Bubalamai Bawa Gumada (Healing the Wounds of the Heart): The search for resilience against racism for Aboriginal Australian students

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Abstract
Within the Australian research setting, a strong research base has emerged to articulate both the nature and impact of racism from the perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It may be argued though that quantitative approaches to this research have been limited by simplistic measures that fail to capture the complexity of racism today. This limitation may have important implications for the identification of factors that could provide a buffer against the detrimental effects of racism, and thus promote a stronger and positive sense of resilience and engagement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth. It is the purpose of this paper to summarise two studies that have sought to understand the impact of racism on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student outcomes (e.g. achievement, engagement, aspirations) and to identify factors that may limit or negate the effects of racism. Using a mixture of both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, the results identified a) a measure of racism that held strong psychometric properties for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students; b) that each dimension of racism revealed a range of significant and negative associations with educational outcomes; and c) multiple strategies to help combat racism and its negative effects.