

Losing Our Identity: A study exploring why Papua New Guineans are ignorant of their national story

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Abstract

This paper raises the concern that Papua New Guineans are losing sight of their rich cultural values and indiscriminately adopting outside values. This adaptation has brought about confusion among young Papua New Guineans and they are losing their sense of self-identity. The study, conducted among Divine Word University students as well as Secondary High School students and teachers, highlights the fact that schools are not doing enough to prepare young people to discover their cultural self-identity. It was found that the current curriculum of the education system alienates students from their cultural identity and forms them to feel more like foreigners.

Introduction

Papua New Guineans are seemingly neglecting the richness of their past at an alarming rate, especially the young people. With the impact of western influence Papua New Guineans are inclined to take little pride in the immense richness of the past where their elders found valuable principles, wisdom, and lessons of life.

This reality struck me while teaching second year Communication Arts students a Unit called, 'Colonial Experience'. I came to realize that the majority of students not only lack a sense of history but, more profoundly, show a lack of interest in studying their cultural history. I was surprised at the lack of basic knowledge of Papua New Guinea's pre-history as well as colonial history. It was apparent that in spite of completing grade 12 in National High Schools or Secondary schools, students lacked basic knowledge of the country's cultural history as well as colonial history. They were not enthused to know of their past and learn from the richness that the past offers. Rather they were more inclined to forget the past and dwell on the concept of modern PNG with all its paraphernalia such as the modern music, the modern lifestyle, western movies, comedies and almost anything that has Western tastes and what I now shall term as 'western value relationship'. The historical events of significant importance were merely looked upon as passing occurrences, and were not considered relevant to their modern life style. Even during discussions on cultural values, students lacked understanding of core beliefs and values of their respective communities. In the first year class I asked the students how much cultural history of Papua New Guinea they studied. I was surprised to hear that History was not considered important and it was taken as an elective in National High and Secondary Schools. Those who chose history as an elective did not study PNG cultural history but rather something of the European history such as the Russian Revolution.

This observation prompted me to explore factors or reasons which may contribute to the lack of interest shown by students in studying Papua New Guinea's cultural history. The study focused on finding out what students learn in schools and how teachers deliver lessons relating to PNG's cultural history, and what resources they have.

Setting the cultural context

The preamble to the Papua New Guinea Constitution desires that the young generation of the independent State of Papua New Guinea value customs and traditions as building blocks of the nation with the following phrase, WE, THE PEOPLE OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA -

- united in one nation
- pay homage to the memory of our ancestors; the source of our strength and origin of our combined heritage
- acknowledge the worthy customs and traditional wisdoms of our people – which have come to us from generation to generation
- pledge ourselves to guard and pass onto those who come after us our noble traditions and Christian Principles that are ours now.

'We pay homage to our cultural heritage as the source of our strength' (Constitution of Papua New Guinea 1975 pg.15).

According to the Constitution, the rich and the noble values and wisdom of the past must be lived and passed on. The question is: by whom? Obviously it has to be the young people. However for the young people to appreciate and acknowledge the value of life as experienced and lived by past generations, they must be encouraged to learn of the past - what it was like then. They must be provided with the opportunity to learn of the past as a stepping stone or a building block from where their identity as a people comes. The past is the source of their strength, their well or spring of wisdom. If this is not done, young people's orientation of life will be moulded and shaped by Western values and perceptions alone, if this is not the case already. Consequently traditional values will be despised as inferior to Western value systems.

Post colonial context

I have come from 50 000 years so they think.

Others say I was born on 16 September, 1975.

Let my arrows fly another 50 000 years (Kumalau Tawali, 1984)

According to Waiko (1993, p.1.), these words of the Papua New Guinean poet Kumalau Tawali express well the feelings of many Papua New Guineans during independence celebrations. Historians tell us that there is good evidence that humans have lived here for about fifty thousand years. Yet to most people, Papua New Guinea was born at independence thirty years ago. This perception, I believe, has a lot to do with the way many young people think about their own societies in the country. They tend to believe that for fifty thousand years or more Papua New Guineans were not living in organized communities, had

no structured system of organized livelihood. They had no belief systems, no sets of laws and no values systems that could be considered as having high moral and ethical standards. Rather these societies lived in loosely knitted groups and needed to be civilized. And for many, the coming of white man brought the best value systems.

These perceptions are reinforced by such writings as the following abstracts indicate: '*You (the natives) can never be the same as the white man*' (Inglis 1974, p.1). This statement presupposes the superiority of the whites over the blacks. This remark was made in 1901 when members of the first Parliament of the commonwealth of Australia debated the motion that Australia accept control of British New Guinea. They believed they were adopting 'savages' who were in their babyhood as far as civilization and development were concerned.

The white colonizers failed to see that the people were highly sophisticated and looked after their own affairs independently from one another yet at the same time interdependent on one another. Our people had organized structures of social order which regulated traditions, behaviour and values of community including individual members of the community. According to Narokobi (1989, p.20), "each cultural unit was autonomous, possessed of its origins, and defined territorial boundaries".

Ideological change

The arrival of westerners brought about a complete ideological change to the social fabric of Papua New Guinean societies. Colonisers gave names to our land, they named mountains, rivers, seas and other landmarks as if we did not have any names for these places. Tuhiwais' (1999, p.80) phrase, '*They came, They saw, They named, They Claimed*' sums it up succinctly.

Post colonial history introduces a completely different view of PNG societies. When the colonisers first set foot on our shores and met our people they probably thought we were just a conglomeration of tribes, lacking established traditional authority to manage the affairs of our community. Consequently they imposed uniformity and regimentation on our heterogeneous society. Therefore their presentation of PNG's history was a presentation of the Europeans perception and worldview of the native people of Papua New Guinea.

According to Tuhiwai (1999, p.33), we the indigenous people have struggled against a Western view of history and yet been complicit with that view. We have often allowed our histories to be told and have become outsiders as we heard them being retold. Our schooling and its curriculum with its underlying theory of knowledge about history is coming from a world defined and demarcated by a people who regarded themselves as fully human. The body of knowledge contained in the curriculum was based on foreign values and beliefs. Thus western schooling and the education system uprooted the people from their historical and cultural environment.

The focus of the study

The focus of the study, as explained earlier, was to explore reasons why students now coming to the University show a lack of interest in studying PNG's cultural history. In order to further find out the reasons for this decline, the following three specific questions were developed in the survey component of the study.

1. How are teachers implementing the curriculum in teaching PNG's cultural history?
2. What are students doing during lessons when PNG's cultural history is being taught?
3. What resources are available in teaching PNG's cultural history?

Significance of the study

The study is important because it is to raise consciousness among Papua New Guineans, especially the young people, that the problems of contemporary society are both our heritage from the past and our legacy to our successors. If we are to do anything about them we must identify their origins, define their characteristics and devise means of countering their deleterious effects.

Therefore the premise of this study is centered on history being a source of strength and wisdom for the young generation of today. Being a developing nation, our history can become a guiding hand in making the choices we have to make to exist side by side with other world communities.

At this time of development crossroads in PNG, where there is immense social and cultural impact and pressures on PNG societies, the study of cultural history can provide stability and direction to the young people of the country. Study and appreciation of one's own culture gives identity and a sense of belonging to a people. And Papua New Guinea with its unique diversity of cultures and traditions should give young people a sense of pride and identity. With this sense of identity they can both appreciate the values and traditions of their people and at the same time make conscious choices to live with outside values and know the difference.

This call for cultural understanding is also echoed by Narokobi when he speaks of PNG law undergraduates who are seldom equipped with the knowledge of moral, cultural and political background from which the law springs, whether common law or legislative law. He suggests that a study of Melanesian culture, political history, economic factors influencing law and law making, morality and ethics, sociology and psychology, comparative thought and literature, government in Melanesia and other subjects would do more to equip a lawyer than to undertake a study of law, as if it bore little or no relation to other fields of human concerns (Narokobi 1989, p. 200). The emphasis here is that Papua New Guineans now being educated in western education systems and occupying positions of decision making and authority should have some basic

cultural and historical knowledge of their own society. From this basis they can better understand their fellow Papua New Guineans and appreciate being Papua New Guineans and promote national identity.

The impact of Western education in PNG

The western education system had a revolutionary impact on the indigenous people of Papua New Guinea. In a newspaper article entitled “Cultural divide”, Pamba (2000) made the following comments, cited by Pickford (2001), that the education system is playing a part in disconnecting students from their indigenous heritage.

Our students are losing touch with their indigenous culture roots, thanks to the modern education system. ... The modern education process is about learning and making linkages and associating with what is out there in the modern world. The indigenous Papua New Guinea student is compelled to be on that road. This expectation is not in harmony with the need to keep traditional cultures alive... Indigenous Papua New Guinean cultures are living cultures whose sustenance has been by the word of mouth and daily relationships through time immemorial. A modern student is taken out of that equation.

Pickford (2001, p.7) says that these arguments are not new, and there are of course, always ‘alternative accounts’ that must be considered. It is, he argues, equally important to recognize the contributions of modern life as well as its disruptions, as well the contributions and limitations of customs and beliefs that have existed for a long time. He reaffirms the view that schooling must provide young people with the knowledge and the skills to manage the social, cultural and economic diversities the country faces.

The Ministerial Committee Report titled *A Philosophy of Education for Papua New Guinea* (1986) also referred to as The Matane Report, presents a self-image of the nation in terms of differences between two alternatives - traditional life and modern life. The report highlights the function of traditional education in an attempt to give some direction to the modern system:

- Traditional education was the responsibility of the family and the local community; introduced schools... took a large part of that responsibility away from the parents and the community.
- Traditional education satisfied the needs of the family, and the community. The missions, the colonial administration and post war development introduced new needs.
- Traditional education was education for life. Mission education was for eternal life.
- Traditional education was integrated with the community and taught children to see the world through the eyes of the community. Through whose eyes do our children see the world now?

For this purpose the National Education Plan in an approach entitled *Enterprise and Education Beyond Year 2002* (1996), describes at length the type of graduates that should pass out from its institutions, especially higher learning institutions. Some of its visionary statements are:

The education system should be producing the following type of graduates:

- Melanesian men and women well-educated and striving for excellence in all that they do.
- Responsible and accountable citizens abiding by the traditional and Christian values of Papua New Guinea.
- Contribute meaningfully to the development of their people and to the growth of new knowledge and skills; and
- Competently facing the challenges of daily life in a rapidly changing society.

Quality of education curriculum

The current question, whether the education curriculum is performing to expectations, remains a searching question. Researchers in the past two decades (Avalos 1989; Rose 1989; Yeoman 1986) have concluded that in spite of various innovations and substantial financial assistance poured into the national education system by both foreign aid donors and the PNG national government (Department of Education 1999), there appears to be no significant change in the quality of the education system in PNG (Department of Education, 2000). Onagi (2001, p.40) points out that during the colonial period the schools were used as agents of change, to transmit Western culture, values, norms and attitudes, to the indigenous pupils through its curriculum.

According to Onagi (2001, p.41) our present schools have moved away from that role of transmission to one that could be described as reflective. He argues that we should redefine the system so that schools can play the major role in reforming society, and handing down to the next generation the common cultural heritage of PNG society, rather than simply using the schools to mirror the changes taking place. Onagi emphasises that while the PNG education system is in the reform mode, it is suggested at least some steps in constructing our sense of national identity be taken on board in our school curriculum. I believe there is a correlation between the concept of education and curriculum. Louisson (1974) implies that curriculum was informal and fundamentally for survival skills in traditional societies. In other words, traditional education curriculum was life based. McLaughlin & O'Donoghue (1996) affirm this observation when they write that prior to the first European contact, PNG tribes had their own system of education. The curriculum of traditional education was based on life experiences and wisdom of 40,000 years of history (McLaughlin 2005, p.3).

Commenting on curriculum Onagi (2001, p.37) holds the view that the colonial era curriculum portrayed the sharing of a common culture for political unity, whilst the transitional and national curricula advocated cultural diversity but simultaneously encouraged universal values in the curricula materials as bases

for the development of national identity. Following the discussion on Curriculum as a Social Construct, O'Donoghue (2002, pp.54-55) points to the various concepts of curriculum. The stress is on societal needs rather than individual needs. Education and curriculum are seen in terms of their relation to the social issues of the day. O'Donoghue makes reference to one of Brameld's principles which best affirms the function and role of curriculum as a Social Construct. Part of the principle reads:

Education must commit itself here and now to the creation of a new social order that will perform the basic values of our culture and at the same time harmonise with the underlying social and economic forces of the modern world. Society must be transformed, not simply through political action, but more fundamentally through the education of its members to a new vision of their life in common.

Onagi (2001, p.40) obviously sees curriculum as a social construct when he says that Social Science Education in PNG should serve to give students an understanding of the society and the political state. The role of Social Science should be redefined and changed from the reflective emphasis to playing a greater role as an agent of change. PNG should start with an examination of its school system. He believes that the role of school be redefined so that our schools are used as agents of change rather than the reflective role they appear to be playing (Onagi 2001, p.41). This is a new challenge to the education system and its curriculum.

Following this trend of thought, Onagi says that people of Papua New Guinea need to recognize the power of the school curriculum in transforming society. He further adds that given our cultural diversity, we should socialize our children into a common culture within the framework of the Melanesian way of life.

Flaherty (1998, p.10) points out that as early as 1950s the education drive has been to prepare Papuan New Guineans to fit into the shoes of its colonial masters. Under the banner 'Education for Development' by the colonial government - a policy of *gradualism*, or the spread of universal primary education rather than secondary and tertiary education was the objective of schooling. Later in preparation for self-government, the United Nations Trusteeship Council recommended a change in policy (1962) from gradual uniform development to the deliberate creation of an elite to assume administrative responsibilities and political power. Two years later in 1964 the Currie Commission on Higher Education, claiming that 'education was an investment for the advancement and the development of the economy', planned for the expansion of secondary and tertiary education to provide standards of professional, administrative and political leadership vital to any territory in preparation for self-government.

From these efforts we can deduce that the desire to make education relevant to the needs of Papua New Guineans was already felt by the educators and curriculum developers at the time. It was anticipated that introduced education

would nurture and cultivate a connectedness to values and good traditions of society through a deliberate curriculum setting that instills in the mind of students their social obligations as citizens of the country (*Enterprise and Education Beyond Year 2002*, 1996).

Papua New Guinea has attracted many historians, anthropologists and other researchers who have written a lot on the cultures and the people of the country. Many have depicted the people and their practices as inferior, primitive and less developed. Much has been written on the history and cultures of Papua New Guinea. However this material is very often written from the perspective of the westerners and from their historical orientation. Waiko (1993) in his preface to the book *A Short History of Papua New Guinea* makes the following observation. "How can I put thousand years of my people's history into fifty thousand words"? Such a task, is of course, not possible, for almost all that time there is very little written evidence for us to base our history, let alone the recording of the oral tradition of our the people. Having said that, he relies on the written records of early contact to write the history of contact period of the last one hundred years. Waiko, by relying on western written records, naturally compromises his view of the history of Papua New Guinea. If he were to question the history as recorded by the westerners, he would be contesting the western paradigms, which claim to be the authority of knowledge.

As Tuhiwai (1999, p. 35) puts it, "... every aspect of the act of producing knowledge has influenced the ways in which indigenous ways of knowing have been represented. Reading, writing, talking, these are as fundamental to academic discourse as science, theories, methods and paradigms". A Maori writer Patricia Grace undertook to show that "Books Are Dangerous". She argues that there are four things that make many books dangerous to indigenous readers: (1) they do not reinforce our values, actions, custom, culture and identity; (2) when they tell us only about others they are saying that we do not exist; (3) they may be writing about us but are saying negative things which are untrue; and (4) they are writing about us but are saying negative and insensitive things which tell us that we are no good. This observation is very true of the history of Papua New Guinea societies as well. Acknowledging this limitation Waiko (1993, p. 5) maintains the view that readers of these historical records must realize that they are often flavoured by cultural misunderstanding of our societies by Europeans, and are, of course, limited to the people with whom the European writers happened to come into contact.

Errors have inevitably arisen when these writers have tried to generalize the social ideas relating to human origins based upon records of particular societies. Apart from early explorers and sailors who were merely interested in trade and business, Papua New Guinea's images of history, of its geographical landscape, and its people were also pieced together by scholars from a wide range of disciplines such as anthropologists, botanists, linguists, archeologists and missionaries. It is against this backdrop that Papua New Guinea must discover its cultural history.

Participant response

As the study was to gauge views of why students show lack of interest in studying their cultural history the following questions were developed, addressing specific aspects of teaching and learning methods. Therefore the first question of the study was on curriculum.

1. How are teachers implementing the curriculum in teaching PNG's cultural history?

Almost 100% of both students and teacher respondents all said that, very little cultural history of PNG is provided in the curriculum because much of the curriculum is about other country's culture and history. One teacher respondent said:

Of the current system in place, there is very little emphasis on PNG's cultural history. It is generally taught as a case study within the Social Science Course and not as a separate course where it can be dealt in depth. PNG cultural history should be made as a separate but compulsory subject in which all students regardless of their specific preferences should learn of their nation's cultural history".

There was an overwhelming preference for cultural history subject to be separate from social science curricula. Again almost 90% of the respondents expressed a strong opinion that currently history as part of Social Science being taught in grade 9 is inadequate and very often not relevant to the PNG context.

A Social Science teacher said:

I know of the current education drive to make our students feel more like Papua New Guineans and appreciate their origins by studying cultural history, but this will not happen if cultural history is part of Social Science curricula. The curriculum division has not put emphasis on PNG's Cultural History in the curriculum. I think the current curriculum does not provide any basic knowledge of PNG's cultural history to students at all.

Another teacher respondent said:

Some teachers try their best to teach cultural history; others disregard it. They tend to stick to the syllabus which at the moment is way away from PNG's cultural history. Some teachers do not have knowledge about PNG's cultural history themselves. There is need for staff development in this area. The curriculum especially History at upper Secondary does not go into depth about PNG's cultural history. It needs evaluation and change.

Another teacher respondent wrote:

Basically I don't think the current curriculum in high schools provide basic knowledge of PNG's cultural history to students because it is based mainly on foreign cultural history and not promoting our own (PNG) cultural history. As a result of this, students are confused

themselves and see themselves as not fitting back to their own cultural communities.

Another teacher respondent had this to say:

PNG History is insignificant in high school curriculum, as it simply does not exist. What is in the curriculum is Pacific History and European History. In grade 9, under Pacific History, an almost dismal mention is made of PNG's cultural history. I do not want to say that students are disinterested in learning their cultural history because PNG's Cultural history as a subject is not established yet.

A student respondent who attending a National High School said:

For them History was an elective, and very few students were interested in taking the subject, simply because it is not covered well in the curriculum. Furthermore the content of the history was more related to foreign history, especially the history of Europe, China or Japan.

One student had this to say:

PNG's Cultural History was not adequately taught because it is not covered well in the curriculum. Most things taught are from other countries. In the National High school I attended, maths, science, and physics were considered far more important than PNG's cultural history. For national identity PNG's cultural history must be a compulsory subject taught in schools. This is where we will learn and appreciate the values of our ancestors.

In summary to the first question, all respondents said that very little of PNG Cultural history is taught in schools. Even teachers cannot teach the subject because they themselves lack the necessary knowledge. This contributes to lack of interest shown by students in studying PNG's cultural history. There was a 100% view presented by the respondents that PNG culture history should be a subject on its own and not be part of Social Science Curricula.

This view contradicts what Onagi suggests that Social Science Curricula should incorporate more of PNG's cultural values. The result of the survey conducted through interviews and questionnaires strongly expressed the view that PNG Cultural History should be taught as a separate subject and not be part of Social Science. It should develop its own curriculum with trained teachers.

Students' observation

The second question was on students' participation.

2. What are students doing during lessons when PNG's cultural history is being taught?

From the respondents, varying answers came in. A teacher respondent wrote:

From my experience and observation we are more based on theory, all the time talking and students loose interest. Teacher centered teaching is contributing to students' lack of interest. Students should be involved in finding out more about their own cultures and share with others.

A student respondent expressed:

We sit down and copy notes from the teacher. Another student said: We participate in discussion and try to ask questions. Another said: We just sit down and listen to what the teaching is telling us. We can participate if we are asked to talk about our people, but again many of us do not know the culture and history of our own people.

A teacher respondent interviewed explained:

Students at upper secondary are not really studying PNG cultural history. Therefore to expect them to be enthused at tertiary level is expecting too much from them. It is not the fault of students but of the system. The teaching of PNG's cultural history should come before studying other histories such as European history and should already begin at grade 7 where students learn about different traditions, values and customs of the societies in PNG.

From participant observation, I noticed that students do exactly what the two respondents expressed. When there is discussion those who have some interest in history tend to be more enthused in leading the discussions. Others tend to passively listen and not fully participate. The reason for this difference could be, as I mentioned earlier, to do with their career priorities. Another reason I observed is the lack of basic knowledge on PNG cultural history. Students felt they did not want to look stupid in the eyes of their fellow students; hence they did not want to share. Some even despise the cultural practices of their people so they did not want to share and feel ashamed.

I also noticed that the more mature the student was, he or she would express interest in historical information. They would want to discuss and share and comment on values and traditions of the past.

Most respondents to this question showed ambivalence. Teacher respondents tended to say that students lack of participation is related to the way the subject is taught, as well as lack of materials and many of them are not trained in their own culture. Student respondents indicated that they wanted to learn PNG's cultural history in order that they can feel like Papua New Guineans. However lack of early preparation in their schooling made them lose interest and some found it boring.

Resources

To the question; what resources are available in teaching PNG's cultural history?

The respondents expressed the following:

A teacher respondent expressed: As a student studying Social Science at UOG (2001-2004) and as a first year teacher teaching Social Science I see that there are limited resources. I don't think the materials are adequate and sufficient enough to generate students' interest in studying their cultural history. More people should also be trained to teach the course more effectively.

A student respondent said:

Because of the lack of resources in terms of books, most of which are outdated, PNG's cultural history cannot be adequately taught. Another student respondent pointed out that apart from lack of teaching material there is also lack of human resource – that is there are not enough trained teachers who could teach the subject. Another teacher respondent pointed out the lack of resources to include library books, computers, and lack of adequate time given to studying PNG cultural history.

A teacher respondent expressed:

We only need resource material. If the government is serious about encouraging national identity, more books about PNG should be written by Papua New Guineans. The content must include values of our society and not only talk about dates and events of the past. There are not enough books by Papua New Guineans such as John Waiko's *A Short History of Papua New Guinea*. The Education Department should make every effort to pool some Papua New Guineans to write our history.

Conclusion

The conclusion presents the summary of some of the issues highlighted by both students and teacher respondents in answering the questionnaire

The first specific research question was: How are teachers implementing the curriculum in teaching PNG's cultural history? This question was intended especially to explore teachers views on how much of PNG's cultural history is contained in the current curriculum and how it is implemented in their teaching. This question drew almost 100% response drawing attention to a lack of PNG content material in the Social Science Curriculum. Teacher respondents expressed a unanimous view that the current curriculum does not cover PNG's cultural history adequately. They said the subject is too broad to cover in Social Science lessons. Thus they are handicapped and cannot possibly do justice to the subject. Some expressed that the teachers themselves are not trained to take up teaching the subject. The conclusion is that teachers cannot implement the teaching of PNG's cultural history when it is embedded in the Social Science Curricula.

They also expressed the view that when PNG's cultural history becomes a subject of its own, it should also become a compulsory subject where students learn about the richness of PNG's culture, its values, customs and traditions.

Currently under the Social Science Curricula this cannot be done. Student respondents expressed the view that for national identity, PNG's cultural history should be taught and made a compulsory subject. Students also could identify that there is lack of curriculum material available. Some expressed that they studied very little of PNG's cultural history whilst they were going to school. The issue of current curriculum being not helpful and should be evaluated and changed was also raised.

The second specific research question was: What are students doing during lessons when PNG's cultural history is being taught? This question was open to both teachers and students. It was designed to explore what interaction or activity takes place both in the classroom as well as outside of classroom when topics on history are being taught. The question was basically to find out what activities both students and teachers are engaged in when topics on PNG cultural history is being discussed.

This question drew mixed reaction. Students blamed the teachers for not being innovative in their teaching. Likewise the teachers blamed the students for not being interested and responsive. Again some teachers commented that there are not enough adequately trained teachers to make students feel involved and appreciate the value of studying PNG's cultural history. Some student respondents expressed that they find history boring when the teacher only talks and they have to just sit and listen. Some teachers were of the view that their hands are tied and they could not do much as the current curriculum allocates limited time only.

The third specific research question was: What resources are available in teaching PNG's cultural history? This question had both teacher and student respondents agreeing that there is lack of adequate teaching and learning material for teaching the subject. There are very few books written by Papua New Guineans on the history of the country. One good book written by a Papua New Guinean is Waiko's *A Short History of Papua New Guinea*. Further, respondents commented that many of the old books are outdated. Because of lack of resources, teachers only teach the theory and do not take students out for excursions, visiting historical sights or attending cultural activities taking place in the community. The teachers especially expressed the view that because of the lack of resources, PNG's cultural history will never be adequately covered in schools.

Importance of this research to PNG

I believe the importance of this research is that it contributes to the greater awareness and search for who we are, where we are going, and how should we get there? The research should also help fellow Papua New Guineans feel a sense of national pride and identity. It should contribute ideas to policy makers and educationists to see the value of PNG's cultural history as we appreciate the diversity of cultures we have in the country.

Recommendations

The results of the survey questionnaire undoubtedly points to a change in the curriculum. Based on these results the following recommendations are offered:

- That the Education Department make PNG's cultural history a compulsory subject in all schools;
- That PNG's cultural history becomes a separate subject with its own curriculum
- That more resource material is written from PNG perspective
- That more teachers are trained and specialized in teaching PNG's cultural history
- That the Education Department pool a group of resource people to write PNG history books
- That the curriculum and content of the PNG's cultural history not only talk about chronological events and dates but more on human values, beliefs and traditions of our people.

In order for this to happen, the education system with its curriculum must address the social issues of history. As highlighted by the results of the study, PNG's cultural history should be studied first instead of studying histories of other people first.

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