

5-7 DECEMBER 2023 – AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND

ANZALS 30TH ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE

‘LEISURE FOR LIFE’



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'LEISURE FOR LIFE'

Proceedings of the Australian and New Zealand Association for Leisure Studies (ANZALS) 30th Anniversary Conference

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Leisure for Life.

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Edited by Brielle Gillovic, Richard Wright, Pola Wang, and Heike Schänzel.

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Polyfest: A space for pacific youth to participate and compete as themselves

Dion Enari (Auckland University of Technology), Pita Alatini (Cause Collective), Fila Fuamatu (Sport New Zealand) & Tita Leaupepe (Sport New Zealand)

Polyfest is a Secondary School cultural dance festival in Auckland, New Zealand that enables young people the opportunity to engage with their cultural identity, values, and practices. A key objective of this study was to explore the lived experiences of Pacific youth participants in Polyfest to better support their modes of movement and development. A secondary objective was to explore whether cultural dance is viewed as a physical activity and/or sport. Kakala and Talanoa were used to weave together the young Pacific voices and lived experiences. This framework acknowledged the collectivism and Pacific cultural nuances that evolved from the talanoa (conversations). Talanoa were engaged in with young people through various mechanisms (i.e., interviews, kava bowl) at each Polyfest site across NZ. The research showed participating in Polyfest has nothing to do with the value or benefits of physical activity. Young Pacific people will not engage in activities that are not community, culturally, or collective-oriented. Meaningful participation is dependent on the value that is placed on culture and identity and Young Pacific people believe that cultural dance should also be included as physical activity and movement. Overall, these findings underscore the need to prioritize cultural inclusivity, community orientation, and the provision of opportunities like Polyfest for young Pacific individuals to express themselves authentically. By recognising and embracing cultural heritage, practitioners, policymakers, and sports organisations can foster an environment that not only values their identity but also promotes holistic well-being.

Keywords: *community physical activity; Indigenous dance; Pacific youth; youth movement*