The value of indigeneity in the tourism and hospitality industry in Aotearoa – manaakitanga

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Hospitality within the Indigenous paradigm of manaakitanga (translated as 'warm hospitality') is founded on an 'ethic of care'. This ethic of care creates the space for a multi-dimensional wealth, encompassing "spiritual, cultural, social, environmental and economic well-being" [1]. This is similar to the UNWTO's sustainable development goals, which are underpinned by the three dimensions of economic, socio-cultural and environmental sustainable development [2]. Manaakitanga in Māori contexts such as marae and many iwi (tribal) organisations demands a values-centred approach that is based on the principle of reciprocity. This form of exchange extends beyond the economic focus of traditional business models and, when applied to non-Māori contexts, demands a degree of culturalising commerce rather than commercialising culture.

In the global tourism and hospitality industries, Indigenous cultures have become more significant to countries as a means to differentiate themselves from others [3]. Indigenous cultures are appealing to emerging tourism markets and the resultant economic benefits have led industry stakeholders, throughout the global-local nexus, to include Indigenous cultures in national tourism and hospitality offerings. In the context of the New Zealand tourism and hospitality industry, Māori culture is presented in several key ways. For example, the use of manaakitanga in New Zealand tourism marketing [4] highlights and promotes the significance of the culture to the nation. Tourism and hospitality can both support economic development as well as promote the uniqueness, authenticity and beauty of Indigenous cultures that encourages visitation, differentiates nations and showcases national pride. The tourism and hospitality industry is not always beneficial, however, to the actual Indigenous communities from which the intellectual property is derived. There is evidence that shows the use of deep and meaningful cultural values are sometimes misunderstood, exploited and not reflected in actual practice within the industry.

Indeed, analysis of the engagement of Māori women in the hospitality industry, for example, shows that there are distinct inequities in employment [5]. While these inequities are not unique to tourism and hospitality, the evidence shows that Māori women in service-sector employment, such as hospitality, are disproportionately represented in low paid, lower skilled, precarious work [6]. It is a paradox that Māori women's contribution as the face of the industry is not associated with decent work and career progression.

This paper follows a presentation delivered at the Critical Hospitality Symposium in 2018, where the concept of manaakitanga was critically applied to a range of 'hospitality' contexts as a point of social analysis. The importance of sustainable development in the industry lends well to engaging in further research on how Māori cultural frameworks can be used to address inequalities in hospitality as a starting point for a broader research agenda in creating high impact future value and growth for New Zealand's hospitality industry. This research agenda challenges current business models that tag on Māori cultural concepts as promotional tools for organisational profit-driven praxis. Indigenous frameworks of knowledge, such as manaakitanga, can create the space to bring together the key dimensions necessary for a more equitable, richer, ethical and sustainable global tourism and hospitality industry.

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