a similar topic, these were collated together.

Analysis involved interpreting the overall meaning of each story that related to a broad category, even while the content of that story may have also illustrated one or more of the other concepts at the same time. Analysis in Step 3 aimed to discover the smaller themes within the broad categories that were in common with other healers, as well as the contrasting opinions between healers, in an effort to understand

each story in relation to the collective whole (Josselson, 2011).

Illustrative excerpts provided comprehensive detail on each healer's contribution to the group's collective understanding of each broad category and focused on the complexity of meanings elicited from the data through a process of interpretation and engagement with the text (Crossley, 2007). However, this process of determining the illustrative excerpts did not always involve breaking each concept down into smaller pieces of data. Long sequences of the stories were sometimes preserved in an effort to capture the depth and richness of their contribution as well as to remain true to their real meaning. As a consequence, often whole tracts of data were maintained to capture the broader meaning of participants' talk. Initial broad categories were modified depending on the stories from other healers. These were deleted, combined, modified or separated to correspond with stories from the other healers. The broad categories were selected according to importance to the healer, repetition of reference across all healers, contrast to other healers, and relevance to RM. Whilst some concepts were only referred to a few times by healers, they were included because they were considered unique and important to illustrating the multifaceted nature of RM. During data analysis, emerging concepts were continuously and rigorously checked against interview transcripts to ensure that the findings were embedded in the data. In the course of conducting the research, the whakataukī was a useful tool to "explore the data", allowing the views of all involved to be incorporated, and it was also utilised as a tool of validity and rigour to check across the interpretations made at various points in the analysis.

Together, the use of the three steps of the Rourou Māori framework of data analysis tells the collective story, ā tātou kōrero katoa (all of our stories), about the underlying values, beliefs and philosophies of RM.

In practice, because researchers must compare each of the participants' data to all the others, it is important that the researcher continue to immerse themselves in the data. Researchers will need to be vigilant that each of the final findings has sufficient support to warrant a full finding, and that the final findings are representative of what all of the participants said. Researchers must continue to ask, "How does this individual participant's message contribute to the whole?"

Implications

The implications of the inclusion of Māori cultural ways of being, doing and thinking into research methodology is supported by scholars who agree that bridging indigenous ways of knowing and Western research principles is important (Lavallée, 2009; Saunders, West, & Usher, 2010). Research that includes indigenous perspectives could be considered a gift which has the potential to offer new and creative approaches to research as well as providing a way for indigenous researchers to assist with liberating indigenous people from the oppressive forces of colonialism (Lavallee, 2009; Sam, 2011; Saunders et al., 2010). There are implications for future researchers and graduate students to modify accepted Western research methodologies and align them with native worldviews which, in turn, may encourage indigenous people to reimagine and recreate research that inspires the development of indigenous methodologies (Kahakalau, 2004; Loppie, 2007). The focus of this article has been on the use of the Rourou framework of analysis based on indigenous cultural values, but this approach could also be adapted for use in indigenous research conducted under other academic disciplines depending on their requirements.

An ongoing exercise in the creation of indigenous methodologies gives indigenous scholars the capacity to contribute to the much-needed and continued discussion about the use of

indigenist research methodology (Kwaymullina & Kwaymullina, 2013). Lester Rigney (1997) promotes discussion on indigenist methodology to determine appropriate responses to reduce racist oppression in research and shift to a more empowering and self-determining outcome for indigenous peoples. Rigney defines indigenist research as culturally safe and culturally respectful research, comprising three principles: resistance as the emancipatory imperative in indigenist research; political integrity in indigenous research; and privileging indigenous voices in indigenist research. Rigney supports the right of indigenous people to define and control their own epistemologies and ontologies that value and legitimate the indigenous experience. The inclusion of Māori values into the Rourou Māori methodological approach, as described in this paper, provides an example of defining and legitimising our unique Māori knowledge in the academic context.

Conclusion

Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) states that the use of indigenous methodologies and "factors" should be built into the research explicitly, thought about reflexively, declared openly as part of the research design, and discussed as part of the final results of a study. In the development of this analytical innovation—that is, inclusion of whakataukī in research on RM—it has been shown that it is possible to include indigenous perspectives and values in research methodology. We anticipate that this article, and the analytical framework described therein, will contribute to a body of Māori research that will continue to validate our indigenous Māori thought processes and ways of being in research.

Glossary

ā tātou kōrero katoa	all of our stories
aroha	love
iwi	tribe
kaupapa Māori	a way of conducting research using Māori principles
manaakitanga	the care and feeding of the people
Nāu te rourou, nāku te rourou, ka ora ai te iwi	With your basket of food, and my basket of food, the people will be fed
rongoā	trees, plants and herbs
rongoā Māori	traditional Māori medicine
rourou	food basket
Rourou Māori	name of framework of analysis
taonga	treasure
tuakana	in this context denotes a senior relationship between plants and humans
whakapapa	genealogy
whakataukī	proverb
whakawhanaungatanga	a sense of whānau
whānau	family

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