THE CONSISTENCY OF MĀORI VALUES WITH STAKEHOLDER THEORY IN ANNUAL REPORT ACCOUNTABILITY

Rawiri Taonui, Lesley Udy, Russell Craig, Susan Wild, Lúcia Lima Rodrigues

ABSTRACT

In this paper we argue that deeply-held traditional values in Māori culture are concordant with common theoretical perspectives used to explain the motivations for, and nature of, annual accountability reporting. We propose that Māori values are manifest in the annual reports of Māori organisations in a way that represents consistency with stakeholder theory. The paper’s methodology fuses Western literature-based scholarship with an indigenous method that uses oral information and the written literature of Māori scholars recognized for possessing traditional Māori knowledge and contemporary academic scholarly credentials. Empirical support is provided by examples chosen from the annual reports of four Māori organisations.

The paper finds that traditional Māori values related to Spirituality (wairua, manaakitanga, and tikanga), Restoration (utu, manaakitanga, kaitiakitanga, tikanga), Inter-generationalism (kaitiakitanga, whanaungatanga, tikanga), Governance and Leadership (mana, rangatiratanga, tikanga) are consistent with the central tenets of stakeholder theory. The authors posit that a deeper appreciation of how theory perspectives influence the presentation of a Māori cultural perspective in annual reports will enhance understanding of the central values of Māori. It is proposed that, as the influence of Māori-controlled business activity increases in New Zealand, business relationships (including those involving accountants) can be enhanced through heightened awareness of traditional Māori values and contemporary world-views and theoretical influences. This cross-cultural research has significance for accounting theory and reporting practice, as well as wider social and cultural implications.