

An uBuntu Research Methodology – Exploring the South African Coloured Identity in Aotearoa New Zealand Through Shisa Nyama and uKhamba

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Abstract

The coloured identity of South Africa, arising as it did from the racism of colonialism, has held a contested place in the lives of South Africans in the country. For diasporic South Africans, where the term ‘coloured’ may be perceived differently by members of the host country, their relationship to this identity has prompted introspection and reflection particularly amongst younger South Africans. In seeking to culturally and affirmatively explore how coloured South Africans in Aotearoa New Zealand understand and apply the coloured identity, the authors employed the Affirming Methodologies theoretical framework which centres Local and Indigenous voices in the research process and recognizes the value of these voices in sharing knowledge. Within this framework, the uBuntu methodology was designed to keep faith with the cultural lens and practices of the co-researchers (participants). This paper focuses, not on the findings of the study, but on the development of and engagement with the uBuntu methodology. The uBuntu methodology, embodying the uBuntu principles of community, humanity and relationship, offered an authentic and affirming approach to seeking and sharing knowledges through the shisa nyama research method; the uKhamba method of data analysis was designed to discuss, critique and conclude on the knowledges shared.

Keywords

uBuntu methodology, shisa nyama, uKhamba, South African, coloured, identity, affirming methodologies

Introduction

This article focuses on the uBuntu methodology that was employed in a narrative research study which sought to understand the lived experiences of individuals classified as coloured¹ South African in the South African context, and who now reside in Aotearoa New Zealand. Research into the lived experiences of coloured South Africans in the country of their birth is a growing area of interest for social science researchers focused on identity from ethnographical and phenomenological approaches (Adhikari, 2005; Bloom, 1967; Groenewald, 2011; Nilsson, 2016). However, research into the lived experiences of coloured South Africans in the diaspora is sparse. Sonn’s research in this area reflects his lived experiences growing up coloured under apartheid before migrating to Australia. His findings reveal the

complexity of coming to terms with the coloured label being seen as unacceptable outside of southern Africa, and the psychological process of identity reconstruction experienced by those in the diaspora (Sonn, 1995, 2009, 2013). While most research exploring the lived experiences of the coloured South African community has been conducted in Australia and Canada

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(Langsdorff, 2018), there has not been similar research carried out in Aotearoa New Zealand.

This study into how coloured South Africans perceive and understand the coloured identity sought to employ a research methodology that affirmed the cultural lens of those who shared their knowledges. The uBuntu methodology is seen as embodying an Affirming Methodologies framework where the cultures and worldviews of those involved are centred and valued in relation to and respectful of their relationship with one another (Nakhid, 2022). The Affirming Methodologies framework centres Local and Indigenous voices in the research process and recognizes the value of these voices in sharing knowledge. Culturally affirming research is based on the traditions and ways of knowing of these communities and are considered valuable without needing to justify their existence or be validated against other mainstream Eurocentric or Western research approaches (Nakhid, 2022). Within an Affirming Methodologies framework, the knowledge producers and sharers are mindful and informed of how their histories have shaped and developed knowledges unique to their ancestral homelands. An affirming methodology arises out of our lives and living experiences, and is concerned with how we think about and locate ourselves in our world.

Within the Affirming Methodologies theoretical framework, the uBuntu methodology, based on the worldview and uBuntu principles of relationships, community and humanity, was developed to provide a culturally affirming approach to exploring coloured identity. An uBuntu methodology was envisaged to be embracing of the different perspectives and characteristics of the co-researchers (participants) and to provide a communal and egalitarian space in which to engage with the study. Within an uBuntu methodology, it was important that the research method also aligned with the principles of uBuntu and that it was culturally appropriate and inclusive for the co-researchers. Shisa nyama, a South African tradition of cooking meat on a fire was developed as the research method. The shisa nyama research method ensured an authentic and recognizable experience in which food was communally prepared and shared, and stories were listened to, debated, and respected including those of the primary researcher. The knowledges gathered from the shisa nyama were discussed, critiqued and analysed through the uKhamba method of data analysis. uKhamba, the South African practice of drinking beer collectively from one pot, was employed in keeping with the characteristics of uBuntu. All views were acknowledged and valued, and the key issues for discussion were highlighted following agreement with the co-researchers.

This paper provides a brief historical context of coloured South Africans. It offers an explanation of uBuntu and the development of uBuntu into a culturally affirming research methodology. This is followed by a discussion of the use of shisa nyama and uKhamba as research method and method of data analysis respectively to understand and analyse how coloured South Africans perceive a coloured identity. Although it is not the aim of this paper to present the results of the study, the key findings are presented.

Overview of the Context that Shaped the uBuntu Methodology

Coloured South African identity was borne out of the colonial project and cemented under the apartheid regime. Those classified as coloured were told that they were not African despite their African genealogy. It is from this positioning that research with the coloured South African community in a post-apartheid world was conducted. Employing a decolonised lens, an African research methodology was designed that would understand the lived experiences of coloured South Africans in the Aotearoa New Zealand context and explore their perceptions and practices around a coloured identity. For centuries, Western research methodology and its consequential power imbalance (Ndlovu-Gatseni, 2017) denied the voices and practices of Indigenous peoples and People of Colour in the research process. A decolonised approach to research enables new knowledge to be created and old knowledges to resurface through the perspectives of those sharing their knowledges in research. It encompasses cultural ethics protocols, collects data in ways that affirm the Indigenous practices of those who share their knowledges, and makes a positive contribution to their lives (Seehawer, 2018).

uBuntu Worldview

Though difficult to translate into English without losing its essence, uBuntu is widely understood as a belief in the universal bond of sharing and community that connects people (Ajitoni, 2024). The philosophy of uBuntu focuses on the value of community as the most important part of one's life. In this context, community encompasses the relationships that people nurture and grow with God, other people, their ancestors, the land, sea, animals, and plants (Gichure, 2015). The uBuntu ontology asserts that we are not born human, but that we become human through our relationships with other people. As a result, people embrace their humanity as they grow in relationship with those around them. In an extended form, uBuntu is explained using the isiXhosa proverb, *umuntu mumuntu ngabantu*, meaning a person is a person through other persons (Letseka, 2013).

Criticisms surrounding uBuntu include those by van Binsbergen (2001) who argues that uBuntu is not inclusive of non-Indigenous persons. Marx (2002) sees uBuntu as a guise for conformity, or as Richardson (2008) claims, the use of ubuntu in post-apartheid South Africa is to universalise without contextualising. For Matolino and Kwindingwi (2013), uBuntu is of little use in a modern, diverse society such as South Africa and is only useful in its natural and traditional context.

uBuntu is held to be a social philosophy and way of being deeply embedded in African culture. It is seen as honouring the dignity of each person and seeking to hold mutually affirming and enhancing relationships. uBuntu embodies our interconnectedness, common humanity and our responsibility to one other as a result of that connection (Nussbaum, 2003).

uBuntu speaks to our natural desire to affirm and work for the good of our fellow human beings. Having been in existence for thousands of years in most countries of Africa, uBuntu continues to lie at the core of intrinsic values in traditional African societies (Nussbaum, 2003). Gade (2011) proposes that uBuntu is talked about in narratives of return home which can be divided into three phases: the pre-colonial period which was seen as harmonious; the period of decline brought on by colonialists and invaders who disrupted and attempted to annihilate African histories, cultures and peoples; and the period of recovery as Africans regained political power and attempted to restore traditional values. Most authors' use of ubuntu is as a "human quality, African humanism, a philosophy, an ethic, or a worldview" (Gade, 2011).

Originating in southern Africa, the uBuntu worldview is widely known and applied in South African and Zimbabwean society (Ulvestad, 2012). uBuntu played a crucial role in the liberation movements and the transition to democracy in both nations (Kubow & Min, 2016). Focused on a shared humanity, uBuntu can only be lived out and realised through dedicated action in addressing issues of social justice. Its role in the freedom movements of Zimbabwe and South Africa was therefore crucial. In order to see others as people, equal to us, uBuntu values and practices must be implemented (Finnegan, 1994). Under apartheid rule, the mass mobilisation of organisations fighting for the same mission became commonplace. Political, religious and community groups worked hand in hand to oppose the apartheid government and its oppressive laws. This was uBuntu in action. The uBuntu philosophy gained international attention for its role in South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission - a restorative justice initiative that sought to deal with the apartheid crimes inflicted on victims by perpetrators. The commission was led by South Africa's first democratically elected president, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, and anti-apartheid freedom fighter, Emeritus Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

In post-apartheid South Africa, Archbishop Tutu advocated for the application of uBuntu to build a more equitable and inclusive South Africa. In his 2000 book, "No Future Without Forgiveness" (p. 35), Tutu expands on the concept of uBuntu stating "A person with uBuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed, or treated as if they were less than who they are."

A Qualitative Undertaking From an African-Centric Perspective

To understand the lived experiences of Aotearoa New Zealand immigrants who are classified as coloured in the South African context, a qualitative approach was chosen. Qualitative research is exploratory in nature, seeking to understand individuals' views and ultimately discover new insights (Austin & Sutton, 2014).

(Adedoyin, 2020) describes qualitative research as social science research that gathers and analyses non-numerical data to gain an understanding of social life relative to a specific group of people or location. Qualitative research, with the aim of understanding the construction of social reality through the perspectives of participants, was considered appropriate for an in-depth exploration of perspectives.

The importance of framing the research within an African paradigm and outside of one which was Eurocentric was crucial in countering the colonial creation of the coloured community and a coloured identity. An Indigenous research methodology shifted the research from a space imbued with inequalities to one that was intentional about meeting participants where they are, and in contexts that were affirming and culturally safe. Nakhid and Farrugia's (2021) work on culturally affirming research methodologies involving African communities in two diasporic contexts revealed the transformative nature of such a research process. Culturally appropriate ways of thinking, being, and doing allowed the individuals involved in Nakhid and Farrugia's research to feel a greater level of understanding and ownership of the research and its outcomes. Elabor-Idemudia (2002), in seeking to understand the difference between Indigenous and Western worldviews in her participatory research work asked: How is it possible to decolonise (social) research in/on the non-Western developing countries to ensure that the people's human condition is not constructed through Western hegemony and ideology? The need to understand communities in ways that are culturally affirming is pressing because, when this is done, the research shifts to incorporate the community's ways of knowing and doing, making it more meaningful. Culturally affirming research methodologies also enhance the sense of belonging, authenticity, and cultural relevance for those involved (Nakhid & Farrugia, 2021).

This study aimed to understand the identity experiences of those classified as coloured in South Africa following their migration from South Africa to Aotearoa New Zealand. The methodology developed sought to generate new knowledge by considering the cultural background of the participants and creating a space for those involved to share their views in a culturally familiar, affirming, and safe environment. By using a research methodology with characteristics that were familiar to the participants, it was expected that more honest and comprehensive views of identity construction and reconstruction for coloured South African migrants in Aotearoa New Zealand would be co-created and shared.

uBuntu Research Methodology

The African philosophical worldview of uBuntu informed the research methodology for the study. uBuntu is based on the principle of people being connected through a universal bond of sharing (Maluleka & Khazamula, 2019). The uBuntu research approach focuses on the community as opposed to the individual. It asserts that knowledge is created through communal discourse

and not individually. Different forms of truth or knowledge can materialise from the same conversation because each person adds to the discourse based on their own lived experience (Seehawer, 2018).

In the uBuntu methodology, all knowledge sharers make a significant contribution to the research. The researcher is not positioned as the central figure extracting information from informants; instead, the researcher has as much or as little to contribute as the co-researchers involved in the study and holds a similar speaking and listening position in the conversations shared and perspectives given. The equity of all involved in the research is an important aspect of the uBuntu methodology because uBuntu is about building a collective understanding through the sharing of ideas among community members. This aligns with the assertion that ideas are not property to be owned by individuals but are instead a common resource that should be shared willingly (Hailey, 2008).

Characteristics of an uBuntu Methodology

In deciding upon an appropriate methodology to underpin this research, it was intentional to select an ontology that would appropriately connect with those involved in the study. Gaining meaningful insights into a community whose identity classification was borne out of colonisation required undertaking a move away from Eurocentric ways of thinking and doing. The uBuntu worldview, underpinned by values that are lived out in community with others (Maluleke, 2020), seemed a culturally affirming and relevant approach for a methodological framework. Underpinned by the uBuntu principles, such a methodology would decentre the researcher and enable all participants to hold equal value in the research. Instead of the researcher extracting information from respondents, the research participants become co-researchers and co-owners of the research.

As a research methodology, uBuntu is reflective of the interpretive paradigm, which seeks to understand the lived experiences of individuals (Mbatyoyi, 2022). uBuntu methodology also aligns with a social constructionist approach whereby each person's subjective experience of the world is valid because it is their lived reality, and this reality is socially constructed (Aikhionbare, 2007). Our social reality is created and understood by the connections we have with other people and with the environment. While Western worldviews tend to focus on the individual – the I/You relationship, Indigenous worldviews focus on the community – the I/We relationship (Chilisa, 2012). In addition, a methodology based on the uBuntu philosophy, like other Indigenous research methodologies, does not claim that truth is absolute. Unlike the Eurocentric belief in universalism and imposed knowledge, an uBuntu research methodology focuses on the creation of new knowledge based on an individual's personal experiences – past and present – and view of the world (Heleta, 2018).

An uBuntu informed methodology places emphasis on the value of the spoken word, as the tradition of storytelling is

central to African culture and has been used as a means of passing down knowledge from one generation to the next (Tuwe, 2016). The stories that are told by elders in African communities are purposeful and people focused. They are borne out of the experiences and struggles of forefathers and mothers and teach moral lessons to listeners. Woven into the stories are elements of history, tradition, and values (Nakhid & Santana, 2023). The participatory experience of African storytelling makes it an interactive communal experience where knowledge is shared amongst the group.

At its core, uBuntu is about the importance of community. In an uBuntu research process, the community plays an active role in setting the agenda, whilst simultaneously being the agenda (Seehawer, 2018). This is characteristic of the holistic nature of Indigenous research methodologies the world over, such as Kaupapa Māori (Te Apatu et al., 2014), Afrocentricity (Mkabela, 2005) and methodologies based on Native Canadian peoples (Kovach et al., 2013). These considerations were crucial to the development of an uBuntu methodology.

Understanding the reconstruction of identity for those classified as coloured South African in the diaspora held great personal interest for one of the authors as well as for several South African friends and family members in Aotearoa New Zealand. The lack of a pre-set agenda and thus a pre-determined outcome were also by design so as not to prioritize the needs and interests of the researcher over those of the community. In an uBuntu research methodology, the participants are not simply informants for the purpose of collecting research data. They are co-researchers in the generation of new knowledge as a community. Consultations with coloured South African family and friends who understood and were living the complexities embedded within the research topic assisted in formulating and guiding the topics to discuss.

Co-Researchers' Input and Positionality Within an uBuntu Methodology

The community members consulted were diverse in age, gender, language, and region of South Africa, to ensure that the topics of discussion did not speak only to the interests of a certain demographic. The emphasis on forming positive and authentic relationships cannot be overstated in an uBuntu research framework. As such, the way in which participants were engaged with from the beginning needed to align with the values of uBuntu. The recruitment took into account the small size of the community and the limited number of individuals who fit the participation criteria. The selection began with family members and friends in the community who in turn identified suitable participants who either contacted the main researcher² or gave permission to be contacted. In keeping with the oral traditions of African culture, potential participants were told the origin story of the research topic. The researcher is also a member of the South African community, and their knowledge and understanding of the issues

were valid, though not universal. Relying solely on their own interpretation and views of coloured identity to inform the topics would have compromised the collaborative nature of the uBuntu research process. The researcher explained their longstanding passion and interest in understanding coloured identity outside of South Africa, and in the many experiences that they had shared and heard from others who were classified coloured in South Africa and now resided in Aotearoa.

In an uBuntu framework, relationships extend beyond people to include other living and non-living elements (Seehawer, 2018). This encompasses our relationships with our ancestors, fauna, flora, the land, and sea. In the context of ancestors, the collectivist nature of coloured South African communities meant that elders (grandparents and great-grandparents) are treated with respect and are valued for the knowledge they hold of the past and of the generations that came before them. With the history of coloured people in South Africa dating back to the 17th century, most coloured South Africans mixed race identity goes back at least two generations. The uBuntu framework therefore created a space for those classified as coloured South African to discuss and explore their African ancestry.

Criteria for Participants

In order to understand the lived experiences of coloured South African immigrants in Aotearoa New Zealand, the voices of those in the community needed to be heard. The co-researchers were born in South Africa and classified as coloured. In addition, they would have been raised culturally coloured – this meant that they would have lived in a community classified as coloured by the apartheid Group Areas Act law, and raised by coloured parents.

It was also important that the participants had knowledge of South Africa's social, political, and racial dynamics. They were permanently residing in Aotearoa New Zealand at the time of the study and living in Tamaki Makaurau (Auckland). Another criterion was that the co-researchers had lived in Aotearoa for at least five years which would have given them the opportunity to understand the social, political, and racial dynamics of the country. They were also 18 years of age or older and were a mix of genders, ages, languages, and hometowns in South Africa to ensure that diverse views were socially, if not statistically, represented.

Participants as Co-Researchers and Storytellers

The uBuntu research methodology holds that participants are co-researchers and will be involved in and have agency in the research process. Every conversation with prospective co-researchers held the privilege of learning about their identity journey. They were open about their perspectives on the research topic and how a coloured South African identity impacted their lived experience. The researcher shared the purpose of the research and explained that it would be

conducted using an uBuntu methodology. Participants were informed that their involvement in the uBuntu research process would be active. They would be co-researchers in the research process in keeping with the uBuntu worldview that all individuals have equal value and make a significant contribution to the community, whether they chose to share in great detail, or listened to what others were saying. The understanding of participants as co-researchers was vital as it affirmed and centred their ways of knowing and being as a community (Nakhid et al., 2023; Seehawer, 2018).

The uBuntu methodology was designed to ensure reciprocal engagement. The co-researchers also played a role in the analysis of the data. After the sharing and creating of knowledge, the co-researchers met again to discuss and analyse, in their own way, the knowledges that were shared, and to build on the relationships that had been formed due to their involvement in the research (Santana et al., 2019).

Shisa Nyama Research Method

A research method applied within an uBuntu methodology should be consistent with the uBuntu worldview. Given the Indigenous nature of the uBuntu research methodology, it was important to have an Indigenous research method that spoke to the values of uBuntu and maintained legitimacy and authenticity with the methodology. The Indigenous practice of shisa nyama was developed as the research method in keeping with the philosophy of uBuntu (community, humanity, sharing, reciprocity).

Shisa nyama, literally meaning 'to burn meat' in isiZulu, is a social gathering where meat is cooked over a charcoal fire with those in attendance sharing conversations around the fire. The world's first shisa nyama dates back more than one million years, with ash being found in a South African cave in 2012 that hinted to the origins of cooking over a fire.⁶ The concept of shisa nyama is derived from African identity, culture and heritage (du Rand & Fisher, 2020). The First Nations people of South Africa, the Khoekhoe and Sān, who in modern day South Africa are classified as coloured, engaged in communal stories and interchange of ideas around the fire. A university of Utah study (Wiessner, 2014) explored how these fireside Khoesān conversations impacted human social and cultural evolution by creating a sense of community and encouraging ideas. Fireside activities centred on conversations that evoked the imagination, helped people remember and understand others in their external networks, healed rifts of the day, and conveyed information about cultural institutions that regulated behaviour and generated trust. The desire for fireside settings with intimate conversations and evening stories remain with us today.

Known as a braai in South Africa, shisa nyama gatherings are commonplace in South African society and are an opportunity for family and friends to connect and share in discourse over a traditional meal. The braai is traditional in the coloured communities in South Africa and in their adopted land of Aotearoa

New Zealand. Braai Day, an annual event held in Auckland, New Zealand creates a space for South Africans to share food, community, and conversation in Aotearoa. Attended by many coloured South Africans, the event is seen as an opportunity for the community to celebrate their culture and connect with one another (Wessels, 2016).

At a shisa nyama, meat is cooked over an open fire and those gathered engage in open conversation. A shisa nyama would typically take place at the home of the host, with guests being welcomed into their personal space and treated with African hospitality. In African culture, hospitality is central to life, and welcoming guests into one's home is an important part of African culture. It is an uBuntu value that speaks to the need for us to actively live in community (Hailey, 2008). To ensure that the research was conducted in a culturally affirming way, shisa nyama events were held at the home of the researcher with the co-researchers engaged in naturally occurring conversations around a fire and sharing a meal together.

The act of people coming together to share in conversation and community at a shisa nyama is uBuntu in practice. The shisa nyama research method promoted communication that was authentic and unfiltered, making it an appropriate way to engage in meaningful discourse that provided insights into the identity reconstruction of those classified as coloured in South Africa. The coloured South African community's familiarity with a shisa nyama increased the likelihood that they were more likely to trust the research process and to speak openly on personal issues and perspectives. By using a culturally affirming method, importance is placed on the setting and the way in which knowledge is shared amongst members of the community which, in turn, influences the way in which participants engage (Nakhid & Farrugia, 2021). In Nakhid and Farrugia's studies, the practice of sharing and coming together was shown to be culturally common amongst African communities on the continent and in the diaspora as they spoke to the values of hospitality and sense of place.

In this study, knowledge was shared at two shisa nyama occasions each involving five co-researchers. The participants received text message reminders leading up to the event. At each shisa nyama, traditional dishes were prepared by the researcher. These included uphutu (maize meal porridge), chakalaka (spicy tomato-based relish), morogo (braised spinach), irostile/roosterbrood (bread baked over the fire), and a variety of meats such as sosaties (chicken kebabs), wors (beef sausage) and lamb chops. The food selection was important because these dishes would typically be served at a shisa nyama and were familiar to the participants. The non-meat dishes were prepared beforehand, whilst the co-researchers participated in the cooking of the meat dishes around the fire.

The research questions sought to understand the lived experiences of those classified as coloured in South Africa and who now reside in Aotearoa New Zealand. The questions explored identity from the perspectives of the co-researchers - What does it mean to be coloured? What does it mean to be coloured outside of South Africa? How do you identify in Aotearoa New Zealand?

While the meat was being cooked, the co-researchers began the conversations. Two audio recording devices were used, and more than 5 hours of conversations were recorded with their permission (Nakhid & Santana, 2023). The topics that were selected prior to the shisa nyama and in consultation with the co-researchers were: Origins, ancestors, and the importance of whakapapa³ (lineage) in the South African context; Colouredness; Blackness; Africanness; Kiwiness and sense of community in Aotearoa; Acculturation in the New Zealand context; and Future generations of coloured South African immigrants in Aotearoa New Zealand. The above-mentioned topics were introduced naturally and did not follow a particular structure. Topics were introduced at any point, with most organically being discussed and typically following on from an earlier topic. The absence of time limits enabled the conversations to flow without co-researchers feeling hurried. This enabled each topic to be discussed to the extent that the co-researchers felt appropriate, and they were free to share as much or as little as they felt comfortable. Fernandez Santana's (2020) research, which employed the culturally affirming Caribbean methodology of Liming and Ole Talk as an appropriate way of exploring Caribbean identity in Aotearoa, embodied similar characteristics of agency and autonomy over the conversations, and resulted in community members sharing knowledge and creating new insights into the Caribbean community in Aotearoa. The co-researchers' choice of topics for discussion as opposed to structured questions placed ownership in their hands, as well as the decisions on the questions asked, and the length of time to discuss a topic.

uKhamba Data Analysis

In developing the uBuntu methodology, it was necessary to consider an appropriate and culturally affirming method of data analysis that reflected the values of uBuntu and which truly engaged the participants as co-researchers. Most Western data analytical methods rely on the researcher to individually make sense of the data and to create new knowledge from their perspective of what was most pertinent in the data. We believed that analysing the data in this way compromised the uBuntu methodology and we sought an Indigenous approach that could be adapted to the research context. A Pacific research study carried out by Tucker (2020) prompted our thinking. The magic malolo, a fish in Pacific culture, was used as a culturally relevant symbol for participants in Tucker's study to decide which elements of the data collected were most relevant to them. This gave the participants control of the themes and sub-themes that made up the findings. In essence, the participants actively engaged in the data analysis as co-analysts with the primary researcher. This approach resonated strongly in the development and application of a culturally relevant and appropriate method of data analysis within an uBuntu research methodology.

Given the importance of community in an uBuntu research methodology, the uKhamba data analytical approach was

conceptualized. uKhamba (plural: izinkamba) is a ceremonial beer pot made from clay. The Zulu people of South Africa traditionally crafted large earthenware vessels used for brewing, storing and serving umqombothi (traditional beer). The beer is lifted out of the pot with a ladle made from a bottle gourd (inkhezo) (Jolles, 2005). The uKhamba symbolises unity and the communal act of sharing, values that are fundamental to the uBuntu worldview. The term uKhamba consists of two words - “*Ukukhama*” and “*Bamba*.” The first means to squeeze out and compress while the latter means to hold in space or receive. It is said to be a metaphor of the human mind’s capacity for extensive thought and memory. The uKhamba vessel thus symbolizes a reservoir of all that is valuable to nourish humankind’s physical and spiritual worlds.⁴ The uKhamba method of data analysis ensured that the co-researchers were instrumental in determining the key topics that resulted from the discussions related to the research questions. Following on from the conversations at the two shisa nyama, the co-researchers were given pieces of paper and asked to write down the ideas and arguments that they found to be most pertinent in relation to the research questions. The uKhamba was passed around for each co-researcher to place their notes. The co-researchers were not restricted in the number of discussion points that they could write down. The topics that were most mentioned became the themes and sub-themes explored in the findings. This process had been discussed and agreed to by the co-researchers prior to the uKhamba taking place.

Limitations of the uBuntu Methodology

There are limitations to the uBuntu methodology. First, the inaugural development and implementation of the uBuntu methodology in this study necessitated a small group of participants. As such, the outcomes of the research cannot claim to be statistically representative of the coloured South African community in Aotearoa. While we cannot generalize the experiences of the co-researchers to the wider coloured South African community, members of this community might consider the findings representative of their experiences. Second, the lack of existing research in this area makes it difficult to claim that the use of the uBuntu methodology provided for a more authentic and accurate view of identity construction for coloured South African immigrants in Aotearoa or other countries. We can only argue that a culturally relevant and affirming methodology such as the uBuntu methodology is more likely to do so (Nakhid, 2022; Nakhid et al., 2022).

Discussion

Through an Affirming Methodologies theoretical framework, the uBuntu methodology centred Indigenous South African voices in the research process and recognized the value of those voices. Within the uBuntu Methodology, the knowledges shared showed

a recognition and valuing of the knowledges co-created by the co-researchers from their histories and lived experiences, and became the lens through which they viewed how they wanted to share this knowledge. The uBuntu worldview informs the way of life for many African communities across the continent and is woven into the fabric of South African society. By selecting a methodological framework underpinned by uBuntu, the cultural ways of knowing, doing and being of the co-researchers involved in the study could be affirmed and validated. Through the uBuntu methodology, the co-researchers realized the capacity to express compassion and dignity, harmony and humanity in the interests of building and maintaining community (Nussbaum, 2003).

The shisa nyama research method provided the opportunity to listen to and affirm others. Developing relationships with those who shared their knowledges in the study was crucial to understanding and respecting how the co-researchers related to a coloured South African identity. The uKhamba data analytical method created trust, fairness, and a shared understanding out of the meaningful discourse and engagement that took place. The uKhamba method of data analysis highlighted the pertinent aspects of the shisa nyama conversations and complemented the uBuntu methodology in its communal and engaged format.

The key findings of the research revealed that, for coloured South Africans, coloured identity was linked to white identity and influenced their assimilation towards whiteness. The coloured lived experience in South Africa had shaped the lives of individuals and limited their access to opportunities, caused psychological harm due to racism and discrimination, and resulted in unequal financial rewards and barriers to career promotion in favour of those considered white. Coloured family values, experiences of racism, and the meaning of coloured identity for South Africans in Aotearoa New Zealand influenced how the co-researchers self-identified and the identity labels they chose to use. The uBuntu methodology created a space for the lived experiences of those classified as coloured in the diaspora to be heard. This is of immense value to a community that has been marginalised in certain spaces in South Africa and under-researched in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The strength of the research study lies in the uBuntu methodology. Through the creation of a research methodology that was culturally affirming, a space was created whereby knowledge was shared openly and candidly amongst the co-researchers in a recognizable, affirming and valued manner. The group was engaged and invested in the study and research process, and were cognizant that their involvement was not merely as informants, but as partners and co-researchers in the creation of new learnings and invaluable insights into the phenomenon of coloured identity among coloured South Africans. Within the uBuntu methodology, incorporating the shisa nyami research method and the uKhamba method of data analysis, communities and individuals for whom the research is centred should be prioritized. A research methodology should reflect the values and cultures of the communities and must be underpinned by worldviews that affirm their cultures (Nakhid et al., 2019). The uBuntu methodology

creates opportunities for researchers to reflect on the ways in which they carry out research as the community is involved from the commencement of the research process. The shisa nyama research method is proposed as an authentically African way of engaging with research participants in a space that is culturally affirming, relevant and welcoming. The uKhamba method of data analysis aligns with the shisa nyama research method as it ensures that the research participants have an active role in selecting and analyzing those ideas and arguments most poignant to them and what they wish to explore.

In the broader societal context, this research hopes to contribute to the growing knowledge of coloured South Africans in Aotearoa New Zealand. The insights can provide government agencies such as the Ministry for Ethnic Communities⁵ with information to guide the way in which they serve and interact with the diverse communities of Aotearoa. For individuals within the community, the research gave voice to their diverse perspectives and explored how cultural contexts can shape individuals' experiences. The study emphasized what it meant to be coloured in the diaspora in an effort to understand how those classified as coloured South Africans reconstruct their identity in a foreign land. Understanding this can help the growing number of coloured immigrants deal with questions of identity, race, and ethnicity as well as those who have emigrated and find themselves questioning a coloured identity.

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Notes

1. A racial classification for mixed race South Africans.
2. Referred to as the researcher.
3. Māori word meaning lineage and understood by the co-researchers.
4. <https://www.bepimitive.com/stories-descriptions/ukhamba-or-ritual-beer-vessel>.
5. <https://www.ethniccommunities.govt.nz/>.
6. <https://scitechdaily.com/million-year-old-ash-in-south-african-cave-yields-evidence-of-cooking/>.

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