‘Te tautoko i ngā ākonga kia angitu’

The role of a whānau class in supporting Māori student success

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Educational Leadership in Te Puna Wānanga,
University of Auckland, 2022

ABSTRACT

For decades, Māori underachievement in English-medium schools has been attributed to many causes. Apathy on the part of Māori is frequently cited, whereas the schools themselves are rarely mentioned. More recently, focus has shifted from victim-blaming to research, policy, and professional learning focused on the structures, norms, and pedagogies in English-medium schooling that negatively impact student achievement. Collectively, this work has promoted the key role of understanding and promoting Māori students' culture and identity. A range of macro-level policies and culturally responsive pedagogical initiatives have been launched by institutions such as the Ministry of Education to address the issue of Māori student underachievement. In contrast, this study, utilising kaupapa Māori methodology, investigated the efficacy of a small-scale initiative, a Year 11 whānau class nested in an English-medium secondary school to enable Māori students to succeed as Māori. Ākonga and teachers participating in the programme were interviewed and a key finding was their collective positive response to the programme. Many sociocultural factors were identified that were associated with the development of students' confidence and self-perception factors that influence student achievement. These factors include infusion of Māori cultural values such as whanaungatanga and manaakitanga in whānau room practices and pedagogy. Students were highly complementary of their teacher support and culturally responsive pedagogy. Participants also noted the key role community had in supporting the programme and students in extracurricular Māori-centric activities and reinforced several research findings that stressed the importance of varied home, community, and school partnerships. Considered as a range of interrelated, intertwined sociocultural factors, this study concludes that whānau classes have very positive outcomes for participating students, staff, and whānau.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis would not have been completed without the help of many people. Throughout the long writing process, I am indebted to their ongoing support, awhi, and aroha.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the seven students and two teachers who participated in this research. Their openness and willingness to share their experiences were truly humbling, and their insights and honesty were inspiring and invaluable. I appreciate them giving up their time during busy work and school schedules, especially during a time of COVID-19 lockdown and disruptions. Also, thank you to the tumuaki for allowing me to conduct this research in their kura.

I am also grateful to my supervisors, Associate Professor Tony Trinick and Dr Tauwehe Tamati. Dr Tauwehe Tamati for her cultural guidance, invaluable insights and understanding, as well as her positivity for the study and helping me stay focused and motivated. Dr Tony Trinick, for his wealth of knowledge and experience regarding Māori education and thesis requirements, and especially for his time, patience, and guidance on academic writing.

I am thankful and grateful for my amazing advisory group and Te Hononga colleagues for your constant support and help. Your passion and motivation for Māori student success inspires me to become a better teacher every day.

To Nancy and Sarah, thank you for giving up your time to proofread; your patience and critique was invaluable. Dud, I could not have done this without you. I am indebted to you for taking time to read, proof, change, and make cool comments. You are the epitome of a friend, teacher, counsellor, and best proof-reader.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to my whānau and friends. To all the strong wahine that I have worked with throughout my teaching career, it is because of you I want to continue my leadership journey in education. My friends for your constant support and interest in my research studies and for giving me much needed time out to talk, vent, and go on walks. Mum and Dad, for your continuous support in my studies

over the years and for allowing me to use your places as quiet and serene writing venues.

Lastly, special mention to my supportive husband Moana and wonderful children Tana, Ariana, and Honey. For giving me time and space to complete this thesis and for doing all the household jobs. I hope it inspires you to work hard, dream big, and achieve your goals. I look forward to spending more whānau time together and going on more fun adventures in the future.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CRP	Culturally responsive pedagogy
CSR	Culturally sustaining pedagogy
HOF	Head of Faculty/Department
ERO	Education Review Office
ETP	Effective teacher profile
KMR	Kaupapa Māori research
MOE	Ministry of Education
NCEA	National Certificate of Educational Achievement
NCLB	No Child Left Behind Policy – America
NZ	New Zealand
NZQA	New Zealand Qualifications Authority

GLOSSARY

Ākonga	Student
Ako	To learn, study, teach, instruct
Aotearoa	New Zealand
Awhi	Embrace
Āwhina	Help
Hapū	Subtribe
Hauora	Wellbeing
Hui	Meeting
Iwi	Tribe
Kaiako	Teacher
Kaitautoko	Role of a support staff member
Kāhui ako	Community of learning (Ministry of Education initiative)
Karakia	Prayer
Ka Hikitia	To step up (Ministry of Education strategy)
Kaupapa	Topic
Kohanga reo	Māori total immersion early childhood centre in Aotearoa
Koha	Gift
Ko wai au	Who am I
Kura	School
Kura kaupapa	Māori total immersion primary school in Aotearoa
Kupu	Words
Mahi	Work
Manaakitanga	Kindness, generosity showing respect
Mana tangata	Power, status
Māra kai	Food Garden
Mātauranga	Knowledge, wisdom
Motuhake	Separated
Pā	To be connected
Pākehā	New Zealander of European descent

Rangitahi	Youth
Tauira	Student
Te ao Māori	The natural Māori world
Teina	Younger female or male
Te Kotahitanga	Unity of purpose (Ministry of Education initiative)
Te reo*	The Māori language
Te Titiri o Waitangi	The Treaty of Waitangi
Tikanga	Māori customs/rules
Tino rangatiratanga	Self-determination, sovereignty
Tuakana	Older male or female
Tumuaki	Principal of a school
Ūkaipō	Origin
Wahine	Female
Waiata	Song
Wananga	Traditional knowledge
Wero	Challenge
Whakapapa	Genealogy
Whakawhanaungatanga	Process of establishing relationships, relating well to others
Whakataukī	Proverb
Whānau	Family
Whanaungatanga	Relationships
Wharekura	Māori total immersion secondary school in Aotearoa

*Te reo Māori and Māori language are interchangeable and have been used accordingly.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

'Titiro whakamuri

kōkiri whakamua'

Look back and reflect

So, you can move forward

This whakataukī resonates with me and speaks to why I chose this research topic. I consider myself a lifelong learner and this thesis enabled me to partake in a research study whilst reflecting on a 20-year teaching history. Taking the time to pause, look back, and learn allows us to know how to move forward. This study has confirmed my passion for developing, improving, and striving to be an effective teacher for Māori ākonga.

1.1 Background

Over the past three decades, issues with Māori secondary school student underachievement have been at the forefront of Ministry of Education (MOE) professional development and schooling improvement policies and policy statements (Highfield & Webber, 2021). Although this issue has been ongoing for decades, the statistics for Māori achievement at all three NCEA levels, learning, and retention in high schools remains significantly lower than their Pākehā, Pasifika, and Asian peers. While these statistics show some improvement over time, they remain difficult to change in our secondary schools today despite various initiatives.

This research investigated a new bespoke initiative developed in an English-medium secondary school by a group of dedicated and committed Māori teachers to address Māori student underachievement. The initiative is the creation of a specialised Māori whānau class nested in an English-medium secondary school set on the outskirts of a large city. The goals of the programme include supporting Māori students to succeed, effectively learn, reinforce Te Ao Māori cultural values and kaupapa, and promote positive Māori identity. The key objective was to make a positive difference in Māori students' lives at school, so they experience school as a positive experience.

By utilising and implementing previous comprehensive research in this area, for example, Te Kotahitanga, Starpath, and MOE strategies such as Ka Hikitia, the whānau class is a new programme for Māori teachers to implement these strategies and strive for quality education and opportunities for Māori students. Teachers used a range of local resources, iwi connections, and curriculum knowledge and skills to deliver a culturally responsive programme and pedagogy through the whānau class format.

1.2 Statistics on Māori students' participation at secondary schools in Aotearoa

Arguably, the primary goal for any secondary school teacher is for their students to achieve their potential. However, there remains a lingering disparity between Pākehā and Māori student academic results in national assessments such as NCEA (Graham et al., 2010). Smith and Timperley (2008) referred to the NCEA qualifications as "choke points". Their analysis of the qualification system highlights many areas of concern that negatively impact Māori and Pasifika student achievement. Māori and Pasifika student achievement in these accreditation tests reinforces history repeating itself and the ongoing maintenance of intergenerational injustices for Māori students in a mainstream secondary school (G. H. Smith, 2000).

Research has been conducted on why Māori student achievement at senior NCEA levels has not reached the targets hoped for (Graham et al., 2010). Because of this, this study objective was to focus on a Year 11 group of students from a whānau class perspective and investigate how it helped students succeed. In addition, to inquire if a whānau class positively impacted Māori student achievement at Year 11 Level 1 NCEA. This interest is because of my personal experience teaching NCEA classes and the fact that these classes usually have a high percentage of Māori students. Combining these two factors justifies my personal interest in this research topic.

Table 1 presents data from the 2020 NZQA data analysis report and shows that Māori students had the lowest percentage pass rate at Year 11 since 2009.

Table 1: Year 11 Level 1 NCEA pass rate data for 2009–2020 (Education counts, n.d).

	2009	2015	2020
Overall pass rate	60.6%	74.5%	71.8%
Māori	42.3%	61.4%	60.8%
NZ European/ Pākehā	68.6%	80.2%	75.8%
Pacific	42.7%	66.7%	68.2%
Asian	64.5%	76.5%	73.1%

As Table 1 shows, the percentage of Māori pass rates has risen since 2009. However, a gap is still prevalent when comparing the overall pass rate and the difference between Māori, Pasifika, Asian, and Pākehā students. Sadly, the percentage for Māori remains significantly lower than their peers. The MOE acknowledges this failure and has admitted that the State schooling system has systematically failed to meet the needs and aspirations of Māori and Pasifika students and their whānau/families (MOE, 2013b). Therefore, there is still much work to be done to change schools' narratives, improve NCEA statistics, and remove achievement barriers for Māori learners.

Another example of this underachievement is the percentage of school leavers that have achieved the highest qualification available at secondary school, Level 3 NCEA certificate, and university entrance as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Year 13 Level 3 school leaver data (Education Counts, n.d.).

Ethnicity	2010	2015	2020
Māori	21.4%	33.2%	40.3%
Pasifika	26.4%	44.6%	55.8%
NZ European/Pākehā	48.7%	57.5%	60.4%
Asian	65.7%	74.8%	81.3%

Table 2 shows that Māori student school leaver percentages have improved since 2010, but the disparity remains between their peers of different ethnicities. These statistics highlight that Māori student retention at Year 13 also remains an issue and an area that needs improvement.

Another concern for high schools in Aotearoa is the high rates of stand-downs and exclusions for Māori students compared to other ethnicities. If students are not participating in school, this will impact their success. Table 3 presents stand-down and exclusion rates for 2000–2020 for different ethnicities.

Table 3: Stand-down and exclusion rates for 2000–2020 for different ethnicities and all year levels and ages (Education Counts, n.d.).

Ethnicity	**2000**		**2010**		**2020**	
	Stand-downs	**Exclusions**	**Stand-downs**	**Exclusions**	**Stand-downs**	**Exclusions**
Māori	6,725	740	8,325	701	7,740	370
Pasifika	1,576	147	2,467	178	1,916	55
NZ European/ Pākehā	8,261	629	7,691	482	7,729	264
Asian	246	20	474	19	485	8

Disciplinary actions are often referred to as a reflection of the key indicators of the success of a school (Gregory et al., 2010). According to Gregory et al. (2010) “frequent suspensions appear to significantly increase the risk of academic underperformance” (p. 60). This reinforces the importance of discussing disciplinary actions, as Indigenous culture disciplinary rates are considerably higher than other ethnicities in English-medium schools. It is pleasing that these rates have reduced over the past 20 years for Māori, but there is still a big gap that needs to be reduced, so Māori students’ exclusion from school does not impact their future lives. Disproportionate numbers of Māori students who are stood down, suspended, or excluded from schools because of challenging and disruptive behaviours leave high school without formal NCEA qualifications. The cause of this disruptive behaviour is frequently attributed to the cultural distance between home and school (Ogbu, 1991).

Tables 1–3 represent three areas of secondary school life and highlight the educational disparity in the Aotearoa education system for Māori students. According to Bishop et al. (2012), one reason for the disparity in achievement is that Western epistemology drives school systems and some teachers’ pedagogy to marginalise students. According to Bishop et al. (2012) for indigenous peoples around the world, educational disparities impact them for all their lives. It is the same for Māori students,

their academic achievement levels are also low, many leaving school without any qualifications especially when compared to their non-Māori counterparts.

Therefore, effective change needs to continue with new and different programmes, pedagogy, and initiatives that need to be implemented in English-medium secondary schools to change the narrative for Māori students.

1.3 Situating myself in the research

Throughout my 20 years of teaching experience, I have taught at several South Auckland secondary schools. These schools have had a high population of Māori students comprising approximately 30 to 45 percent. On reflection, I feel that I have specifically chosen to work at these schools because of my passion for helping Māori students. During my time at one of these schools, I was part of an enthusiastic and committed group of Māori wahine teachers who helped create a new whānau class for Māori and Pasifika students. This whānau class was established under the already existing vertical homeroom house system. The main goal for this whānau class was to promote, incorporate, and teach as much tikanga, te reo, and te ao Māori as we could in our daily scheduled 20-minute homeroom time.

During this time, I was also fortunate to be involved in phase three of the compulsory Te Kotahitanga professional development initiative (see Bishop & Berryman, 2010). My involvement in this initiative progressed to being part of the Kia Eke Panuku team for the school. Both programmes fascinated, inspired, and encouraged me to question the causes, beliefs, and ideologies that caused injustices for our Māori students in our Pākehā-dominated schooling system. According to Webber et al. (2013), if teachers can empower students to be proud to be Māori, they can make a difference in their setting. This will help improve educational outcomes and results by using their school's natural resources, local community, and localised curriculum to provide learning, growth, and achievement opportunities with a te ao Māori focus (Webber et al., 2013).

Through my involvement in these two MOE programmes, I was fortunate to learn from Māori lecturers, leaders, and enthusiastic educators and apply their strategies to my culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP). Being an effective teacher, building positive relationships, and avoiding biased assumptions and deficit thinking are phrases that have since dominated my teaching, and therefore helped improve and develop my

pedagogy to help raise Māori student achievement in my classes. As Hynds et al. (2016) highlighted, for Māori students to have enjoyable experiences and achieve academic success as Māori, it is highly dependent on the schools they attend and their teachers.

It felt only natural for me to continue this interest in my research topic. At my current kura, I have been fortunate and privileged again to have another opportunity to be involved in a similar programme and be a whānau/form teacher of a unique Māori homeroom class working alongside a group of passionate, committed, and inspiring Māori colleagues. We all share the same kaupapa, aiming to improve, help, and improve Māori students' wellbeing, learning, achievement, and promote and encourage positive Māori cultural identity.

Another reason this research topic resonates with me is because, as G. H. Smith (2000) noted, it is important for Indigenous teachers and educators to be "change agents" to transform and change their current circumstances. This research complements my role as a teacher of Māori descent and Māori students. My involvement in these classes is my approach to being a change agent, enact new strategies, and "implement a 'radical pedagogy' to help and benefit Māori students" (G. H. Smith, 2000, p. 70).

1.4 Research aims and questions

This research examined how a whānau class, a specialised Year 11 learning class, supported Māori students to succeed. Success and achievement in the context of this study is not just academic success but broader, including sociocultural factors such as identity, belonging, and relationships.

In this study, the term "whānau class" refers to a group of students who coalesce for all compulsory subjects. The criteria for student participation in this class are Māori or Pasifika ethnicity or having a strong interest in Māori culture. Student participation is voluntary, but parents/caregivers must consent. This research focuses on the various factors used in the whānau class programme to improve educational success. In addition, I explored students' perspectives of how this class encouraged and responded to the students' self-identity as Māori. My overarching research question

was: How does a whānau class support Māori students' success? In addition, the following sub questions are also the focus of this study:

- What did students enjoy about being involved in this whānau class?
- What strategies were used by teachers to support their cultural identity?
- How did participation in this class improve their educational success at school?

This study aimed to collect and collate student and teacher voices to determine if a whānau class influenced Māori students' academic success. Firstly, I investigated if the class promoted and encouraged Māori students to feel proud of their culture, and secondly, whether students were provided with the opportunities to achieve educational success as Māori. Finally, I wanted to investigate if the whānau and core curriculum subject teachers were supporting the goal of raising Māori student success. My objective was to investigate if participation in the whānau class had any relevance or improvement in students' school lives to help support the students. I agree with G H Smith (1993) regarding schooling for Māori, who stated that their needs and aspirations are not homogenous or singular. For this very reason, the established class had to do something different for our ākonga.

Another goal of this whānau class was for the programme to be sustainable and to use the staffing and resources already available in the school and community to establish a new class annually in Year 9. One objective of this research was to utilise the findings to inform future whānau class development to ensure Māori student success. Thus, reinforcing the importance of schools and teachers creating their change in schools to benefit their students. In agreement with Hynds et al. (2016), it should be expected that all teachers provide a learning environment that has a Te Ao Māori focus that Māori learners can participate and contribute in. Reinforcing this importance is that education policies require schools to enable Māori students to enjoy and achieve success as Māori.

1.5 Research setting

The setting was a coeducational, Decile 6 secondary school in the greater Auckland rural area. The school roll is approximately 950 students, with a Māori student population of 30 percent. Student participants were aged between 15 and 16 years

and of Māori, Pasifika, and Pākehā descent. Approximately 40 percent of the Māori students are descendants of the local iwi. These student and school population statistics are also an approximate reflection of the local community population and ethnic makeup.

The ākonga participants in this study were in Year 11 and aimed to achieve their Level 1 NCEA qualifications. For 18 months, they were a member of this whānau class since the start of Year 10. Later in this chapter, an explanation is given on how students became members and the background establishment of this class.

The teacher participants in this study taught the whānau class in one of their core compulsory curriculum subjects—mathematics, science, English, social studies, physical education, and health. Both are experienced teachers and have taught at the school for several years.

There is one iwi in this area, and they have a favourable and unified presence in the community. Having one mana whenua has resulted in iwi knowledge, history, and tikanga being represented, acknowledged, and valued amongst the community. Over the last 13 years, the school tumuaki has made significant efforts to create solid and respected connections with the local iwi, so their history, language and te ao Māori have more presence in the curriculum and school life. In the school's history, no principal has made these positive links and relationships with iwi, and they have become well respected by the iwi. As a result of these connections, more recognition and importance are placed on the significant history in the school environment and curriculum. The principal has prioritised iwi knowledge and history in staff inductions and professional development over recent years.

1.6 The rationale for this research

Māori student underachievement is still a national macro-level issue. Frequently, the solution to raising Māori student achievement is at the local level of the school and community. Therefore, teachers become key agents of change. Politicians and macro-level policies by themselves will not make much of a change as we have witnessed for decades, despite a range of Māori education initiatives. Children have a right to succeed educationally, and culturally, as "Māori succeeding as Māori" schools, teachers, and policy developers have a moral and legal obligation to ensure students

reach their potential. However, this requires a change in thinking, attitudes, and behaviour on the part of the education workforce.

My maternal grandmother is of Māori descent hailing from Te Hauke and Ngāti Kahungungu iwi. Although my Pākehā and Chinese cultures influenced my upbringing, since my first day of teaching twenty years ago as a secondary health and physical education teacher, I have always felt a strong connection and passion for making a positive difference in my Māori learners' lives. My enthusiasm stems from a sense of belonging and a goal to help improve the success and achievement levels of the Māori students I teach, so when they leave school, they have felt success, achieved their goals, and had the skills and knowledge to be whatever they want to be.

Another justification for this research is that many of our Māori students in our rural areas are fortunate to attend kohanga reo and kura kaupapa, but sadly cannot continue onto a wharekura. There are many reasons for this, and one main reason is that there is usually no wharekura available in the area. Due to location or financial reasons, fluent te reo Year 9 Māori students must attend the only high school in the area, which is usually an English-medium mainstream school that does not have a total immersion environment or bilingual programme for Māori students.

I was interested in the students' and teachers' perspectives of their experiences at school and what impacts their motivation, participation, and identity. Bishop et al. (2012) reiterated the value in collecting Māori student voices on their schooling experiences. Therefore, attaining students' voices is relevant to this research topic and essential if positive change is to occur in schools. As stated in Ka Hikitia, the MOE (2013a) Māori education strategy, "Māori student voices are contributing to school improvement practices" (p. 33). Adolescents live, eat, and breathe and are the focal point of school life, by listening and allowing them to voice their opinions and concerns. It enables relevant changes, empowering and inspiring changes to help improve and better their experience during an already challenging time in their lives.

Another aim of this study was to investigate if the whānau class achieved its vision and goals, met the needs of the students, and does what it initially set out to do. In agreement with Milne's (2017) research at Ki Aroha College, the whānau classes "are

trying to create authentic learning spaces in a dominant Pakeha institutional setting" (p. 29).

1.7 Research methodology

A kaupapa Māori theoretical framework underpinned the qualitative methodology of this study. Kaupapa Māori theory and philosophy is relevant for this study because it involves Māori participants and resonates with the nature of this research. As Linda Smith (2000) explained, a fundamental approach of kaupapa Māori research (KMR) encourages Māori researchers to engage with Indigenous communities and stakeholders to ground and embed the research in their communities.

The theoretical framework of this research draws on the two KMR principles of ako Māori – culturally preferred pedagogy and tino rangatiratanga – self-determination. The principle of tino rangatiratanga was used as a lens to analyse the class environment and the students' perceptions of self-determination and empowerment concerning their cultural identities. The data collected will be examined concerning its connections to the second principle of ako Māori. Data analysis will focus on inherent support strategies and pedagogical strategies used in the whānau class that include these principles.

A qualitative research methodology was selected because it connects people's meaning to their lived experiences in the social world. An interpretive method was employed to answer the research questions and explore the participants' meanings and moments of being involved in the whānau class. This method aided in gaining more insight and perspective of the students' lived experiences (Hughes, 2010).

Another feature of qualitative research methodology is that it aligns succinctly with the previously mentioned KMR research principles. One KMR principle of importance is that the researcher must avoid manipulating or pre-determining the participants' results and not view the participants as targets (Pihama, 2010). As a teacher at the school, I had to follow and respect the KMR principles throughout the research process and avoid any future conflict or confidentiality breaches with research participants.

One of the data collection methods was an anonymous online survey using Microsoft Forms. The survey consisted of 16 questions containing Likert scales and open and closed questions (see Appendix 2). The design of the questionnaire was based on

Toepoel's (2017) method of participants completing fewer challenging questions at the beginning and ending with more demanding and thought-provoking questions at the end. I am fortunate and thankful that seven students from the whānau class completed the survey.

A semi-structured interview method was employed to allow conversational flexibility and to establish a friendly informal environment (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). The interview consisted of six open-ended questions (see Appendix 3) and were conducted and recorded on-site at the school during school hours at a time that suited the participants. Three student participants were selected from the seven who completed the survey. Their selection process came down to availability due to COVID-19 lockdown. In addition, my supervisor randomly selected two subject teachers to be interview participants.

The data was then analysed and interpreted to examine the factors contributing to Māori student success in the whānau class. A deductive and inductive (pragmatic) approach was used to analyse the data. The deductive coding method was employed to draw on a predefined set of themes and concepts derived from the literature review and the methodology. As a result, five themes appeared from the student data and four overall themes from the teacher data.

1.8 Background to the establishment of the whānau class

Whānau classes began at the school in 2020, but the programmes leading up to the implantation paved the way for its eventual establishment. In 2018, 12 male Māori students took part in a Ko Wai Au programme in Year 9. The programme was taught over three separate one-week blocks during one school term. During this time, the students were taught the cultural values of tikanga, whanaungatanga, and mātauranga and participated in outdoor activities. The kaupapa was to encourage and educate through a te ao kaupapa to help improve behaviour and build student resiliency. This programme started due to a new staff appointment who had the knowledge and skills to lead this programme. They were employed in a kaitautoko role and had intensive outdoor experience and te ao Māori kaupapa. Being a descendant of the local iwi, they were motivated to help Māori students become better versions of themselves. Their role was to support three local primary schools with a similar programme appropriate to this age group of Māori students. The schools were

fortunate to have this valuable staff member to implement and support these programmes and their Māori students.

In 2019, the same course developed further, including a separate female programme of 12 Māori females in Year 9. Instead of a block course, students were withdrawn from their timetabled classes for two hours every week for one term to take part in the Ko Wai Au programme.

At the end of the programme, the students asked if they could be in a group/class and meet more often, for example, throughout the entire year. As part of the school timetable, the students were in form/admin/tutor classes in their respective year groups, and this class met for 20 minutes every day. Therefore, creating a specific and unique Māori whānau/form class was a relatively comfortable fit into their timetable. To the students' delight, it was implemented in 2020 at the start of the school year.

Students were hand-selected based on their Māori and Pasifika ethnicity or their commitment to Māori kaupapa. Although being involved in the kapa haka group was not a requirement, there was an expectation to participate in it and be involved in waka ama. Parents and caregivers had to give their permission for their child to be a member of the whānau class.

1.9 The whānau class philosophy and vision

The class aim was to have effective and positive subject and whānau teachers in front of the students. These teachers have proven to use culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) in their classrooms and be enthusiastic about making a difference in Māori students' lives. The teacher requirements are reiterated in Bishop et al.'s (2012) Te Kotahitanga programme. Bishop et al. found that teachers who adopt a relationship-based pedagogy had solid connections and relationships (whanaungatanga) between the student and teacher, resulting in positive outcomes and achievement for Māori learners at school. Therefore, the core curriculum teachers of the whānau class were selected who had proven student success, rated high on the ETP (effective teacher profile), and showed no negative resistance to changing their practices to be culturally responsive.

Māori teachers created the whānau classes for their Māori students to continue using and implementing the research and strategies from MOE initiatives. As Berryman and

Eley (2017) explained, Ka Hikitia evolved as a policy to challenge educators ‘‘to step up, to lift or to lengthen one’s stride… stepping up how the education system performs to ensure Māori students are enjoying and achieving education success as Māori” (p. 93). These Māori teachers stepped up and tried something different in a mainstream setting to provide more cultural opportunities for their Māori learners.

The whānau class provided another opportunity and time in the school day for students to build on their knowledge of te reo, tikanga, te ao Māori, and mātauranga. Otherwise, students can only learn this knowledge if te reo is an optional language subject. In most schools, senior option lines have four hours a week. However, for juniors (Years 9 and 10), it can be between two to four hours of the weekly timetable. Unfortunately, in my experience in English-medium secondary schools, many of our Māori students are not provided with a time or place to connect with te ao Māori if they do not take te reo as an option. In addition, due to timetabling issues, some students may not take te reo as an option for several reasons. For example, the class time may clash with another one of their options, so they cannot select it as a class. Alternatively, if they are fortunate enough to be provided with the opportunity of taking te reo as an option class, it is only for four hours out of the 25-hour week. This is a small amount of time for a lot of knowledge, kaupapa, and skills to be taught. This timetable structure in English-medium secondary schools is one of the many examples of our English-dominated hegemonic processes permeating our school systems and reinforces the hidden curriculum that promotes deeply engrained injustices for our Māori students (Bishop et al., 2014). Milne’s (2017) “White spaces” research recognises the detrimental impact of White privilege and supremacy in New Zealand secondary schools’ policies and practices that reinforce Eurocentric nature.

The whānau class is part of a newly formed Māori department that was recently set-up due to the increase in a variety of senior NCEA Māori options and four whānau classes now at year levels 9–12. The department has its own why and vision statement. The department’s vision is “for opportunities to be given to our tauira to stand confidently in te ao Māori, in te ao Pākehā hoki”. The strategy to enable our vision is based on four interlinking pou:

- Valuing and promoting te reo Māori as a spoken language and a taonga.
- Setting and pursuing goals around embedding mātauranga Māori (with mana ōrite) within the school.
- Deepening the school's commitment to achieving equitable Māori participation and success rates.
- Develop leadership and partnership with local iwi and our community.

The whānau class is one action of change for this school to embody and promote these important cultural values for Māori learners.

1.10 The nature of schools, teachers, and the classroom environment

Aotearoa classrooms are considered "global", meaning various ethnicities comprise the student body, especially in Auckland and the surrounding areas as it is the largest city. Having this diverse range of students means that a teacher's pedagogy must be culturally responsive to meet the different needs of the students in the class (Hynds et al., 2011). However, the reality is that in schools and teachers, diversity is not seen or reflected in schools' cultural norms and practices.

The reality is that many teachers in front of these mixed ethnicity classrooms are of New Zealand European, Pākehā descent (Education counts, n.d). The following statistics show the ethnic makeup of teachers in New Zealand schools: 73% European/Pākehā, 12% Māori, 5% Asian, and 4% Pacific. Of this, 54,468 identify as female and 17,112 as male, and fewer than 1,000 non-binaries are reported (Education counts, n.d).

These statistics reinforce that in secondary schools across Aotearoa, cultural diversity amongst the teacher population, especially those of Māori, Pasifika male, and non-binary teachers, does not reflect the diverse student population. Therefore, students do not have a role model or a face they can familiarise or look up to, resulting in the student not feeling or having any instant connections with them.

Another key influence of having a high percentage of Pākehā teachers and often a negative reality in schools is that, sadly, Māori students are often in a class with a homeroom teacher who may not have the knowledge or understanding of Māori

culture. Therefore, they cannot play a pivotal role to help support and nurture Māori students in important pastoral areas and help keep them in everyday school life. In addition, many teachers do not practice a CRP approach in their classrooms for various reasons. Hattie (2008) argues that reinforcing specific teachers' actions of "knowing the student" and having conversations about their teaching and learning will positively impact student engagement in the classroom.

Macfarlane (2004) affirms that teachers need to be committed to supporting the emotional needs of their students to ensure they are available and go beyond their job requirements. The Starpath Project's (2018) phase three findings reinforce a range of teachers' attitudes in secondary schools. The research identified significant variability in interpersonal relationships amongst teachers and that it "was not uncommon to find condescending behaviours, low expectations, and other problematic dispositions among school staff. Changing or shifting such behaviours is still a challenge for us all" (Webber et al., 2018, p. 23)

1.11 The role of homeroom/admin/tutor/whānau classes

Most secondary schools across Aotearoa have an allocated time or slot during the school day to provide an opportunity to support a student's pastoral needs. It is known by different names in different schools, but is often known as either homeroom, admin, tutor, or whānau time. It ranges from 10–30 minutes per day and is organised into either horizontal year level groups such as only Year 9 or a vertical class of mixed year levels consisting of a few students from year levels 9–13.

The purpose of this time is for the teacher to perform administrative and organisation duties and provide a pastoral role in helping support the students' wellbeing in school. For example, they help to address any non-compliance uniform issues, attendance, extracurricular activities, and connections between school and home. Another goal for most schools is to have the same teacher in charge of this class for all five years of secondary education and to develop, build and grow a positive relationship between the teacher, student, parents, caregivers, and whānau.

Class size differs from school to school but generally ranges from 15–30 students. Usually, no formal curriculum learning, or teacher instruction occurs during this time. Instead, the focus is to provide pastoral support and assistance and help be an upbeat

guide and point of contact for students in all areas of their school lives. Unfortunately, the reality is that the subject teachers do not have the time to provide this guidance and support during classroom curriculum learning time. Liu and Barnhart (1999) summarise the role of the Chinese homeroom teacher, perfectly explaining that they are the heart of each class. The teacher assumes multiple functions such as leader, counsellor, instructor, and sometimes even a surrogate parent. Homeroom teachers in Aotearoa can relate to this definition and would conduct many of these functions daily.

These whānau classes are an initiative to try and help provide another opportunity in a Māori students' school day that encapsulates Māori culture. Furthermore, at the same time, working with and alongside our Pākehā -dominated school systems, timetables, and structures. This study examines whether the whānau class achieves its goals and aims.

1.12 Thesis structure

Following this chapter, which briefly outlined the research project, the thesis is divided into six chapters outlined below.

Chapter 2, the literature review, provides a critical examination of international and New Zealand-based research and literature on factors influencing Māori student success, including MOE initiatives and policies for Māori students, the impact and importance of CRP, and the sociocultural and psychological factors impacting Māori students at English-medium secondary schools.

Chapter 3 explains the methodology used for this study. It outlines and justifies the KMR approach used for this research. Research participants are introduced in this chapter, along with recruitment processes. Finally, a description and outline are provided about the research design, data collection methods, and data analysis processes used in this study.

Chapter 4 is the ākonga data and discussion. It outlines the research findings from their raw data and describes the key themes from the data analysis. A detailed explanation of the five key themes, commonalities, and differences amongst the participant perspectives is provided. Finally, the key findings are discussed concerning the relevant literature from Chapter 2.

Chapter 5 analyses the Kaiako data and discusses the literature from Chapter 2. Finally, the four themes that emerged from this raw data are explained.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Maha rawa wā tātou mahinga,
Tē kore mahi tonu
Tawhiti rawa tō tātou haerenga,
Tē kore haere tonu.
We have done too much not to do
more we have gone too far not to go further

2.1 Introduction

This whakataukī resonates with me because it acknowledges the long-term efforts that Māori educationalists, researchers, and academics have made to influence and improve Māori student outcomes and success. However, as the whakataukī notes, teachers need to continue their passion and drive to improve their and their peers' practices by investigating, researching, and testing initiatives from various past and present literature. This study adds to the knowledge and strategies on how educationalists can continue challenging the injustices for minority and marginalised students, in particular Māori students, who are the focus of this study.

This chapter examines literature that focuses on the debate that directly and indirectly impacts the merits of establishing a whānau-type class to support underachieving Māori students academically, culturally, and socially in a mainstream secondary school. The establishment of these types of classes is not without controversy and are sometimes viewed as pandering to an ethnic minority (Gay, 2004).

Therefore, this chapter examines the different interrelated psychological, sociocultural, and pedagogical factors that impact student success and learning, including effective teacher practice that caters to the needs of Māori learners. The following big ideas are the most relevant to this research and are discussed sequentially. Firstly, researchers' views, responses, and interventions to address minority and marginalised student underachievement are discussed; then policies and interventions developed to

address Māori student underachievement are considered. These initiatives have not been without criticism, which will also be addressed.

2.2 Responses and interventions to address minority and marginalised student achievement

A pedagogical argument that has gained momentum over the years to help minority and marginalised students in an educational setting is for teachers to demonstrate a CRP. Developed in the early-1990s, CRP was designed to make the classroom more inclusive of all cultures by shifting teacher practices and focusing on positive relationships between teachers and students (Paris, 2021).

There are various definitions of CRP (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Milne, 2017; Paris, 2021; Siope, 2013). According to Bishop et al. (2014), one of the more prominent educational researchers in Aotearoa, CRP is when a teacher's instruction, expectations, and classroom environment are culturally inclusive, resulting in teachers building positive relationships with their students. Howard and Terry (2011) defined it as a merging between culture and pedagogy—a way to rethink instructional practices to improve minority student achievement levels. From my own experiences and in the view of Hackman (2005) and others, achieving equity in a classroom beset by macro-social inequities and inequalities is a constant challenge for teachers. Therefore, researchers such as Macfarlane and Macfarlane (2013) broaden the definition to include the need for educators to be fair, honest, positive, inclusive, respectful, and willing to share power.

The architect of the CRP concept is Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995), an American teacher and pedagogical theorist who is well known for her teachings on diversity and critical race theory (Paris, 2021). She defined CRP as having, three criteria or propositions: (a) Students must experience academic success; (b) students must develop and maintain cultural competence, and (c) students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo, of the current social order. (Ladson-Billings, 1995 p. 160)

Ladson-Billings is considered a seminal writer on this topic, and her research has significantly influenced the establishment of teaching CRP in Aotearoa schools. Her CRP research resonates with many worldwide studies, because, sadly, Indigenous

cultures have not been respected or reaffirmed in colonised school learning environments (Savage et al., 2011). Māori students in Aotearoa are similarly marginalised and discriminated against (Rubie et al., 2004). Thus, the CRP narrative reinforces the need to shift from traditional dominant European discourses that promote hegemonic systems and structures of the coloniser in all facets of school life that impact Māori student achievement. Ladson-Billings (1995) argued for the need to acknowledge minority and marginalised cultures in the school curriculum and support positive learning relationships between students and teachers to improve achievement results.

Recent studies have reframed the CRP concept to culturally sustainable pedagogy (CSP). Paris (2021), a leader in this field explains the importance and need to focus beyond student–teacher relationships and that CSP is about listening and following and sustaining indigenous people's communities' ways of life, valuing the importance of their relationship with the land. Thus, expanding the CPR idea of going beyond the classroom.

Paris (2021) explains that a key factor of CSP is acknowledging White privilege as the problem. Therefore, educators must remove the whiteness and put Indigenous communities at the centre of classroom learning (Paris, 2021). This includes reinforcing and valuing the importance of Indigenous cultures within a school's curriculum so that minority students can relate to, and learn from, various cultural values and methods, not only the dominant White discourse.

2.2.1 International research on culturally responsive pedagogy initiatives

In First Nations and Inuit communities in North America, Oskineegish's (2014) research on teachers who implemented a CRP effectively showed improved student academic attainment. Oskineegish found that when teachers demonstrated CRP, it enhanced students' desire to learn and increased their sense of pride and wellbeing (Oskineegish, 2014). Interestingly, there are mixed results on the educational benefits of CRP. Studies such as Oskineegish (2014) showed improvement in students' learning. In contrast, some studies showed that while teachers and schools implemented CRP, there was no gain or effect on students' results.

An example of this was Castagno and Brayboy's (2008) meta-analysis of CRP literature and the impact of these interventions on Indigenous students. Their detailed analysis of one case study in the United States of America, known as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), found that CRP had an insignificant effect on their minority cultures' achievement. In America in 2001, the NCLB Educational Act passed by US Congress required teachers to implement a CRP pedagogy in their classrooms. The goal was to improve achievement for Indigenous students, particularly minority cultures such as African American students and native Americans. Sadly, 14 years later, in 2015, it merged into another policy and had run its course because it was too generic for teachers, and although it was a law, too many teachers did not implement a CRP, thus accounting for its eventual failure to make a significant change (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008).

Consequently, CRP in the United States did not supply systemic, institutionalised, long-lasting improvements for their Indigenous youth's educational results (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008). This example reinforces that policy intent by itself does not affect change but demonstrates the power of teachers to subvert and resist educational initiatives to implement cultural change within their classrooms. Although governments can mandate policies, it is frequently up to the teaching workforce to implement policy. What this points to is that there needs to be effective policy implementation plans.

2.2.2 The significance of culturally responsive pedagogy in Aotearoa

While CRP is not a new process internationally, throughout Aotearoa, education is becoming more globalised as there is recognition of diversity, ethnicities, social and economic backgrounds, and different learning needs (Webber et al., 2013). This growing diversity would suggest this is another argument for teachers to have CRP. In addition, the body of literature in Aotearoa about the positive benefits CPR has in improving Indigenous students' lives at secondary schools has grown. An example of this literature is that of the early work of Savage et al. (2011), who found that if teachers care for their students through positive student–teacher relationships and as culturally found individuals, it is valuable for all students, but especially so for Māori.

According to Bishop et al. (2009), some of the leading CRP researchers in Aotearoa over the last three decades, when teachers implement CRP in classrooms and build relationships, it creates a positive learning environment for Māori learners. Specific

examples of CRP are advocated by Berryman and Eley (2017). These studies suggest that teachers with high expectations of students, power-sharing through student agency, and cultural values are vital factors for Māori student success. The saying "what works for Māori students, works for all" came from their research on this topic and was often heard in professional development sessions throughout Aotearoa to encourage more teachers to use the CRP approach in their classrooms and schools (Bishop et al., 2012).

In Aotearoa, the educational discourse that advocates for CRP highlight that it acknowledges the individual, their uniqueness, puts them at the forefront of their learning and has supplied some evidence of improved student achievement (Berryman & Eley, 2017). As reinforced by Ladson-Billings (2021), this is because "culturally relevant/sustaining/revitalising/reality pedagogies are designed to cultivate students' voices, entrepreneurial inclinations, and inventive spirits" (p. 353).

2.2.3 The significance of a positive learning environment and relationships (Ako)

Ako originated from the importance of helping others. For Māori, this was in the form of tuakana and teina relationships. This means that older people help, show, and teach younger people and emphasise shared experiences (MOE, 2013a). In te ao Māori, it is one of the KMR guiding principles and is defined as a positive teacher–student relationship that happens through connections between individual learners and their culture and background (Highfield & Webber, 2021). As a result, knowledge is co-constructed between the teacher and student, and mutual respect is developed and reciprocated (Bishop et al., 2012). According to Bishop et al. (2014), teachers who displayed the concept of ako in their classrooms encouraged Māori students to engage and learn because the students felt valued and connected, and trust was established that enhanced their relationship.

Rubie et al. (2004) suggested that good teaching practices include culturally correct methods to improve Indigenous minority children's self-esteem. Māori learners are frequently inflicted by low self-esteem because of a teacher's low expectations of them (Bishop et al., 2003). The intensive Starpath Project (see section 2.5.2 for detailed background of this initiative) development and research project also highlighted the relevance of the positive effects that student–teacher relationships have on

achievement, retention, and transition into higher education (Webber et al., 2018). Students in the Starpath research spoke extensively about what teachers did and did not do, and their low or no expectations of their Māori learners (Kiro et al., 2016). Deficit thinking on the part of the teacher made it difficult for students to reach their goals and aspirations if there was a deficit, discursive learning environment in the school and classroom. According to Webber et al. (2018), “the relationships Māori students had with their teachers were perceived to be a significant factor in their success and engagement” (p. 58)

Research by Webber and Macfarlane (2020) endorsed the argument that best teacher practice includes incorporating history, values, and cultural knowledge of Māori students’ hapū and iwi into the school curriculum. Their research also found that reframing school organisational structures that encouraged Māori students and whānau to engage in and make authentic decisions in their schools was of immense benefit for Māori students and their parents/caregivers (Webber & Macfarlane, 2020).

The sad reality is that for many Māori students, the educational setting they attend does not make effective use of Māori language or culture, including Māori ways of knowing in the curriculum or celebrating Māori role models of academic excellence (Bevan-Brown, 2005). Therefore, it is not surprising that many Māori students feel that school has nothing to do with their ethnic selves (Webber & Macfarlane, 2020). Therefore, schools must not default to the traditional White discourse and curriculum, but instead implement localised cultural content into different subject areas.

2.3 Policies and interventions to address Māori student achievement

2.3.1 Background history

History has proven that education systems did not promote and sustain Indigenous languages and cultures (Hynds et al., 2011). Since European colonisation, Māori students have assimilated into an English-medium education system that has alienated them and tried to eliminate cultural differences (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). According to Whitinui (2004), The 1840 *Te Tiriti O Waitangi* began the disparity inequalities, injustices, and lack of opportunity for Māori students in classrooms across Aotearoa.

As explained by Macfarlane et al. (2007), Culture Counts, The History of the Treaty and its subsequent educational initiatives, policies, and laws are complex; therefore, a detailed explanation of the Treaty and the effects go beyond the depth of this study. In brief, the Māori formal colonising education timeline begins with native schools in the late 1800s (Walker, 2016); single-sex Māori boarding schools in the early 1900s (Jenkins & Mathews, 1998); a complete ban on te reo Māori in 1903; assimilation policy introduced in 1915, and by the 1950s, most Māori households in urban locations spoke only English (Walker, 2016). The early 1960s saw several seminal but pejorative reports on the view of Māori language and culture, which drew attention to the disparities between Māori and Pākehā educational achievement, essentially blaming Māori (Macfarlane, 2015). It was not until 1970 that educators began to lobby for the introduction of te reo Māori into the school curriculum. The early 1980s welcomed a Māori renaissance by introducing total immersion schools such as kohanga reo at marae, kura kaupapa, followed by wharekura (Macfarlane, 2015). Total immersion schools provided Māori students with an education based on Māori tikanga and kaupapa and students became fluent speakers of te reo Māori. These language nests promoted te reo and te ao Māori culture because mainstream schools were not delivering (Macfarlane, 2015). As there are only a few total immersion schools situated around the country, most Māori students have no option but to attend their local English-medium secondary school.

In the late 1970s, te reo Māori was recognised as a standalone subject that teachers assessed against national education assessment criteria. This was a significant step forward in the academic endorsement of the language. The introduction of NCEA in 2002 helped further promote and build the language's status as a subject; however, it the amount of time it took for te reo Māori to be confirmed, recognised, and endorsed as an academic subject is concerning (G. H. Smith, 2000).

In 2010, The Education Review Office (ERO) stated nine different strategies that a school should implement if it is to be defined as a high-performing secondary school and successfully engage Māori students in their learning. One of these factors was "Whānau classes for Māori students" (ERO, 2010, p. 17). At that time, I was teaching in an English-medium secondary school comprising 45 percent Māori students. We were unaware of the ERO strategies and, in 2013, introduced whānau classes which

we considered our initiative to embrace Te Kotahitanga. Interestingly the same year, the New Zealand Government acknowledged that the State schooling system had systematically not met the needs and aspirations of Māori and Pasifika students and their whānau/families (MOE, 2013b). I use this example to demonstrate the importance of government communication with educators and how poor communication can have affect Māori educational achievement statistics. There were policies in existence in 2010, but educators were unaware. Not surprisingly, the results of the 2013 survey (MOE, 2013b) reported the system was failing Māori and Pasifika students; however, the criteria for assessment were based on policies that teachers and whānau were unaware of.

In 2014, the New Zealand Government announced the Investing in Educational Success initiative with a $359 million budget to help raise student achievement with a particular focus on Māori students. This initiative set-up communities of learning known as kāhui ako, where local school clusters worked collaboratively to help students identified as at risk of underachievement (MOE, 2016). Ninety-three percent of kāhui ako named culturally responsive practice as a core goal to lift student academic underachievement (MOE, 2016). This programme utilises the ability and knowledge of teachers across early childhood, primary, and secondary schools from the same area to work collectively and continues today in most schools. Sadly, through my direct experience as an educator in the kāhui ako community I work in, CRP is not a goal. Although the reason for this is not apparent, my thoughts on it are that perhaps CRP is not seen as a key focus area for this community. However, I know that the statistics for Māori learners in my community for all levels of NCEA are like the national average mentioned in the literature review and are approximately 20 percent lower than their Pākehā counterparts.

In 2020, the MOE implemented the *Education and Training Act* (MOE, 2020). The aim was for all government organisations to embed Te Tiriti O Waitangi principles in all policies and procedures in their institutions. This Act is a vehicle to address injustices experienced by minority groups based on Treaty requirements. Highfield and Webber's (2021) article highlight the Act's key points:

- Working to ensure their plans, policies, and local curriculum reflect tikanga Māori (protocols), mātauranga Māori (knowledge/wisdom), and te ao Māori (worldviews).

- Taking all reasonable steps to make instruction available in tikanga Māori and te reo Māori; and

- Achieving equitable outcomes for Māori students.

(Highfield & Webber, 2021, p. 147)

This Act puts Māori culture at the forefront of educational classroom practice to provide an environment that sees Māori students supported in their cultural identity, engaged, and challenged at school. A critical inquiry is to investigate if schools and other educational institutions are fulfilling and instigating this Act and its requirements, or if this will be another missed opportunity by the Government because of poor communication with educators.

2.3.2 Ministry of Education Māori education strategies

The first Māori education strategy (Berryman & Eley, 2017) was launched in 1999 and had three main goals:

- Raise the quality of English-medium education for Māori.

- Support the growth of high-quality kaupapa Māori education.

- Support greater Māori involvement and authority in education.

(Berryman & Eley, 2017, p. 94)

This Ministry-led strategy was designed to reinforce that all educators, community leaders, and whānau have a responsibility to support Māori learners at school. However, 10 years later in 2009, the Ministry used evidence from the best evidence synthesis to conclude that the educational system was still not addressing Māori learners' needs as there were many deeply entrenched disadvantages for them to succeed (Robinson & Timperley, 2007). In the space of 10 years, the Ministry's education strategy had no significant effect on Māori learners (Berryman & Eley, 2017).

In 2013, the MOE introduced Ka Hikitia (MOE, 2013a). This initiative covered all education sectors from early childhood to tertiary education with the vision to make "shifts in systems" to supply excellent and fair outcomes for Māori (Education counts, n.d).

As part of Ka Hikitia phase one and as a follow-up from Te Kotahitanga professional development, secondary schools engaged Kia Eke Panuku to help roll out Ka Hikitia (MOE, 2013a). Kia Eke Panuku provided funding and release time for facilitators to collaborate with targeted secondary schools (Kia Eke Panuku, n.d.). I took part in the Kia Eke Panuku initiative as part of my school community, and its initiatives were promoted throughout most secondary schools in South Auckland. On reflection, I believe the success of the infiltration of Kia Eke Panuku into schools was due to funding support and the high financial resourcing provided.

One of the goals of Ka Hikitia – Accelerating Success was that "by 2017, Māori school leavers achieving university entrance will be on par with non-Māori school leavers" (Highfield & Webber, 2021, p. 146). Sadly, this goal was not achieved. In 2020, the university entrance qualification results for the four main ethnicities of the student body in New Zealand were: Asian, 64.1%; European, 59%; Māori, 34.1%; Pasifika, 33% (Education counts, n.d).

Berryman and Eley's (2017) article reviewed the limited effectiveness of Ka Hikitia and the need to continue a transformative change to address the educational damage owed to Māori students. As Berryman and Eley (2017) noted, the school sector needs to continue to step up "if we are to reap the benefits of Māori students fashioning and leading our future, and we must if our nation is to flourish truly" (p. 106).

In continuing to address Māori underachievement in schools, in 2019, the Ministry added to the narrative and policy of Ka Hikitia strategy with "Māori achieving success as Māori" (MOE, 2019), thus reframing the initiative to explicitly focus on tikanga and te reo. The focus for this refreshed policy, as highlighted in Highfield and Webber (2021) was for schools to have teaching and learning approaches that are enjoyable, effective, and engaging for Māori students. For this to happen teachers need to have high expectations of all Māori learners, track and monitor their educational outcomes.

As well as schools developing productive partnerships with Whānau, iwi and communities that are response and reciprocal.

When writing this thesis, this strategy was two years old. Once again, I was unaware of the change of title from Ka Hikitia to Ka Hāpaitia – Māori achieving success as Māori and the new policies this strategy promotes. I only found out about the revised strategy because of this study. The Ministry's communication to schools and their new policies requires significant improvements. There is a breakdown in communicating new initiatives to schools and educators that impact Māori learners, and when schools are audited, they are judged based on systems they are unaware of.

2.4 Current statistics about Māori students attending high schools in Aotearoa

On the 30th of June 2020, Statistics New Zealand estimated the Māori population at 850,500 which is 16.7% of the total population of Aotearoa. Of this number, the median age for females is 25.1 and 27.1 for males. These statistics highlight that the Māori ethnic group is young (Statistics New Zealand, n.d.) and are likely to be lower compared to other ethnic groups, which is a very sad and telling statistic. Therefore, educators must address the education system's shortcomings that affect Māori learners.

On the 1st of July 2020, there were 294,132 students enrolled in secondary schools across Aotearoa. Of this, 66,403 identified as Māori, the biggest ethnic group after NZ European (Education counts, n.d). Sadly, regarding senior NCEA levels of achievement, in 2020, Māori student numbers had the most considerable decrease between Years 11–13 compared to their NZ European, Asian, and Pasifika counterparts. Table 4 shows the number of students by ethnicity attending secondary schools in Aotearoa in 2020.

Table 4: Number of students in secondary schools for Years 11–13 in 2020 (Education counts, n.d.).

	Year		
Ethnicity	**11**	**12**	**13**
Māori	14,817	11,318	8,497

NZ European/Pākehā	29,973	28,111	24,117
Pasifika	5,730	5,405	4,625
Asian	7,675	7,279	7,293

Whereas Pākehā, Asian and Pasifika student numbers reduce by hundreds each year, Māori and Pākeha student numbers decline by thousands every year of high school.

These statistics highlight that at the start of Year 11 Level 1 NCEA, there was a relatively high population of Māori students attending high school. The statistics show a dramatic decrease in Māori learners in Years 12 and 13 (NCEA Levels 2 and 3), which are required for apprenticeships in trades, tertiary courses, and university entrance degrees. These statistics lead me to believe that either the education system needs to focus on retaining more Māori students for Years 12 and 13 to allow them to earn credits to transition into a workplace, trade, or tertiary courses, or apprenticeship and trade schemes need to be adjusted to host NCEA Level 1 school leavers.

The presented information and statistics are relevant to this research study. They show in a snapshot the shortcomings of the current education system in identifying the critical times to intervene in Māori learners' lives. The injustices and significant achievement gaps between diverse groups highlight the need for schools to do more to help their Māori students. In addition, the statistics emphasise the need to ensure the curriculum and school life are rewarding, culturally inclusive, and beneficial for Year 9 and 10 students, encouraging them to continue to the latter years and gain vital qualifications.

2.5 Research and initiatives to improve Māori student outcomes

2.5.1 Te Kotahitanga research

In 2001, Te Kotahitanga began as a Ministry funded educational pilot for selected Decile 1–4 English-medium secondary schools across Aotearoa with high Māori student populations (Bishop et al., 2009). The goal of Te Kotahitanga was to address the historical inequalities Māori secondary school students experienced and improve their educational results (Bishop et al., 2014). The principles of this programme were founded on a teacher's relationship-based pedagogy in their classrooms (Bishop et al., 2009). These principles included using students', whānau, principals' and teachers'

voices as evidence for teachers to change their pedagogical practices to be more culturally inclusive (Bishop, 2008). Te Kotahitanga showed “how schooling could make the greatest difference in reducing educational disparities through raising the educational achievement of Māori children” (Bishop, 2008, p. 57).

Te Kotahitanga continued until 2012 and had three different implementation phases in various schools during its time (Bishop et al., 2014). The power-sharing model promoted by Te Kotahitanga seemingly removed teachers’ bias, deficit thinking, and negative assumptions (Hynds et al., 2011). The programme also drew on evidence to improve student academic performance to help schools identify and solve their problems through professional development initiatives (Bishop et al., 2009).

Te Kotahitanga created the ETP factors, skills, and attributes that a teacher should show to succeed in the classroom. Some of these skills are:

- *Manaakitanga* – Teachers care for their students as culturally located human beings above all else.
- *Mana motuhake* – Teachers care for the performance of their students.
- *Nga whakapiringatanga* – Teachers can create a secure, well-managed learning environment.
- *Wananga* – Teachers can engage in effective teaching interactions with Māori students as Māori.
- *Ako* – Teachers can use strategies that promote effective teaching interactions and relationships with their learners.
- *Kotahitanga* – Teachers promote, monitor, and reflect on outcomes that lead to improvements in educational achievement for Māori students. (Bishop et al., 2012, p. 176)

The programme was based on the belief that if teachers implement the above skills in the classroom, students’ results, engagement, and achievement will improve, especially those of Māori students. Teachers were prompted to model the ETP so “they begin to develop classroom relationships and interactions that see Māori students attend more regularly, engage as learners and achieve to levels that begin to realise their true potential” (Bishop et al., 2009, p. 7).

After this programme ceased in 2012, Bishop et al. (2012) acknowledged that the pedagogic shift was “effective in reducing the educational disparities and improving the retention and the schooling experiences of Māori students in the first large group of schools who took part in the project” (p. 18).

In my opinion and experience, I could not find any valid criticism of Te Kotahitanga’s goals and teacher professional development that it set out to achieve. I do believe that the timeframe was too brief. After 11 years of implementation, Māori student NCEA results had improved significantly, but they were still not on par or close to their Pākehā counterparts (Education counts, n.d.). There was still more work in English-medium secondary schools to achieve equality between cultures. Therefore, it should have continued to be implemented in schools, especially with the growing student population and new teachers entering the profession.

2.5.2 The Starpath Project

The Starpath Project was a longitudinal intervention study involving 39 low- to mid-decile secondary schools led by the University of Auckland. The goal was to make a notable change in pedagogy and challenging opportunities for students from low socioeconomic communities in English-medium secondary schools (Webber et al., 2018). Some of the findings that schools need to do are:

1. Provide opportunities for students to be ‘inspired’.
2. Set simple and specific student attainment targets.
3. Provide ample opportunities to learn and succeed.
4. Ensure effective tracking and monitoring practices are consistent.

(Webber et al., 2018, p. 12).

Over 12 years and three distinct phases, the study found vital factors that supported Māori student engagement and, therefore, achievement (Webber et al., 2018). The factors mentioned above are also priorities of the whānau class, and this research reinforces that they are implemented to support and encourage Māori student success (Webber et al., 2018). The Starpath Project also found that student success relied on school culture, systems, and structures with quality relationships between students,

teachers, whānau, and communities (Kiro et al., 2016), thus reinforcing the same principles as Te Kotahitanga relating to the critical role of teachers having positive relationships with their Māori learners, as well as reaffirming the vital role of a whānau class in an English-medium secondary school.

The recommendations from the Starpath Project are in line with this study, in particular reinforcing the different strategies that can be implemented to improve Māori achievement and encouraging the continued development of critical links between whānau, iwi, and community.

My only criticism of this programme is that it is not widely known amongst secondary school teachers. In my experience, my school colleagues and teacher friends from other various schools are sadly unaware of this study. I became aware of this research because of my enrolment in the University of Auckland's master's programme. The MOE or University needs to utilise this comprehensive research and incorporate it into English-mainstream schools' professional development programmes to use and implement valuable knowledge and recommendations to benefit and help Māori and Pasifika learners.

2.5.3 The edu-cultural wheel

In response to the educational situation for Māori, in 2004, Macfarlane et al. (2007) created a cultural framework designed to enable successful relationships between teachers and students. Known as the edu-cultural wheel, it consists of five interwoven concepts (see Figure 1). Firstly, *whanaungatanga* builds relationships and is explained as an opportunity to show trust and respect (Macfarlane et al., 2007).

It is essential for teachers to know each child and have strong links with whānau and the wider community. *Rangatiratanga* (self-determination and leadership) relates to teachers' developing the skills and knowledge for collaborating effectively with Māori learners in the classroom.

The third concept of *manaakitanga* (the ethos of care) is defined as reciprocal and unconditional care. *Kotahitanga* (unity of bonding) is concept four and stands for a sense of cohesion and engagement in cultural rituals and routines while promoting the principles of the Treaty: partnership, protection, and participation. Finally, *pūmanawatanga* is the beating heart, where the teacher embodies the values, beliefs,

attitudes, and behaviours of the other four concepts of the edu-cultural wheel within the classroom (Hall, 2014).

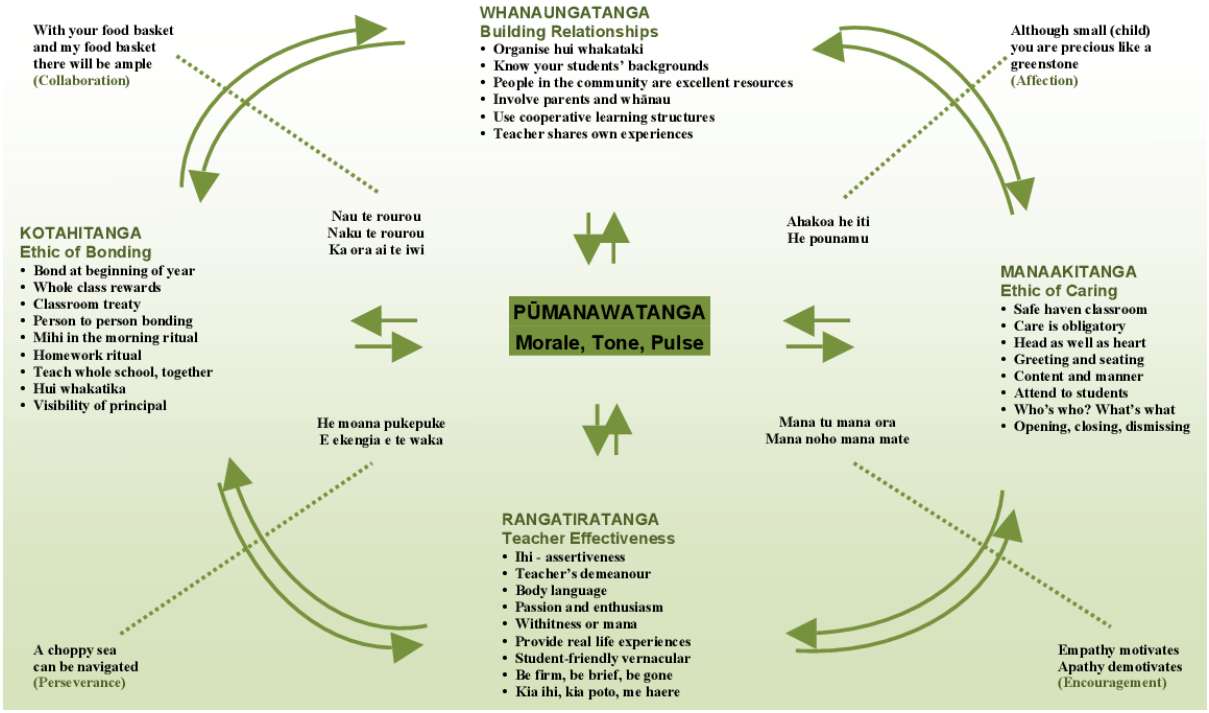


Figure 1: The edu-cultural wheel (Macfarlane, 2004 p. 97)

These cultural values are significant to Māori as they emphasise the importance of connections and valuing students' cultural identities. The edu-cultural wheel reflects the purpose of establishing whānau classes to incorporate and include te ao Māori kaupapa in everyday school systems and practices. Once again, a criticism is that I was never introduced to this concept as a teacher. I also wonder if teachers who are not familiar with Māori terms or knowledge would be responsive and embrace it. Given the edu-cultural wheels detail and its use of te reo kupu and kaupapa. I feel that teachers who are not familiar with Māori terms would struggle to understand it's true meaning and value.

2.6 Sociocultural factors affecting minority and marginalised student achievement

Sociocultural factors significantly impact Māori students' confidence and self-perception (Webber et al., 2013). For example, the Ka Hikitia strategy links self-efficacy and self-belief with expectations, highlighting that Māori students who expect themselves to achieve have more of a chance in doing so (MOE, 2013a).

2.6.1 International research on homeroom/admin/tutor/whānau classes and the role of pastoral care

Chapter 1 presented why homeroom-type classes exist in timetables across Aotearoa high schools. Liu and Barnhart (1999) drew attention to the importance of a homeroom teacher in showing a personalised relationship with the student to help them succeed at school. This notion relates well to the Māori principles of manaakitanga and whanaungatanga, which as previously mentioned, foster feelings of connection that are critical for Māori wellbeing and are linked to increased student achievement.

In China, Shi and Leuwerke's (2010) researched the role of homeroom classes. Shi and Leuwerke found that the homeroom teacher had a significant role in students' overall development. In addition, they performed a school counsellor's position because of the increase in the prevalence of mental health concerns amongst teenagers (Shi & Leuwerke, 2010). In my experience, teachers in Aotearoa would be familiar with this finding as we often experience the same problems and issues in our homeroom classes and often act in a counsellor's role to help students.

Koomen (2019) studied the different relationships students have with secondary school teachers in America. Koomen (2019) found that the "students experienced more closeness in the relationship with their homeroom teacher than in their relationship with the other two teachers" (p. 8). As such, homeroom teachers were successful in their roles as confidential and contact persons. This was because they became the personal advocate for the student and created a family-like environment.

Rhodes' (1994) research on the homeroom class found it played a significant role in their overall education in a Japanese high school setting. The study found that the homeroom class managed all sides of a student's total education, which has similarities with the New Zealand homeroom environment. However, one notable difference is that Japanese students play more active roles during homeroom time. For example, they manage the class cleaning time as there are no paid cleaners in Japanese schools. Therefore, the students ensure the class is clean and tidy for the next school day. Japanese schools also do not have an employed counsellor, so the homeroom teacher actively takes on this supportive role if needed (Rhodes, 1994).

Another valuable role of this homeroom class time is for the teacher to build and enhance students' determination to do well during school time. As Fitzgerald and Gunter (2006) suggested, to lead learning, both the extrinsic and intrinsic factors that impact students and teachers in classrooms and the school community must be recognised as they are the link between the teacher and community. The nature of the homeroom environment, with its daily routines and familiarity, creates a physically safe space for students, and the one-on-one personal time between a teacher and student is where the students' spiritual and mental sides are nurtured.

2.6.2 Pastoral care support homeroom/admin/tutor/whānau class time in Aotearoa

As mentioned in Chapter 1, pastoral care is another crucial feature of homeroom time. It is evident through the Te Kotahitanga research that increasing student success has resulted from not just the teaching and learning opportunities but also the pastoral care and support of the students (MOE, 2006). The Starpath research also stressed the importance of pastoral care through academic conversations with students as, "they need to know that an interested adult that is available to them and understands their concerns, continually helps them consider and explore educational and career goals and wants to help them pursue their education and career objectives" (Webber et al., 2018, p. 52)

Another area found in phase two of the Starpath longitudinal study is the need for Māori students to want teachers to know them, including understanding their families, backgrounds, and circumstances (Kiro et al., 2016). This reinforces the critical role of a whānau class teacher in getting to know their students by finding out who they are and where they come from, their situation at home, and how they can best support the student throughout their teenage years at school.

2.6.3 Reinforcing stereotypes: Labels of being in the 'Brown class'

Indigenous peoples' epistemologies have a long history of marginalising power imbalances in communities (Jaramillo et al., 2016). As highlighted in Raham's (2013) studies, in most Western countries, the dominant societies of European/White culture are embedded in school systems, structures, policies, and transmission of knowledge to students. Australia had the same situation where Aboriginal culture was neglected in their State schooling (Raham, 2013). As a result, school life and classrooms can be

a vehicle to reinforce and promote negative stereotypes for minority or marginalised student groups (Webber et al., 2013). Stereotype threat is a process that describes how our thinking and behaviour change in response to experiences of racism (Webber & Macfarlane, 2020).

A negative issue about the whānau homeroom class that has arisen in the school where the research occurred, is that it is different from other mainstream classes. By difference, the reason is due to the students' skin colours. As a result, sadly, racist comments can be heard, such as being known as the "Brown, dumb or naughty class". Reinforcing systemic and institutionalised racism is prevalent in our society and schools. These comments are a typical example of racial oppression in schools against Indigenous youth (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008). These subtle racist words can make minority groups feel uncomfortable and, at the same time, promote control and power for the dominant group (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008).

A euphemism sometimes overheard for the whānau class is the "Brown class". Unfortunately, this racial stereotype instantly dampens the class's positive aspirations for Māori students. Instead, it reinforces negative, detrimental, and harmful cultural associations of being "Brown" that can lead to issues for an individual's mental wellbeing in the future (Doerr, 2015). This point reinforces the powerful impact that stereotypes and bias have on students and cannot be ignored for initiatives such as whānau classes to succeed. According to Raham (2013), this hidden curriculum perpetuates negative associations and stereotypes for Indigenous youth in the classroom and playground.

Data from Castagno and Brayboy's (2008) study on racism in high schools suggests that unfair treatment is a widespread and constant element in schooling experiences for Indigenous youth. Racism is filtered through several classroom avenues, including biased curriculum materials, stereotypes, violence, low expectations, and harmful associations (Webber & Macfarlane, 2020). Stereotypes regarding the abilities of culturally diverse students exist, and for Māori in the Aotearoa school context, they are primarily negative, depicting them as less intelligent and academically disengaged (Turner-Adams, 2018; Webber et al., 2013; Webber & Macfarlane, 2020).

In 2007, 9,107 secondary school students throughout Aotearoa took part in an extensive health and wellbeing study. The results found that “Indigenous and minority group students more commonly report ethnic discrimination” (Crengle et al., 2012, p. 2). It also confirmed associations between ethnic discrimination and lower health/wellbeing outcomes. This correlation is evidence that bias and health can negatively affect one’s overall wellbeing. Many inequities continue to threaten the health of Māori adolescents at school (Williams et al., 2018). Māori students need and deserve better resources at school to support and improve their wellbeing.

One way that schools can increase Māori participation and achievement in education is to end the racism and persistent negative stereotypes that suppress Māori student achievement (Webber et al., 2013). For example, if Māori students believe they can succeed in academically challenging classes, despite negative ethnic stereotypes, they are more likely to have a powerful sense of embedded achievement and put forth the effort needed to gain academic rewards (Altschul et al., 2006.)

Teachers can also implement a culturally sustaining pedagogy that enhances an individual’s mana, and this can go a long way to helping combat the negative societal stereotypes prevalent in our education system in Aotearoa, including the most often used euphemism about Māori education being, “the long brown tail of underachievement” (Webber & Macfarlane, 2020, p.42). The 2016 Starpath Project study found that Māori students who displayed a strong connection with their identity also used it as a support structure, calling on whānau and their tikanga when faced with difficult circumstances. When students had this intense sense of belonging and connection to their Māori identities, it helped with their resiliency and protected them from deficit stereotypes and opposing school or home experiences (Kiro et al., 2016).

Blank et al. (2016) suggested that recognising how unconscious bias impacts teachers’ relationships with Māori learners is the means to raising Māori educational achievement. Blank et al. explained that mitigating the impact of racism involves teachers first accepting and recognising their own biases, and then diminishing their influence on interactions and decision-making with Māori students (Webber & Macfarlane, 2020).

2.7 Changing the narrative in schools

All schools aim to make an improved difference to student learning, engagement, and achievement, but as Robinson (2011) stated, school improvement "is immensely complicated, it is about more than just adding value and 'doing the right things'" (p. 116). Furthermore, Bishop et al. (2012) emphasised that for effective change to happen in schools, approach and timing are essential for change to be accepted and sustainable. Therefore, it is necessary that "schools which succeed in changing practice are those that start with the practice and modify school structures to accommodate to it" (Elmore, 2004, p. 4).

The senior leadership team in a school also needs to support and encourage new initiatives and programmes. For example, they need to "walk the talk" if they want Māori students to have positive role models and something to aspire to. They need to model this through school structures. Effective leadership is a key factor to changing Māori achievement results (Hohepa & Robson, 2008).

2.8 Why implementing change in schools' is a positive action?

The title of Fink and Stoll's (2005) chapter, *Educational change: Easier said than done* explains the controversies, difficulties, and intricacies of implementing new and different programmes into schools. The chapter is a relevant summary of why and how teachers and schools resist and oppose the latest ideas and approaches. It also reinforces the importance that schools become stalemate places where results, outcomes, and achievements become stagnant if change does not happen (Hargreaves, 2005). The difference between schools and teachers must be relevant, evidence-based, and a mix of bottom-up and top-down to be successful and welcomed with open arms (Hargreaves, 2005). On reflection, the whānau classes are a fitting example of change from the bottom up as the teachers and students started and implemented the concept together.

When starting change in a school, it is essential that it is outcome-focused and that the new policies and programmes can produce results. As Durie (2003) stated, "too much time is spent trying to fix up systems that will never deliver to Māori rather than identifying systems where Māori can flourish and then, developing partnerships with them" (p. 208).

2.9 Psychological factors that affect minority and marginalised student achievement

2.9.1 The importance of ethnic and cultural identity for Māori ākonga

Defining ethnic identity is challenging and complex, especially as there are many variables and factors for individuals to identify and connect with their ethnicity. For example, Greaves (2014) thesis analysed different types of Māori identity. Her research found that ethnic identity relates to ethnic affiliation through connections and belonging to a group (Greaves, 2014). Ethnic affiliation was crucial in Doerr's (2015) research into a Māori bicultural unit within a mainstream Aotearoa secondary school. Active identification and distinct categories of belonging were indicators to explain how students identified themselves as Māori. Doerr found that the terms "having" and "being" Māori were two diverse ways a student identified with their ethnicity. Doerr explained that a Māori student's ethnic identity depends on their involvement in the mainstream class or the bicultural unit. Her observations showed how a school programme could reinforce or disengage a participant's recognition of being Māori. In her high school setting, "the mainstream class was less conducive to a student's identifying him/herself as being Māori" (Doerr, 2015, p. 188). Student involvement in the bicultural class enhanced, encouraged, and promoted a positive Māori identity. Doerr's study is significant to this research as it supports the importance of the classroom setting on a student's cultural identity.

2.9.2 How ethnic identity is measured

An example of research that identified and challenged the assumptions of identifying as Māori or the "levelness of Māori" is Mason Durie's (1995) Te Hoe Nuku Roa's longitudinal research. Durie's research used cultural and ethnic measures to understand links between culture, social groups, and socioeconomic status. Durie's study reinforced that many factors influence an individual's identity. For example, some Māori identification involved belonging to social groups with other Māori people; equally, some found that socialising with other Māori people provided a meaningful sense of belonging. For others, participating and being involved in their hapū and iwi gave them a positive sense of Māori identity (Durie, 1995). Greaves et al. (2015) added to Durie's ethnicity studies and acknowledged another group who, although they do not identify as Pākehā or Māori, put them into their distinguished group known as "Kiwis" or "New Zealanders" (Greaves et al., 2015).

Houkamau and Sibley (2015) are research leaders in this field and have completed a considerable amount of credible research. Their most recent study added a seventh factor of perceived appearance to their multidimensional model of Māori identity and cultural engagement (MM-ICE) (Houkamau & Sibley, 2015). The justification for adding another element to their method was to recognise the complexity of this topic. The seventh factor provides individuals with another option to choose from to explain their Māori identity (Houkamau & Sibley, 2015). Their model aimed to make comparisons within the Māori population and recognise the unique and different experiences for Māori when identifying with their ethnicity.

Tragically, from early European settlement in Aotearoa up until the 1980s, the blood quantum method was commonly used to measure Māori identity. Terms such as “half” or “quarter caste” were frequently used to justify and explain an individual’s Māori ethnicity (Houkamau & Sibley, 2015). Since then, much of the research reinforces that this identification method became unpopular due to its racist connotations. On reflection, it is another example of European colonial discourse and assimilation of Māori people (Houkamau & Sibley, 2015).

A key component of identity for Māori is the genealogical ties one has with their iwi, hapū, and whānau (Greaves, 2014). Another aspect in Māori identity literature is the relevance wairua or spirituality plays in whakapapa/genealogical connections. Having connections with your ancestors and land is also strongly linked to an individual’s ethnic identity (Greaves, 2014; Johnston & Pihama, 1995). Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s (2017) study found that “identity is also inextricably bound to whānau and whenua relationships, to the marae and the value system and language which holds these things together” (p. 48).

2.9.3 The importance of having a positive cultural identity for Māori students

As previously mentioned, when English-medium mainstream secondary schools promote an environment where a Māori student’s identity is encouraged, respected, and valued, Māori students have many positive outcomes and results. Webber et al.’s (2013) ethnic identity research in Auckland high schools emphasises the crucial connection between Māori identity and educational success. In Webber et al.’s study, Māori students’ positive self-identification can be linked to understanding language

and culture, involvement in Māori activities, and having close relationships with other Māori (Webber et al., 2013).

According to Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2017), the intrinsic connection of positive promotion of cultural identity in a learning environment results in Māori students feeling empowered. Therefore, when a secondary school is committed to consistently promoting these positive connections of ethnic identity for Māori students, it can play a vital role in encouraging academic achievement. Data from Webber and Macfarlane's (2020) Mana Ka Awatea research reinforced the point that, "ethnic identity is an important variable affecting Māori students' beliefs about their intelligence and ability" (p. 2).

2.9.4 International literature on the connections of cultural identity and educational achievement

Indigenous and minority cultures worldwide continue to fight the injustices of dominant White systemic discourses prevalent in education systems (Bishop & Berryman, 2010; Webber et al., 2018). A considerable amount of literature written by Barlett and Burton (2020) explored ways in which minority cultures have been repressed by, and at the same time, created spaces of resistance from within assimilationist educational structures and systems. Their analysis of many studies completed on this topic around the world asks questions such as "whether education is doomed to replicate the inequalities in society or whether it can be an engine for challenging inequality and for promoting social justice" (Barlett & Burton 2020, p. 303).

Native American adolescent studies used longitudinal research to examine the relationships between cultural identity and educational achievement. Unfortunately, Whitesell et al.'s (2009) data did not support the predicted links between these two topics. Instead, their findings pointed to self-concept and high self-esteem as vital components in positive Native American ethnic identity. For this community, adolescents who felt good about themselves could also access resources that enabled personal success and had fewer negative problem behaviours that could interfere with their achievement (Whitesell et al., 2009). Their research raises an interesting connection for adolescents between positive self-affirmation, identity, and achieving at school.

A study conducted by Jaramillo et al. (2016) with Native American adolescents showed the importance of ethnic identity and stereotype threat on academic achievement. Their survey results found that adolescent participants aged between 14 and 19 with high ethnic identity and low stereotype threat scores reported higher grade point averages. Jaramillo et al. (2016) also noted that, “ethnic identity also interacted with perceived discrimination to predict hopelessness” (p. 771). Although this study was in America, there are comparisons to ethnic identity and achievement connections with this Indigenous group of teenagers and Māori students in Aotearoa.

2.10 Silence in the literature

The gap in the research includes, amongst others, the following:

A lack of reviews of practical and relevant programmes in English-medium secondary schools that are helping Māori students succeed as Māori. Of the known programmes, namely Ka Hikitia, Kia Eke Panuku, Te Kotahitanga and Star path’s principles and successful strategies, what student-based initiatives are currently being taught to implement these initiatives? There is detailed research about successful initiatives in kura kaupapa schools and total immersion schools about Māori student achievement. However, the issue is, how can we transfer more successful total immersion concepts into English-mainstream secondary schools where students do not speak te reo Māori or know and understand tikanga and te ao Māori knowledge? Are there any different and successful programmes in our mainstream high schools that could break the cycle of deficit thinking and reduce negative statistics and the “long brown tail”? There is a plethora of comprehensive literature on CRP and CSP through teacher professional development. However, for teachers who teach with this pedagogy daily in their classrooms and tick all the requirements of an effective teacher, what else can they do to drive Māori learner success in their English-medium secondary schools?

Conversely, if teachers are implementing CRP, why do significant gaps between Māori and other ethnicities still exist concerning achievement at all NCEA levels, suspension and stand-down rates, and school leaver data? Is this group of teachers who adopt the CRP a minority also? Why is there a breakdown in communication between government strategies such as Ka Hikitia and intensive research such as Starpath and schools? Why are they not commonly known to many secondary school teachers?

The following chapter discusses the methodology used for this research study and the data collection methods.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Kahikatea tū i te uru

Strength in numbers

The whakataukī mentioned above is of personal value because of the assistance I received from my advisory group. Having the support/āwhina of these colleagues gave me strength and enthusiasm throughout the research process.

This chapter outlines the qualitative method used to gather and analyse data for this research project. An explanation of the kaupapa Māori framework underpinning the study is included, as is my critical role in ensuring validation and accountability. Finally, ethical considerations for this study are highlighted.

3.1 Research method: Qualitative method interpretative research paradigm

This study was qualitative in design. Qualitative research connects people's meaning to their lived experiences in the social world (Given, 2008). A fundamental feature of qualitative research is that it is concerned with understanding social realities from the participant's point of view within their natural settings (Sarantakos, 2013). It seeks to explain happenings and actions through the opinions and words of the people involved (Hughes, 2010).

This research aimed to explore participants' views of being a member of the whānau class and gain insights into their general school experience. Kivunja and Kuyini's (2017) study explains that this approach "tries to get in the head" of the subjects to attempt to understand their feelings and perceptions.

This method was the most applicable to this study because it does not require large numbers, and the potential participant pool available was always going to be less than 20. As Punch (2009) explains, sample size can be small for a qualitative study so the researcher can get closer to what is being studied—justifying the method used for this research study.

3.2 Research approach: Kaupapa Māori methodology

Defined as "research by Māori, for Māori and with Māori" (L Smith, 2000, p. 47), founded by Māori academics, this Indigenous research method challenges the

dominant Western research positioning. It also corrects the historical disadvantages of the past and legitimises and acknowledges the importance of Māori knowledge, tradition, tikanga, and beliefs in a research paradigm (L Smith, 2000).

A kaupapa Māori approach provides a platform for researchers to design, gather, and analyse data utilising protocols and processes familiar to te ao Māori.

3.2.1 Kaupapa Māori research method

Kaupapa Māori research (KMR) method is a well-established research epistemology/paradigm and refers to a Māori way of doing research. As stated by Haar et al. (2018), it "enhances indigenous research, [and] grew out of a history of Māori being 'researched' by non-Māori, largely for the self-interest of the researcher" (p. 156).

Kaupapa Māori research is aimed at identifying and challenging social injustices for Māori. Researchers working through a kaupapa Māori lens are encouraged to frame their conversation/korero around improvement strategies that are transformative in nature, as opposed to regurgitating the same information which does not challenge the status quo or promote positive outcomes for Māori.

In Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (2017) article, she explains KMR and cites Graham Hingangaroa Smith's summary, as he has written extensively on this subject:

- It is related to 'being Māori.'
- It is connected to Māori philosophy and principles.
- Takes for granted the validity and legitimacy of Māori, the importance of Māori language and culture; and
- Is concerned with the 'struggle of autonomy over our own wellbeing.'

(p. 23)

Walker et al.'s (2006) article explains the theory and history of how KMR emerged because of three significant developments. The first was the worldwide revitalisation of Indigenous self-determination over land, language, and culture. The second was to

affirm and acknowledge the commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi between non-Māori and Māori to increase power-sharing and involvement in research with Māori participants. Thirdly, the growth of revitalisation initiatives such as kohanga reo and Māori health models encouraged Māori academics to create their own culturally responsive research processes to enable Māori kaupapa such as manaakitanga to be a valued contributor to the research.

It was not until the 1970s that Māori began to make a stand against improper research methods and biased outcomes of research into Māori by non-Māori researchers (Mahuika, 2008). Sadly, as Mahuika (2008) highlighted, Māori participants were perceived as the “targets” and the investigation was not beneficial for their community or culture.

For this study, the following KMR philosophies by Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2000) and cited in Walker et al. (2006) are embedded into the thought processes and physical actions of the research and researcher:

- Kaupapa Māori research gives full recognition to Māori cultural values and systems.
- Kaupapa Māori research is a strategic position that challenges dominant Pakeha (non-Māori) constructions of research.
- Kaupapa Māori research determines the assumptions, values, key ideas, and priorities of research.
- Kaupapa Māori research ensures that Māori maintains conceptual, methodological, and interpretive control over research.
- Kaupapa Māori research is a philosophy that guides Māori research and ensures that Māori protocol will be followed during research processes.

(p. 333)

The qualitative design method dovetails well with KMR principles. The Rangahau website explains that the strength of qualitative data collection is that it allows for a Māori perspective to be heard and allows for equal empowerment of the participant

(Rangahau, n.d). Qualitative analysis ensures participants are not seen as “targets” and have the researcher must have no pre-determined expectations or manipulation. Instead, this method facilitates in-depth and holistic understanding to do justice to social life complexities (Punch, 2009).

3.2.2 Guiding principles of kaupapa Māori research method relevant to this study

The following KMR principles were applied in this research:

3.2.2.1 Tino rangatiratanga – The principle of self-determination

Tino rangatiratanga encompasses self-determination, absolute sovereignty, autonomy, control, self-determination, and independence (Pihama et al., 2002).

Bishop (1996) clarifies that this principle is about power and control within Māori cultural understandings and practices. By having a Māori centred approach in all aspects of the research process, Māori participants are encouraged to be independent and empowered.

One of the aims of this study was to analyse if self-determination was promoted in the school and learning environments. This principle is explained in more detail in Chapter 4 – the ākonga data analysis.

3.2.2.2 Taonga tuku iho – The principle of cultural aspiration

This principle asserts the centrality and legitimacy of te reo Māori, tīkanga, and mātauranga Māori (Walker et al., 2006). Within a kaupapa Māori paradigm, these key terms are Māori ways of knowing, doing, and understanding the world. Therefore, researchers need to acknowledge the importance of having a Māori worldview when conducting research. Pihama et al. (2002) defined this further, describing that Māori tikanga, values, and beliefs must be inclusive and embedded throughout the research process. The researcher must value Māori knowledge with high esteem and treat it with respect and importance. Walker et al. (2006) reinforced these cultural values stating that it is “important Māori concepts need to be applied within kaupapa Māori research to ensure that Māori protocols are maintained” (p. 334).

As KMR is an Indigenous paradigm, there could be a tendency to assume that this principle is already embodied within the whānau class. Therefore, the focus of this

study is to investigate if the whānau class achieves this goal by analysing language, teaching resources, communication processes, daily routines, interactions between teachers and students, and the general classroom environment.

3.2.2.3 Ako Māori – The principle of culturally preferred pedagogy

This principle focuses on the teaching and learning practices that must be effective, unique, and connected to Māori. Graham Hingangaroa Smith (1993) reiterates the importance of selected teaching and learning choices and must be "culturally preferred." Concerning this study, a teacher's pedagogy plays a critical role in the learning environment of a classroom. Therefore, two essential research questions for this study were:

- How do teaching practices embody ako Māori?
- How do teaching pedagogies provide an environment where students can grow, develop, and be proud of their cultural identity?

3.2.2.4 Kia piki ake i ngā raruraru o te kainga – The principle of socioeconomic mediation

Kaupapa Māori theory acknowledges the important role socioeconomic status has in an individual's life. Therefore, this principle emphasises the need to mediate and assist in alleviating negative pressures and disadvantages experienced by Māori communities (Mahuika, 2008). Bishop's (2003) opinion is that at an ideological level, KMR can positively influence the low socioeconomic status experienced by many Māori.

One objective of this study is to assess whether the school environment is setting up positive learning environments for Māori students, allowing them the freedom to develop without barriers to opportunities faced by people of low socioeconomic status. Graham Hingangaroa Smith (1993) recognises the schools' potential as a positive experience for students, which is critical in combatting negative social and economic influences from the outside community.

3.2.2.5 Whānau – The principle of extended structure

For Māori, the principle of whānau is the core element in society and culture (Walker et al., 2006). As Bishop (1996) enlightens, the concept of whakawhanaungatanga is intertwined with relationships and is a critical facet of whānau. Bishop (1996) stated,

“whakawhanaungatanga is the process of establishing relationships, literally through identifying, through culturally appropriate means, your bodily linkage, your engagement, your connectedness and therefore (unspoken) commitment to other people” (p. 214).

This cultural value reinforces that when using the KMR approach, Māori voices must be heard, reinforcing the importance of connectedness and trust between researchers and participants. Relevant people should be included in the study, and groups should work together during the research process. This principle puts responsibility and onus on the researcher to ensure participants trust the people and process, are nurtured and cared for, and have an intrinsic connection.

3.2.2.6 Kaupapa – The principle of collective philosophy

This principle reinforces the importance of having a collective vision for a community (Mahuika, 2008). Having a clear goal is appropriate within the research process as it helps guide and provides direction during a time of struggle. As Pihama (2010) articulated, the study must enhance or be a vital contributor to the overall kaupapa that is beneficial for the Māori community. An objective of this research study was to collect student voices to understand how these classes can be improved to make changes for the future, and in addition, to better serve this school’s community and ensure whānau classes are sustainable and provide a positive learning and cultural environment for Māori students.

3.3 Participant selection process

Qualitative research design does not require any set guidelines on research design or selection (Given, 2008). Merriam and Tisdell (2015) stated, “selecting the sample are dependent upon the research problem” (p. 103). Participants in this study were selected using purposive sampling. One criterion of being a member of the whānau class was that they must be of Māori or Pasifika descent.

Student participants were from the Year 11 whānau class. The student participants approved were for completing the anonymous questionnaires, subject matter teachers and also interviews with Year 11 students. They were all older than 16 years of age.

At the time of data collection, the students had been in the whānau class for 18 months since the start of Year 9. Most of the students had attended this school for two and half years, having had the same whānau class teacher throughout. This period was considered long enough to enable students to produce quality responses to meet the research objectives. Their familiarity with the teacher and school system also geared the study towards obtaining quality input from the participants.

A positive aspect of including children or youth voices in a research study is that it can provide detailed and relevant information on the impact of their environment (Darbyshire et al., 2005). O'Reilly and Dogra (2016) reinforced this point, stating that this age group's valuable contribution towards studies is beneficial as "they can yield a great deal of rich and interesting information" (p. 11). The age group of the participants for this study falls into the youth/child category, so their voices and opinions are an asset for the aims of this research topic.

Eighteen students were enrolled in the whānau class at the start of Term 3 when data collection was planned. However, due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, students were required to complete their schoolwork at home as part of the government lockdown strategy, and only eight of the students returned to school in Term 4. The other students did not return to school because they gained full-time employment. In their opinion, they had achieved Level 1 NCEA, so they did not see the need to return to school. The long time away from the school environment also made them feel disconnected from education, and they did not see the relevance of attending school any longer.

The sample of students used in this research was seven. If data had been collected before the lockdown, I believe the sample size would have been much higher.

3.4 Data collection methods

Two data collection methods were used for this research study.

3.4.1 Anonymous online survey

An anonymous Microsoft Forms online survey was used (see Appendix 2). Student participants completed the survey on their personal laptop/device, and the survey consisted of 16 questions.

The format for this survey began with closed questions. It then progressed to open-ended questions to try and collect more explanation and justification of their experiences inside the whānau class. Finally, the survey ended with a comments section for participants to voice any other concerns or feedback. The benefit of this format is that when asked about first-hand experiences, it encourages the participants to be more expressive and freely share their viewpoints (Allen, 2017).

3.4.1.1 Survey structure

Toepoel (2017) emphasised that online survey design is critical to ensure quality and optimal data. It was always intended that the structure would start with simple questions, leading to more demanding and thought-provoking questions near the end.

The survey design template followed Lazar et al.'s (2017) comprehensive guidelines for ensuring the survey structure is simple so that participants know and understand how to respond. Lazar et al. (2017) stated, "the best way to collect high-quality data is to keep survey items short, simple, and clear" (p. 47).

The survey consisted of 16 questions (see Appendix 2) and used the following format:

- Questions 1–6: 5-point Likert scales requiring students to rate how strongly they agreed with a particular statement.
- Questions 7–9: Tick box questions allowing participants to select as many responses as they liked.
- Questions 10–15: Open-ended questions that allowed participants to further explain their lived experiences in the whānau class.
- Question 16: Open-ended question to make any recommendations for future improvements.

I was thankful that seven students participated in the anonymous online survey. The time taken to complete the survey ranged from five minutes and nine seconds to seventeen minutes and forty-eight seconds. The average time taken to complete this survey by all the participants was four minutes and thirty seconds.

3.4.2 Face-to-face interviews

The second method employed was semi-structured face-to-face interviews. These interviews were designed to be completed in approximately 20 minutes. Three students, all aged 16 years from the seven who participated in the survey, were selected from whānau class. The data collection timing dictated the selection process. Due to COVID-19 disruptions, the students were selected for their availability and interest in the study.

A significant advantage of using a semi-structured interview is that it can clarify any misinterpretation, provide valuable data, and allow further questions to explore a specific area (Newby, 2014). The positive factors identified by Newby (2014) of using a semi-structured interview include freedom and flexibility around delving into deeper conversation. These were beneficial when working with students as there was a need to prompt for further information and clarity on many answers. As Brinkmann and Kvale (2018) clarified, the semi-structured interview technique allowed for the chance to open-up other lines of enquiry that were not thought of when the research questions were written. This made the face-to-face responses much richer and more informative. The student interview questions are listed in Appendix 3.

For this study, it was valuable to collect teacher voice to gain educators' insights into teaching the whānau class. Therefore, my supervisor randomly selected two out of a possible five core compulsory subject teachers to be participants. The teacher interview questions are listed in Appendix 3.

3.5 Conducting the participant interviews

The interviews followed a semi-structured format due to the age of the student participants. Being familiar with the wider school community, I knew a formal environment would not have been suitable or conducive for this research group. I therefore used a mixture of open-ended and interpretative questions, leading and probing to draw more data from the participants when I felt it was safe to. To ensure the interview was effective, I used words and a tone to ease the interviewee by being considerate and putting myself in the participant's shoes about how they would feel and react. More importantly, to respond to a degree of their choosing, if they felt like talking, they could, and if they were not in the mood, they could end the interview. In

using open-ended questions, it also provided an unlimited opportunity for the participants to explain their thoughts in more detail.

Since some participants were also my colleagues, I made a point of keeping the interviews strictly professional to keep the integrity of the research. I made sure the University of Auckland's ethical guidelines were at the forefront of the interview process. I followed the six quality criteria Brinkmann and Kvale (2018) stated as good practice when conducting an ideal interview. Implementing these criteria assisted me in conducting professional interviews and ensured I collected raw data that was relevant and purposeful. For me, demonstrating professionalism is also my way of showing respect and gratitude towards the participants; this is how I acknowledged and maintained their mana.

Before each interview, all participants were given a paper copy of the questions (see Appendix 3). This was to transmit an open and honest atmosphere and reduce the anxiety levels of those taking part in the interviews.

I was conscious of subjectivity to avoid issues of bias, predispositions, and attitudes that could colour the collected data. According to Roberts (2020), the researcher must ensure they have the right attitude throughout the interview. The researcher must listen to the participants' stories to understand the experiences and let them unfold without judgement.

The interviews were recorded using an audio device to ensure no critical information was lost in transcription. I transcribed the audio files into Word documents to make the coding and data analysis method more manageable and accurate.

A small koha (gift) of packaged, sealed kai was given to the student and teacher participants as a thank you for their time participating in the interview. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 restrictions, lunch could not be provided.

Student interviews ranged in length from 11 minutes to 20 minutes, with an average length of 14 minutes. The teacher interviews ranged from 22 to 30 minutes in length.

3.6 Research setting

The environment and atmosphere for interviews must be relaxed and comfortable for the participants (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018) to minimise stress for the participants and build more rapport with them, leading to a better quality of information. The location needs to be in a comfortable, private place “on their grounds” and familiar to the participants. Ensuring a welcoming atmosphere will meet the interviewee’s needs and be more convenient (Herzog, 2012).

For this study, the interview location was at the participants’ school. Interviews occurred during school day hours, at a time that suited the participant and did not disrupt their learning or other critical school-based activities. The interview room was part of the library building that had enough privacy to protect participants’ confidentiality so that no disruptions or people were walking past, but at the same time in a quiet space that did not seclude or separate them from the rest of the school.

3.7 Validation strategies

Validation in this study involved ensuring that the information meets the intended objectives and that all decisions and actions align with kaupapa Māori research philosophies.

The following is a list of validation strategies employed in the research:

- Respect/Aroha – Following school guidelines, written consent was obtained from both the individual and their parents/caregivers to participate in the research. The permission letters disclosed information about the study to inform parents/caregivers about the research process. As Linda Smith (2017) highlighted, when using KMR, cultural ethics is of utmost importance so that the participants, their whānau, and culture are respected and valued throughout the research process.

- Transparency/Tika – One week after each interview, participants received an emailed copy of their interview transcript. They had one week to read, provide feedback, and make changes or corrections. No student or teacher participants replied to request any changes or corrections, so I took from this that they were pleased with their comments and consented to the information being used in

this study. Linda Smith (2000) supports the importance of KMR research, ensuring the researcher's commitment to report back to participants involved to ensure reciprocity and accountability of all parties.

I continually discussed the importance of having clear and honest communication and operating with the full consent of the participants and their whānau, and I consciously modelled this behaviour with all participants.

- Accountability/whānau – The researcher is personally involved in the research process, not as an individual, but as a member of the research whānau. This means that the researcher is engaged "physically, ethically, morally, and spiritually, not just in one's capacity as a 'researcher' concerned with method" (Bishop, 2003 p. 130). The advisory group was involved and consulted during all phases of the research, thus reinforcing the critical principle of tino rangatiratanga and having a Māori-centred approach. Having this approach reiterates Walker et al.'s (2006) viewpoint that "if Māori is not to benefit from research, then there is little point in undertaking kaupapa Māori research." (p. 5).

- Reciprocity/Koha – As highlighted in O'Reilly and Dogra (2016), educational research with young people aims to change and impact teaching practice. One of my study aims was to improve and enhance the whānau class programme for future Māori learners. So, the data could be distributed to the Māori department at the school to inform and encourage critical discussions to improve educational opportunities and achievement for their future Māori students.

3.8 Analysing participant data

A deductive and inductive (pragmatic) approach was used to analyse the data. According to Azungah (2018), deductive coding draws on a predefined set of themes and concepts derived from the literature review and the method. On the other hand, Durdella (2019) states that inductive coding (or open coding) begins from nothing and creates codes based on the qualitative data itself.

I listened to and transcribed the kkey informant interviews. Several editing sessions were needed to check for accuracy and coding. Weston et al. (2001) suggested that

researchers use a grounded approach to discover codes while working through the transcripts and surveys. Following the thinking of Burnard et al. (2008), I was prepared to identify a coding system to help find common themes that emerged from the data. Using the most straightforward coding technique, I looked for word repetitions and keywords-in-context (Ryan & Bernard, 2003) to help understand the key ideas, views, and attitudes expressed by Te Whānau Rangahau. Codes were then grouped into categories (axial coding, grouping the codes related to each other through their content or context) and then into themes by finding commonalities between two or more categories. The primary purpose of thematic analysis is to find trends and patterns across a dataset that informs the research question related to people's experiences, perceptions, or viewpoints (Durdella, 2019). These themes are explained in further detail in Chapters 4 and 5 and are discussed and compared with the key literature identified in Chapter 2.

Seven key codes emerged from the survey and raw interview data, and these were the most frequently used terms by all participants. After further analysis, discussion, and guidance from my supervisor, these codes were reduced from seven to five. In addition, the wording of the themes was expanded to provide more explanation about them. The codes were a mixture of English and Māori terms. After coding, the five themes were: positive extracurricular opportunities, a feeling of belonging (whanaungatanga), developing a Māori identity, culturally preferred pedagogy, and a learning environment (defined as ako). The exact format of identifying key and similar codes was also used to analyse the kaiako (teacher) data. Four themes emerged from the coding: the need for positive relationships, the challenges the teachers encountered, creating a safe environment for Māori learners, and the impact of effective leadership.

3.9 Research questions

This research examined how a whānau class, a specialised Year 11 learning class, supported Māori student success at an English-medium secondary school. In this study, the term "whānau class" refers to a group of students who coalesce for all their compulsory subjects and meet every morning during whānau/homeroom time. The definition of success and achievement in the context of this study is not just academic

success, but includes wider factors of success such as identity, belonging, and relationships.

This research focused on identifying the pedagogical strategies used in the whānau class programme that may have helped improve students' educational success. In addition, I aimed to explore student perspectives on how this class encouraged and responded to the students' self-identity as Māori, and more broadly, how the whānau class supported Māori students in a secondary school environment.

My overarching question was, "How does this whānau class support Māori students' success?" Sub-questions included:

1. What do students enjoy about being involved in this whānau class?
2. What strategies were used by teachers to support their cultural identity?
3. How has participation in this class improved their educational success at school?

The primary purpose of collecting student feedback was to better my own CRP so that I could continue to improve my effectiveness as an educator and contribute to raising Māori student achievement. The secondary reason for the research was to inform the whānau class initiative at my kura and to make it more effective for our ākonga. My research journey, particularly the feedback realised in the data, provided an opportunity for my colleagues and me to reflect and improve.

3.10 Ethical considerations – The role of the researcher

The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee approved this research on the 1st of October 2021 for three years. The reference number was 22161.

When embracing KMR, as Cram et al. (2018) stated, the research must be done with Māori, not alongside them or with them as bystanders. Therefore, a Māori advisory group was formed to provide support and guidance throughout the research process. This group consisted of the te reo Māori teacher and the whānau class teacher, the deputy principal, and a parent employed by the school as kaitautoko (support member from the local community who was a descendant of the local iwi). This group aided

with verification, and āwhina to me as the researcher and ensured student interests were always at the forefront of every decision and activity.

As an emerging researcher, I recognise the great depth of mahi previously conducted before my study to create, establish, and promote the KMR method. The KMR method has taught me to respect and appreciate kaupapa Māori and its importance in a European-centric academic setting.

As the researcher the steps that were under taken to ensure I mitigated the problematic nature of undertaking research in my place of employment prior, during and after the research process. I acknowledge my positionality in the project that a possible ethical issue exists because I have previously formed a relationship with these students and teachers are my colleagues, who are my participants. To ensure this did not impact or influence data collection, firstly I ensured confidentiality was always the priority by ensuring the name of the school, student, and teacher particiapants were never published only psydeoms used. Another important aspect to ensure there was no conflict of interest was that at the time of data collection I was not teaching any of the students for curriculum subjects.

Students and teachers had the opportunity to withdraw whilst participating in the study. They were not given any compensation for participating in the study. Whilst carrying out the data collection I was not intrusive and avoided disrupting the students' learning, timetable arrangements, curriculum studies and extracurricular commitments.

My supervisor randomly selected two staff out of a possible five to be interviewed by me. Of these five teachers I did not have a strong or close friendship with them, it was purely a professional colleague relationship. A reason for this is that none of them were in my department and so I only knew them by face and have never spent any time with them outside of school meetings and requirements. The student questionnaire was online and anonymous. At the time of data collection there were three different whānau classes in the school, so this also helps ensure anonymity as it will never be revealed which class was part of the research.

Anonymity was a priority but cannot be guaranteed as the three-student interview participants will be from the same class. However, the following process was

followed to ensure confidentiality was always paramount:
- Students for interviews were randomly selected by my supervisor using the class roll.
- PIS and Consent forms for parents and caregivers along with Assent forms for students will be handed to the three students in the following way.
- I emailed each student to organize a time to meet with me to talk briefly about the research and give him/her the participation pack and ask them to read the forms with their parents/caregivers.
- The participation pack included Participation Information Sheet, Consent Form, Assent Form.
- Completed and signed participation forms were returned in a sealed, self-addressed envelope to the school office.

For the teacher participant processes, I had an individual meeting with each teacher to briefly discussing a summary of my research and to see if they would be interested in their participation in the research study. Explaining in detail my steps to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

Regarding the data management I will safely store all Data on my personal one drive account. For the electronic surveys and interview transcripts will be on my personal one drive. The audio file of the interviews will also be stored on my personal one drive.

The following chapter is the analysis of ākonga data from the online survey and interviews. The five themes are analysed using the relevant identified literature from Chapter 2.

CHAPTER 4: ĀKONGA DATA AND DISCUSSION

Mā te Tuakana te teina e tōtika.

Mā te teina te Tuakana e tōtika

Both older and younger have valuable knowledge to share.

4.1 Introduction

The whakataukī above resonates with me because it recognises that knowledge gained from all ages is equally important. This study supports this proverb as it looks to seek knowledge from a spectrum of people of ages from 15–60 years. I feel it pertinent to the success of this research that all voices are heard and fully appreciate how we can lead and implement change within the education system for Māori.

My overarching research question was, "How does this whānau class support Māori students' success?" This chapter presents an analysis of the survey and interview data from the ākonga participants to find answers to this question. This research study used the data analysis framework discussed in Chapter 3. As noted, this included analyses through the lens of the KMR approach, notably drawing on two fundamental principles: ako – culturally pedagogy and tino rangatiratanga – self-determination. Throughout this chapter, these two principles are used to critique the views of ākonga participants.

Once coding and categorisation of themes were completed, five broad themes were identified that encapsulated the impact of the whānau class on the ākonga. These factors can be grouped around self-related psychological factors or variables (also influenced by intrinsic sociocultural factors), socio-psychological factors which supported their success as Māori students, psycholinguistic identity factors, various sociocultural-contextual factors, and finally, pedagogical factors.

Participant quotes from the seven ākonga participants are in *italics*. Pseudonyms of Ākonga 1, 2, 3 (A1, A2, A3) are used for the face-to-face interview data.

4.2 Self-related psychological factors

Researchers in social psychology and education have long been interested in understanding students' self-perceptions and perceived competency beliefs. Examples of self-related psychological perceptions include self-concept, self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-discipline, and motivation. Self-related psychology relates to things

held intrinsic to the learner, resulting from external factors. Research supports a solid reciprocal relationship and the importance of these perceptions for student success (Hansford & Hattie, 1982). Thus, self-related perceptions have turned into an essential subject in education, given its impact on student behaviour and academic performance (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009). These concepts were identified in the ākonga data concerning a student's positive associations with their cultural identity. The Ka Hikitia strategy "associates self-efficacy and self-belief with expectations, reinforcing that confident Māori student who expect themselves to achieve have a higher chance of doing so" (MOE, 2013b, p. 63).

Melinda Webber, a Māori educational researcher in Aotearoa, supports this self-concept value and emphasises how vital it is for schools to affirm and be inclusive of cultural diversity. Webber's et al.'s (2013) research findings identified that high-achieving Māori students also saw themselves as having a high academic identity. When Māori students feel connected and have a sense of belonging, this can help them deal with the emotional turmoil typically faced in adolescence (Bishop et al., 2014). Having resiliency and positive emotions is essential in improving student engagement. If this is taught, it can only serve to benefit Māori as the education system looks for ways to keep them engaged in their final two years of high school. As mentioned in Chapter 1, this area requires urgent attention to reduce the achievement gap between Māori students and their peers.

According to the participants, being a member of the whānau class promoted positive self-related perceptions. The following are some of the ākonga comments regarding self-esteem and self-concept:

> *It makes me feel good to be around my own culture.*
>
> *It feels that the whānau class felt like home, you feel a sense of belonging; in that class, it is basically a family class, they make you feel like you belong. You become yourself there, and everyone around you brings out the best in you.*
>
> *It makes me feel more connected with the other students.*
>
> *I feel like I belong; everyone brings out the best in you.*
>
> A1: *I like being Māori.*

The demographic of the students showed that all had a mixed ethnic genealogy. There were students of mixed Māori/Pasifika lineage, mixed Māori/Pākehā lineage, or mixed Māori/other. Regarding the ākonga's individual perceptions on cultural identity, it is interesting that they all had strong affiliations to their Māori ancestry. It was evident in their responses that their whakapapa and Māori cultural connections ranked highly in terms of being important to their identity development. The whānau class environment proved to promote cultural values that were important to positively developing their Māori identity.

The data analysis showed that the KMR principle of ako is evident in the ākonga perspectives. It reinforces that the whānau class learning environment includes this cultural value, helping develop and encourage Māori students' self-belief and confidence. In keeping with the recommendations of the Starpath report, Webber et al. (2016) reinforced that this cultural connection is a critical enabler for Māori and Pasifika students in their self-concept towards their learning. This principle is further evident in Section 2.5.2 of this thesis.

4.2.1 Socio-psychological drivers of success for Māori students

The socio-psychological theory asserts that individuals, society, and culture are interlinked. This means an individual strives to meet the needs of society, and society helps him, or her attain their goals (Rothon et al., 2011). It is the society or community from where the students inculcate their cultural values and the social norms, which helps them shape their personality and influences their behaviour according to the external situations. Through this interaction, the personality of an individual is determined.

4.2.2 The value of having a positive sense of Māori cultural identity

Webber and Macfarlane (2020) argued for a strong link between positive cultural identity and academic success for Māori students. Therefore, if Māori students experience a positive cultural identity because of being a member of the whānau class, their potential to gain academic success increases.

The ākonga survey data showed that a strong sense of Māori cultural identity gave them great pride. These responses provided a deeper understanding of the students'

definition of cultural identity. One ākonga commented on the importance of feeling proud of who they were and where they had come from:

> *The whole kaupapa of the whānau class makes me proud of everything we learn and engage with makes me happy to be a Māori.*

To gauge how the ākonga valued their cultural identity, ākonga rated how proud they were to be Māori using a Likert scale, where 1= “Strongly disagree” and 5= “Strongly agree”. The results showed that six out of seven ākonga selected 5, and one student selected 4. This is strong evidence to support that they were all proud of their Māori culture.

Another question in the survey asked about the benefits of being in the whānau class. Four out of seven chose it because it made them feel *proud to be Māori,* reinforcing the importance for students to be surrounded by positive Māori stimuli such as that offered in a whānau class environment. Further comments were:

> *The environment that surrounds me enhances me to be proud of who I am and where I’m from. I am proud to be Māori.*
>
> *They make me feel proud to be Māori and special because I can speak it fluently.*
>
> *I am proud to be a Māori and being in the whanau class reminds me of that every day.*

These positive comments from the ākonga reinforce that being a member of this whānau class enables, embodies, and promotes Māori cultural identity. It positively contributes to student affiliation with their Māori identity and reinforces their positive feelings associated with their ethnic representation. Doerr’s (2015) research into the effects of a mainstream classroom environment on Māori identity showed that mainstream classroom environments were not conducive to making Māori feel proud of their culture. This study showed that the whānau class environment fostered a sense of pride in the students. This finding supports the valuable idea that a Māori student has a strong sense of cultural identity and affiliation with ko wai au (who they are and where they come from). This is reinforced by Webber and Macfarlane’s (2020) research on mana tangata, particularly ūkaipō.

4.2.3 Examples of how the school encouraged Māori Identity in the classroom and school activities

As noted in Webber and Macfarlane's (2020) research, it is important for Māori students to feel proud of their cultural identity. Therefore, it was relevant for this study to investigate what this secondary school did to promote and encourage Māori identity in everyday school life. One of the research questions asked, "What strategies do teachers use to promote cultural identity?". This question was aimed at identifying strategies that worked well. The ākonga commented on and listed specific school activities that supported their cultural identity. Comments included:

> *Learning new Māori topics and themes, te reo focused activities, teachers, and students consistently speaking te reo in the classroom.*
>
> *Taking part in the nationwide Te Reo Māori language week, the daily whānau class huis, singing waiata and saying karakia.*
>
> *The teachers try to get us to learn more about Māori culture.*
>
> *My experience in the whānau class has been very useful compared to how I would learn in other classes.*
>
> A2: *Learn about my culture where I'm from, I don't get to go to my marae much, but because everyone is from around here, I join in with them… it's who I am.*
>
> A3: *It is cool having more whānau classes this year. The little ones get to experience the culture and learn about ancestors' etcetera*.

Six out of seven students selected the option from the survey choices of: *creating a learning environment with a te ao Māori focus*. In addition, four out of seven chose because the *teachers use activities with a te ao Māori focus*. Both reinforce the value and importance of having a curriculum that teaches te ao Māori topics.

The following are ākonga comments relating to the teachers' activities to encourage more Māori culture in the classroom:

> A1: *Some teachers acknowledge and encourage it, and some teachers don't… we have more opportunities to learn about the culture, and it has opened more doors for me.*

A2: *In English, we learnt about Māori topics and themes and the unities tied into the curriculum. This made it more relatable and interesting for us students.*

A3: *The teachers are more understanding and helpful, and they take their time. So, we have more opportunities now like te ao kaka and te ao Māori. Having more of these classes helps us.*

The literature recognises that cultural connectedness is encouraged through performing mihi and having hui with far-reaching positive outcomes for Māori students and their whānau (Gilgen, 2012; McMurchy-Pilkington, 2013). It reinforces the importance of schools providing time and opportunity for these to happen, and whānau class enabled these experiences. While there is criticism of the Ka Hikitia policy, primarily because of its poor implementation, it does highlight that when a Māori student has secured cultural identity, it is one of the primary enablers of success, and that "identity, language, and culture are an asset and a foundation of knowledge on which to build and celebrate learning and success" (MOE, 2013b, p. 17).

The data from the cultural identity questions emphasise the importance of having a strong Māori "presence" in the classroom to promote self-determination (tino rangatiratanga principle). According to Bishop (1996), having a Māori centred approach in all aspects of the whānau class encouraged Māori participants to be independent and empowered by Māori cultural values. These students' learning experiences of Māori culture, for example, about their descendants and important historical events, will continue to build their knowledge and understanding of tino rangatiratanga.

4.2.4 *A sense of whanaungatanga in the classroom environment*

Interpersonal relationships and communication are critical to both the teaching–learning process and the social development of students. From a Māori perspective, Bishop et al. (2014) defined these relationships as whanaungatanga – an extended, family-like positive relationship between the teacher and student and between students. Concerning this study, the whānau class environment was designed to be the vehicle for Māori students to develop a sense of care and connectedness with each other and support each other as they would in a family situation.

The data analysis showed that the main reason ākonga enjoyed being a member of the whānau class was because of the presence of other Māori students/peers in the class. Six out of seven students stated that they wanted to be in this whānau class because they were *with other Māori students.* The survey asked about the benefits of being in this whānau class, and again, five out of seven chose *to be with other Māori students*. These findings reinforce Webber et al.'s (2013) study on ethnicity and identity. Webber et al. (2013) highlighted the importance of social belonging and connectedness (whanaungatanga) to help with Māori student learning and engagement in a classroom. Ākonga feedback also reinforced the importance of being surrounded by peers with more sociocultural similarities than differences. Other comments included:

> *Everyone in the class can relate to something, we're all Māori, and I think that's nice and makes me feel proud.*
>
> *Very open and welcoming, you aren't a stranger for long, fun to be around, your own little family.*
>
> A1: *For me, it makes me feel comfortable because I'm surrounded by some of my cousins, and I like being with them. They help me with my learning.*
>
> A3: *It's nice being with other Māori's. We are on the same level, we've become mates, connect easier, and our friendships have grown.*

In my experience as a high school teacher, I have observed how important these formative years are for students in terms of their social development and how influential these relationships are. This study's findings prove that spending time with friends and peers was a highlight of the student's day and a key factor in the classroom environment being more enjoyable. These findings link with Highfield and Webber's (2021) study on the value and importance of the whanaungatanga concept for students.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, school statistics show that 40 percent of the Māori students who attend this class come from local iwi. Therefore, many of the ākonga are descendants of the same hapū and iwi, which naturally created the kinship and similarities that connected them (whanaungatanga).

4.2.5 Strategies to promote more cultural knowledge and engagement.

The final open-ended question of the survey asked what schools and teachers can do to encourage more tikanga. The following suggestions were given:

> A1*: Speak more te reo, for some teachers to just accept that you are Māori and not leave you out.*
>
> A2: *Teachers using and teaching about Māori history/themes/topics in all classes would help, regardless of which class you are in.*
>
> *A3: More Māori sports, e.g., ki-o-rahi, more te reo, not just used during the one-off week. Everyone to learn our new haka for the inter-house haka competition.*

The ākonga feedback and recommendations from this study align with Stoll and Fink's (1996) literature from Chapter 2 on making effective changes in school improvement. In agreement with Stoll and Fink (1996), driving any cultural change in schools is intricate and complicated, but it can be done when teachers work together, understand the cultural values, and adapt to structures that will help with the successful change.

4.3 Psycholinguistic identity

4.3.1 Teachers speaking te reo to me

Speaking te reo Māori was another factor that five out of seven ākonga said teachers used to support and encourage Māori cultural aspects in the classroom. Four out of seven ākonga selected speaking more te reo Māori as one of the reasons they joined the class.

This highlights the importance of teachers committing to using te reo Māori in their everyday communication with students. Gay (2002) argued that in relation to Indigenous cultures, when a teacher uses their language in a lesson, it affirms the importance of their culture in a Westernised setting. The use of te reo Māori is also a recognised CRP strategy. In addition, it reinforces the influence that modifying the curriculum to incorporate Māori topics and themes is an essential task for raising student engagement and learning (Bishop et al., 2014). The following survey comments supported this theme:

> *Having hui in the morning is good, using more te reo in the school and more Māori subjects introduced as senior options.*

The school values are taught, how every teacher includes Māori language even when they are not of the culture.

4.3.2 Māori achieving success as Māori

Participants were unanimous with their answers to the interview question, "How did this class help them succeed as Māori?" All agreed that being in this class supported them to experience success as Māori:

A1: Yes, a little bit. I speak te reo more, and I'm more confident now.

A2: Being in this class gets me more involved in the subjects and environment… More helpful because before, we didn't learn much Māori, and you must be involved in the kaupapa. It helps push you into it.

A3: Yes, it helped me get two excellence endorsements this year. I don't think I would have gotten that if I had been in a mainstream class. It motivates me to come to school every day, and my attendance has improved. In Year 9, I didn't like coming to school much.

These outcomes reflect the policy intent of Ka Hikitia (MOE, 2019), which recommends schools having programmes for Māori students that promote "educational success as Māori". To do this, teachers must have high expectations of their Māori learners that are evident in all aspects of the classroom through conversations and pedagogy (Berryman & Eley, 2017; Bishop & Berryman, 2010; Webber et al., 2016). Teachers must encourage independent learning and authentic relationships for Māori learners to achieve. To do this, a teacher must provide opportunities for ākonga to be inspired through te ao Māori contexts to help them succeed and learn in the classroom (Bishop & Berryman, 2010; Macfarlane et al., 2007; Whitinui, 2004).

4.4 Sociocultural – Contextual factors

4.4.1 Involvement in positive extracurricular/external experiences

A few examples of extracurricular activities outside the school day include pro-social activities such as kapa haka, team sports, and waka ama. In contrast, in-school involvement activities can consist of intramurals and academic clubs. In general, in Aotearoa, extracurricular or external experiences are activities that fall outside the scope of the school's curriculum subjects. These activities can be sporting, arts, or

cultural (Webber et al., 2013). Individuals choose to be involved in these activities during their own time through personal interest or as a hobby. This topic is of interest in Aotearoa because of the prominent levels of alienation and boredom reported by Māori students in school (Bishop et al., 2003).

Throughout the ākonga survey and interview data, the positiveness of their experiences in extra curricula experiences was prevalent. Student participants recognised and acknowledged that being in this whānau class provided opportunities to participate in different te ao Māori extracurricular opportunities than what was offered in the general classes. For example, they went on camps and trips that had a cultural kaupapa focus, and for many students, these camps were often the highlight of their entire school experience. In addition, students appreciated and learned more about Māori culture and themselves and identified the importance and relevance of participating in these extracurricular activities.

Comments included:

> *How we get to go to the historical pā sites of our ancestors.*
>
> A1: *All the places we go are based on Māori culture; we get more opportunities to learn more about our culture.*
>
> A3: *It gives you cool experiences and opportunities you don't get in other mainstream … having Matua's support teaches us about being in "the right place at the right time."*

The experiences noted by ākonga in this study are consistent with Webber et al.'s (2013) racial-ethnic study, which found that high-achieving Māori students engaged in sporting and cultural activities held during and after school. In turn, this had a considerable positive impact on their use of spare time and increased their self-esteem and ability to excel in their academic studies (Webber et al., 2013).

It is important to note that these trips occurred due to a staff member's passion, skills, and knowledge, as mentioned in Chapter 1. The students and school are privileged to have a staff member who has extensive expertise in the outdoors and te ao Māori to organise and implement these fantastic trips and activities. Not many secondary schools are fortunate to have this calibre of staff.

4.4.2 Positive impact of Te Ara Rangatahi activities and events

Te Ara Rangatahi is a charitable youth trust established by the local iwi that runs various sessions and activities with ākonga. It was founded by a group of passionate local iwi members who identified the need to provide rangatahi (adolescents) of their iwi with additional support and resources to help guide them through life's challenges. This trust has been established for several years, proving their kaupapa is necessary and important. Te Ara Rangatahi's activities occur during school hours and outside school hours and include workshops on goal setting, careers, values, and tikanga. All their initiatives have a te ao Māori focus. The trust organises a camp once a year that is fully funded and at no cost to students.

The school uses the services of Te Ara Rangatahi for their students, and participation in the Te Ara Rangatahi activities was a meaningful highlight throughout the student transcripts. While this community group arguably delivers similar kaupapa as the school, it provides a different learning environment and facilitators. Although often the presenters are not qualified teachers, the students enjoy, engage, and learn from their teaching style and knowledge.

> A2: *The things Te Ara Rangatahi teaches us, their courses, and their help is awesome.*
>
> *My favourite event the school provided for our whānau class was the trip we went on with Te Ara Rangatahi. They really impacted you, and it makes me feel proud to be a Māori.*

This reinforces that teachers are not the only people who can effectively educate and engage ākonga, and that the wider community is equally influential. This supports the need to promote and encourage community groups that the students enjoy and resonate with to engage them in learning. Webber and Macfarlane's (2020) research on mana motuhake reinforces the value and importance that tribal organisations have on Māori students' positive identity and development. Thus finding, endorses that when a secondary school is fortunate to have an external iwi group help them, the outcomes are very productive for Māori students.

4.4.3 Extracurricular activities – The impact of kapa haka

One survey question enquired how cultural identity was promoted and what the school experiences were that encouraged the students to feel proud to be Māori. The rationale for this question was based on previous research on the impact of identity on Māori student achievement. For example, Flavell (1997), a prominent Māori educationalist, noted that the unique identity of the individual and group, the dignity and mana of Māori, was critical to educational achievement.

As highlighted in Whitinui's research (2010), participating in kapa haka promotes enhanced social and cultural wellbeing, better relationships, increased confidence, improved attendance, and achievement, and most noticeably, family involvement. Participating in kapa haka was a significant and enjoyable extracurricular activity for ākonga in this study. Participation in kapa haka ranked the second-highest reason the students became members of this whānau class. For six out of seven students, kapa haka resonated with them because it represented their cultural identity. This finding links with studies conducted on this topic by Whitinui (2010) and Macfarlane et al. (2007). These researchers also found that for their students, kapa haka was a time during the school day when the "lights came on" demonstrating the importance of kapa haka for Māori students in increasing their level of enjoyment at school and enhancing their cultural identity.

In this study, kapa haka also provided an opportunity and outlet to showcase their culture to their peers, the school community, and their whānau in a positive, affirming way that created a sense of celebration. In addition, this extracurricular activity enabled a time and place to learn more about Māori culture and identity, contrary to the school curriculum and timetable, which limited these sorts of cultural activities:

> A1: *I enjoyed kapa haka more, I hated it when I was in Year 9 because of some people, and I got stage fright. Now I am a leader.*
>
> A2: *I enjoy doing kapa haka. It teaches me about my culture.*
>
> A3: *I like being able to do more kapa haka.*

These findings suggest that it is essential for secondary schools to offer a range of positive extracurricular cultural activities for students to experience and be exposed to. Although these activities may not have an academic focus, they advocate for

improved hauora/wellbeing, personal growth, and development and reinforce Māori cultural identity (Whitinui, 2010). An English-medium school must enable learning that allows for educational and cultural experiences beyond the classroom (Webber & Macfarlane, 2020).

4.5 Pedagogical factors

4.5.1 Ako – Culturally referred pedagogy

In this study, ako was evident in the transcripts in both the ākonga and kaiako comments. It became evident in the ākonga data the importance and significance of teachers demonstrating ako in the classroom by having a culturally responsive classroom environment. The following interviewee responses relate to how the teachers helped the students improve their academic success:

> A1*: Yes, the teachers help me if I need it. I just need to open my mouth more than in other classes.*
>
> A2: *I don't need help, but I know the Whaea would help me and that they are there if I need it.*
>
> A3: *Having more Māori classes gives me more opportunities … having the best teachers helped us.*

The survey data showed that the students enjoyed being a member of the whānau class. Five out of seven students strongly agreed that the teacher influenced their level of enjoyment, so these results point to the presence of ako in the learning environment. It was evident to the ākonga that the core subject teachers in the whānau class went above and beyond to help them with their studies and expected them to achieve and succeed. Even if the student did not require any help, they were confident and comfortable asking for assistance when needed:

> *The teachers push me to do my best in every subject.*
>
> *Because they are not rude to Māori people or us, and they try to speak Māori.*

One of the final questions of the survey and interview asked ākonga what the benefits of being in this whānau class were and why they chose to be in it. Three student responses gave credit to their teachers, stating they were the reason and a critical benefit of being a class member. This result reinforces the Ministry's strategies for

teachers to improve their pedagogy. When teachers collaboratively promote, monitor, and reflect upon students' learning outcomes and modify their instructional practices when required, it improves student engagement and results (MOE, 2006).

Through the classroom environment's teaching and learning practices, the raw data showed that the teacher's pedagogy was effective, unique, and connected to te ao Māori. In agreement with Graham Hingangaroa Smith (1993), learner choices were explicitly selected by the whānau class kaiako, and curriculum topics were aspects of Māori culture. This is a positive example of breaking down the dominant European hegemonic "White spaces" filtered throughout our secondary schools in Aotearoa (Milne, 2017).

4.5.2 Strategies to improve the organisation of the whānau class learning environment

Participants were asked to provide feedback on the whānau class learning environment. Three out of seven ākonga would make no changes to the current system and organisation. The four suggestions and changes identified by the ākonga were:

Make it stricter.

If I speak more, te reo.

We need more student leaders.

Daily acknowledgements.

From the ākonga interview data, the following recommendations were:

A1: *Some teachers need to get on our page and see how we learn, not just give us a stack of papers to do.*

A2: *How to deal with the naughty students who distract the more focused students.*

A3: *More motivation to help keep students at school. Although this is a great class, I would not change it.*

These points reiterate that although there are many positive outcomes, actions, and attributes of the whānau class, there are also areas of improvement that should be addressed to create and maintain positive learning experiences. When asked to

comment on any negative experiences from the whānau class, three out of seven students explained that they had not experienced any negative aspects as class members. However, the remaining four students were unanimous in the view that the naughty and disruptive behaviour that some of the students displayed was the major negative factor of being in the class. Their concerns were:

> *Some students were not doing what they were supposed to do.*
>
> *We like to talk, and we are loud, we answer back sometimes, and when it comes to sports, we are all competitive and aggressive.*
>
> *The boys in the class think that because they are in the whānau class, they are cool and have a sense that they are better than the mainstream classes. They aren't proud and do not respect the whole kaupapa.*
>
> *Some students have just been distracting, naughty, but they got a little better by the end of the year.*
>
> The ākonga findings suggest that some of the student's harmful disruptions affect the more focused and motivated students' learning. Improved strategies for behavioural management could benefit the classroom environment. One such strategy could be to engage the kaupapa Māori model to reinforce discipline and class guidelines. These would be co-constructed with both kaiako and ākonga to help prevent adverse and off-task behaviour and agree on a class plan or strategy to address negative behaviours. Their solutions and consequences would be in the form of a class contract that all students agree to sign and implement. Proactive strategies are an effective behaviour management technique for teachers to address student misbehaviour (Clunies-Ross et al., 2008).

In general, there was a consensus that this whānau class supported Māori students' education, understanding, and knowledge of the curriculum. The teachers were agentic and inclusive of te ao Māori concepts in various subject areas. The two principles of KMR (ako and tino rangatiratanga) were evident in the data analysis, and it was reassuring that this whānau class endorsed and promoted these two important and valuable Māori concepts in this educational setting.

4.6 School statistics for the whānau class from the KAMAR program on attendance, pastoral records, and achievement

The following information was collated using KAMAR, the school data management system, to signal any improvements or changes in attendance, pastoral records, and Level 1 NCEA achievement for the ākonga in the whānau class. At the time of data collection, these statistics correlate with the two years that the class has been together.

4.6.1 Attendance statistics

The first year of the whānau class was 2020, when the ākonga were in Year 10. There were seven Year 10 classes at this school, including the whānau class. Table 5 shows the overall attendance data of the whānau class compared to the other Year 10 classes. When this attendance data is analysed into Māori ethnicities, the whānau class ranked the fourth best for Māori students at 89.43%. Interestingly the other classes had fewer than nine Māori students. The whānau class consisted of 22 Māori students in 2020.

Table 5: Whānau class attendance percentage for 2020 and 2021.

Class	Year group average (%)	Overall year attendance for the class (%)	The highest attendance rate for a class (%)
Year 10 whānau class	88.80	83.62	91.3
Year 11 whānau class	90.93	90.66	92.6

In 2021 when the class were Year 11 students, the overall attendance rate for the class improved 7% to 90.66% – a positive significant increase and improvement. During this year, ākonga experienced a significant amount of time in lockdown/home learning. In reflection, I feel this impacted the class's overall attendance rate. They were on track to achieving an even higher result had it not been for the lengthy lockdown. As stated previously, lockdown also impacted the retention rate in Term 4.

4.6.2 NCEA Level 1 achievement data and results

In 2021, the Year 11 whānau class goal was to achieve a Level 1 NCEA certificate. Out of 16 students, 10 students achieved Level 1 (62.5%). This is the same result as the 2020 NCEA national data which is pleasing. One student achieved Level 2 also.

Out of the six students who did not achieve Level 1, one student was short by 5 credits and the other five students missed out on between 15 and 20 credits. The students intended to get these credits during the start of their Year 12 school year and are on track to do so. The COVID-19 lockdown needs to be considered when analysing these results. I believe that had these six students been attending school regularly and not doing online learning, they would have received the support they needed to achieve a Level 1 qualification. Had the teachers and students engaged in academic counselling conversations, I feel it would have provided the ākonga with āwhina, knowledge, and guidance they needed to achieve the required 64 credits (in 2021, the required number of credits for Auckland students to achieve Level 1 NCEA was reduced from 80 due to lengthy COVID-19 disruptions).

Other outstanding results from the 10 students who achieved Level 1 were that two students achieved an overall merit certificate of endorsement for Level 1 NCEA. Five students earned excellence subject endorsement in either English, te reo Māori, or physical education. One student completed merit subject endorsement in physical education.

4.6.3 Pastoral statistics

A pastoral note is a written response to negative behaviour or incidents during school. Teachers record the incident on the KAMAR student management system as a pastoral note. Depending on the severity of the situation, the consequences are dealt with by either the teacher, the dean, or a senior management team member. Pastoral notes can be recorded for positive incidents. However, for this study, no data was recorded for positive situations as the reality is that most teachers do not record these into the KAMAR system due to lack of time. Table 6 displays the total number of negative pastoral events recorded over three years. In addition, the Year 9 data was added, even though they were not part of a whānau class at that time. This data was included to show the improvement in the students' behaviour as they became members of the whānau class, thus raising the question of whether this class helped improve student behaviour.

The total amount of pastoral records is for the 16 students who were still on the school roll when this data was collected. It was interesting to discover that the ākonga fell into either two groups. One group had none, or less than five pastoral incidents recorded

over the three years. Alternatively, the other students had over 10 plus pastoral notes for one school year.

Table 6: Whānau class pastoral records for 2019–2021.

Class	Total number of pastoral notes recorded (for all 16 students)
2019 – Year 9 Students were not in this whānau class	96
2020 – Year 10 First year as a whānau class	82
2021 – Year 11 Second year as a whānau class	80

It is pleasing to note that the total number of pastoral incidents recorded reduced every year. Factors to consider when collating this pastoral data:

- Teachers may or may not record every incident that occurs with a student in their class in the pastoral form
- A couple of students left the class, but new students joined the class over the two years
- A large amount of time during the COVID-19 lockdown period between 2020 and 2021 was spent working/learning from home.

The ākonga results from this current study support many of the findings and previous research on the key factors and attributes that support Māori student success in an English-medium secondary school. For example, overall, the findings from this study align with international and national research and literature concerning the barriers and enablers that promote a positive learning environment for Māori students to succeed in Aotearoa.

The next chapter explains the kaiako (teacher) findings with discussion from the relevant literature identified in the literature review in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER 5: KAIAKO DATA AND DISCUSSION

Ko ō tātou whakapono ngā
Kaiwhakawhewehe i a tātou. Ko ō
Tātou moemoeā me ō tātou pākatokato
Ngā kai whakakotahi i a tatou.
Ideologies separate us.
Dreams and anguish bring us together. – Wharehuia Milroy

The above whakataukī highlights that our beliefs and ideologies can separate us but that our dreams unit us. Arguably, teachers' actions and behaviours are influenced by their beliefs, but regarding this whānau class, there was a united vision. In the engagement in the whānau class, both ākonga and kaiako experience peaks and troughs of success and happiness, and both need support and help to guide them back along the bumpy path. Having dreams and goals to make their classroom and school the best place it can be for all learners should be the aim of all teachers.

5.1 Introduction

In this study, two out of the five core curriculum subject teachers were interviewed to gain insights into their perspectives, thoughts, and opinions on teaching the whānau class. Collecting the teachers' voices provided valuable depth to this research and added another component of data to analyse and discuss alongside the ākonga data. Both kaiako were head of faculties for their subject areas and had taught at other English-medium secondary schools in Aotearoa and overseas. They had over 50 years of teaching experience in the classroom between them and thus had considerable experience of working with Māori. From my perspective and observations, if the Te Kotahitanga (Bishop & Berryman, 2010) ETP scale for classroom observations were applied to them, they would both rate highly on it. For example, as middle leaders, they have proven themselves as successful and passionate teachers in their curriculum areas. As inspiring and influential leaders of their faculties, they also play a crucial role in discussing and implementing new strategies at a managerial level along with the senior management team. My observations they were also involved in other areas of the school community such as helping with extracurricular activities. Anecdotal student opinion from the playground

and conversations with ākonga lead me to conclude they were respected and rated highly by most of the student body because they displayed enthusiasm and passion for their subjects and were motivated and compassionate towards their learners.

The criteria for selecting a teacher in this inaugural whānau class was detailed in Chapters 1 and 3. Teachers from the specific core curriculum subjects (maths, English, science, social studies, physical education, and health) were hand-picked by the deputy principal (line manager for the whānau class) and the whānau class form teacher. These kaiako had previously promoted and were committed to CRP. This may lead others to question the suitability of the two successful kaiako as they were valued and respected as successful teachers. An outsider reading and critiquing this study may believe that their skills may skew the kaiako data due to their long teaching experience and confidence in CRP. Therefore, this could result in only cheerful, affirmative voices being discussed in the interviews in this thesis. As the researcher, I believe it does the opposite and strengthens and justifies their provided data because it provides further evidence that CRP is successful and achievable to implement in all classrooms across Aotearoa. Even though the kaiako results are from effective teachers of CRP who are critical and reflective about their practices, it enables and provides valuable evidence and explanation of what teachers should and should not be doing for their Māori learners in an English-medium secondary school.

The two kaupapa Māori research principles of ako and tino rangatiratanga were used as a framework to analyse the data. As explained in Chapter 3, ako refers to cultural pedagogy and tino rangatiratanga refers to self-determination. A similar pragmatic analysis of the ākonga data was used to interpret the individual teachers' experiences in this real-life whānau class context. During the data analysis, coding, axial coding, and categories of similar phenomena were used to identify the key themes. Cleary, kaiako have a different role in the whānau class from learners. However, both groups could be considered as learners. Due to the distinct nature and role of the kaiako, the emerging themes were different from the ākonga data previously discussed in Chapter 4. As coding and data analysis progressed, the following four themes emerged: the need for positive relationships and caring for students, how they dealt with challenges of being a teacher, creating a safe environment for their Māori learners, and effective

leadership. Pseudonyms Kaiako 1, 2 (K1, K2) are used for the teachers to protect confidentiality.

5.2 The need to establish positive relationships

5.2.1 The importance of building positive relationships

There are several different types of positive relationships a learner develops during their time at secondary school with their teachers, coaches, tutor teachers, and school leaders. These include learning-focused relationships, which are about maximising the significant potential in the teacher–student relationship to maximise the student's engagement with learning (Bevan-Brown, 2005). The presence of a learning-focused relationship has been shown to positively impact students' emotional wellbeing, social skills, and interest in learning (Bird & Sultmann, 2010). A relationship of trust is another type (Snow et al., 2000). During their time at high school, these multiple and often fragile relationships can impact students' academic achievement. Bird and Sultmann (2010) maintain that positive relationships are vital between students, staff and parents as everyone is able to learn, interact, improve wellbeing and build strong learning communities. Thus, providing a foundation for the exchanging of values, skills, knowledge, and skills amongst one another to develop, learn and grow.

In this study, both kaiako participants continually emphasised the importance of their role as teachers in establishing, fostering, and having caring and empathetic relationships with their students. They believed it helped with ākonga learning and understanding by having positive connections and relationships with them. Their views were consistent with Bishop et al. (2014), who noted that "caring relationships are seen when teachers demonstratable care for Māori students as culturally positioned people in ways that Māori students can understand" (p. 191).

The kaiako acknowledged that positive relationship building with their students took time and much effort on their behalf; for example, getting to know an individual's background and preferred learning method. At the time of data collection, the kaiako were into their second year of teaching many of the students from the whānau class. Thus, both kaiako felt that teaching them in the second year made things a lot easier for them in the classroom with both behaviour management and knowing the learners. They believed this was due to the positive relationships they had developed with the students, which took effort, time, consistency, and commitment; however, the reward

was invaluable as it created a classroom environment that was fair, honest, and productive for students to achieve so that they could reach their full potential.

5.2.2 Understanding ākonga reference points (background)

Teachers in the interviews firmly believed in the need to understand and appreciate ākonga sociocultural backgrounds. This is consistent with the work of Rychly and Graves (2012) who pointed out four essential characteristics that should be in a culturally responsive teacher: caring about students, approaching students empathically, being aware of their cultural reference points, and having cultural knowledge of cultural responsiveness. Villegas and Lucas (2002) note that culturally responsive teachers should have competencies such as being socio-culturally conscious as it makes students feel valued and their background and cultural identity acknowledged and respected. The following comments reinforce the importance and significance of the nature of the relationships formed by these kaiako:

> K1: *It took time to understand the nature of the class and appreciate all the differences… there felt an aura of deeper relationships being formed amongst the students and less deep-seated tension between them compared to other mainstream classes. There were deeper relationships at the heart of the class.*
>
> K2: *It was so good in the second year because I had built relationships with the students, I knew what they liked and strategies to use. I wanted to make sure they felt like they belonged and were cared for in my class.*

Spending the time and trying to get to know the sociocultural backgrounds of the ākonga helped kaiako connect with them. For example, the kaiako made family connections with the students' older/younger siblings or cousins that they taught. Kaiako 1 alluded to their priority of valuing, asking, and learning about their backgrounds and any association with other past and present students:

> *It is important to have different relationships with different students and use community connections to build and develop these by making an effort to go as deep as you can make it with them. But at the same time, not being a "friend." Having a professional student–teacher relationship as we are the adults in the room.*

As previously mentioned in Chapter 2, Bishop et al. (2009) highlighted six key characteristics and attributes of effective teachers of Māori students. The two

characteristics and attributes that affirm the findings of kaiako data from this research are wānanga – engaging in effective learning interactions with Māori students and ngā whakapiringatanga – creating a secure and well-managed learning environment. Knowing who the students were and where they come from and ensuring a safe and secure classroom were top priorities for these two kaiako.

5.2.3 Having a culture of manaakitanga with the students

An element of understanding ākonga cultural backgrounds was of critical importance to the cultural value of manaakitanga. In this context, manaakitanga – caring for students as Māori (Bishop et al., 2009). When the kaiako displays this cultural value, it establishes common learning goals and outcomes between teacher and student. Thus, it enhances trust, openness, and power-sharing values in the class where the student's culture is acknowledged (Webber et al., 2016).

According to Berryman and Eley (2017), enhancing this significant cultural value can affect students' learning and education, and support students to improve their results. According to Hargreaves (2005), "good teachers are not just well-oiled machines…they are emotional, passionate beings who fill their work and their classes with pleasure, creativity, challenge, and joy" (p. 279).

Kaiako in this study identified a range of situations and examples where they were creative, passionate, and challenged themselves to implement new te ao Māori topics to make learning interactive and dialogic for the students in the whānau class.

> K1: *I used student agency and voice to determine what topic an English thematic study would be taught.*

This finding links with Bevan-Brown's (2005) recommendation that instruction and assessment must utilise culturally preferred learning methods to support gifted Māori students. Furthermore, Rubie et al.'s (2004) study emphasised the importance of teachers employing culturally relevant cooperative learning strategies in their pedagogy to result in a range of positive outcomes for Māori students.

5.3 The challenges encountered with being a new class

There will always be areas of concern and room for improvement with any new educational initiative. The first challenge the kaiako faced was some of the students'

negative and disruptive behaviour, a legacy of their previous experiences. Secondly, it was the first time a class of this nature had been created and an opportunity to do things differently by changing the content of the curriculum.

5.3.1 The challenge of disruptive and negative behaviour

One such challenge with this whānau class identified by one kaiako and some of the ākonga was students' negative and disruptive behaviour. Challenging behaviour in children and adolescents stems from a range of environmental and genetic factors and is complex (Browne, 2013). The intricacies and reasons for ākonga displaying off-task behaviour can be attributed in part to their previous negative schooling experiences; hence, the need to create this whānau class. One kaiako commented:

> *That sometimes it was tough for the top academic kids in the class because of specific individuals' disruptive, negative behaviour. I often felt sad that these top-end academic students were missing out and disadvantaged at times.*

To address the negative impacts of disruptive behaviour on those behaving well is a challenge. In the future, a strategy (mentioned in Chapter 4) could be implementing an evidence-based behaviour management strategy with a kaupapa Māori focus. For example, having a set of positive and negative consequences for behaviour. It could be co-constructed with students and kaiako so both parties could collaboratively discuss, create, and plan a strategy to address these behavioural issues. Students will then know the required expectations and consequences and hopefully take more ownership over the behaviour management strategy and its application to the classroom environment. Studies conducted by Thomson (2010) reinforce the value and importance of having students involved in new initiatives so that their voice is heard and valued when implementing change processes in the school. Thomson (2010) noted that, "children and young people are 'expert witnesses' to their lives and can provide unique perspectives on and reasons for, and models of educational change" (p. 810).

In addition, if all the subject teachers of the whānau class used a behaviour management strategy alongside effective practical and positive reinforcement methods, it would strengthen a positive learning environment to eliminate some negative issues, such as inappropriate behaviour. The students would seamlessly

transition between the different classes and teachers by reinforcing consistent expectations regardless of the classroom. Thus, one of the key strategies for ETP from Te Kotahitanga and Starpath research is that ākonga must have mana motuhake – high expectations of their Māori students' ability to achieve. However, there is also evidence that teachers holding high expectations is not enough in itself to lead to student academic success (Rubie et al., 2004). Teachers need to show, guide, and students set realistic and achievable goals. For example, creating individual education plans to monitor and track their NCEA credit achievements could be one strategy to help them refocus and change their negative behaviours.

According to Dad et al. (2010), to modify a student's behaviour, a teacher must use a combination of positive reinforcement to acknowledge desired behaviour and consequences for undesired behaviour. This is a practical and achievable strategy for the whānau class teachers to implement. Thus, the students will have a clearer and more specific guideline to understand and follow regardless of the teacher or class they are learning in. This complements the research conducted by Luiselli et al. (2005) who noted, "by virtue of reducing discipline problems, teachers can devote more time to instruction and other learning opportunities that maximise educational progress" (p. 16).

5.3.2 Challenges of establishing a culturally responsive whānau class

One of the biggest challenges overall for the establishment of the whānau class was that it was a new venture for ākonga, teachers, and the school, and while there was some support material available (e.g., Te Kotahitanga), much of that research focused on teachers. While the teachers were very experienced and curriculum leaders, they had not taught in whānau classes previously. The teachers explained the varying challenges they faced, both positive and negative, and were open, honest, and reflective about why these challenges occurred. This opened a vast dialogue of the "could" or "could nots" when teaching this class, the Kaiako identified various effective strategies that should be implemented. Bearing this in mind and understanding that any new initiative implemented in a school requires time, energy to assess, reflect, and make quality changes for improvements to happen. Hargreaves's (2005) literature on educational change also reinforces the complexities of implementing a new

programme in schools, referring to it as turbulent, complex, and multidimensional. Examples of the first-time challenges faced by the kaiako were:

> K1: *It was challenging to begin with, as it was the first time, but I immediately felt that it was the right move as it felt safer.*
>
> K2: *It was not easy at the start, but rewarding... when it was amazing, it was amazing, but when it was bad, it was bad.*

These comments are reinforced by Fink and Stoll's (2005) research on implementing change. Teachers are constantly bombarded with many changes in all secondary schools due to a changing technological and global world, government requirements, new programmes, and policies from the senior leadership team (Fink & Stoll, 2005). However, if all the whānau teachers work collegially to address these issues, they can then use the evidence to plan a solution and strategies to move forward, resulting in school improvement and success (Shah, 2012). This will in turn enable teachers to concentrate on the more favourable facets of teaching that Hargreaves mentions above.

5.3.3 The opportunity to change the curriculum content

Another positive and recurrent theme in the kaiako interviews was the freedom to try new things in the classroom, for example, a te ao Māori focused unit on science about māra kai. The kaiako used te ao Māori contexts, themes, and resources to deliver their curricula. Again, it was being able to *change it up* and use various measures of success and assessments that helped with the students' focus and engagement. This supports the idea of adaptive expertise, meaning teachers who can be adaptable to their students' interests and learning needs (Kiro et al., 2016).

An example of Kaiako 1 '*changing it up'*, was implementing a new unit standard assessment for the first time that focused on traditional Māori methods helped ākonga be more engaged in the topic. Following are kaiako comments about their adaptive expertise experiences:

> K1: *I didn't feel pressured to rush through the curriculum/content; we tried to do things differently. I held a more holistic/long-term view of their education. As there*

was a range of abilities in the class, I feel certain students felt a lot more comfortable being mentored in this environment.

K2: *My pedagogy had to change, making me a better teacher...I used more student agency, listening to what they wanted and adapting the curriculum using students' voices. I listened to them and the topics they wanted to research, and I was happy to go with what the students wanted.*

Making curriculum changes to include more te ao Māori topics is an essential attribute of a Te Kotahitanga ETP (Bishop et al., 2009). Using student voices to discuss themes and relevant content that ākonga can relate to is a powerful tool to help with engagement and learner success. As a result, students will be more attentive when learning the topic as they are interested in it and can relate to it. According to Berryman and Eley (2017), when co-construction of knowledge, activities, or interactions occurs between teachers and students, it can lead to positive results. A power-sharing strategy and model that values student knowledge and contribution are implemented, and the teacher will not be seen as an authoritarian with all the knowledge.

The evidence from this study reinforces that these teachers were passionate and determined to implement successful organisational and cultural changes. However, it will require time, conversations with colleagues, and adaptations of behaviour management strategies. In continuing to aim for successful and sustainable outcomes for the whānau classes, the goal for the future is to address the challenges kaiako encountered to ensure that the teachers continue growing, developing, and learning alongside the whānau classes.

5.3.4 Creating a safe environment for ākonga

Another challenge of establishing a whānau class based on CRP was creating a culturally safe environment. This includes pedagogical and sociocultural factors that are mana enhancing for students and reinforces that all school systems such as timetabling, classroom environment, activities, and events have an environment that encompasses a culture of caring.

5.4 Pedagogical challenges: Demonstrating ako

In the kaiako interviews, *providing a safe learning environment* was prevalent in terms of the goals of the whānau class. This reinforces that for these whānau class teachers,

the KMR principle of ako was present in their pedagogy. These kaiako provided positive lived experiences and evidence of demonstrating ako to their Māori students. An example of this was the kaiako implementing more te reo Māori in their lessons as they were not fluent te reo speakers or of Māori descent. They positioned themselves as learners of the language alongside the students.

Furthermore, as a result, kaiako did not feel any fear in doing so because of the relationships formed. On the contrary, by caring for the students, they wanted to empower them by planning and using various interactions and strategies with open dialogue and support (Berryman & Eley 2017). Kaiako 1 explained the challenge of speaking more te reo Māori:

> *I tried to use as much as I could. I'm not good at languages, I stumbled my way through it, but I felt that I had no fear in front of the students because of the relationship we had.*

Creating a safe learning environment in their classroom was critical for kaiako. The kaiako felt that the learners would be more engaged, respectful to their peers, and motivated to attend school if this was achieved. This links to the need for positive relationships (whanaungatanga) and reinforcing the inter-connectedness of these sociocultural elements:

> K1: *I wanted all the students to feel safer. I felt that if a few of the students had not had that nurturing or safe environment that they were in, they might not be still in school now. It is generationally better for them and their whanau. They are going to be more positive with their children coming through school if they've had a safe time in school.*

> K2: *Having rules and routines, taking away any barriers to their learning, so there are no battles.*

Ensuring students felt secure and comfortable helped the kaiako continue developing positive relationships with their students. There is a strong link between the class environment and positive behaviour (Luiselli et al., 2005). Furthermore, there has been increasing evidence that dealing with social and emotional issues is integral to learning and integral to the learning environment's effectiveness (Roffey, 2010; Spratt et al., 2006). One could argue that creating this safe environment was relatively easy for this

kaiako, because of their significant years of teaching experience. As a result, they were confident and had the knowledge and skills compared to a beginning teacher.

5.4.1 Cultural challenges

Poor interactions between the learner and other stakeholders may be detrimental to a student's learning (Rubie et al., 2004). For example, if students have poor interactions with their teacher, they are less likely to involve themselves in the lesson activities (Cullen & Monroe, 2010; Grove, 2004). This may result in poor retention of the information presented in class, leading to poor test results. Therefore, it is vital that teachers "create culturally-safe schools – places that allow and enable students to be who and what they are" (Macfarlane et al., 2007, p. 65).

The data from this study demonstrated that kaiako prioritised creating a safe cultural environment in their classroom. The goal was to make the students feel comfortable as individuals to be themselves and *be in a safe environment to grow.* Thus, reinforcing the importance of implementing the Ka Hikitia strategy, stating that schools and teachers must "ensure the *Tātaiako* cultural competencies (*wānanga, whānaungatanga, manaakitanga, tangata whenuatanga*, and *ako*) are embedded in teaching and school practice" (Hynds et al., 2016, p. 39).

Kaiako 1 provided an excellent example of this growth and awareness when they initiated the practice of reciting a karakia at the beginning of lessons. It was the first time this kaiako had done this, and it was part of a new te ao Māori unit and assessment they were studying. Initially, only three of the students joined them reciting the karakia aloud; however, by the end of the unit, all students joined in and spoke confidently.

Although it took some time for all the students to embrace the new kaupapa, Kaiako 1 commented that it was one of their best teaching moments to date. This example reinforces the ambition of one of the Starpath recommendations "to improve culturally responsive pedagogy and normalise the Māori language, culture, and identity" (Webber et al., 2016, p. 46).

5.4.2 The impact of leadership

The final theme from the kaiako data analysis in terms of factors that contributed to the effectiveness of this whānau class, was the recognition and impact that positive leadership can have in all areas of school life, not just in the classroom. Most notably was the kaiako role and responsibilities as head of faculties. Kaiako also noted the influence and impact of the school structure, systems, and senior management leadership team on the whānau class. According to Hohepa and Robson (2008), "educational leadership has been identified as a critical factor in raising achievement, particularly among Indigenous and other minoritised students" (p. 21).

From the kaiako interviews, this theme emerged in response to why they chose to teach the whānau class and how it supported Māori students to succeed as Māori. Both kaiako believed that being a role model was necessary for their departments and colleagues as heads of faculties as they were leading by example. This action supports the findings of Ford (2013), where a culturally responsive leader not only facilitated relationships, but also fostered cultural practices within the whole school.

The Te Kotahitanga research also reinforced the need for leaders to support their teachers in implementing successful programmes and making positive changes for Māori learners (Bishop et al., 2009). A competent and active leadership model in schools needs to support learner agency, become regularised, and be designated in all systems (Bishop et al., 2012.) Both interviewees referred to this theme as the primary reason they chose to teach the class:

> *K1: To lead by example for other teachers in their departments and provide a calm and safe learning environment.*
>
> *K1: I felt like I needed to be leading role modelling. I had the confidence and wanted the initiative to be a success, and if I didn't put my hand up, it might not have longevity.*
>
> K2: *As a HOF, it is important to lead by example, we need to build capacity, and I wanted to do it…. having the support from the deans and senior leadership team.*

Regarding strategies to improve in areas of leadership, one topic discussed by Kaiako 2 was that:

It would be good to get more support from the senior leadership team, especially concerning tikanga professional development. For example, how to teach it and what that looks like in our classrooms … so we have the opportunity to do it and use it more.

Have more regular hui with all the teachers of the whānau class to discuss direction, what and why we are doing it.

We need to continue to promote the sense of pride to be Māori and make it more present within all areas of the school.

According to Hohepa and Robson (2008), effective leadership that emerged from the Ministry's best evidence synthesis analysis reinforces that improving and engaging in teacher learning and development is required to be linked to enhancing Māori student outcomes. This also links to one of the kaiako's suggestions for the need for more tikanga professional development and regular hui with all whānau class teachers to focus on direction and to be able to work and plan work, topics, and strategies together collegially. According to Robinson and Timperley (2007), teachers must meet regularly to discuss, collaborate, and co-construct any issues, challenges and planning of topics. These constructive conversations are a successful method to improve their teaching and promote reciprocated support during the challenging change process.

In my experience, English-medium schools are cemented in hierarchal leadership models that determine and influence all facets of school life. For example, the organisation of the school timetable, how departments are structured, and school activities and events. These organisational practices reinforce Anne Milne's (2017) point mentioned in Chapter 2 about schools being "White spaces" and that schools in Aotearoa cannot make changes that benefit "non-White" students. A key factor in addressing this hegemonic discourse for an effective leader is to "walk the talk". This study showed that these kaiako are doing this by taking up the wero, teaching these whānau classes, and role modelling CRP. However, the leaders in this study needed support and guidance, and they acknowledged that creating positive changes in schools is a team effort and cannot be done solo (Shah, 2012).

The analysis of data in this chapter indicates that the kaiako voice, experiences, and viewpoints, alongside the ākonga data, provide essential insights into the role a

whānau class has in encouraging and promoting Māori student engagement success at secondary school. It highlights the positives, challenges, and current systems and what can be done to continue striving for Māori student educational excellence in the future. According to Whitinui (2004), “the balance between culture and education perhaps suggests that schools and teachers need to be better informed about what Māori value in education, and why, and to work towards a more educationally cultured pathway” (p. 90).

Chapter 6 follows and is the conclusion. Key findings from this research study are identified and explained, and limitations and strengths of this study and recommendations for future research are described.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Rukuhia te wāhi ngaro, hei māngai tātai whetū

Explore the unknown, pursue excellence – Sir Paul Reeves

This final whakataukī resonates with me because the kaiako and ākonga of this whānau class are still exploring, learning, and discovering. Some mistakes have been made, lessons have been learnt, problems solved, challenges faced, and improvements, accomplishments, achievements, and successes achieved. However, there is still a lot more to do to continue to strive for Māori achieving success as Māori in our secondary schools so they can pursue excellence.

6.1 Introduction

This study aimed to investigate ākonga participation in a whānau class and the characteristics of the class that contributed to their educational success. This whānau class was nested in an English-medium secondary school in Aotearoa. Success and achievement in the context of this study were defined not only in terms of academic success, but more broadly, including sociocultural factors such as cultural identity, belonging, and relationships. The whānau class was created as a strategy to address historical Māori student underachievement in the school by creating a learning environment that enhanced ākonga culture and identity. The ākonga coalesce for all their compulsory subjects and extracurricular activities. These sorts of whānau/homeroom initiatives have been operating for decades. However, minimal research has been done on their efficacy, and there has been considerable development over the last 10 years of CRP in Aotearoa.

The study investigated student perspectives on how the whānau class encouraged and responded to their self-identity as Māori. Furthermore, one of the aims of the whānau class was to provide additional time in the school day to teach and promote tikanga and te ao Māori. Therefore, it was essential to investigate whether the cultural goals were achieved in the whānau class. As discussed in Chapter 2, research has demonstrated that self-concept, self-esteem, and self-efficacy affect the engagement of Māori students in English-medium schooling. However, only a few studies have

examined the sociocultural psychological factors that affect achievement when participating in a whānau class.

6.2 Whanau class: A sociocultural responsive environment

Special types of classes set-up in mainstream schools to address Māori student underachievement have functioned for decades. The rationale for setting these classes up varies from school to school. However, initially, they were set-up as remedial classrooms for students who perhaps did not test well on entry, or special classrooms for students whose behaviour was too disruptive for the "normal classes". The net effect of these interventions had minimal positive outcomes for Māori students' "successes". Research over the past 20 years or so has focused on the need to address the systemic racial inequalities, structures, and assimilationist norms of English-medium schooling. Various initiatives such as Te Kotahitanga have had some success, but inequalities persist because structural issues remain. One of the solutions to improving academic engagement and social-emotional wellbeing has been to create whānau classes to create an environment that focuses on students' development and connectedness to their ethnic identity and whanaungatanga. The results of this study have demonstrated the merit of this whānau class. The following discussion explains why.

6.2.1 Enjoyment and emotional wellbeing

Students enjoyed being involved in the whānau class. They enjoyed being with other Māori students in and outside the classroom. It did not matter if their peers were their close friends or relatives. While enjoyment itself does not guarantee educational success, enjoyment and happiness positively affects learning, memory, and social behaviour. Therefore, enjoyment is an indispensable element of a balanced life. This is extremely important because being in harmony means feeling safe, valued, and a necessary part of whānau, which is also the case when in a learning community. Enjoyment creates a community, a whānau, but it also evokes positive memories and makes them stronger.

6.2.2 The concept of whanaungatanga

Connected to wellbeing and enjoying being with peers was the development of whanaungatanga. This concept was supported by both the ākonga and kaiako participants who regarded it as a crucial component of success. The commonalities

they shared through their Māori socialised cultural connections was a favourable factor that increased their enjoyment of being a member of the class. There was a significant role and vital need for interconnections and relationships between the school, whānau, hapū, and iwi. Schools alone cannot create this. Having a whānau class provided a natural setting for this to happen and had the support of the local iwi. Establishing the crucial links for the school to work with and beside local iwi. Resulted in more inclusion and incorporation of the iwi's cultural knowledge and values into the school environment. Relationships and connections are central to Māori and Māori wellbeing. Whanaungatanga is about forming and maintaining relationships and strengthening ties between peers and communities. This value is the essential glue that binds students, teachers, and community together, providing the foundation for a sense of unity, belonging and cohesion

6.2.3 Te Aō Māori focus: Cultural identity

Students affirmed that the programme supported the development of their cultural identity. Having ako evident in the classroom learning environment was another key theme that emerged. Ākonga identified and recognised that their kaiako were there to help and support them in whatever aspect they needed. The kaiako went out of their way to ensure they understood, learnt, and progressed. The whānau class also reinforced and promoted positive Māori cultural identity and connections. This was achieved through different learning opportunities with a te ao Māori focus both in and outside the classroom. Ākonga acknowledged that they would not have got these different experiences had they remained in the mainstream homeroom classes. The whānau class also reinforced and promoted positive Māori cultural identity and connections.

Being a member of this class made ākonga feel proud to be Māori, and the kaiako supported and encouraged them to experience these feelings of positive cultural identity. Participating in kapa haka was the main activity that promoted this positive cultural identity, alongside speaking te reo Māori, daily whānau hui, singing waiata and saying karakia. Once again, the theme of engaging in extracurricular activities and experiences was another important factor that contributed to the success of this whānau class.

6.2.4 Culturally responsive teacher workforce

Culture is a complex phenomenon that includes changing worldviews, knowledge, values, traditions, beliefs, capabilities, and social and political relationships of a group of people that give meaning to and influence their life and actions. This means that culture goes beyond visible and tangible aspects, such as including more implicit behaviours with social roles, behaviours, communication, and beliefs. Many schools and teachers struggle to engage students from cultural backgrounds (such as Māori) that differ from the dominant culture represented in mainstream schools. Therefore, as evidenced in this programme, a committed and well-informed teacher workforce is needed for effective change to happen in a school. Kaiako behaviour, attitudes, and practices directly influence and impact Māori learners. Having ako evident in the classroom learning environment was another key theme that emerged. Ākonga identified and recognised that their kaiako were there to help and support them in whatever aspect they needed. The teachers went out of their way to ensure that students understood, learnt, and progressed.

6.2.5 Community learning support

This whānau class benefited from the support of an external agency (the local iwi), that supported the school and their Māori students. Having the Te Ara Rangitahi Trust working with the school, enabled further resources, knowledge, experience, and opportunities that the school does not have and cannot facilitate by themselves. A working relationship with this group is beneficial to both parties to help facilitate and improve the lives of Māori students.

6.2.6 The educational success of ākonga

This outcome produced mixed results from both ākonga and kaiako. Kaiako identified several factors that require improvement considering significant challenges that were identified. Although most of the students felt their learning and understanding of the curriculum had improved whilst being a member of this whānau class, three out of the seven were undecided. Their feedback, combined with kaiako, included suggested changes and strategies that could be implemented in the future. Challenges included students' off-task and disruptive behaviour and the effective implementation of manaakitanga in the classroom and amongst the teaching staff, including senior management.

In summary, these factors cannot occur in isolation from each other. They require an inter-connectedness of all the factors working systemically together. For successful change to happen, it is linked to both intrinsic and extrinsic factors in and outside a school, working alongside together. It requires a school system to be better at being interrelated and all systems working cohesively simultaneously. All these factors have their unique importance, but they are more effective if they all come together and work simultaneously. Everything and everyone need to work together to improve the lives of our Māori students at English-medium secondary schools.

6.3 Study limitations

This is a case study, so it is difficult for the outcomes to be applied to other contexts and schools. However, in theory, the conclusions reached in this study could be applied to other English-medium secondary schools.

The lengthy COVID-19 lockdown that Auckland schools experienced, which resulted in lower student participation numbers in the study is another limitation. Many students did not return to school after the lockdown so were not available to be interviewed. If they did, it was only for random days and hours depending on their academic requirements to achieve Level 1 NCEA. Therefore, it made it difficult to contact the students and gain their interest and participation in the study. The original intention was for all 20 class members to partake in the survey. More students would have resulted in a more significant catchment and a more comprehensive range of student voices. However, I was thankful that seven completed the survey, given the difficulties and interruptions the students experienced during this time. The original intention was to interview four students, and I was fortunate that three additional students volunteered.

As I am a schoolteacher, confidentiality and anonymity were always at the forefront of the data collection process. Therefore, the survey data was anonymous. However, the interview data could be viewed as being skewed. Both the ākonga and kaiako participants may have felt pressured to voice only positive answers and not be honest where they feared their comment could be perceived as unfavourable and potentially jeopardise their relationship with me. On reflection, I do not feel this was the case, as both parties gave a mixture of answers during their interviews. Nevertheless, it is essential to acknowledge that our relationships could impact the research.

The use of in-depth interviews also has some recognised limitations. One-to-one interviews provide no opportunity for feedback or input from others (Hennink et al., 2011). However, it was the most appropriate method for this research and participants were consulted via email regarding the transcripts and outcomes. Preferably a one-to-one consultation regarding the results would also have added to the KMR approach and further increased the study's validity.

In hindsight, it would have been valuable to complete this study with another English-medium secondary school that also had a whānau class. A detailed comparison could have been conducted between the two different schools as it would have provided cross-case results. Additionally, a more significant number of participants would have provided greater external validity due to the possibility of improving the generalisability and reliability of the findings.

6.4 Study strengths

There were several strengths of this study. First, the aim was to complete an informed study about Māori student academic potential, rather than looking at all the student deficit reasons and experiences. Second, the goal was to acknowledge and recognise a new and different programme implemented in an English-medium secondary school. Third, to understand its effectiveness, realise areas of improvement, and share this knowledge back with the school community. This follows kaupapa Māori philosophy of mentoring the next generation and adds more value to participants' contributions as more than just research subjects, but a legacy to improve the educational opportunities of the next generation of Māori.

This research has significant benefits for the school, teachers, and future whānau classes. First, it provided a time, space, and opportunity to collect valuable student and teacher voices about the current system and what changes need to be made to improve. In my experience, teachers are always "time short", so having the time and university support to collect and conduct research was a privilege.

6.5 Future research possibilities

The ssocioeconomic disadvantages that many whānau face may explain academic underachievement for Māori. This is beyond the scope of the current research but must be considered as one of the most significant barriers to the improvement of Māori

student educational outcomes. Societal factors have a considerable influence and impact on school life. It would be interesting to study how, what, and why these influence Māori student success in a whānau class.

Another area this study did not delve into was whānau/parental/guardian engagement and involvement. Researching their voices, opinions, and thoughts on their child's participation in the whānau class would also provide fascinating insights into their understanding of Māori student success. If the research was completed longitudinally over two or three years of being in the whānau class, whānau/parents could identify if any changes or areas of improvement occurred with their child being in the class.

6.6 The need for change

Although statistics on Māori achievement is improving as previously mentioned, the wide gap between Māori and all other ethnicities remain for NCEA results, school leaver, suspension, and stand-down rates. As a result, English-medium secondary schools must try to do something different within their school and community to improve Māori outcomes, such as implementing a whānau class into their school system. In addition, ERO's (2010) action plan identified ways that high-performing secondary schools can successfully engage Māori students in their learning (ERO, 2010).

Providing valuable pastoral care is also a critical factor in helping Māori students succeed in today's classroom. For example, a tutor/homeroom/whānau teacher recognising that a student needs extra awhi or help in their schooling and offering them the appropriate level of assistance will go a long way to making the student feel more included and supported. This will, in turn, help lift their hauora/wellbeing, enhancing their self-related psychological factors, which will hopefully increase their engagement, learning and, achievement at school.

6.7 Recommendations

Ongoing support from the schools' leadership team is required to help the efficacy and function of these whānau classes. By allowing organised hui (meetings) in the school schedule, teachers can meet regularly to address any issues, plan, and discuss pedagogical strategies as a collective to enable constant improvement. Another area of support needed for the teachers is professional development on tikanga, te reo,

CRP, and how to include more te ao Māori topics in core curriculum subjects when and wherever necessary. If teachers want to learn and develop more in these areas, they should be encouraged.

Another recommendation to help with Māori student engagement and success is for English-medium secondary schools to offer a range of te ao Māori options at NCEA Levels 1–3 alongside te reo Māori language subjects. The emergence of te ao haka, kaitiakitanga (environmental studies) and te ao Māori topics provide opportunities for Māori students to learn and engage in a Māori content. The ākonga in this study acknowledged a new, exciting, and growing area within the school timetable. They appreciated that these new subjects are recognised and valued as an academic area that can lead to tertiary courses and studies.

The final recommendation is improved communication and implementation strategies between MOE policies, boards of trustees, schools, and teachers. The MOE produces relevant and informative research and documents involving Māori students, but sadly, these are not transmitted or communicated to schools or teachers. A simple reason may be the financial cost involved when implementing a new strategy. It is disappointing and sad that the knowledge and expertise stop with the report being publicised. There is a breakdown in our current system at the charter level between the Government's policies and initiatives and what happens at the ground level in schools.

Evidence from this study confirms the assertions of the MOE (2019) and Webber and Macfarlane (2020) that identity, culture, and language is critical in the educational success of Māori students. Whānau classes are one way to promote and encourage all the vital factors needed to achieve this success.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Ethics approval letter

UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE (UAHPEC)
24/08/2021

Dr Tony Trinick

Re: Application for Ethics Approval (Our Ref. UAHPEC22161): Approved
The Committee considered your application for ethics approval for the study entitled "**'Te tautoko i ngā ākonga kia angitu' – The role of a Whānau Class in supporting Māori student success.**".

We are pleased to inform you that ethics approval has been granted for a period of three years.
The expiry date for this approval is **24/08/2024**.
Completion of the project: In order that up-to-date records are maintained, you must notify the Committee once your project is
completed.

Amendments to the approved project: Should you need to make any changes to the approved project, please follow the steps
below:
Send a request to the UAHPEC Administrators to unlock the application form (using the Notification tab in the Ethics RM form).
Make all changes to the relevant sections of the application form and attach revised documents (as appropriate).
Change the Application Type to "Amendment request" in Section 13 ("Submissions and Sign off").
Add a summary of the changes requested in the text box.
Submit the amendment request (PI/Supervisors only to submit the form).
If the project changes significantly, you are required to submit a new application.

Funded projects: If you received funding for this project, please provide this approval letter to your local Faculty Research Project
Coordinator (RPC) or Research Project Manager (RPM) so that the approval can be notified via a Service Request to the Research
Operations Centre (ROC) for activation of the grant.
The Chair and the members of UAHPEC would be happy to discuss general matters relating to ethics approvals. If you wish to do so,
please contact the UAHPEC Ethics Administrators at humanethics@auckland.ac.nz in the first instance.

Additional information:
Do not forget to fill in the 'approval wording' on the PISs, CFs and/or advertisements, using the date of this approval and the

reference number, before you use the documents or send them out to your participants. All communications with the UAHPEC regarding this application should indicate this reference number:

UAHPEC22161.
UAHPEC Administrators
University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee
c.c. Dr Sophie Tauwehe Tamati, Miss Amy Lambourne

Appendix 2: Online student survey questions

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORK
TE PUNA WĀNANGA

'Te Tautoko i ngā ākonga kia angitu'

The University of Auckland
Te Puna Wananga
Department of Education & Social Work
Epsom Campus
74 Epsom Ave
Auckland 1023

Project Title: *'Te tautoko i ngā ākonga kia angitu' - The role of a Whānau Class in supporting Māori student success.*

Name of Principal Supervisor: Dr Tony Trinnick
Name of Co-investigator: Dr Sophie Tauwehe Tamati
Name of Student Researcher: Amy Lambourne

Kia ora, thank you for participating in my anonymous survey to collect your opinions about being a student in this Whānau class. I am carrying out this research for my Master of Educational Leadership degree.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 24/8/21 for three years, Reference Number: UAHPEC 22161

1.I enjoy being in the Whānau Class.
(1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

1
2
3
4
5

2. Being in the Whānau Class supports my learning in subjects.
(1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

1
2
3
4
5

3.Being in the Whānau Class improves my curriculum level results.
(1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

1
2
3
4
5

4.Being in this Whānau Class makes me feel proud to be Māori?
(1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

1
2
3
4
5

5. As a student in the Whānau Class, I'm supported and encouraged by my teachers.

1
2
3
4
5

6.Would you recommend this class to other Māori students?

1
2
3
4
5

7.Why did you join this class? *(You can tick multiple answers)*

☐ The teachers

- [ ] To be with other Māori students
- [ ] To be in a Te Ao Māori learning environment
- [ ] To engage in activities about Te Ao Māori.
- [ ] To engage in Māori cultural experiences
- [ ] To engage in kapa haka
- [ ] All the Above
- [ ] (Please write your comments in the text box below)
- [ ]

8. In what ways do your Whānau Class teachers support and encourage your being Māori? *(You can tick multiple answers.)*

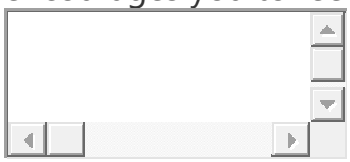
- [ ] Using Te Reo Māori (Māori language)
- [ ] Correct pronunciation of Te Reo Māori
- [ ] Using activities that are about Te Ao Māori
- [ ] Creating a learning environment with a Te Ao Māori focus
- [ ] All the above
- [ ] None of the above
- [ ] Other (Please write your comments in the text box below)
- [ ]

9.What benefits have you experienced as a student in the Whānau Class? *(You can tick multiple answers.)*

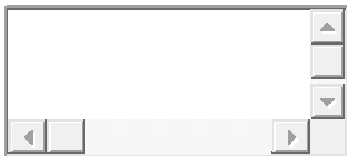
- [ ] The teachers
- [ ] Being with other Māori students
- [ ] Being in a Te Ao Māori learning environment
- [ ] Engaging in activities about Te Ao Māori.
- [ ] Engage in Māori cultural experiences
- [ ] Engaging in Kapa Haka
- [ ] Feeling proud to be Māori
- [ ] All the Above
- [ ] None of the Above
- [ ] Other (Please write your comments in the text box below)
- [ ]

10.Describe what it is like for you to be a student in the Whānau Class?

11. As a student in the Whānau Class, describe how the environment encourages you to feel proud to be Māori?

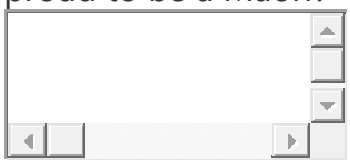


12.What change(s) would you suggest improving your learning in the Whānau Class?

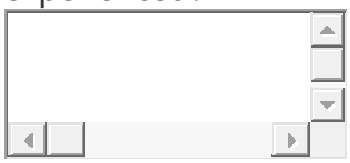


13.What change(s) would you suggest supporting your Māori identity the Whānau Class?

14.What event(s)/experience(s)are provided by the school make you feel proud to be a Māori?



15.As a student in the Whānau Class, describe any negative factors you have experienced?



16.Please write any other comment(s) below:

Submit

Appendix 3: Interview questions

Student interview questions

The following were the **student interview** questions:

1. 1.How would you describe your experiences as a student in the Akoranga whānau class?
2. 2.What does Māori identity mean to you and how has it been acknowledged in your classes?
3. 3.How has this class supported you to achieve success as Māori?
4. 4.How has this class helped to support your academic achievement?
5. 5.What new strategies would you suggest improving the learning and success of Māori students in the Akoranga whānau class?
6. 6.What can the teachers/school do to encourage more tikanga Māori in the school?

Teacher interview questions:

The following were the **student interview** questions:

1. Describe your experiences as a teacher of the Akoranga whānau Class?
2. Why did you choose to teach in the Akoranga whānau class?
3. What strategies do you use in the classroom to teach/promote Māori culture/tikanga?
4. Is your teaching experience in the Akoranga whānau class different from your teaching in other classes?
5. Would you recommend this class to other secondary schools to have for their Māori students? Why?
6. How does this class support Māori students to achieve success as Māori?

Appendix 4: Participant Information Sheets

Te Puna Wananga
Department of Education & Social Work
Epsom Campus
74 Epsom Ave
Auckland 1023

Project Title: *'Te tautoko i ngā ākonga kia angitu' - The role of a Whānau Class in supporting Māori student success.*

Name of Principal Supervisor: Dr Tony Trinnick
Name of Co-investigator: Dr Sophie Tauwehe Tamati
Name of Student Researcher: Amy Lambourne

STUDENT INTERVIEWS PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Researcher Introduction - Who am I?

Kia ora, my name is Amy Lambourne, and I am a Masters student in the Educational Leadership programme in Te Puna Wānanga School of Māori and Indigenous Education, Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Auckland. I am carrying out this research to complete my Master of Educational Leadership degree.
I am writing to invite you to take part in this research. Please read the following information before deciding whether you would/would not like to take part.

What is the aim of the project?

This project is examining how the Akoranga Whānau Class at Waiuku College supports student success, not just academic but also factors such as Māori identity, the sense of belonging and relationships. I would like to interview you to get your opinions and viewpoints about being a student in this class. Your participation in this interview is voluntary and every effort will be taken to ensure that your participation will be anonymous and confidential. Your participation will help me to make recommendations for future the Whānau Class and other classes of this type. My research will also be of benefit to future students of the Whānau Class at Waiuku College. This research has been approved by the University of Auckland Human Ethics Committee on 24/8/21 the application reference number is UAHPEC 22161.

Project Procedures – What is involved?

You have been invited to participate in this research because your name was randomly selected from all the students who participated in the electronic survey. If you agree to be interviewed by me, I will facilitate the interview at school during school hours in a designated classroom.

- We will be the only two people in the room.
- I will ask you six questions about how your being in the Whānau class supports your success in learning, achievement, and with your Māori identity.
- The interview will be semi-structured format which means that after I ask the questions, I may also use prompts to help you explain your responses.
- The interview will take approximately 20 minutes.
- I will audio record the interview and I will transcribe the key points.
- At any time during the interview, you can choose not to respond a question or stop the interview at any time without giving a reason. You can also ask to have the audio recorder stopped briefly for any reason.
- You will receive a copy of the key points soon after your interview and you will have one week to read the transcription and make any changes. You will be able to make corrections, deletions and have additional details added.
- If you could please sign the transcription as this confirms your approval of your interview answers and return it in an envelope with my name on it by handing it in at the school office.
- If you return the transcript without any comments or changes it will be understood that you agree with your comments and that they are true and correct.
- The principal has given his assurance that there will be no impact or repercussion for you as a participant at school.
- You can withdraw from the research study by contacting me by email at any time before 4th December 2021.

What will happen to the information you give?

Every effort will be taken to ensure that your participation will be anonymous and confidential. You will be given a pseudonym (different name) of your choosing if you like. However, you should be aware that in small projects like this, your anonymity cannot be completely guaranteed, and your identity may become known to others in your community. The interview transcripts, summaries and all recordings will be kept in secure storage and destroyed on 24/8/2027.

What will the project produce?

The information from this research will be used to inform the writing of my Master's thesis.

If you accept this invitation, what are your rights as a research participant?

If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- choose not to answer any question.
- ask for the audio recorder to be turned off briefly at any time during the interview
- withdraw from the study before 4th December 2021.
- ask any questions about the study at any time.
- read over and comment on the key points of your interview.

If you have any questions or concerns, who can you contact?

If you have any questions, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:

Student:
Name: Amy Lambourne
Email address:
alam039@aucklanduni.ac.nz

Supervisor:
Name: Tony Trinick
Role: Associate Professor
School: *Te Puna Wānanga: School of Māori and Indigenous Education*
Email: t.trinick@auckland.ac.nz

Co-Supervisor:
Name: Dr Sophie Tauwehe Tamati
Role: Senior Lecturer
School: *Te Puna Wānanga: School of Māori and Indigenous Education*
Email: t.tamati@auckland.ac.nz

Human Ethics Committee information

For any queries regarding ethical concerns, you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, Office of Research Strategy and Integrity, The University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 ext. 83711. Email: humanethics@auckland.ac.nz

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 24/8/2021 for three years, Reference Number: **UAHPEC22161**

Te Puna Wananga
Department of Education & Social Work
Epsom Campus
74 Epsom Ave
Auckland 1023

Project Title: *'Te tautoko i ngā ākonga kia angitu' - The role of a Whānau Class in supporting Māori student success.*

Name of Principal Supervisor: Dr Tony Trinnick
Name of Co-investigator: Dr Sophie Tauwehe Tamati
Name of Student Researcher: Amy Lambourne

TEACHER PARTICIPANT INTERVIEWS INFORMATION SHEET

Researcher Introduction - Who am I?

Kia ora, my name is Amy Lambourne, and I am a Masters student in the Educational Leadership programme in Te Puna Wānanga School of Māori and Indigenous Education, Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Auckland. I am carrying out this research to complete my Master of Education Leadership degree.
I am writing to invite you to take part in this research. Please read the following information before deciding whether you would/would not like to take part.

What is the aim of the project?

This project is examining how the Whānau Class at Waiuku College supports student success, not just academic but also factors such as Māori identity, the sense of belonging and relationships. I would like to interview you to get your opinions and viewpoints about being a teacher of this class. Your participation in this interview is voluntary and every effort will be taken to ensure that your participation will be anonymous and confidential. Your participation will help me to make recommendations for future the Whānau Class and other classes of this type. My research will also benefit future students of the Whānau Class at Waiuku College. This research has been approved by the University of Auckland Human Ethics Committee on the 24/8/21 and the application reference number is UAHPEC 22161.

Project Procedures – What is involved?

You have been invited to participate in this research because your name was randomly selected from the five core subject teachers who taught the class in 2020. If you agree to be interviewed by me, I will facilitate the interview at school during school hours in a designated classroom.

- We will be the only two people in the room. I will ask you six questions about how teaching the Whānau class supports a Māori student success in learning, achievement, and with their Māori identity.
- The interview will be semi-structured format which means that after I ask the questions, I may also use prompts to help you explain your responses.
- The interview will approximately up to 20 minutes.
- I will audio record the interview and will transcribe the key points
- At any time during the interview, you can choose not to respond a question or stop the interview at any time without giving a reason. You can also ask to have the audio recorder stopped briefly for any reason.
- You will receive a copy of a transcription of the key points soon after your interview and you will have one week to read the transcription and make any changes. You will be able to make corrections, deletions and have additional details added.
- If you could please sign the transcription as this confirms your approval of your interview answers and return it in an envelope with my name on it and place it in my pigeonhole.
- If you return the transcript without any comments or changes it will be understood that you agree with your comments and that they are true and correct.
- The principal has given his assurance that there will be no impact or repercussion for you as a participant at school.
- You can withdraw from the research study by contacting me by email at any time before 4th December 2021.

What will happen to the information you give?

Every effort will be taken to ensure that your participation will be anonymous and confidential. You will be given a pseudonym (different name) of your choosing if you like. However, you should be aware that in small projects like this, your anonymity cannot be completely guaranteed, and your identity may become known to others in your community. The interview transcripts, summaries and all recordings will be kept in secure storage and destroyed on 24/8/2027.

What will the project produce?

The information from this research will be used to inform the writing of my Master's thesis.

If you accept this invitation, what are your rights as a research participant?

If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- choose not to answer any question.
- ask for the audio recorder to be turned off briefly at any time during the interview
- withdraw from the study before 4th December 2021.
- ask any questions about the study at any time.
- read over and comment on the transcript of your interview.

If you have any questions or concerns, who can you contact?

If you have any questions, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:

Student:
Name: Amy Lambourne
Email address:
alam039@aucklanduni.ac.nz

Supervisor:
Name: Tony Trinick
Role: Associate Professor
School: *Te Puna Wānanga: School of Māori and Indigenous Education*
Email: t.trinick@auckland.ac.nz

Co-Supervisor:
Name: Dr Sophie Tauwehe Tamati
Role: Senior Lecturer
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Te Puna Wananga
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Project Title: *'Te tautoko i ngā ākonga kia angitu' - The role of a Whānau Class in supporting Māori student success.*

Name of Principal Supervisor: Dr Tony Trinnick
Name of Co-investigator: Dr Sophie Tauwehe Tamati
Name of Student Researcher: Amy Lambourne

STUDENT PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET FOR SURVEY

Researcher Introduction - Who am I?

Kia ora, my name is Amy Lambourne, and I am a Masters student in the Educational Leadership programme in Te Puna Wānanga School of Māori and Indigenous Education, Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Auckland. I am carrying out this research to complete my Master of Education Leadership degree.

I am writing to invite you to take part in this research. Please read the following information before deciding whether you would/would not like to take part.

What is the aim of the project?

This project is examining how the Whānau Class at Waiuku College supports student success, not just academic but also factors such as Māori identity, the sense of belonging and relationships. I would like to get your opinions and viewpoints about being a student in this class. Your participation in this survey is voluntary and your participation will be anonymous and confidential. Your participation will help me to make recommendations for future the Whānau Class and other classes of this type. My research will also benefit future students of the Whānau Class at Waiuku College. This research has been approved by the University of Auckland Human Ethics Committee on 24/8/21 and the application reference number is UAHPEC 22161

Project Procedures – What it involves?

You have been invited to participate in this research because you are part of the Year 11 Akoranga Class.

- Only the students who have volunteered will be in the classroom whilst you complete the survey.

- The survey will be in Microsoft Forms template, and it will be emailed to your school email account by me.
- The survey consists of fifteen questions and should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. If you could please complete it on an electronic device. Either your laptop or one will be provided for you.
- Your participation is anonymous, I will not know who has answered the questions. Your

What will the project produce?

The information from this research will be used to inform the writing of my Master's thesis.

If you accept this invitation, what are your rights as a research participant?

If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- At any time during the survey, you can choose not to respond a question or stop completing the survey at any time without giving a reason.

If you have any questions or concerns, who can you contact?

If you have any questions, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:

Student:
Name: Amy Lambourne
Email address:
alam039@aucklanduni.ac.nz

Supervisor:
Name: Tony Trinick
Role: Associate Professor
School: *Te Puna Wānanga: School of Māori and Indigenous Education*
Email: t.trinick@auckland.ac.nz

Co-Supervisor:
Name: Dr Sophie Tauwehe Tamati
Role: Senior Lecturer
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Te Puna Wananga
Department of Education & Social Work
Epsom Campus
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Auckland 1023

Project Title: *'Te tautoko i ngā ākonga kia angitu' - The role of a Whānau Class in supporting Māori student success.*

Name of Principal Supervisor: Dr Tony Trinnick
Name of Co-investigator: Dr Sophie Tauwehe Tamati
Name of Student Researcher: Amy Lambourne

PARENT/CAREGIVERS PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET FOR SURVEY

Researcher Introduction - Who am I?

Kia ora, my name is Amy Lambourne, and I am a Masters student in the Educational Leadership programme in Te Puna Wānanga School of Māori and Indigenous Education, Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Auckland. I am carrying out this research to complete my Master of Education Leadership degree.
I am writing to invite your child to take part in this research. Please read the following information before deciding whether you would/would not like them to take part.

What is the aim of the project?

This project is examining how the Whānau Class at Waiuku College supports student success, not just academic but also factors such as Māori identity, the sense of belonging and relationships. I would like your child to complete an anonymous survey online using a Microsoft Form template. It will consist of fifteen questions and will take up to fifteen minutes to complete. This will be completed during admin time and Whaea Rhema will conduct the survey. It is voluntary and every effort will be taken to ensure that your child's participation will be anonymous and confidential. Their participation will help me to make recommendations for future the Whānau Class and other classes of this type. My research will also benefit future students of the Whānau Class at Waiuku College. This research has been approved by the University of Auckland Human Ethics Committee application on 24/8/21 and the reference number is UAHPEC 22161.

Project Procedures – What is involved?

Your child has been invited to participate in this research because they are a part of the Year 11 Akoranga Class in 2020 and 2021.

- Only the students who have volunteered to be participants will be in the classroom whilst they complete the survey.
- The survey will be in Microsoft Forms template, and it will be emailed to their school email account by me.
- The survey consists of fifteen questions and should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. It will be completed on an electronic device. Either their laptop or one will be provided for them.
- Their participation is anonymous, I will not know who has answered the questions. their name will not be stated anywhere.
- The principal has given his assurance that there will be no impact or repercussion for your child as a participant at school.
- You can withdraw from the research study by contacting me by email at any time before 4th December 2021.

What will happen to the information you give?

Every effort will be taken to ensure that your participation will be anonymous and confidential the name of the school will not be mentioned in the published thesis or documents. However, you should be aware that in small projects like this, your anonymity cannot be completely guaranteed, and their identity may become known to others in your community. The interview transcripts, summaries and all recordings will be kept in secure storage and destroyed on 24/8/2027.

What will the project produce?

The information from this research will be used to inform the writing of my Master's thesis.

If you accept this invitation, what are your rights as a research participant?

If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- choose not to answer any question.
- withdraw from the study before 4th December 2021.
- ask any questions about the study at any time.

If you have any questions or concerns, who can you contact?

If you have any questions, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:

Student:
Name: Amy Lambourne
Email address:
alam039@aucklanduni.ac.nz

Supervisor:
Name: Tony Trinick
Role: Associate Professor
School: *Te Puna Wānanga: School of Māori and Indigenous Education*
Email: t.trinick@auckland.ac.nz

Co-Supervisor:
Name: Dr Sophie Tauwehe Tamati
Role: Senior Lecturer

School: *Te Puna Wānanga: School of Māori and Indigenous Education*
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APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 24/8/2021 for three years, Reference Number: **UAHPEC22161**

Te Puna Wananga
Department of Education & Social Work
Epsom Campus
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Auckland 1023

Project Title: *'Te tautoko i ngā ākonga kia angitu' - The role of a Whānau Class in supporting Māori student success.*

Name of Principal Supervisor: Dr Tony Trinnick
Name of Co-investigator: Dr Sophie Tauwehe Tamati
Name of Student Researcher: Amy Lambourne

PARENTS/GUARDIAN PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET FOR INTERVIEW

Researcher Introduction - Who am I?

Kia ora, my name is Amy Lambourne, and I am a Masters student in the Educational Leadership programme in Te Puna Wānanga School of Māori and Indigenous Education, Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Auckland. I am carrying out this research to complete my Master of Education Leadership degree.

I am writing to invite your child to take part in this research. Please read the following information before deciding whether you would/would not like them to take part.

What is the aim of the project?

This project is examining how the Whānau Class at Waiuku College supports student success, not just academic but also factors such as Māori identity, the sense of belonging and relationships. I would like to interview your child to get their opinions and viewpoints about being a student in this class. Their participation in this interview is voluntary and every effort will be taken to ensure that your participation will be anonymous and confidential. Their participation will help me to make recommendations for future the Whānau Class and other classes of this type. My research will also benefit future students of the Whānau Class at Waiuku College. This research has been approved by the University of Auckland Human Ethics Committee on 24/8/21 and the application reference number is UAHPEC 22161.

Project Procedures – What is involved?

Your child has been invited to participate in this research because their name was randomly selected from all the students who participated in the electronic survey. If they agree to be interviewed by me, I will facilitate the interview at school during school hours in a designated classroom.

- We will be the only two people in the room. I will ask them six questions about how being in the Whānau class supports their success in learning, achievement, and with their Māori identity.
- The interview will be semi-structured format which means that after I ask the questions, I may also use prompts to help them explain their responses.
- The interview will approximately 20 minutes.
- I will audio record the interview and then transcribe the key points.
- At any time during the interview, they can choose not to respond a question or stop the interview at any time without giving a reason. They can also ask to have the audio recorder stopped briefly for any reason.
- They will receive a copy of the key points soon after the interview and they will have one week to read the transcription and make any changes. Your child will be able to make corrections, deletions and have other details added.
- If your child could please sign the transcription as this confirms their approval of their interview answers and return it in an envelope with my name on it by handing it in at the school office.
- If they return the transcript without any comments or changes it will be understood that they agree with your comments and that they are true and correct.
- The principal has given his assurance that there will be no impact or repercussion for your child as a participant at school.
- You can withdraw from the research study by contacting me by email at any time before 4th December 2021.

What will happen to the information you give?

Every effort will be taken to ensure that their participation will be anonymous and confidential. **They will be given a pseudonym (different name) of their choosing if they like. However, you should be aware that in small projects like this, there anonymity cannot be completely guaranteed, and their identity may become known to others in your community.** The interview transcripts, summaries and all recordings will be kept in secure storage and destroyed on 24/8/2027.

What will the project produce?

The information from this research will be used to inform the writing of my Master's thesis.

If you accept this invitation, what are your rights as a research participant parent/caregiver?

If your child decides to participate, they have the right to:

- choose not to answer any question.
- ask for the audio recorder to be turned off briefly at any time during the interview
- withdraw from the study before 4th December 2021.
- ask any questions about the study at any time.
- read over and comment on the transcript of their interview.

If you have any questions or concerns, who can you contact?

If you have any questions, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:

Student:
Name: Amy Lambourne
Email address:
alam039@aucklanduni.ac.nz

Supervisor:
Name: Tony Trinick
Role: Associate Professor
School: *Te Puna Wānanga: School of Māori and Indigenous Education*
Email: t.trinick@auckland.ac.nz

Co-Supervisor:
Name: Dr Sophie Tauwehe Tamati
Role: Senior Lecturer
School: *Te Puna Wānanga: School of Māori and Indigenous Education*
Email: t.tamati@auckland.ac.nz

Human Ethics Committee information:

For any queries regarding ethical concerns, you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, Office of Research Strategy and Integrity, The University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 ext. 83711. Email: humanethics@auckland.ac.nz

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 24/8/2021 for three years, Reference Number: **UAHPEC22161**

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