Telling the Tale and Living Well: Adolescent Narrative Identity, Personality Traits, and Well-Being Across Cultures

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This study explored links between narrative identity, personality traits, and well-being for 263 adolescents (age 12–21) from three New Zealand cultures: Māori, Chinese, and European. Turning-point narratives were assessed for autobiographical reasoning (causal coherence), local thematic coherence, emotional expressivity, and topic. Across cultures, older adolescents with higher causal coherence reported better well-being. Younger adolescents with higher causal coherence instead reported poorer well-being. Personal development topics were positively linked to well-being for New Zealand European adolescents only, and thematic coherence was positively linked to well-being for Māori adolescents only. Negative expressivity, neuroticism, conscientiousness, and openness were also linked to well-being. Implications of these cultural similarities and differences are considered for theories of narrative identity, personality, and adolescent well-being.

Habermas and Bluck (2000) postulated that it is not until mid- to late adolescence that teenagers “get a life”—a life story, that is. Children can tell complete and understandable narratives about single events in their lives, but it is not until adolescence that they can fashion an integrated life story (Bohn & Berntsen, 2008). By mid adolescence, it is clear that teenagers are connecting past events to their present selves, both in narratives about their whole lives (Habermas & de Silveira, 2008) and in narratives about critical and self-defining life events, such as turning points (e.g., McLean & Breen, 2009; McLean, Breen, & Fournier, 2010; see Habermas & Reese, 2015, for a review). Habermas and Bluck (2000) termed this newfound capability “autobiographical reasoning” and argued it is an essential ingredient in a mature life story.

A prime question in current developmental research on the life story is: What are the implications of life stories for other aspects of adolescents’ lives, specifically for their well-being? This study addresses this question with turning-point narratives—stories of life-changing events—from adolescents ranging in age from 12 to 21 years from three cultural groups in New Zealand (Māori, Chinese, and European). We address the unique role of narrative identity in adolescent well-being, while also taking personality traits into account.

Theories of Narrative Identity

Narrative identity is the unique aspect of self that is tapped by one’s life story (McAdams, 2001). McAdams and Pals (2006) proposed that personality comprises three levels: The most basic level is made up of traits; the second level of goals, motivations, and coping strategies; and the third level of life experiences that coalesce into a life story or stories. The trait level is the most basic because it is the way we are like other people who share the same traits and is to some extent present from birth in the form of temperament. The second level is more individual and is learned through our interactions with the world but is shaped by our trait-like
tendencies. The third level is the way that we are unique—no one else has exactly the same collection of life experiences or ways of telling about those experiences. In our life stories, we select those experiences we view as self-defining, as well as the way in which we portray those experiences to others through narrative. McAdams (2013) added a developmental dimension to the theory, in which one is first an actor (from early childhood), then an agent (from middle childhood), and finally, beginning in adolescence, one becomes an author of one’s life. These ideas dovetail nicely with other developmental theories of identity in which adolescence is an important time for the development of the life story (Erikson, 1968; Habermas & Bluck, 2000; McLean, Pasupathi, & Pals, 2007). Nevertheless, there exists a gap between developmental and personality accounts of identity, which can be bridged by tracing traits and narrative identity across adolescence and across cultures (see McAdams, 2013; Reese, Chen, et al., 2014; Smillie, 2013).

A primary indicator of the development of narrative identity is the advent of autobiographical reasoning, which contributes to global coherence in life narratives (Habermas & Bluck, 2000). Rarely would an individual tell a whole life story; rather, their personal narratives contain evidence of the maturity of the life story in the form of autobiographical arguments. These autobiographical arguments are evidence that the individual is thinking about one’s life. Autobiographical reasoning is multifaceted (Habermas, 2011), but one crucial aspect appears to be the causal link between past events and one’s present personality or perspective on life. It is this form on which we focus, which Habermas and de Silveira (2008) termed causal coherence (e.g., After age 10, I became a shy person because my parents’ separation made me distrust others, p. 713). Causal coherence contributes to life story coherence by making the links between events explicit and their importance for self-understanding clear. Causal coherence is a critical aspect of narrative identity.

Yet causal coherence is not the sole driver of narrative identity (Habermas & Reese, 2015); coherence of life narratives is multidimensional (Habermas & Bluck, 2000; Reese et al., 2011). Another critical aspect of narrative identity is narrative coherence with respect to theme. The term global thematic coherence (Habermas & de Silveira, 2008; cf. Grysmann & Hudson, 2011) refers to the theme or thread that ties events together across an entire life story. In the context of the turning-point narratives that we focus on here, we term thematic coherence instead as the local, internal coherence of the event narrative. How detailed and understandable is the narrative; is there a main idea or theme that is satisfactorily developed; is the event resolved? Detailed and resolved narratives of critical events in one’s life, including turning-point events, are believed to be vital for one’s narrative identity (see Reese, Chen, et al., 2014; Waters & Fivush, 2015). Thus, local thematic coherence of single-event narratives may contribute to narrative identity if the event itself is important for self-definition, such as a turning-point event (see Reese, Chen, et al., 2014; Waters & Fivush, 2015). Thus, the topic of the narrative is another important feature to consider. We note also that local thematic coherence of single-event narratives taps autobiographical reasoning only if the narrator integrates the event with other events or in relation to the self (see Habermas & Reese, 2015).

Another crucial way that personal narratives are important for identity is in terms of one’s subjective perspective on an event, as exemplified by the internal states and evaluations included in the narrative (Bohanek & Fivush, 2010; Waters, Shallcross, & Fivush, 2013). The presence of cognitive (I realized), emotional (I was sad about that; I was ecstatic when I crossed the finish line), and evaluative words (It was a tough time) in the narrative is a sign that the event is significant to the narrator and that the narrator has attempted to draw meaning from the event. Causal, thematic, and subjective dimensions of personal narratives, along with their topics, offer a complex window onto the development of narrative identity.

Culture and Identity

McAdams and Pals (2006) originally proposed that cultural influences might be more important for the narrative level of identity, and specifically for the content of life stories, than for traits or mid-level adaptations. Empirical evidence instead suggests that cultural differences abound even at the trait level (e.g., Reese, Chen, et al., 2014; Wang, 2004). Every individual is steeped in a culture or cultures from the moment of birth—and even before, through cultural conceptions of pregnancy—and culture most likely pervades every level and aspect of identity.

One prominent dimension along which cultures differ is their orientation toward independence versus interdependence (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). All individuals come to establish both independence and interdependence in the course of development and thus ascribe to a complex “coexistence
of orientations” (Killen & Wainryb, 2000, p. 17). Yet, there are identifiable patterns across cultures as well as between subcultural groups within a single culture (Wang, 2014). Wang (2013) proposed that conversations between independently oriented Western parents and their children are frequently about autobiographical memories for self-understanding and bonding purposes. In contrast, these conversations are not as typical among interdependently oriented non-Western parents and children. These different cultural practices are likely to have an impact on adolescents’ narrative identity (Fivush, Habermas, Waters, & Zaman, 2011). Parent–child conversations about shared personal experiences are linked to children’s own autobiographical memories (e.g., Reese & Newcombe, 2007; Wang, 2007), later self-concept (Bird & Reese, 2006) and to autobiographical reasoning in adolescence (Reese, Jack, & White, 2010).

Apart from the influence of independent-interdependent orientations, other cultural practices and experiences can also affect the development of narrative identity. For instance, New Zealand Māori cultural practices comprise an elaborated range of oratorical and narrative forms, with a great value placed on oral history (Reese, Hayne, & MacDonald, 2008; Reese & Neha, 2015; Rewi, 2010). Māori children often grow up experiencing a rich narrative environment through their exposure to these diverse narrative forms, with a particular emphasis on time and internal state references within narratives (Reese et al., 2008). Accordingly, Māori adults have earlier autobiographical memories than either New Zealand European or Chinese adults (MacDonald, Uesiliana, & Hayne, 2000). The Chinese ethnic group in New Zealand, however, has experienced recent immigration and encountered many unique challenges in the process of acculturation. Such experiences can, in turn, shape narrative identity to reflect values of both home and host cultures (Koh & Wang, 2013; Wang, Koh, & Song, 2015).

Despite unique characteristics of different cultural groups, making sense of one’s own experiences through autobiographical reasoning to construct a narrative identity may be an important developmental task in adolescence regardless of culture (Alea & Bluck, 2013; Habermas & Reese, 2015; Jobson & O’Kearney, 2008). We propose that life story causal coherence is one avenue toward narrative identity, and a particularly prominent one in cultures with an independent orientation, but that there are other means of achieving narrative identity—through local thematic coherence and subjective perspective. The development of detailed, resolved, and emotionally laden narratives about one’s own life experiences may also shape narrative identity, even if these narratives do not include explicit references to changes in personality.

Developmental Changes in Narrative Identity

Extant research on the development of narrative identity, mostly with Western European samples, has shown that all aspects of life narrative coherence develop over adolescence. In particular, dramatic age-related changes in causal coherence and thematic coherence, both in life stories and in personal narratives, are evident over adolescence and into adulthood (Bohn & Berntsen, 2008; Grysmann & Hudson, 2011; Habermas & de Silveira, 2008; Habermas & Reese, 2015; McLean et al., 2010; Reese et al., 2011). These developments appear to be similar for boys and girls (e.g., McLean & Breen, 2009; Fivush, Bohanek, Zaman, & Grapin, 2012; although cf. Grysmann & Hudson, 2011), but cultural differences are present in both aspects of narrative identity. In the current sample, we found age-related, cultural, and gender differences in both life story causal coherence and local thematic coherence of adolescents’ critical-event narratives, in which they were asked to talk about a high point, low point, and turning point in their lives (Reese, Chen, et al., 2014). Specifically, the pattern of age-related changes was moderated by culture and gender. Age-related development in local thematic coherence was observed across adolescents from three cultural groups in New Zealand, but Māori and Chinese adolescents were lower on both life story causal coherence and local thematic coherence compared with European adolescents. Moreover, the expected age-related changes in causal coherence were observed only with European adolescents, with European girls showing age-related growth between early to mid-adolescence, whereas European boys did not show age-related growth until mid- to late adolescence. These findings highlight the conceptual and empirical independence of causal coherence and thematic coherence when these features are captured across independent and interdependent cultures. Thus, it is important to consider these aspects of narrative identity separately, especially when adopting a cross-cultural perspective.

Connections Between Narrative Identity and Well-Being

Our interest in narrative identity is not simply theoretical: Narrative identity in adults is connected
to well-being, with higher levels of narrative coherence linked to lower levels of depression and higher self-esteem and life satisfaction across cultures (e.g., Baerger & McAdams, 1999). The connection between life narratives and well-being for adults has now been replicated many times (e.g., Bauer, McAdams, & Sakaeda, 2005; Lilgendahl & McAdams, 2011) and is starting to be replicated across cultures (Alea & Bluck, 2013).

In adolescence, however, the link between life narratives and well-being is moderated by age, dimension of narrative identity, and characteristics of the life event. For instance, McLean et al. (2010) found a negative link between causal coherence (in the form of insight) and self-esteem for younger adolescent boys, with no significant link for older adolescent boys (up to age 18 years). With emerging adults, Banks and Salmon (2013) noted a positive link between causal coherence (in the form of connections between self and event) and well-being but only when the connections between past and present reflected positively on the self. Young adults who narrated critical life events containing negative self-event connections instead reported lower well-being. Likewise, African-American older adolescent girls who displayed higher levels of causal coherence (in the form of insight) about highly negative events evinced higher levels of depressive symptoms (Sales, Merrill, & Fivush, 2013). This link appeared to be due to the girls’ perceived lack of control over life events, however, because once their external locus-of-control was covaried, the correlation disappeared. Moreover, Waters and Fivush (2015) found that for emerging adults, a composite score of local coherence (including thematic coherence) of personal narratives correlated positively with well-being but only when the event was self-defining. For recurring, generic events, there was no association between coherence of the narrative and well-being. Thus, a positive connection between narrative identity and well-being does not appear to emerge robustly until late adolescence or even emerging adulthood. As for adults (e.g., Greenhoot & McLean, 2013; McLean & Mansfield, 2011), the nature of the link also depends on the valence and type of event being narrated.

In terms of subjective perspective, internal state references in personal narratives increase from childhood to adolescence (Bauer, Stark, et al., 2005) and are more prevalent in adolescent girls’ narratives than in adolescent boys’ narratives (Fivush et al., 2012). The link between internal state references and well-being appears to be moderated by both age and gender. Preteens and young adolescents (aged 9–13 years) who used more negative evaluations and explanations in a Pennebaker-inspired expressive writing task showed decreases in well-being over time (Fivush, Marin, Crawford, Reynolds, & Brewin, 2007), whereas research with 13 to 14-year-olds found positive effects on well-being of expressive writing techniques (Soliday, Garofalo, & Rogers, 2004). Bohanek and Fivush (2010) proposed that when preteens narrate negative events replete with internal state language, they may not be able to cope with the resulting anxiety that the narrative creates because of their limited emotion regulation skills. Moreover, Bohanek and Fivush (2010) found that gender moderated the internal state language to well-being link for 13- to 16-year-olds; only for adolescent boys was internal state language in personal narratives correlated—positively in this instance—with well-being. Boys who expressed more negative emotions in positive- or negative-event narratives reported lower levels of depression and anxiety.

The Present Study

The main aim of this study was to investigate the links between narrative identity, personality traits, and well-being for adolescents aged 12–21 from three cultural groups in New Zealand: Māori, Chinese, and European. According to the New Zealand 2013 census, 74% of the New Zealand population identified as European, 15% as Māori, and 4% as Chinese. Māori are the indigenous people of New Zealand with their arrival over 1,000 years ago; European immigration began in earnest in the 1800s and continues to this day. Chinese immigration also began in the 1800s and China is still one of the top two countries from which immigrants hail (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). New Zealand is officially a bicultural society (Māori and European) but is becoming multicultural, with individuals increasingly ascribing to multiple ethnic identities (Morton et al., 2014).

In spite of the blurring of boundaries between these three New Zealand cultural groups, they nevertheless provide an interesting comparison because of their differing emphasis on memory, narrative, and interpersonal orientation (MacDonald et al., 2000; Reese & Neha, 2015; Reese et al., 2008). In contrast to New Zealand European youth, Māori youth report being more interpersonally or group-oriented, although they simultaneously report high levels of an independent orientation (Harrington & Liu, 2002; Jose & Schurer, 2010). In addition, there...
is a tradition of oral history and a high value placed on narrative in contemporary Māori communities (Reese et al., 2008). Chinese society is also typically interpersonally oriented (Wang, 2013). In New Zealand, however, Asian adolescents report independent orientations similar to those of European adolescents after controlling for socioeconomic status, perhaps because of acculturation and the subsequent development of a bicultural self (Jose & Schurer, 2010; Wang et al., 2015). In line with its dominant independent orientation, New Zealand European culture emphasizes individual memory for self-knowledge purposes (MacDonald et al., 2000).

In our previous analyses of the narrative identity of the present sample, the adolescents’ narratives about turning points returned the highest levels of causal coherence and local thematic coherence across all three cultures in comparison to their high-point and low-point narratives (Reese, Chen, et al., 2014). Turning-point narratives are also more likely to be self-defining. Thus, in the present analysis in relation to well-being, we focus only on adolescents’ turning-point narratives, again with respect to their causal and thematic coherence, but also their positive and negative expressivity, as well as the topic of the event (see Chen, McAnally, Wang, & Reese, 2012). In prior analyses, turning-point narratives were also the most distinct narratives from personality traits (measured with the Big Five inventory; Reese, Chen, et al., 2014). In adult samples, traits are moderately to strongly correlated with well-being: negatively for neuroticism and positively for extraversion and openness (e.g., Bauer, Stark, et al., 2005). In line with the adult research, we analyzed well-being in terms of the absence of depressive symptoms and the presence of positive indicators such as self-esteem and life satisfaction (e.g., Baerger & McAdams, 1999; Bauer, McAdams, & Sakaeda, 2005; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985).

Our prediction was that narrative identity (measured by causal coherence, local thematic coherence, emotional expressivity, and topic of turning-point narratives) and personality traits would both play vital roles in well-being for adolescents from all three cultural groups. Given previous findings of age moderation, we predicted that higher levels of these aspects of narrative identity would be linked to better well-being only for older adolescents. At the same time, the heavy emphasis on memory and on narratives in Māori culture is likely to mean that there could be stronger and/or earlier links between narrative identity and well-being for Māori adolescents. Given the flat age-related patterns of causal coherence in life narratives for Māori adolescents in this sample (Reese, Chen, et al., 2014), this link with well-being might instead be stronger for thematic coherence of turning-point narratives, which emphasizes elaboration and resolution of events, and for emotional expressivity of the narratives. We did not have any specific predictions for gender differences in the links between narrative identity and well-being, given the mixed findings in prior research. For traits, we hypothesized that neuroticism, extraversion, and openness would be most strongly linked to well-being, similar to the findings for adults.

Method

Participants

A total of 268 New Zealand adolescents who presented themselves as Māori (NZM; n = 90), Chinese (NZC; n = 88), or European (NZE; n = 90) responded to a call for recruitment in their intermediate or high schools or through a student job search advertisement at the local university and polytechnic. Data collection took place from 2009 to 2011 in one small city on the South Island and one town and one city on the North Island of New Zealand. Within each culture, there were similar numbers of girls and boys in each of three age groups: younger adolescents (YA; 12–14 years; n = 80; 41 boys), mid-adolescents (MA; 15–17 years; n = 92; 40 boys), and older adolescents (OA; 18–21 years; n = 96; 45 boys). We also invited parents to complete a demographic questionnaire by mail about their own ethnicity and education levels. Parents’ response rates differed by ethnicity, with 70% for NZM, 45% for NZC, and 80% for NZE. We used these questionnaires primarily to establish families’ socioeconomic status via maternal education. Table 1 contains demographic information for adolescents from each culture, and their parents when available. On average, Māori and European adolescents had mothers with a polytechnic or trade certificate, and Chinese adolescents had mothers with a bachelor’s degree. The majority of the Māori and European adolescents were born in New Zealand, whereas the majority of the Chinese adolescents were born outside New Zealand (Table 1). Yet although adolescents had the option of being interviewed in te reo Māori, Mandarin, or Cantonese, all adolescents in the present analyses chose to be interviewed in
English, indicating our sample was relatively acculturated.

Procedure

After giving informed consent, with additional parental consent for adolescents under 16, all adolescents participated in individual life story interviews and then completed well-being questionnaires in a private room at their school or at a university lab. A total of four researchers (all young adult women) conducted the sessions. The interviewer was always from the same cultural group as the participant.

Narrative Identity

The interviewer first asked the participant to tell the story of their whole life by chapters as if it were a story in a book (see Chen, McAnally, & Reese, 2013; adapted from McAdams, 2008). Then, the interviewer asked the participant to narrate their earliest memory, a low point, a turning point, and a high point from any time of their life (see Reese, Chen, et al., 2014). The total word count across the entire interview comprised a life story length variable. Here, we focus on the turning-point narratives, in which we asked adolescents to tell the interviewer about “an event that has changed your life or the kind of person you are.” Following the participant’s free-recall narrative of the event, the interviewer asked several follow-up questions about their age at the time of the event, who else was there, how they felt, and how other people might have felt. The interviewer also asked them to specify how the event had changed their life. All turning-point narratives were fully transcribed and then coded in separate passes in the following four ways.

Topic Coding

The turning-point narratives were coded into one or more of the following topics (adapted from Thorne, McLean, & Lawrence, 2004): personal development, relationships, leisure, achievement, immigration, or accidents. We added the personal development and immigration topics to Thorne et al.‘s topics in response to our data. Examples of personal development topics included a change in one’s religious belief, behavior, or life philosophy (becoming a vegetarian); relationship topics included conflicts, break-ups, or a death; leisure topics included hobbies or recreation; achievement topics included receiving an award or acquiring a skill; immigration included a move to another country or within the same country; and accident topics included injuries or illness. These topics were not mutually exclusive; for example, a narrative about a change in religious belief could be both about personal development and about relationships.

Causal Coherence Coding

We coded causal coherence in the form of developmental consequentiality on the overall turning-point narrative using a 4-point scale (see Table 2, for scale points and examples; Reese, Chen, et al., 2014; adapted from Habermas & de Silveira, 2008). Developmental consequentiality is a type of causal coherence that taps the degree to which the participant identifies how past events changed their present self. We use the term causal coherence throughout to refer to these instances of developmental consequentiality.

Thematic Coherence Coding

We coded the local thematic coherence of the free-recall portion of turning-point narratives with the 4-point thematic coherence scale from the Narrative Coherence Coding Scheme (Reese et al., 2011; Reese, Chen, et al., 2014; see Table 2 for scale points and examples). Local thematic coherence assesses the degree to which a central theme is developed, elaborated, and resolved within the narrative. Thus, it captures the coherence of the entire event narrative but does not require any explicit links to the self or to other events, unlike causal coherence (see Habermas & Reese, 2015). At the highest point of the scale, however, it may include links to other events, or statements about personal development.
Table 2
Coding for Causal Coherence and Thematic Coherence in Turning-Point Narratives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of coherence</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Causal coherence</td>
<td>0 point</td>
<td>The narrative did not provide any reference to personality change or the realization of personal development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 point</td>
<td>The narrative merely implied but did not state a change in personality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 points</td>
<td>The narrative explicitly states changes in personality but does not detail those changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 points</td>
<td>The narrative explicitly describes the changes in personality as a result of the event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thematic coherence</td>
<td>0 point</td>
<td>The narrative is mostly off-topic and never states a theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 point</td>
<td>The narrative has an identifiable topic but the theme is not developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 points</td>
<td>The narrative contains a clear theme, which is elaborated to some degree, but there is no resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 points</td>
<td>The theme is substantially developed, contains emotions or links to other autobiographical experiences, and is resolved in some way</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Emotional Expressivity Coding

We coded each mention and valence of self-focused emotions and emotional behaviors (e.g., afraid, relieved, laughed), desires (want, prefer), and evaluations (favorite, stressful) in the turning-point narratives and prompted responses (Bohanek & Fivush, 2010). We summed all positively valenced mentions for a total “positive expressivity” score, and we summed all negatively valenced mentions for a total “negative expressivity” score. We also coded for adolescents’ references to others’ positive
and negative emotions and evaluations in the turning-point narratives, but frequencies were low (M < 1 per narrative) so were excluded. Finally, we coded the turning-point narratives for redemption sequences (McAdams, Reynolds, Lewis, Patten, & Bowman, 2001), but the classic redemption pattern was exceedingly rare (only 8.6% of narratives). The adolescents in our sample simply were not structuring their narratives in this form; it is unclear whether this dearth is for age-related or cultural reasons.

Narrative Coding Reliability

Each scheme was coded in a separate pass on the turning-point narratives. One main coder conducted reliability on 25% of the transcripts from each culture with the interviewer for that cultural group. Once reliability was achieved, the main coder went on to code the remaining transcripts. For topic, agreement was 90% for NZM, 88% for NZC, and 90% for NZE cultural groups. For causal coherence/thematic coherence, Shrout-Fleiss inter-rater reliabilities were .89/.82 for NZM, .90/.78 for NZC, and .96/.79 for NZE cultural groups. For emotional expressivity, Cohen’s kappas were .78 for NZM, .78 for NZC, and .77 for NZE cultural groups.

Personality Traits

After the life story interview, participants completed a computer-assisted personality trait inventory for extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness (the 44-item Big Five Inventory; John & Srivastava, 1999). Average Cronbach’s alphas across the five traits were .70 for NZM, .77 for NZC, and .73 for NZE adolescents. These reliabilities are similar to previous research using the 44-item inventory with this age range (Soto, John, Gosling, & Potter, 2008).

Well-Being

As part of the computer-assisted portion of the session, adolescents completed a depression inventory (the 30-item Reynolds Adolescent Depression Scale–2nd ed.; Reynolds, 2002; Cronbach’s alpha for NZM = .90, NZC = .89, NZE = .91), a self-esteem inventory (the 10-item Rosenberg Self-Esteem Inventory; Rosenberg, 1965; Cronbach’s alpha for NZM = .73, NZC = .69, NZE = .77), and a life satisfaction scale (the five-item Satisfaction With Life Scale; Diener et al., 1985; Cronbach’s alpha for NZM = .74, NZC = .79, NZE = .77).

Results

No data were missing for personality traits or well-being. For narrative identity, two Chinese and three European participants declined to narrate turning-point events, so analyses were conducted on N = 263. Table 3 contains descriptive information for personality traits, narrative identity, and well-being as a function of culture, gender, and age. Adolescents’ positive and negative expressivity scores were positively skewed, so we performed square root transformations and then used transformed scores in correlational analyses.

Preliminary Analyses

We conducted preliminary analyses of variance (ANOVAs) on all variables as a function of whether adolescents had one or multiple ethnic identities. There were no significant differences on any variable, either as a main effect or in interaction with culture. Thus, all further analyses were conducted on the full sample.

Topics of Turning-Point Narratives

The most common topic of turning-point narratives across all cultures was personal development (135), followed by relationships (83), leisure (40), and achievement (30). Immigration and accident narratives were rarer (22 and 4 instances, respectively). We conducted separate chi-square analyses for each topic as a function of culture, gender, and age group on the set of 263 narratives. The only significant difference by culture was for immigration narratives, $\chi^2(2) = 7.77, p = .02$, with Chinese adolescents most likely to choose this topic. Greater differences were apparent by gender, with girls more likely to choose relationship topics, $\chi^2(1) = 6.10, p = .014$, and boys more likely to choose achievement, $\chi^2(1) = 5.07, p = .02$, or leisure topics, $\chi^2(1) = 7.68, p = .006$. However, boys and girls were equally likely to focus on personal development topics. Younger adolescents were more likely to focus on achievement in their narratives, $\chi^2(2) = 7.10, p = .029$, whereas middle and older adolescents were much more likely to focus on personal development, $\chi^2(2) = 21.34, p = .00$. These age-related differences make sense in light of a dramatic increase in focus on one’s identity from mid adolescence (e.g., Habermas & Bluck, 2000). We, thus, include personal development topics as another aspect of narrative identity in further analyses (Table 3).
Age, Gender, and Cultural Differences in Narrative Identity

For adolescents’ turning points, we ran separate Age (3) × Gender (2) × Culture (3) ANOVAs on each aspect of narrative identity, followed up by post hoc least significant difference (LSD) tests at \( p < .05 \). For personal development topics, there was a significant three-way interaction, \( F(4, 246) = 2.98, p = .02, \eta_p^2 = .05 \). Separate follow-up age by gender ANOVAs within each culture revealed a significant main effect of age for NZC, \( F(2, 80) = 4.23, p = .02, \eta_p^2 = .10 \), and NZE, \( F(2, 82) = 8.34, p = .001, \eta_p^2 = .17 \). For both NZC and NZE, younger adolescents used fewer personal development topics than middle and older adolescents, who did not differ. There was also a significant age by gender interaction for NZE, \( F(2, 82) = 5.56, p = .005, \eta_p^2 = .12 \). Follow-up ANOVAs for NZE revealed a gender difference for use of personal development topics in the middle adolescent group only, \( F(1, 28) = 11.20, p = .002, \eta_p^2 = .29 \). NZE mid-adolescent girls used more personal development topics than NZE mid-adolescent boys. For causal coherence, there was a significant three-way interaction, \( F(4, 246) = 3.57, p = .008, \eta_p^2 = .06 \). Separate follow-up age by gender ANOVAs within each culture revealed that only for NZE was there the expected increase in causal coherence with age, \( F(2, 82) = 14.10, p = .001, \eta_p^2 = .25 \). For NZC only, there was a significant age by gender interaction, \( F(2, 80) = 3.16, p = .048, \eta_p^2 = .07 \), and a main effect of gender, \( F(1, 80) = 7.18, p = .009, \eta_p^2 = .08 \). NZC girls were higher overall in causal coherence than NZC boys, with older NZC boys scoring significantly higher than young NZC boys. For thematic coherence, there was only a significant effect of age, \( F(2, 246) = 5.83, p = .003, \eta_p^2 = .04 \). Older adolescents were higher in thematic coherence than younger adolescents. There were no culture or gender differences for thematic coherence. For positive expressivity, similarly there was only a significant effect of age, \( F(2, 246) = 14.45, p = .001, \eta_p^2 = .10 \). Older adolescents were more positive than young or middle adolescents. For negative expressivity, there were no significant effects of age, gender, or culture.

Table 3

Means (and SDs) for Traits, Narrative Identity, and Well-Being as a Function of Culture, Gender, and Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traits</th>
<th>NZM</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>NZC</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YA (14)</td>
<td>MA (15)</td>
<td>OA (15)</td>
<td></td>
<td>YA (16)</td>
<td>MA (14)</td>
<td>OA (16)</td>
<td></td>
<td>YA (11)</td>
<td>MA (19)</td>
<td>OA (18)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD, %</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>CC</td>
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<td>1.5 (0.8)</td>
<td>.8 (0.8)</td>
<td>1.2 (0.8)</td>
<td>1.1 (0.8)</td>
<td>1.8 (0.6)</td>
<td>1.9 (0.7)</td>
<td>1.6 (0.6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC</td>
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<td>2.0 (0.8)</td>
<td>2.2 (0.6)</td>
<td>2.1 (0.6)</td>
<td>2.2 (0.6)</td>
<td>2.1 (0.7)</td>
<td>2.0 (0.7)</td>
<td>2.1 (0.8)</td>
<td>2.2 (0.4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emot+</td>
<td>4.8 (2.7)</td>
<td>3.6 (3.3)</td>
<td>7.7 (3.7)</td>
<td>3.5 (1.9)</td>
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<td>6.7 (3.6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Emot−</td>
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<td>3.2 (3.5)</td>
<td>2.6 (2.7)</td>
<td>3.2 (2.6)</td>
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Note. NZM = New Zealand Maori; NZC = New Zealand Chinese; NZE = New Zealand European; YA = younger adolescents; MA = mid-adolescents; OA = older adolescents; Extra = extraversion; Agree = agreeableness; Cons = conscientiousness; Neur = neuroticism; Open = openness; PD = personal development topic; CC = causal coherence; TC = thematic coherence; Emot+ = positive expressivity; Emot− = negative expressivity; RADS = Reynolds Adolescent Depression Scale; RSEI = Rosenberg Self-Esteem Inventory; SWLS = Satisfaction With Life Survey.
Intercorrelations Among Traits, Narrative Identity, and Well-Being

Intercorrelations among the trait, narrative identity, and well-being variables are listed in Table 4. As in previous research, personality traits were intercorrelated, with neuroticism negatively correlated to all other traits. Adolescents with higher levels of neuroticism reported lower levels of agreeableness, extraversion, conscientiousness, and openness. These correlations were weak, suggesting that the five traits are indeed tapping different dimensions. Likewise, all narrative identity measures were positively intercorrelated, indicating that adolescents who used a personal development topic had higher scores on causal coherence, thematic coherence, and positive and negative expressivity. These correlations were significant yet weak, suggesting that these aspects of narrative identity are distinct. Finally, the three well-being measures were moderately intercorrelated, with lower levels of depression associated with higher life satisfaction and self-esteem. All five traits were correlated with well-being (positively for extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness, and negatively for neuroticism). There were few significant zero-order correlations between narrative identity and either traits or well-being.

Main Analyses

Our main aim was to test the unique predictive power of narrative identity and personality traits for adolescent well-being as a function of age, culture, and gender. Previous research with this sample has revealed cultural and gender differences in personality traits and age, cultural, and gender differences in narrative identity (see Reese, Chen, et al., 2014). Personality traits and narrative identity were only weakly correlated for turning-point narratives (Table 4). Thus, our analytic approach was to conduct separate Age (3) × Culture (3) × Gender (2) analyses of covariance on the three well-being scores, with narrative identity and personality traits as predictors (covariates), along with interaction terms for the hypothesized interactions between age and narrative identity, and between culture and narrative identity. We conducted post

<table>
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<tr>
<th>NYE</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
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<td>OA (18)</td>
<td>YA (13)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3.2 (0.8)</td>
<td>3.0 (0.7)</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1.7 (10.1)</td>
<td>.8 (10.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8 (0.5)</td>
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<td>1.6 (0.8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>56.4 (13.6)</td>
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hoc LSD follow-up tests at $p < .05$. When controlling for personality traits, we included in the model only those traits that were significantly correlated with the well-being outcome (extraversion, conscientiousness, and neuroticism for depression; extraversion, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness self-esteem; and conscientiousness and neuroticism for life satisfaction; Table 4).

**Depression**

In predicting depression, there were no significant age, culture, or gender effects and no significant interactions. Negative expressivity, $F(1, 216) = 4.11$, $p = .04$, $\eta^2_p = .02$, conscientiousness, $F(1, 216) = 18.40$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2_p = .08$, and neuroticism, $F(1, 216) = 103.54$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2_p = .32$, were all significant predictors of depression. Adolescents who expressed more negativity in their turning-point narratives, and those who reported higher levels of neuroticism and lower levels of conscientiousness experienced more depressive symptoms.

**Self-Esteem**

In predicting self-esteem, there were no significant age, culture, or gender effects and no significant interactions. Causal coherence, $F(1, 215) = 4.17$, $p = .04$, $\eta^2_p = .02$, conscientiousness, $F(1, 215) = 17.62$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2_p = .08$, neuroticism, $F(1, 215) = 18.24$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2_p = .08$, and openness, $F(1, 215) = 10.25$, $p = .002$, $\eta^2_p = .04$ were all significant predictors of self-esteem. Adolescents with higher levels of causal coherence in their turning-point narratives, and those who reported higher levels of conscientiousness and openness, and lower levels of neuroticism, had higher self-esteem.

**Life Satisfaction**

In predicting life satisfaction, there was a significant effect of culture, $F(2, 217) = 4.52$, $p = .012$, $\eta^2_p = .04$. Post hoc tests did not reveal any significant pairwise differences, although there was a trend for NZE adolescents to have higher life satisfaction than NZC adolescents ($p = .097$). Thematic coherence, $F(1, 217) = 4.25$, $p = .04$, $\eta^2_p = .02$, conscientiousness, $F(1, 217) = 15.84$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2_p = .07$, and neuroticism, $F(1, 217) = 19.08$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2_p = .08$ also significantly predicted life satisfaction. Adolescents with higher thematic coherence in their turning-point narratives, and those who reported higher levels of conscientiousness and lower levels of neuroticism, had higher life satisfaction. There were three significant interactions: between age and causal coherence, $F(1, 217) = 3.51$, $p = .03$, $\eta^2_p = .03$; between culture and topic, $F(1, 217) = 3.60$, $p = .03$, $\eta^2_p = .03$; and between culture and thematic coherence, $F(1, 217) = 3.12$, $p = .046$, $\eta^2_p = .03$. Follow-up correlations, partialing out personality traits and other dimensions of narrative identity, revealed a significant negative link between causal coherence and life satisfaction for younger adolescents ($r_p = -.25$, $p = .03$) and a significant positive link between
causal coherence and life satisfaction for older adolescents ($r_p = .25$, $p = .02$). There was no significant correlation between causal coherence and life satisfaction for middle adolescents ($r_p = -.07$, ns). These different patterns for younger and older adolescents in the connection between autobiographical reasoning and well-being were expected and are in line with previous research (e.g., McLean et al., 2010). For the culture by topic interaction, follow-up partial correlations revealed a significant positive link between personal development topics and life satisfaction for NZE only ($r_p = .27$, $p = .02$; for NZC, $r_p = -.18$, ns, and for NZM $r_p = .13$, ns). This finding was unexpected given that personal development is a new coding category but is in line with theories of the central role of the individual in autobiographical memories in European cultures (e.g., Wang, 2014). For the culture by thematic coherence interaction, follow-up partial correlations revealed a significant positive link between thematic coherence and life satisfaction for NZM only ($r_p = .26$, $p = .02$; for NZC, $r_p = .11$, ns, and for NZE $r_p = -.12$, ns). This finding was in line with predictions that thematic coherence would be important for Māori adolescents’ well-being.

Discussion

Our main finding was that personality traits and narrative identity were both uniquely linked to well-being for adolescents from three cultural groups in New Zealand. Neuroticism was negatively linked to well-being, and conscientiousness and openness were positively linked to well-being. Life story causal coherence was positively linked to well-being for older adolescents only. Specifically, higher levels of causal coherence were linked to greater life satisfaction for 18- to 21-year-olds. In contrast, higher levels of causal coherence were linked to lower life satisfaction in younger adolescents. These findings are consistent with the patterns observed for adolescents, emerging adults, and adults in other samples (e.g., Banks & Salmon, 2013; Bohanek & Fivush, 2010; Lilgendahl & McAdams, 2011; McLean et al., 2010). In two new findings, we discovered a positive link between personal development topics and life satisfaction for European adolescents of all ages and a positive link between thematic coherence and life satisfaction for Māori adolescents of all ages. These main questions to address are as follows: (a) For the younger adolescents, why was there a negative link to well-being for causal coherence? (b) Why was the positive link between personal development topics and well-being present for European adolescents only? (c) Why was the positive link between thematic coherence and well-being present for Māori adolescents only?

Age Moderation in Narrative Identity and Well-Being

In addressing the first point, we propose that the younger adolescents with higher levels of causal coherence seem to be casting about for meaning in their lives. In early adolescence, there is a sharp dip in happiness and self-esteem (e.g., Petersen et al., 1993). Suddenly, younger adolescents feel worse about themselves and their lives in general than they did when they were children, and they are trying to figure out why. We speculate that younger adolescents’ lower well-being could be driving their attempts at autobiographical reasoning. We predict that these children with the highest levels of causal coherence in early adolescence, although currently the most dissatisfied with their lives, will be the ones with perhaps the greatest satisfaction later in adolescence because they are doing the hard work of identity exploration early on. We are now following a portion of this sample longitudinally, so soon we may have an answer to this question.

Previous research established a positive role of negative expressivity for well-being by mid adolescence (e.g., Bohanek & Fivush, 2010; Fivush et al., 2007; Soliday et al., 2004). In contrast, we did not find any age moderation in the role of emotional expressivity of turning-point narratives in relation to well-being once other aspects of narrative identity and traits were controlled. Negative expressivity in narratives was, however, one of the significant predictors of adolescent depressive symptoms, alongside higher levels of neuroticism and lower levels of conscientiousness. It is possible that emotional expressivity overlaps with other, more critical dimensions of narrative identity—such as topic and narrative coherence—as positive indicators of well-being. Our inclusion of these multiple dimensions of narrative identity helps to isolate the critical factors for adolescent well-being.

Cultural Similarities and Differences in Narrative Identity and Well-Being

Our main finding was one of similarity across cultures in the link between narrative identity and well-being. Although there were marked cultural differences in causal coherence for the turning points in this sample, with lower levels of causal coherence for Māori and Chinese adolescents, the link between
causal coherence and life satisfaction was positive for older adolescents across all three cultural groups. Presumably, being able to evaluate important life events and draw causal connections—that is, engaging in autobiographical reasoning—allows older adolescents to better appreciate their lives, regardless of culture. This similarity across cultural groups may also stem from New Zealand culture being largely independent in orientation (see Jose & Schurer, 2010), so that it is possible that older adolescents in all three cultures benefit from the practice of drawing causal connections between past events and the present self. For instance, contemporary Māori adolescents simultaneously endorse both independent and interdependent orientations, and NZ Asian adolescents are as high in independence as NZ European adolescents (Harrington & Liu, 2002; Jose & Schurer, 2010). In addition, the fact that all interviews were conducted in English could have primed for an independent self for Māori and Chinese adolescents, due to the congruency effect between language and culture-specific self (Wang, Shao, & Li, 2010). Notably, there was also a positive link between causal coherence and self-esteem across the three cultural groups, underscoring again the importance of autobiographical reasoning for well-being across cultures.

Only for New Zealand European adolescents, however, were personal development topics in turning-point narratives linked to life satisfaction. Note that personal development was a broader category than our other topics, encompassing such diverse topics as a change in religious belief, a change in one’s life philosophy, or a change in the kind of person one chose to become. Not surprisingly, narratives with personal development topics scored higher on all other dimensions of narrative identity, particularly causal coherence. Yet, personal development topics emerged as a unique protective factor for life satisfaction for New Zealand European adolescents only. We interpret this finding as further evidence that Western cultures prize the individual over the collective in their orientation to memory and to self (Wang, 2014). Although narrating events focused on personal change or growth is correlated with well-being in independently oriented individuals, these self-focused events appear less consequential for interdependently oriented individuals.

In contrast, Māori adolescents demonstrated the additional protective factor of thematic coherence for their life satisfaction. This positive connection was present for Māori adolescents regardless of age and is in line with prior research and theory of the importance of memory and narrative in contemporary Māori culture (Durie, 1994; Reese & Neha, 2015; Reese, Taumoepeau, & Neha, 2014; Reese et al., 2008; Rewi, 2010). Our coding of local thematic coherence captured the degree to which turning-point events were narrated in a detailed and resolved way. Related research reveals that Māori adults produce more detailed narratives about highly significant life events, such as the birth of a child, compared with European adults (Reese et al., 2008). Although contemporary Māori vary widely in their identification with the culture, greater cultural efficacy—defined as having “the personal efficacy to engage appropriately with other Māori in Māori social and cultural contexts”—is linked to greater personal well-being (Houkamau & Sibley, 2010, 2011, p. 382). Reese and Neha (2015) found that Māori parents who identified more with Māori culture also reported reminiscing more often with their children. Thus, narratives may be a crucial aspect of cultural identity for Māori. Our measure of thematic coherence for single events comprises a broader range of narrative coherence skills than does causal coherence, and local thematic coherence develops from a younger age than causal coherence (Reese et al., 2011). Moreover, our measure of thematic coherence taps other types of resolutions than those that link to personality, such as links to one’s understanding of the world or others, or changes in one’s behavior (see examples in Appendix). A Māori proverb states Ehara taku toa i te toa takatahi, engari he toa takatini taku toa—“My individuality is not my strength, but that strength lies in my communal and collective actions and activities” (Moko Mead & Grove, 2001). We suggest that the local thematic coherence scale provided a culturally fairer measure of narrative identity than did causal coherence, which may be biased toward European, independently oriented individuals (see Chandler & Dunlop, 2012; Dunlop & Walker, 2013 for related arguments). Unlike causal coherence, our measure of local thematic coherence does not entail reference to personal development and thus may be especially useful for tapping narrative coherence in interdependently oriented individuals and cultures.

We did not observe this positive connection between thematic coherence and well-being for New Zealand European or Asian adolescents. In contrast, Waters and Fivush (2015) found that a composite narrative coherence measure was linked to well-being for self-defining events in a sample of primarily European and Asian American emerging adults. However, Waters and Fivush’s narrative coherence measure also tapped chronological and contextual coherence, not simply local thematic coherence.
Limitations and Strengths

A limitation of our study was our focus on only a single life-event narrative, although our turning-point narratives did prompt for self-defining events. The strengths of the study include the focus on three cultural groups of relevance for theories of autobiographical memory and narrative identity, as well as our multiple measures of narrative identity. If we had focused only on autobiographical reasoning in the form of causal coherence, we would have overlooked some important nuances for Māori adolescents in the links between narrative identity and well-being.

Implications and Future Research

These results have implications for theories of narrative identity, personality, and adolescent well-being. Narrative identity was uniquely relevant for all aspects of adolescent well-being across all three cultural groups. These results support our hypothesis that narrative identity is an important developmental task for adolescents across cultures, even when the form of narrative identity and its developmental trajectory differs across cultures (Reese, Chen, et al., 2014). Whereas autobiographical reasoning in the form of life story causal coherence was related to well-being for adolescents in all three cultures; however, local thematic coherence was related to well-being for Māori adolescents only. Given that our measure of local thematic coherence does not require autobiographical reasoning (see Habermas & Reese, 2015), these findings support our claim that autobiographical reasoning may not be the only path to narrative identity, particularly for individuals from cultures with an interdependent orientation (Reese, Chen, et al., 2014).

For theories of personality, it is clear that both traits and narrative identity are uniquely important for well-being. Similar to the research with adults, neuroticism was negatively linked to well-being, whereas openness was positively linked to well-being (e.g., Bauer, McAdams, et al., 2005). In contrast to the adult research, extraversion did not play a unique role in adolescent well-being, yet conscientiousness did. Conscientiousness shows dramatic age-related changes in adolescence, with lower levels in early adolescence followed by much higher levels in late adolescence, whereas extraversion shows fewer age-related changes (Soto, John, Gosling, & Potter, 2011). We hope that these findings of different patterns of the role of traits for adolescents’ narrative identity, combined with the cross-cultural findings, will advance integrated theories of personality across development (see McAdams, 2013; McAdams & McLean, 2013; Smillie, 2013).

We propose that future in-depth research is needed with younger adolescents to explore the possible reasons for the negative links between narrative identity and well-being. These studies could explore interactions between rumination, narrative identity, and life satisfaction in this age group. We also advocate future within-culture studies of Māori and Chinese adolescents, from both qualitative and quantitative perspectives, to ascertain whether these results are mediated by the strength of their affiliation with their culture. Finally, we would like to explore the process of narrative identity development and its link to well-being through family stories in childhood and early adolescence in non-European cultures. In a separate longitudinal New Zealand European sample that we have followed from early childhood to adolescence, we noted connections between mothers’ reminiscing style in early childhood and young adolescents’ autobiographical reasoning in critical-event narratives (Reese et al., 2010; cf. McLean & Mansfield, 2011 for concurrent links in adolescence). Given the importance of autobiographical reasoning for well-being in all three cultures, it would be interesting to trace the sources of autobiographical reasoning in non-European cultures. Finally, in future analyses with the present sample, we are exploring the intergenerational narratives that the adolescents in each culture told about their mothers’ and fathers’ childhood experiences. We predict that intergenerational narratives will offer another path to narrative identity, and potentially to well-being, especially for adolescents from cultures with an interdependent orientation (see Fivush, Bohanek, & Zaman, 2011).

These findings also have practical implications for adolescent well-being. We believe that narrative identity is a source of resilience for adolescents and may be a special source of resilience among Māori adolescents. In future intervention research, we would like to explore options for strengthening narrative identity in adolescents from diverse cultures in an attempt to foster well-being.

References


Appendix: Examples of High Thematic Coherence in Māori Adolescents’ Narratives (P = participant; I = interviewer)

Mid-Adolescent

P: When I was at intermediate, like, me, me and my two little, two little sisters ‘cause it was like always the three of us and it’s like you can’t come home without the other one or you can’t come home without her and it’s like, yeah. But like, you know how sisters are really snarky and they always fight and stuff, ah like, actually I don’t know, what happened but like, ah I think it was, I don’t know, like the time, my little, my youngest sister, we were crossing the road, and while we were crossing the road and then like me and [sister’s name] saw a car coming so we were like on a, ah we’ll just wait, but then ‘cause my other sister had already crossed the road, the youngest one like ran onto the road and almost got hit by a car, but like the car stopped like, not far from her and she just stood there and we were like freaked out but then ah after that, after that I was like always looked after them.

Older Adolescent

P: Oh there was this one incident when I went somewhere and they all started talking Māori thinking I couldn’t understand it ‘cause I was White and, and I answered back to them in Māori and you know you should have seen their faces but it was just like, OK so because I’m White I have to prove more so that I’m Māori but I know Brown people that don’t know how to do anything, you know but they don’t have to prove it because they’re Brown. So that, that kind of opened the world to me and up for me and OK, so this is what the world’s like, you know. There are a lot of stereotypes and so that changed that side of me and that made me more determined.

I: Ok.

P: To prove, even though you shouldn’t have to prove but I do. Like I want to show people that yeah I am and don’t underestimate me just because I’ve got white skin.

I: Yeah.

P: You know because it’s not the only factor and so that, that particular bullying and sort of would have been a big change in how I perceived things, yeah.
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