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Abstract

A central feature of Indigenous Solomon Islands socialization of family, clan and tribal members is character-shaping. What this looks like, however, has not been researched. This study provides a first look at what is taught as ethics education in Indigenous Solomon Islands. Using data from a wider qualitative study of an Indigenous tribe of Mala'ita Island in the Solomon Islands archipelago, the study is authored and gifted by a Mala'ita Indigenous ethics educator to other Indigenous Pacific and other global educators and researchers. The study findings include: a clearer understanding of Indigenous Mala'ita ethics education including its integrated curriculum, its emphasis on character-shaping and its particular age-gender variations and pedagogies. The study offers pragmatic, conceptual, pedagogical, contextual and research insights for institutional and societal ethics education in Solomon Islands and other Pacific Islands modern states and to others interested in understanding ethics in context.

Keywords: ethics, curriculum, education, Indigenous, Pacific, Solomon Islands,

Introduction

In the past two decades, ethics has emerged as a priority topic in education and leadership development programmes in the Pacific Islands region. In the Pacific, the concerns are over intra-societal tensions and conflicts (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2015), poor governance (United Nations Development Programme, 2008), societal inequalities (World Bank, 2006), land pressures (Asian Development Bank, 2005), poor leadership (Larmour, 1997) and weak civil societies (Saldanha, 2004). Seen broadly, however, these issues cannot be isolated from the global socio-economic-political and ideological drivers of change affecting all human communities.

The widespread uptake of ethics education in the Pacific Islands region (Sanga & Walker, 2005) is partly because this agenda has been driven by international donors (Huffer, 2005). In the Solomon Islands, ethics education has become a requirement in the school curriculum (Ministry of Education, Human Resources Development [MEHRD], 2013; MEHRD, 2014), school leadership programmes (MEHRD, 2014) and public service leadership programmes (Institute of Public Administration and Management [IPAM], 2011). This ready acceptance of ethics education, however, has not been accompanied by informed conversations involving Solomon Islanders as Indigenous citizens of this Island nation state. Of particular relevance to this study is that little has been discussed about what is taught in Solomon Islands ethics education.

Without a debate about the ethics curriculum, the voices of citizens of Solomon Islands remain unheard. Where local people are not engaged, dialogue is not assured and people cannot participate creatively. Debate ensures that Solomon Islanders have ownership of their ethics education. From a process perspective, according to Loudon (2009), debate determines how change should occur as it “...offers method to reason; it is a way of knowing which results [are] unmatched in experiential learning (p.8).” Beyond giving voice (Snider, 2008), debate educates. Particularly, if debate uses Indigenous discursive group processes such as *tok stori* (Sanga and Reynolds, 2018), discussions are more likely to be relevant, practical and sustainable for Indigenous Solomon Islanders.

At this early stage, many basic questions about Solomon Islands ethics education can be asked. However, this paper focuses on the research question: What is taught in an Indigenous ethics ‘curriculum’ in the Solomon Islands? In this paper, I argue that Indigenous ethics education in Solomon Islands is primarily about shaping and sustaining the character of family-clan-tribal members as ethical agents. I further argue that this character-embedded ethics education emphasizes the inculcation of transcendence, temperance and citizenship virtues which, in the local context, are affirming and enhancing of their clan-tribal *rata* (identity) and *taga lā* (flourishing). As an implication, I offer a tentative research agenda for ethics education in Solomon Islands.

The context

This study is set in the Solomon Islands, a country of 900 islands, one-third of which are inhabited by approximately 550,000 people. While the country is categorized as Melanesian (95%), Polynesian (4%) and Micronesian (1%), the groups are diverse. Linguistically, eighty living Indigenous languages are spoken. As a modern state, Solomon Islands is a nation of villages with ninety percent of its people living a largely subsistence existence in villages located on tribal lands and practising Indigenous customs.

The study is located in Mala'ita; a rugged and mountainous island which is divided culturally and linguistically into twelve groups. Anthropologically, the cultures are patrilineal and egalitarian. Variations of political arrangements exist. Traditionally, the tribes are theocratic.

The participants in the study are from the Gula'alā linguistic group of East Mala'ita, made up of seven tribes and numbering about 1,800 people. Now Christians, the Gula'alā ancestral religion was animism. Today, they live a subsistence village lifestyle. The study was done within my own Gwailao tribe wherein I am alafa (a tribal leader).

Literature review

Due to a scarcity of relevant literature on the Pacific Islands and tribe-based ethics education, this review draws heavily from the global literature and on institutional ethics. The section on syllabus, however, includes materials from Solomon Islands.

While questions about the ethics curriculum continue to be posed in engineering (Shuman, Besterfield-Sacre & McGourty (2005), computer science (Gotterbarn, 2017), accounting (Shawver & Miller, 2017), law (Prentice, 2015) and beyond, there seems to be agreement that ethics can and should be taught (Velasquez, Andre, Shanks and Meyer, 2014; Kohlberg, 1984). The literature suggests that teachers must be experts (Siegler, 1978), trained professionals (Calman and Downie, 1987) and able to work in multidisciplinary groups (Culver, Clouser, Gert et. al., 1985). Further, the literature advocates for using an integrated approach (Miles, Lane, Bickel, Walker and Cassel, 1989), one which is learner-centred (Fox, Arnold and Brody, 1995), problem-based (Goldie, Schwartz, McConnachie and Morrison, 2001) and utilizes small group discussion (Smith, Fryer-Edwards, Diekema and Braddock, 2004). Moreover, the literature warns against inconsistent teacher behaviour (Lewis, 1987) or the hidden curriculum (Gupta, Forlini, Lenton, Duchon & Lohfeld, 2016) and encourages teachers to learn to listen well particularly in cross-cultural contexts (Ballyn, 2014).

The literature on the ethics curriculum across disciplines seem to support an integrated offering (Bosco, Melchar, Beauvais and Desplaces (2010) which balances virtues development with building moral reasoning (Thambusamy and Elier, 2013); a curriculum which connects with students emotionally (Kretz, 2014) and is part of a long-term programme allowing for embedding of professional knowledge (Keefer and Ashley, 2001).

From a Medicine discipline-specific literature, the following are noted. The ethics curriculum should include content which provides a set of skills for ethical analysis and decision-making including philosophy, reasoning and aspects of law (Miles et. al., 1989); content which heightens students' ethical sensitivity so as to enhance their ethical performance (Glick, 1994); and contents such as interpersonal relationships, service, accountability, industry, compassion and honesty (Stern, 1994). In a later review of medical ethics programmes, Goldie (2000) notes a shift in curriculum from ethical dilemmas to the examination of everyday ethics. In a study on English medical ethics curriculum, Giubilini, Milnes and Savulescu (2016) identify a two-part curriculum, including cognitive aspects—concepts, principles and professionalism; and attitudinal aspects—virtues, critical thinking and conscience. To sum, this review supports a strong values-based perspective in Medicine, an area where in earlier years, Freeman & Wilson (1994) have argued for its inclusion to enhance honesty, integrity and dedication.

In the discipline-specific literature from Business and Administration, Bech and Murphy (1994) point to three categories of curricula: courses on knowledge about ethics, those which are issues-oriented and courses which combine both. To these, Hundert, Douglas-Steel and Bickel (1996) argue for ongoing and nuanced programmes which take context seriously because of its influences on what is taught. In further support of an integrated curriculum, Bosco, Mechar et. al., (2010) claim that it is effective for teaching moral reasoning and competence. In summary, the literature supports an integrated and on-going applied ethics curriculum.

On the ethics syllabus, the global literature varies considerably. Examples include contents which support the teaching about values using corporate scandals and financial crises (Michigan Business School, 2014); contents about personal agency using ideas about social responsibility (Penn State University, 2013); teaching about the profession, using frameworks, codes and cases of ethical lapses, traps and failures (Prince, 2013); and teaching how to reason ethically. According to DuBois and Burkemper (2002), ethics education syllabi are not homogeneous in both content and extensiveness due to disciplinary, cultural and other influencing variables.

From the Solomon Islands, two examples of ethics syllabi are given. In the Solomon Islands Public Service, ethics education is a requirement for senior public officers (Institute of Public Administration [IPAM], 2011). While the topic of ethics is embedded in the programme framework of IPAM, the actual offering seems minimal. For instance, in the course module for Public Service supervisors, ethics is allocated one hour in a three-day programme; covering topics such as definitions, scenarios of tensions and ethical decision-making. The targeted context is clearly Solomon Islands setting and the audience, public service leaders within a formalized institution.

In Solomon Islands education, the Primary Social Science syllabus outlines the development of a sense of civic responsibility as a key learning outcome (MEHRD, 2013) which is to be achieved through the study of governance, leadership and the use of resources. In the Secondary Social Science syllabus (MEHRD, 2014), ethics education is approached in an integrated manner. The syllabus requires the teaching of topics such as values, peaceful living, respect for diversity and

citizenship. According to Fito'o (2014), including ethics education in the school curricula is to unify a diverse Solomon Islands society.

In summary, the reviewed literature shows that ethics education takes place within formalized institutional settings and in disciplinary communities. The literature points to a heterogeneous ethics curriculum which generally covers contents on virtues, character strengths, legal and historical frameworks, case studies as well as critical and cognitive skills. The two latter content areas are often explained as necessary to equip students with the rational and moral tools for ethical decision-making and action. The literature further supports an ethics curriculum which is integrated, multi-phased and used with a team approach. The Solomon Islands literature while limited, mirrors the influence of external and global ideas about ethics education.

Methodology

This study is based on qualitative content obtained from a wider multi-year project with the Gula'alā of East Mala'ita, Solomon Islands. In the wider study, guided by Indigenous understandings and processes of ethics, I obtained data from my recordings of daily activities, tok stori with numerous Gula'alā elders and alā lā kini (intentional focused discussions) with key Gula'alā knowledge experts. I had further convened and obtained tribal approval at a rara'aba (literally, calming of tensions) gathering at which the community of clan alafa (tribal leaders) approved the release of the fānanau in this study for wider education purposes. For this paper, I have limited the data to the study question by drawing out relevant information from four data sources, as follows: (1). Fānanau lā (ethics teaching statements, intended to shape character); a total of 91 specific teachings: 15 for boys, 10 for girls, 42 for boys and girls and 24 for adults. (2). Fānanau lā 'inatō (concentrated ethics teaching sessions, usually focusing on key principles or virtues); a number of recorded sessions. (3). Saefua (short story with a moral lesson); two recordings. (4) Sili (a creative genre by expert knowledge holders which is spoken or sung); two recordings. The above sources were supported by alā lā kini (intentional focused discussions) with expert knowledge guardians. Moreover, these data sources were mediated by and triangulated with the author's insider expertise-understanding.

Recordings of all four oral sources were captured and the derived data described in the study. The language used was Gula'alā, transcribed by the author, a first-language fluency speaker. Notes of the recordings were translated into English by the author. Gula'alā language is present in-text to show authenticity, difference and complementarity, a way of countering racism and affirming ethnic freedom (Meiyao Wu, 2017). In terms of data analysis, the descriptive data was examined according to themes, data source types and topics; all in reference to the research question.

As the scope of the study is limited to Gula'alā, its applications to other Mala'ita, Solomon Islands and Pacific Islands peoples are restricted. However, the study is relevant and potentially encouraging to Indigenous Solomon Islands and Pacific Islands ethics educators. I write this

paper as an Indigenous Gula'alā researcher of the Gwailao tribe and acknowledge my personal responsibility for any limitations of description, interpretation or execution of this very new area of Indigenous Pacific Islands scholarship.

Findings

The findings are presented under headings reflecting the data sources: fānanau lā, fānanau lā 'inatō, saefua and sili.

Fānanau lā (ethics teaching statements)

Fānanau lā refers to the teachings, teaching activities or practices intended to shape character. Usually conducted through every-day conversations, parents, grandparents and older tribal members offer teachings, often in short statements, as a way of deliberately shaping the hearts and minds of younger members. Fānanau lā is also often undertaken with boys, girls and other adults to reshape, confirm or re-educate them about key principles, behaviours, norms and aspects of their tribal tagi (ethical system). Mothers and grandmothers offer fānanau to their daughters and granddaughters. Fathers and grandfathers would do the same for their boys and the menfolk.

The study looked at twenty recordings of fānanau lā (ethics teaching statements) for adolescence boys. Generally, the content of these focuses on character formation and virtuous living. Summarized, teaching content and their frequency of occurrence are as follows: three each on restraint behaviour, respect for adults, industriousness and honouring of clan sisters; and two each on honouring of women/girls, being open about girls one is interested in, caring for widows and orphans, and truthfulness in life.

A closer examination of these teachings for boys shows emphasis on character traits needed for temperance and self-regulation. The character traits of citizenship (caring for widows and orphans) and industriousness reflect the contextual settings of tribal communities. Of interest is the reference to honouring high status women and being respectful of girls and clan sisters. These seem to point to a gender-oriented socialization which, over time, contributes to defining the Gula'alā cultural expectations and roles for boys and men.

The fānanau lā for girls focus on personal behaviours and ways of relating which are deemed virtuous. Of the eleven ethics teachings for girls, the contents of five relate to self-regulation characters for personal temperance within family settings. Three examples are given:

My daughter, when doing your food gathering chores in the garden, ensure you're accompanied by and traveling in your mother's shadows.

You, a girl of the light, keep your household tools/equipment together. Never live untidily.

You, an adolescence girl, never sit together with your brother.

Six ethics teachings focus on abu lā (holiness). On this topic, girls are ethically socialized to keep themselves pure, as in:

My daughter. Keep yourself morally restraint. Keep yourself holy.

Or

You, a teenage girl, you are not to live a morally knotted life.

In this instance, uncleanness in Gula'alā is more than a physical state of being. It is also a moral state of well-being and or a spiritual discipline that can be learnt. A point worth noting is that holiness is a prioritized transcendent character strength, and girls are socialized daily to internalize and habitualize this value. Moral purity or moral expressions of character seem to be a more essential trait for Gula'alā girls than for boys.

In 42 fānanau lā (ethics teaching statements) recorded for adolescents (both boys and girls), the principal focus is to shape character, enhance citizenship and or promote virtuous living. In the following examples, the teaching contents relate to character promotion. This can include promise-keeping,

Keeping your word is a big deal. A promise made must always be kept.

Or transparency,

A credible child is transparent in one's deeds.

Or humility,

Your admirable deed is not a justification for arrogance. Nor the praise of others worthy of your indulgence.

Within the Gula'alā setting, these three character traits represent high value principles for boys and girls.

Teachings also targeted ideals of citizenship, as follows:

On community living:

As a community member, live with alertness and in balance; not in extremes.

Or on generosity,

Learn to be generous/open-handed/hospitable with your gifts/blessings/privileges.

And on working together with people or in cooperation:

Work with people. You are not a person without people.

For both boys and girls, tribal membership requires synergistic living, hence the teaching on the character traits of balance, generosity and cooperation.

Of the teachings to boys and girls, many relate to virtuous living, as in:

In times of hardship and death, live a life which inspires hope; uplifting people from their despair.

Live your life above reproach; beyond the reach of verbal attacks.

In your time, never dishonour the treaties/promises of your father and forefathers to others.

Again, character traits of transcendence are reflected. Boys and girls are socialized to inspire hope and live lives above reproach and dishonour as citizens and as leaders.

In a number of fānanau lā to adult women, the subject matter is virtuous living:

As a daughter-in-law: *At your in-laws' home, be diligent and honour them.*

As a mother: *Be caring. Never discipline a child in anger.*

And as an adult: *Contain your speech. An unrestrained mouth is toxic.*

From a character perspective, the examples above emphasize pro-social sensitivity and relationships and for women to show temperance and self-regulation in their actions, behaviours and motivations. The teaching contents for women clearly support and reinforce the teachings for girls except for the application examples and settings which reflect the roles and cultural contexts of tribal Gula'alā women.

In a fānanau lā to adult men, the following are recorded.

On the importance of a leader who listens:

Listen to your people. Hear what they say to you. People must not be burdened with a leader's unfulfilled words.

On moral uprightness:

A leader who lives recklessly and immorally does not live long.

On honouring one's wife:

A man of honour does not dishonour his wife but equips her with abundant supplies.

From the above examples it seems that the teaching to adult men is appealing to character traits of seeking to understand, making good judgements and pursuing higher transcendent values

necessary for regulating one's private and public life. In other words, ethics teaching to men is shifting to now include maintaining of credibility as a leader, husband and senior tribal citizen.

In twenty instances of fānanau lā to adults (both men and women), character reshaping is emphasized. Three examples are given below.

Against entertaining an unforgiving heart:

The end of the road of unforgiveness and anger is death. A person of character does not walk to his/her death.

On endurance and maintenance of personal credibility:

Never forget that the night falls and fades; giving way for the sun to rise again.

On wisdom:

Listen, look and walk wholesomely. Let wisdom be the foundation of your family life.

The findings above suggest that for a mixed adult audience, ethics teaching is more about certain mindsets and attitudes and less about practical or behavioural actions. In other words, the teachings highlight the transcendent characters of forgiveness, endurance and wisdom.

Fānanau lā 'inatō (concentrated ethics teaching session)

In this next section, data from fānanau lā 'inatō (concentrated ethics teaching session) is presented. In Gula'alā, fānanau lā 'inatō takes place within a private-secret knowledge domain. Teaching using this mode of delivery is specific, detailed and comprehensive in terms of depth of coverage and engagement.

In this fānanau lā 'inatō teaching session, the principle of humility is taught. A father is teaching his adolescent son in the privacy of the family home. This single session went uninterrupted for 20 minutes as the teacher continued his teaching, making one statement after another while expounding on the virtue of humility. Parts of this session are reproduced as follows:

In life, live as one who is alive.

Live autonomously.

You're not to follow other children mindlessly.

Even if a man tempts or urges you to do something wrong.

Never listen to such people.

Instead, be industrious. Keep busy.

Think deeply, comprehensively and insightfully, before you get up.

Meanwhile, keep maintaining a level head then go ahead and take action.

Even if you achieve greatness, be rooted. Be humble,

Do not follow the ideas and actions of other children.

Pride is not good. Its fruit always shows.

In time, people will conclude.

We've merely eaten the fruits of a dirty hand.

As an integrated curriculum, the character strengths of humility, relationality and rootedness are woven together in this teaching example. These traits are to be exercised through self-regulation wherein a son is expected to show agency and autonomy by refraining from following other children and by not obeying non-relatives. Within a tribal Gula'alā setting, a son is instead socialized to show humility by reflecting wisdom through applied understanding and deep comprehensive thinking.

By using contextual examples, the son who is receiving the teaching is taught to read and identify the ethical temptations and challenges. In addition, local realities offer familiar examples of how to deal with tempting situations or how to keep oneself ethically upright. In the four statements at the end of the example above, the wisdom behind the teaching on humility can be summed up as: Non-credible living leads to and results in harmful consequences to oneself and others.

As a final example, a portion from a teaching session by a mother to her daughter and son on the virtue of fāmou lā (respect) follows:

Life and death, and good living,

Begin in the home.

In your life journeys, in your interactions with senior women, and with the elderly,

as they are sitting, resting or lying down, you are to respect them.

Never walk in life arrogantly.

When elders are gathered,

as elders are having conversations or in a meeting,

never pass by arrogantly in their face.

Never walk uprightly in their face.

This session, in which reasons for the virtue of respect and advice on how to relate or respond in particular situations are offered, went on for 30 minutes. Particular focus is given to respect for seniors, elders and leaders. The session continued as follows:

Teachings related to particular cultural practices,

*When you see a prohibition mark installed on the reef,
you are to respect the man by honouring his prohibition.*

And to particular standards of behaviour expected of boys,

*For you, a male or boy,
Do not gaze at a woman who may be walking by.
Lower your sight away from looking at women.*

Or to sensitivities which are linked to the physical environment,

*Sacred sites and shrines,
You must respect.
Otherwise compensation will be demanded of you needlessly,
because you are disrespectful to people.*

In the fānanau lā inatō (above), the focus is on respect. All examples used are contextual and hence are familiar to learners. As seen above, the teaching on respect is integrated with teachings on traits such as awareness, self-regulation and synergistic interactions, all of which are deemed necessary for demonstrating respect in the local context.

In summary, the fānanau lā ‘inatō teachings reflect three content categories: contents which highlight a particular principle or character value, those which show applications of principles and those which explain the rationale for keeping true to the virtue.

Saefua (short story with a moral)

As described by Sanga (2015), saefua as a knowledge repository is a short narrative with a ‘moral of the story’ message. Used principally with children, saefua is often narrated by child-minders (including older siblings) as an intentional character-shaping strategy. In the wider study, a number of saefua were recorded. For this study, only parts of one saefua called ‘A’aniwane (Sanga, 2015) which was recounted to a group of clan children, is reproduced:

Once there lived in these parts of the island two boys. The names of these boys were Suraokwaikwai and Suraoalibako. Since their childhood, these boys had been living with their mother. Day after day, the boys would urge their mother to let them go fishing. One day, the mother agreed to their repeated requests; made them strings and hooks and passed these on to the boys. But before the boys set off to the sea, their mother sat them down and sternly warned the boys about a cannibal who was living by the sea. “When you go fishing and you see seaweeds floating in towards the shore, it is time to come home. Do not tarry otherwise the man-eater will eat you both...

The narrator was a tribal grandfather. The children, aged 2-15, were in a family dwelling. Having had their main meal for the day, the children were huddled together, socializing with each other and the adults who were present. It was amidst the children’s singing, laughter and storying that this saefua was narrated. The principal subject content of this saefua teaching is rō lā or obedience. However, like all saefua, the detailed narrative also included teaching points relating to rao lā or industriousness/ hard work and rafaitalana or autonomy/ independence. The occasion was interactive and lively. Younger children posed questions throughout the narration and often, older ones answered or reiterated the points made by the grandfather.

In Gula’alā pedagogy, saefua is an integrated and malleable form of teaching wherein children’s character-shaping includes introducing them to be aware of standards, to be sensitive to socio-physical-spiritual environments and to such character traits as obedience, loyalty and citizenship.

Sili (a creative genre of knowledge deemed settled)

As a knowledge repository, sili (a creative spoken or sung genre) contains knowledge which is deemed publicly settled, is considered ‘sharp’ or considered, hence difficult to contest or counter (Sanga, 2015). Sili lā or the act of performing a sili is often done by elders. In Indigenous Gula’alā, sili lā is infrequently performed. Partly, this is explained by the particular conditions for its public use. Sili is performed mainly by expert knowledge holders and is not scheduled, but happens spontaneously when spurred on by an appropriate deep emotional-spiritual connection and environment.

In the following, parts of a sili are reported. The performance was by a senior adult knowledge expert in a public space and in the company of a group of youth and two adults. In this sili, the performer was exalting an esteemed female ancestor, as follows:

You, a helper of many,

a cultured woman,

a loving woman,

a caring woman,

a peaceful woman,

an obedient woman,

the woman who instigates plans to serve people.

As dictated by Gula'alā custom, the sili was performed without interruption by the audience, showing respect for the performer and the occasion. It was, however, followed by subdued conversations and whispers as listeners responded to the knowledge shared. In other occasions, a sili is received with further and appropriate spontaneous positive reactions, including affirmations, trajectories and elaborations of the historical knowledge shared. The youth of the majority of listeners meant that all remained silent for the entire duration of the sili performance.

The sili content focuses on character traits (helping, loving, caring) which are deemed as important for a communitarian setting. The sili also highlights temperance values such as modesty, peacefulness and obedience. Obedience represents loyalty, which in Indigenous Gula'alā, is ordered highly. Only one of the recorded seven statements (above) speaks of a competence, skill or role (i.e. *the woman who instigates plans to serve people*).

As a second example, parts of a sili performed to a public audience about an esteemed female member of the tribe are cited:

In lament.

My bellowed aunt Kafo.

In worlds now despised,

you were the deliverer of women in their hour of need.

Your compassion had uplifted many at the Bisi gates.

You, a bride whose value surpassed many.

You, a bride who walked proudly on the honoured mat,

because you epitomized the most cultured of us all.

In the rest of the sili, the elder clan member spoke of aunt Kafo's kindness, accompanied by references to how this was demonstrated. The sili exalted Kafo for her obedience, for her peace-making, for her social intelligence, for her industry and her caring heart. The sili shared examples of how Kafo demonstrated these virtues in her daily life. The audience would have been familiar with the bisi (women's compound) and the bridal mat-walking customs and their significance in Gula'alā. Again, this sili highlights the character traits of modesty and self-regulation of peace and obedience. As are such other citizenship characters as caring and offering a helping hand.

Discussion

This discussion focuses on the questions: What is taught in Indigenous Solomon Islands ethics education? What are the research implications for ethics education?

Firstly, in Indigenous Solomon Islands, the clan or tribe is a moral organism, hence, ethics education is integral to clan or tribal membership. On a daily basis and using a variety of delivery modes, older members of the family, clan or tribe intentionally socialize members for the primary purpose of shaping or re-shaping their moral disposition, stamina and capacities. While it is often children and adolescent members who receive ethics instruction, adults are not exempted. This is to say that in Indigenous Solomon Islands, ethics education is life-long.

In spite of the living presence of Indigenous ethics education, good governance agendas by international donors (Asian Development Bank, 2004; World Bank, 2004) and Solomon Islands government (IPAM, 2011; MEHRD, 2013) seem to ignore Indigenous ethics. Consequently, when ethics education is seen in the wider Solomon Islands setting where the majority of the people live, this is merely institutional ethics education. This systemic marginalization of Indigenous Solomon Islands ethics means that institutional ethics is biased towards organizational and institutional concerns; mirrors global agendas, using unfamiliar frameworks; and reflects external and colonizing aspirations. Continuing with the current institutional focus undermines Indigenous ethics education and its potential instructive understandings. Looking ahead, foundation research is needed to enable Indigenous ethics to be represented in Solomon Islands institutional settings in ways which are contextually embedded, respectful and inclusive.

Secondly, the ethics curriculum in Indigenous Solomon Islands focuses on character-shaping. Members are socialized to inculcate values, form habits and internalize certain key virtues. The curriculum emphasizes three categories of character types. First, temperance is emphasised by teaching content relating to character strengths such as restraint behaviour, modesty and forgiveness; all of which help to modulate member mindsets, actions and behaviours. Second, the curriculum supports transcendence and wholesomeness. This is reflected in the emphasis on character strengths such as *abu lā* (holiness/purity), *fāmou lā* (respect) and living above moral reproach; spiritual values which are consistent with the theocratic tribal religions of Melanesian Solomon Islands. Support is further seen in the recognition of higher-order values as promise-keeping, transparency, humility and leadership inspiration. Third, the curriculum privileges the virtue of citizenship through its emphasis on relationships, synergistic living, working together and showing love, care and help. Moreover, the curriculum prioritizes social intelligence and responsibility.

The emphasis on character is consistent with the realities of Melanesian Solomon Islands, including its multiple, egalitarian (Sanga & Walker, 2005) and compensation cultures (Akin, 1999). The importance of character socialization is well-supported in the global literature such as on Indigenous education in Nigeria (Obidi, 1984), early years education in Malaysia (Thambusamy and Elier, 2013), teacher education in the USA (Carr, 2011) and public policy in the UK (Arthur and Harrison, 2012). Cautioning against imbalance, however, Thambusamy and Elier (2013) point out that an ethics curriculum must also include building children's moral judgement and reasoning capacities, and not just building character.

Given these findings, ethics education in the nation state of Solomon Islands has much to learn from the wealth of insights and understandings, together with the long history of curricula, methodological and pedagogical experiences of Indigenous ethics education. More so, at a time when institutional ethical concerns relate a lot to the character and credibility of leaders (Wainwright, 2003) and of leadership generally (UNDP, 2000), Solomon Islands ethics education can learn from the character formation, development and re-shaping experiences of Indigenous ethics education. Long term, the two settings of ethics education need to be bridged respectfully. Towards this goal, considerable research is needed, including on understanding the ordering of virtues in Indigenous Solomon Islands, on particular and specific virtues and their nuanced expressions within the different Indigenous communities, on the extent of the practice of ethics education in Indigenous Solomon Islands, and on how best to bridge the worlds of formal institutional and Indigenous ethics education.

Thirdly, the ethics curriculum of Indigenous Solomon Islands is integrated. Philosophically, this is reflected in three ways. First, there is an emphasis on personal agency wherein a family-clan-tribal member is socialized ethically for the world: for micro, meso and macro levels of society and not just for the institutional world. Second, the integrated nature of the curriculum is seen in its connecting patterns; including generational, pedagogical and spatial linkages and relationships. Third, the curriculum case studies and examples used have direct parallels with what is present and experienced by all, emotionally and cognitively.

Methodologically, the integrated nature of Indigenous Solomon Islands ethics curriculum is seen in three areas. First, the teaching setting is social, private, intergenerational and familial. Second, as teaching methods, *saefua* (short story with a moral), *fānanau lā 'inatō* (ethics education session) and *sili* (creative genre of settled knowledge) are integrated and interactive pedagogies. As such, these methods allow for ease of emotional connection, promote links to past events or consequential references, and enable a more relevant and engaging learning experience. Third, because teachers are family members, the credibility of a teacher is checked in real-time, reducing any negative influences of the hidden curriculum (Gupta, Forlini, Lenton, Duchon and Lohfeld, 2016) on student learning. Familiar familial teachers increase the intertwining emotional connections between students and teachers and with the curriculum, its assessment and student learning; factors which are deemed essential for effective delivery (Ballyn, 2014).

While the global literature focuses on institutional and disciplinary settings, it appears supportive of this study's finding of an integrated ethics curriculum, particularly one which is long-term (Miles, Lane, Bickel, Walker and Cassel, 1989), learner-centred (Fox, Arnold and Brody, 1995), socially-culturally sensitive (Ballyn, 2014) and responsive to influencing variables (DuBois and Burkemper, 2002). An integrated curriculum is similarly found in Indigenous communities such as Nigeria (Obidi, 1984) and Botswana (Matemba, 2010).

As noted elsewhere (Sanga and Walker, 2012), Solomon Islands Indigenous communities hold a worldview which is integrated. Ethics education within these societies, while ignored in

institutional settings, has shown much resilience partly because it is owned by the people and is affirming of them. Institutional ethics education, however, is considered as *faka* (borrowed from the outside), is taught and funded by outsiders (to the local community) and is largely deficit-oriented. Looking ahead, Solomon Islands ethics education will benefit much from a wide range of types of research relating to aspects of institutional ethics (to understand and critically assess such topics as integration of goals, agency, patterns and parallels); aspects of Indigenous ethics (to understand context-derived curriculum, adaptive nature of curriculum and pedagogy, all aspects of teaching, learning and assessing ethics in an integrated curriculum); and aspects relating to overlapping spaces and future integrations and adaptations of Solomon Islands ethics education.

Fourthly, while integrated, the Indigenous Solomon Islands ethics curriculum has particular discernible patterns of variance or specific socialization emphases, pedagogies and/or sequencing. First, as an example of age-oriented curriculum variation, in the curriculum for children, the content appears as introductory; teaching children to be aware of standards, of socio-physical-spiritual environments and teaching them foundational character traits such as *rō lā* (obedience). The pedagogy most used with children is *saefua* or storying. Conversely, for adults the curriculum tends to focus on wisdom-seeking, maintenance of credibility and enhancement of personal temperance. The pedagogies most used with adults are *tarafulā* (proverbs) and short, specific and immediate *fānanau lā* (ethics teaching statement), as reminders. Second, as an example of gender-oriented curriculum variation, the specific teachings for boys tend to emphasize character traits of obedience to adults, honouring of women and clan sisters, and industriousness. Conversely, the teachings for girls seem to highlight personal temperance within family, clan and tribal settings as well as *abu lā* (holiness) as a transcendence character trait.

Generally, this study finding about variance of content, pedagogy and sequencing is consistent with the global literature (DuBois and Burkemper, 2002; Goldie, Schwartz, McConnachie and Morrison, 2001). However, the variation dimension which is not receiving much attention in the global literature relates to gender. The Solomon Islands literature, though minimal, appears to have a homogenous approach to the ethics curriculum in education and public service, thereby totally neglecting the Indigenous and tribe-clan-based settings and understandings of ethics. As a consequence of this neglect, Indigenous ethics understanding is hidden to Solomon Islands institutional life and understanding of ethics. There are however, students and public officials who are taking the courses in ethics but whose hidden curriculum is their Indigenous ethics understandings which continue to be siloed and ignored, remaining in the shadows.

Conclusion

This paper offers important insights relating to ethics education in Solomon Islands. First, while Indigenous ethics education is alive, it is ignored and not included in the country's institutional ethics education. There are, however, Solomon Islanders within schools and in government who

are socialized daily through Indigenous ethics education. For them, Indigenous ethics becomes the hidden curriculum of institutional ethics education socialization programmes. This exclusive privileging of schooling and government ethics education is one-legged and can neither hold up nor sustain the moral capacity building and socialization needs of the country.

Second, at a time when concerns over leadership are related to the character of leaders, Solomon Islands ethics education is not tapping into the understandings of Indigenous ethics education particularly as the latter has much to offer due to its context-embeddedness and its emphasis on and resilience in character-education. This neglect by institutional Solomon Islands undervalues the potential contributions of Indigenous ethics education while at the same time undermining the relevance and crippling the effectiveness of institutional ethics education.

Third and finally, Solomon Islands ethics educators and researchers have much to do in negotiating future research on institutional and Indigenous ethics education as well as on the overlapping spaces of both in ways which are respectful of and engaging for all. As a first step, I have proposed key research areas which might feed into a wider tok stori (Sanga and Reynolds, 2018) or conversation involving Indigenous Solomon Islanders. Ultimately, tok stori as proposed might show the absurd compartmentalization of ethics education in Solomon Islands wherein institutional ethics education is exclusively privileged at the cost of a more complex, comprehensive, appreciative, participatory and authentic ethics education curriculum and moral socialization which is of, by and for the Solomon Islands.

Glossary

abu lā	holiness/purity
alā lā kini	intentional focused discussions
bisi	women's compound
fāmou lā	respect
fānanau lā	ethics teaching statements
fānanau lā 'inatō	concentrated ethics teaching session
rara'aba	calming of tensions
rata	identity
rō lā	obedience
saefua	short story with a moral
sili	a creative genre of knowledge deemed settled

taga lā	flourishing
tagi	ethics principles
tarāfulā	proverbs
tok stori	Melanesian discursive group communication

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Conflict of interest declaration

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest to report.

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