

*“Rongoā brings peace. Toi is rongoā. Art is healing.”*

**Transferability of the Hine Te Rēhia Framework to  
Understand Whānau Wellness**

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## Abstract

This study investigates the transferability of the Hine Te Rēhia framework (Nikora et al., 2021) in understanding whānau (extended family) wellness, specifically through the lens of kapa haka (cultural activity of singing and dancing) as a potential vehicle for wellness. Using Kaupapa Māori Theory as the theoretical framework, an anonymous online survey was conducted to explore the meaning and value of whānau wellness among Māori participants aged 25 to 74. The study employed a reflexive thematic analysis with a social constructionism lens to analyse the sample. The findings reveal significant themes consistent with the four domains of the Hine Te Rēhia framework (Nikora et al., 2021), including Tūrangawaewae, Mātauranga, Ihiihi, and Hauora. These themes highlight the importance of whakapapa (genealogy) and whanaungatanga (relationships), learning and growth, creative expression of emotions, and the holistic integration of social, physical, mental, and spiritual domains in promoting whānau wellness from a Māori perspective. The research contributes a unique instrument for various programmes aimed at promoting personal and whānau wellness and serves as a resource for decision-making, planning, and policy development that affirms Māori aspirations and flourishing futures. Overall, this study underscores the potential of kapa haka as one possible vehicle for wellness and provides insight into the complex interplay of cultural, social, and individual factors that contribute to whānau wellness in the Māori context.

*Key words:* wellness, whānau, Māori, framework, kapa haka, Indigenous peoples

## **Dedication**

For our tūpuna and tangata whenua.

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## **Chapter One: Preface**

### ***Ko Wai Au?***

I, the author of this study, Tyla Pearse (she/her), was raised in a rural town in Tauranga, Aotearoa New Zealand, before commencing my undergraduate studies in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland during my early twenties. My paternal heritage consists of Māori (Ngāti Maniapoto, iwi based in Waikato region) and European ancestry, while my maternal side is solely of European descent. I am proficient in English and possess limited proficiency in te reo Māori (Māori language). Recently, I attended Te Matatini (national kapa haka competition), held at Ngā Ana Wai (Eden Park), Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland in February 2023, as an enthusiastic spectator. Additionally, in the same month, I attended "Taku ihi! Taku wehi! Taku wana!" presented by M9 Aotearoa, which showcased the profound influence of kapa haka on the lives of nine kaihaka (performers). In attending these events, I have been able to reconnect with my cultural roots, rediscover traditional Māori knowledge, experience a sense of belonging, and celebrate Māori culture.

### ***Positionality***

The study adopts an interpretivism approach, which emphasises the importance of comprehending or interpreting the beliefs, motives, and actions of individuals to gain insights into social reality. Unlike interpretivism, positivist psychological research assumes a passive approach to research using scientific methodology, positioning the researcher as an objective outsider to the communities they interact with (Tiakiwai, 2001). However, the process of engaging with

communities, interpreting data, and determining what to include in the results is subjective and influenced by cultural background, worldviews, values, beliefs, and experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Subjectivity is an integral part of this interpretivism study as it provides a more nuanced and contextually-grounded research that is more representative of the complex realities of the social world. Throughout this study, I implemented several strategies to be aware of subjectivity, such as systematic reflexivity, peer and supervisor debriefing, and research transparency.

In Māori culture, whakapapa serves as an analytical tool that shapes our relationships, daily experiences, and research methods (Pihama, 2012). I acknowledge the influence of my experiences, biases, passions, and aspirations in shaping the construction of knowledge (Le Grice, 2014). Through an exploration of whakapapa and its intersection with personal experiences, I intend to offer deeper insights into the development of this study. My personal experiences have influenced my curiosity to explore Māori perspectives on wellness. Growing up outside of my ancestral homeland limited my access to whānau kōrero (conversations), pūrākau (narratives), te ao Māori (Māori worldviews), tikanga (customary practices), and spiritual connections with tūpuna (ancestors), whanaunga (relations), and tūrangawaewae (place where one has the right to stand). However, over the last decade, I have dedicated a significant portion of my life to (re)connecting with these essential components that nurture my Māori identity. At present, my sense of Māori identity is still in development.

Since my later years in high school, and particularly throughout my academic studies, I have struggled with various forms of anxiety. Due to family dynamics in early life, I experienced persistent self-doubt, low self-worth, and a lack of confidence, which significantly affected my

life. Upon reflection, I recognise that these intricate emotions can be attributed to the difficult phases in my life. In the last decade, I have had experience as a consumer within the mental health system in Aotearoa New Zealand in both Western and kaupapa Māori (Māori approach) services. These services have emphasised the importance of cultivating wellness practices and a sense of cultural identity to support me during challenging times.

To conduct an effective exploration of whānau wellness, it is ideal to have Indigenous researchers who are embedded within the cultural context. This approach involves collaborating with my whānau (as outlined in the inclusion criteria in Chapter Four) and focusing specifically on whānau wellness. As a member of the group being studied, I have an insider perspective and am therefore intimately familiar with the culture, norms, and values of the group. This perspective can facilitate a deeper understanding of the social and cultural context in which the phenomenon (i.e. whānau wellness) is occurring, enabling the identification of subtle nuances that an outsider may overlook. However, my insider perspective cannot claim to fully represent the participants' perspectives and lived experiences. Indigenous researchers are obliged to their communities and face the challenge of balancing the demands of the Western academy with the need to produce research that aligns with Māori aspirations and tino rangatiratanga (self-determination; Gilchrist, 2017). In navigating these tensions, I strive to remain true to my identities using strategies of reflexivity, with the goal of bridging these realities (Beals et al., 2019).

### ***Intersection of Indigenous and Community Psychology***

The increasing recognition of Indigenous psychology as a burgeoning discipline at a global level is a direct response to the prevalence of Western psychology, which has historically been

imposed upon Indigenous peoples. An increasing cohort of researchers and psychologists are integrating Indigenous concepts, practices, applications, and philosophies into their scholarship, generating theories of universal psychological discourse, and addressing local concerns. As noted by Nikora (2006) and other scholars, the Māori population possesses distinctive approaches to wellness that fall outside the purview of psychology. The objective of this research is to promote Indigenous psychology by employing culturally relevant knowledge and practices to enrich comprehension of Māori wellness.

Moreover, this investigation adopts a community psychology framework that broadens the scope of inquiry from individual wellness experiences to encompass the wider societal context. Complex issues such as the elevated incidence of Māori suicide and mental health diagnoses necessitate scrutiny through an ecological-systems lens that accounts for the social, cultural, historical, and political milieu. The interdisciplinary character of community psychology enables the author to interconnect diverse fields of inquiry, including Indigenous psychology, health, education, social psychology, policy, anthropology, sociology, evolutionary biology, and ecology.

## Chapter Two: Introduction

Wellness has become a ubiquitous concept in modern-day contexts, permeating popular culture, advertising, and academic discourse alike. The basic premise of wellness refers to a state of being healthy in mind and body. However, the concept of wellness is much more nuanced and multifaceted. This study delves into the longstanding world of Māori wellness, which espouses a comprehensive perspective of wellness as an amalgamation of diverse factors. This investigation seeks to elucidate the key components that contribute to the Māori conception of wellness and explore the idiosyncratic and collective ways in which it is incorporated into everyday life.

Māori philosophy offers a unique and comprehensive perspective on wellness, known as hauora, which is firmly embedded in the setting of Aotearoa New Zealand. The term is commonly understood to denote physical health and the absence of disease and illnesses (Heaton, 2011). However, Māori conceptualise hauora as a multi-dimensional construct that transcends the biomedical viewpoint prevalent in scientific and medical frameworks (Te Ohaakii a Hine National Network of Ending Sexual Violence Together [TOAH NNEST], 2022). Hauora is embedded in Māori pūrakau and epistemologies, embodying Māori values and cultural practices that weave together biological, psychological, social and cultural dimensions. Illustratively, rongoā (traditional Māori healing) and whakapapa, are instrumental in the cultivation of both physical and meta-physical wellness (Riki Tuakiritetangata & Ibarra-Lemay, 2021; Carlson, 2022). Likewise, haka (dance) and waiata (sing), are harnessed to facilitate affective and social flourishing (Riki Tuakiritetangata & Ibarra-Lemay, 2021), thereby underscoring the interrelatedness of these fundamental dimensions within the Māori hauora paradigm.

The notion of wellness has remained a focal point of discussion and scholarly inquiry in Western culture for a considerable period. Generally, wellness connotes the deliberate engagement in behaviours, preferences, and a way of life that culminates in a state of comprehensive health (Miller, 2005; Global Spa Summit, 2010). Central to this definition are two critical tenets: namely, that wellness is a dynamic, evolving, and proactive condition, and second, that it encompasses a holistic approach. Furthermore, extant scholarship posits that wellness can be distinguished from health and well-being, which may signify a static and enduring condition, such as contentment, physical fitness, or overall well-being (Green & Shellenberger, 1991; Wissing, 2000).

The author notably adopts a Western perspective to delineate perspectives largely stemming from Europe and America, whose evolution has been significantly shaped by Christianity, as explicated by Wainwright (1977). It is imperative to acknowledge that Western perspectives ought not to be construed as the exclusive or authoritative lens for comprehending phenomena. Furthermore, an acknowledgment that Western knowledge is accorded preeminence within the purview of this study, due to the limited presence of academically-rigorous inquiry in te ao Māori, which would otherwise offer a comprehensive depiction of wellness. Western literature can proffer a valuable summary of information and insights, it may not necessarily be germane or pertinent to the Māori context.

This study adopts a novel approach to the investigation of wellness by exploring the Māori and Western perspectives on wellness and the role of kapa haka in existing literature. The primary objective is to evaluate the applicability and validity of the Hine Te Rēhia framework (Nikora et al., 2021) and to gather empirical evidence on whānau wellness. To ensure cultural sensitivity, the

research adheres to the principles of Kaupapa Māori, which values Māori traditions and knowledge. Through personal engagement and the inclusion of participants' narratives, the research process critically examines knowledge generation. A retrospective, qualitative analysis of whānau wellness is employed, with a meticulous approach to data analysis. The study findings are presented and discussed, with four main themes identified: Tūrangawaewae, Mātauranga, Ihiihi, and Hauora. Finally, the study discusses the implications, limitations, future directions, and author reflections. This study breaks new ground in wellness research and provides valuable insights for the field.

## **Chapter Three: Literature Review**

The concept of wellness is perceived differently across cultures. In the Māori worldview, wellness encompasses physical, spiritual, mental, emotional, and social dimensions and is interconnected with the taiao (natural environment), whenua (land), and the universe. However, the cultural context of Māori has been influenced by the Western paradigm of colonisation, resulting in significant impacts on Māori wellness outcomes. To address this issue, several Māori wellness frameworks have been developed and applied in various contexts, aiming to understand and improve the wellness of whānau.

Kapa haka is one such vehicle for improving wellness for Māori, but the literature lacks academically-grounded attention to its wellness benefits. The present study seeks to deepen the understanding of whānau wellness through the application of the Hine Te Rēhia framework developed by Nikora et al. (2021). To achieve this goal, it is essential to gather and explore knowledge that lays the foundation of this study. A clear understanding of the complexities of wellness and the significance of context in shaping it, can provide valuable insights into the application and relevance of these frameworks to improve wellness outcomes for Māori.

### ***Māori Perspective of Wellness***

The opening of this section contextualises the term hauora as a central component of Māori ontology. The subsequent section emphasises the significance of preserving the distinct Māori values that underpin their understanding of wellness, which is intrinsically linked to the social



context. These values include mauri, tapu, mana, tūrangawaewae, mātauranga, and ihihi, providing a holistic and interconnected understanding of Maori perspectives on wellness.

**Hauora.** Māori people have a distinctive and holistic approach to wellness that is often referred to as hauora. To better understand the concept of hauora, we can analyse its component parts, with "hau" meaning breath and "ora" meaning life. Thus, we can interpret hauora as the "breath of life" (Heaton, 2011). However, the true depth and breadth of knowledge encompassed by hauora cannot be fully grasped by simply examining its literal meaning. Instead, a more nuanced understanding of hauora can be obtained through exploring traditional Māori oral traditions, such as pūrākau, whakataukī (proverbs), karakia (prayers), and whakapapa. Through whakapapa, for example, one can gain a metaphysical comprehension of historical connection, wherein all things, living and nonliving, are interconnected and descended from a common ancestral origin known as Io (supreme being). This holistic viewpoint is characteristic of Māori culture and contributes to their unique approach to wellness (Heaton, 2011).

The story of Atua Tāne, the god of forests, birds, and insects, and the creation of the first woman Hineahuone, as told in pūrākau, provides valuable insights into the concept of hauora among Māori (Riki Tuakiritetangata & Ibarra-Lemay, 2021). According to the pūrākau, Tāne used clay to form Hineahuone's body and breathed life into her. She went on to become the ancestor of humanity, and from her descendants, the Māori people emerged, forming a connection between humanity and the natural world. Hineahuone was the first to experience the newly created world through her senses, which allowed her to experience and engage with it. As the primordial ancestor, she carried a substantial responsibility, which was augmented by the support of Papatūānuku (the

earth mother) through her prayers, blood, and body, the influence of Ranginui (the sky father) in her mind, and the breath of Tāne in her lungs.

The concept of hauora among Māori can be understood as a call to breathe and counteract the suffocation of everyday life (Carlson, 2022). Hauora can be understood as a state of being that encompasses both the present and extends to the past and future, signifying a sense of belonging and connection. Additionally, hauora is an embodied state, requiring individuals to breathe life into their ancestors (Carlson, 2022). The pūrākau of Tāne creating Hineahuone highlights the distinctiveness of Māori wellness, which is a gift from the Atua and has been integral to Māori culture since the beginning of time.

Hauora is commonly associated with health and physical health (Heaton, 2011). However, for Māori, this term represents a much broader and multifaceted concept that extends beyond the confines of a scientific-medical paradigm (TOAH NNEST, 2022). Rather, hauora is a complex construct that encompasses various dimensions of wellness, including physical, mental, social, spiritual, and environmental aspects, each of which is interconnected and interdependent (Carlson, 2022). The physical dimension of hauora relates to biology including nutrition, exercise, and rest. The mental dimension relates to emotional and cognitive wellness, including psychological distress and resilience. The social dimension relates to the connections and relationships that a person has with others, including family, community, and culture. In addition to these three dimensions, hauora also includes a spiritual component referring to the connection between a person and the spiritual world, including a person's connection to their ancestors, beliefs, and values. Lastly, there is growing attention to an environmental dimension, which is the connection

with the natural world and a person's surroundings. In Māori culture, traditional practices and knowledge are used to support hauora. For example, practices like rongoā and whakapapa are used to support physical and spiritual wellness (Riki Tuakiritetangata & Ibarra-Lemay, 2021; Carlson, 2022). Cultural practices like haka and waiata are used to promote emotional and social wellness (Riki Tuakiritetangata & Ibarra-Lemay, 2021).

The term hauora embodies a unique and holistic understanding of wellness that recognises the interconnectedness between people, the environment and culture. This perspective on wellness is significant because it acknowledges the cultural and social factors that influence health outcomes, and highlights the need for culturally appropriate approaches to wellness for Maori communities. The concept of hauora provides a perspective for understanding and addressing health disparities and promoting wellness in a way that is respectful and relevant to Maori culture and values.

**Mauri.** Central to wellness from a Māori perspective is the relational concept of mauri. The relational concept defies singular translation to English but encapsulates the concepts of life force, vital essence, origin of emotions, energy, and fundamental character of an entity (Wilson et al., 2021). In relation to wellness, mauri is seen as a key aspect of hauora, the Māori understanding of wellness. It is believed that when a person's mauri is strong, they are in a state of optimal wellness, with physical, mental, social, and spiritual dimensions all in balance. Conversely, when a person's mauri is weakened or diminished, they may experience illness, imbalance, or disconnection.

Scholars, including Durie (2001) and Waitoki (2022) highlight the connection between mauri and wellness within an individual. According to the different states of mauri, including mauri moe, mauri oho, and mauri ora, different levels of wellness can be explained and understood. At the stage, mauri moe, a person has untapped potential and a desire to connect with Māori knowledge and traditions, reflecting a need for personal growth and transformation. Moving into the proactive state of mauri oho, a person becomes more aware of their potential and is willing to engage with new challenges and responsibilities, demonstrating inner strength and courage. Finally, mauri ora represents the actualisation of a person's potential and a commitment to living a fulfilling life through active participation in Māori culture and community. Tihe, a framework created by Puhato (2011), serves as a guide for recognising and proclaiming the different states of mauri within oneself and provides an opportunity for reflection, analysis, and understanding at each point of interconnection. In recognising and engaging with the states of mauri, people can achieve a sense of holistic wellness that is grounded in Māori traditions and values.

Mauri ora, as a commonly held Māori value and practice, has profound implications for people's wellness, as a diminishing or harm to one's mauri can rupture the connection to whānau and whakapapa. However, health care practitioners in the business of supporting Māori wellness have opportunities to enhance and enable a person's mauri, which might look like creating opportunities for new challenges (mauri moe), participating in new groups or spaces to pursue challenges (mauri oho), and experiencing new found inner strength as part of the process (mauri ora). As Māori, our obligation extends further to uphold and nurture the mauri in inanimate objects

such as crops or waterways so that they may flourish, as is our role as kaitiaki (guardians; Puhato, 2011). As such, mauri highlights practical ways to support wellness that aligns with Māori values.

**Tapu.** Tapu is a fundamental construct in Māori culture that is intricately associated with wellness. It designates an object, place, or person as sacrosanct or prohibited and withdrawn from the sphere of the profane or mundane (Sachdev, 1989; Durie, 2002). Its interpretation extends beyond English translations that is deeply rooted in a philosophy of safety (Durie, 2002) that supports holistic wellness and flourishing for people, communities, and environments. The degree of tapu can fluctuate, and its connotations can be either positive or negative contingent on the situational context (Sachdev, 1989). For example, tapu associated with women during childbirth highlights the importance of ensuring their physical, spiritual, and emotional wellness during this critical time (Durie, 2002). Tapu is an indication of power from Atua (supernatural being) as a withdrawal of their influence, and it is crucial to treat both the state of tapu and the person or object in it with respect and caution (Sachdev, 1989). Breaching tapu can result in sickness or catastrophe imposed by Atua, such as negative spirits, illness or catastrophe (Durie, 2002). Therefore, safeguarding one's own tapu and showing reverence towards the tapu of others and sacred locations is of utmost importance. Understanding and respecting the concept of tapu is crucial for maintaining a sense of safety and wellness in Māori culture.

**Mana.** The concept of mana is integral to Māori wellness where it is often viewed in tandem with the concept of tapu, with one affecting the other. Scholars such as Sachdev (1989) and NiaNia et al. (2017) have explored the meaning and significance of mana within this context. Mana is understood as a spiritual power or essence that imbues people, animals, plants, and even inanimate objects, making them active channels or hosts of this force. Mana is accumulated by individuals through various sources. According to Metge (1976), every Māori person inherited an amount of mana from their ancestors, referred to as mana tūpuna (power through descent). Additionally, entitlement to land (mana whenua) was also a source of mana, with the mana of land belonging to a hapū (kinship group; Metge, 1976). Mana confers upon a person or whānau the ability to exercise authority over themselves, their environments, and external forces that may be affecting them (NiaNia et al., 2017).

Similar to the concept of mauri, the essence of mana is not rooted in the domination of others, but in the regulation of one's own behaviour and thought processes (NiaNia et al., 2017). When upholding mana, individuals protect themselves and others from harm, and safeguard against negative psychological and spiritual influences, while simultaneously demonstrating respect. However, negative circumstances such as familial disputes, substance abuse, and institutional racism can reduce an individual's mana, rendering them more vulnerable to harmful spiritual influences (NiaNia et al., 2017). Mana-enhancing interventions can be highly effective in addressing negative spiritual experiences and may be misinterpreted as psychotic symptoms (NiaNia et al., 2017). NiaNia et al. (2017) demonstrated through case studies that understanding the concept of mana was crucial for their clients' healing and the restoration of their wellness.

**Tūrangawaewae.** For Māori people, knowing their tūrangawaewae is considered fundamental to their understanding of their identity and heritage (Kāretu, 1990), and can play a pivotal role in shaping their relationships with others and their connection to everything in the universe (Rameka, 2018). Tūrangawaewae epitomises the notion of a locus of entitlement, where an individual possesses legitimate standing, as well as a place of habitation and belonging anchored in kinship and whakapapa (Royal, 2007). According to Royal (2007), Tūrangawaewae may encompass marae (ancestral home), mountains, waterways, and other sites that hold cultural or historical significance in ancestry. Under this definition, these external locations can reflect an inner sense of security and connection (Boulton et al., 2021).

The concept of whakapapa is closely intertwined with tūrangawaewae. Whakapapa pertains to genealogy, lineage, and ancestry, and is a foundational concept in Māori culture that establishes the interrelatedness between people, ancestors, land, environment and communities (Rameka, 2018; Cheung, 2008). Whanaungatanga, or relationships, is considered a critical element for Māori to retain a sense of connection and belonging with people by which they perceive, maintain, and enhance relations within whānau, hapū, and iwi (tribe; Mead, 2003; Rameka, 2018). Whanaungatanga can entail rights, obligations, responsibilities, and commitments among members, resulting in coherence and collaboration (Reilly, 2004). Hence, Tūrangawaewae, whakapapa, and whanaungatanga hold a significant position in Māori culture and play a vital role in supporting wellness.

**Mātauranga.** Mātauranga Māori pertains to a distinct Māori manner of existing and interacting with the world. The concept of mātauranga has significant cultural importance in Māori society, as it serves as an integral component for both personal and collective wellness. In contemporary language, mātauranga refers to a specific body of knowledge, which is not effectively communicated through the term itself (Royal, 2012). Instead, mātauranga encapsulates knowledge in a manner that emphasises its contribution to wellness promotion. For instance, maramataka, a form of mātauranga, promotes the interdependent relationship between people and environmental wellness (Hikuroa, 2017). As highlighted in the hauora section, traditional practices such as rongoā, whakapapa, haka, and waiata are rooted in mātauranga and serve to support overall wellness, both at an individual and collective level (Riki Tuakiritetangata & Ibarra-Lemay, 2021; Carlson, 2022).

Enthusiasts seeking to further the progression of mātauranga Māori delve into the diverse avenues by which it illuminates facets of existence, including personal and collective identity (Royal, 2012). It is suggested that wellness is closely linked to cultural identity, with Māori cultural identity having particular significance given the history of efforts to repress or eliminate Māori culture through colonisation, war, and assimilation policies (Marsden in Royal, 2003). Māori have an inherent right to assert their cultural identity and establish a connection with their cultural legacy and practices through whakapapa and whanaungatanga (Mead, 2016; Te Huia, 2015). For many Māori, cultural identity involves actively participating in practices such as speaking te reo Māori and engaging in cultural customs, which have been shown to improve wellness outcomes (Fox et al., 2021; Muriwai et al., 2015; Stuart & Jose, 2014).



**Ihiihi.** In Māoridom, the practice of ihiihi, or expression, supports the wellness of individuals. Ihiihi can take many forms such as art, singing, dancing, storytelling, and other forms of creative expression. These modes of expression serve as vehicles for conveying and preserving cultural values, knowledge, and identity. In addition to their cultural significance, expression and creativity are recognised as vital components of personal and collective wellness in Māori society. Through expression, individuals can connect with their emotions, experiences, and aspirations, and cultivate a sense of purpose, empowerment, and belonging in various domains of life (Livermore, 2016). The sharing of experiences, thoughts, and emotions through ihiihi fosters a sense of connection, fosters empathy, and understanding among people, further promoting their overall wellness (Livermore, 2016).

Toi Māori, the traditional art of Māori people, is considered a vital component of expression in Māori culture. It encompasses various artistic expressions that reflect the styles, traditions, and values of Māori heritage, passed down from generations of ancestors (Mead, 1996). Toi art forms, such as whakairo (carving), raranga (weaving), and tā moko (traditional tattooing), are considered to be spiritual practices that have the potential to enhance a person's physical, mental, and spiritual wellness. Toi Māori represents the cultural identity and creativity of Māori artists, providing a tangible representation of Māori social, political, cultural, and economic needs (Mead, 1996). The act of creating and appreciating art can have therapeutic effects, providing individuals with a sense of purpose, identity, pride, and connection to others, which contribute to personal and collective wellness.

In conclusion, the Māori perspective of wellness is rooted in their ontology and is centred around the concept of hauora. Preserving Māori values such as mauri, tapu, mana, tūrangawaewae,

mātauranga, and ihiihi is essential to understanding and practising wellness from a Māori perspective. The interconnected nature of these values provides a holistic understanding of wellness, which is closely tied to the social context.

## *Wellness in Western Literature*

This section aims to provide an overview of the trajectory and development of the concept of wellness in Western culture over time. It begins by establishing a definition of wellness and discussing the emergence of wellness frameworks. The article then delves into critical perspectives of wellness in Western culture, highlighting debates and controversies surrounding the concept, such as its commercialisation and cultural appropriation tendencies. By exploring these topics, this section seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the concept of wellness and its place in Western culture.

It is worth noting, however, that Western perspectives should not be seen as the only or definitive perspective on global issues. Cultural perspectives (such as those discussed from a Māori perspective) provide valuable insight into the diversity of approaches to wellness, underscoring the importance of understanding wellness knowledge as a dynamic and context-specific phenomenon. By engaging with diverse perspectives, we can gain a more nuanced understanding of wellness and develop more effective strategies and approaches to address the phenomena.

**The Trajectory and Development.** The trajectory of wellness has evolved significantly. In the 20th century, the concept of wellness gained popularity in Western culture due to a shift in society's health needs. Previously, infectious diseases held a prominent position as the primary cause of death. However, the development and widespread use of vaccines and antibiotics significantly reduced their impact and threat (Seaward, 1997, 2002; Miller & Foster, 2010). Subsequently, the primary health concern became lifestyle illness and diseases such as cancer, diabetes, and heart disease, triggered by longevity and changes in lifestyle, diet and activity (Miller & Foster, 2010). Lifestyle diseases are expected to account for a significant percentage of global deaths and burden in 2030 (Al-Maskari & Gross, 2012).

The idea of wellness as a school of thought has undergone evolution and development over time. Healthcare methods were criticised for primarily focusing on biological factors and neglecting psychological and social explanations in the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of illness and diseases (Edlin & Golanty, 2015). Biological explanations place less emphasis on reducing unhealthy behaviours, promoting healthy lifestyles, and creating a healthy environment (Edlin & Golanty, 2015). New intellectual movements, spiritual philosophies and medical practices were instrumental in propagating holistic and preventive-care approaches to wellness (Global Spa Summit, 2010).

As more emphasis was placed on wellness as a holistic concept, it was appropriated by the corporate world. Wellness became associated with and co-opted for marketing products and services (Fahlberg & Fahlberg, 1997; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Miller & Foster, 2010). The commodification of wellness has led to the commercialisation and marketing of wellness

products and services that may not always be evidence-based or effective in promoting wellness. This has led to a proliferation of misinformation and confusion around what wellness is and how it can be achieved (Cederström & Spicer, 2015). As people become more interested in achieving and maintaining overall wellness, there has been a growing demand for products, services, and experiences that support individual wellness goals.

The rise of wellness as a lifestyle value reflects a broader shift in contemporary Western culture towards individual responsibility and self-expression. The wellness syndrome phenomena (Cederström & Spicer, 2015) was coined to describe a constant social and cultural pressure to constantly measure and monitor individual wellness. Cederström and Spicer (2015) argue that the wellness industry, with its emphasis on individual responsibility and righteousness (Conrad, 1994), has become a new form of control that reinforces capitalist norms and perpetuates social inequality. For those who are not able to participate in the Westernised capitalist norms of practices for wellness are further marginalised and stigmatised. A focus on individual responsibility can obscure larger social and economic factors that contribute to poor health outcomes, such as poverty, inequality, and environmental factors (Cederström & Spicer, 2015).

The trajectory of wellness has evolved significantly over time, and while the emphasis on a holistic and preventive concept of wellness is a step in the right direction, its appropriation by the corporate world has negative impacts on society. The focus on individual responsibility can obscure larger social and economic factors that contribute to poor health outcomes. It is important to acknowledge that wellness is a complex issue that is influenced by a wide range of factors,

including social, economic, and environmental factors. A more comprehensive approach to wellness that acknowledges these factors is necessary to promote and maintain wellness.

**Establishing a Definition.** The definition and description of wellness have become complex and intertwined with related terms such as health and well-being (Miller & Foster, 2010). Scholars contend that wellness constitutes a unique construct separate from health and well-being, which connote a static state of existence, whereas wellness underscores the proactive engagement in pursuits and decisions that foster comprehensive health (Miller, 2005; Global Spa Summit, 2010). Wellness is understood to be a dynamic and evolving state that encompasses physical, emotional, social, and spiritual elements (Miller & Foster, 2010). Although health and wellness are sometimes used interchangeably, wellness is characterised by optimal functioning across multiple dimensions, whereas an individual may be in good health but not necessarily experiencing wellness (Green & Shellenberger, 1991; Wissing, 2000). Health expanded beyond being the absence of illness and disease, wellness was introduced with the intention of highlighting the positive characteristics of health (Miller & Foster, 2010).

In general, this study does not provide a definitive distinction between wellness and related terms, but rather explores wellness from diverse cultural perspectives. The study highlights the importance of wellness in achieving optimal health, which includes healthy eating, regular exercise, stress management, and positive social connections within a specific socio-cultural context.

**Western Frameworks and Assessments.** The development of a framework for understanding a phenomenon, such as wellness, and the process of creating an assessment tool are intertwined. The dimensions of wellness inform the approach taken in understanding it, and from this understanding, key factors worthy of measurement can be identified. These measures provide insight into the phenomenon of wellness. Wellness frameworks can be applied in various ways, tailored to the specific needs and goals of an individual, community or organisation. Examples of common applications include creating individual wellness plans, developing wellness programs for employees or members, evaluating program effectiveness, and conducting wellness assessments to identify areas for improvement and develop strategies to address them.

There is no definitive list of dimensions that constitute an individual's overall wellness. However, there is overwhelming evidence that frameworks are multi-dimensional and have been shown to be effective in promoting wellness across diverse populations (Myers et al., 2000; Swarbrick, 2006). According to the Global Spa Summit (2010), Western frameworks of wellness typically comprise of eight dimensions, which may include but are not limited to:

1. Physical: nourishing a healthy body through exercise, nutrition and sleep, and the absence of harm or injury.
2. Mental: interacting with the world through learning, problem-solving, and utilising individual motivations and strengths.
3. Emotional: recognising and positive expressions of thoughts and feelings.
4. Spiritual: preserving significance and a greater sense of purpose.
5. Social: meaningful connections and engaging with others within communities.

6. Environmental: nurturing a symbiotic relationship with the environment.
7. Occupational: enjoyment of an occupation to earn and contribute to society.
8. Intellectual: having an open mind to new ideas and concepts.

The present study examines the Six Dimensions of Wellness Model, developed by Hettler (1980) of the National Wellness Institute, and its application at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital (Nathenson et al., 2014) as a case study. This model incorporates physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, social, and occupational dimensions, and is integrated into stroke rehabilitation services. The wellness framework is implemented to facilitate optimal lifestyle changes and medical management to achieve goals associated with the mitigation of cardiovascular disease recurrence risk factors and symptom amelioration, ultimately enhancing the quality of life of the patients (Nathenson et al., 2014).

There are several individual-level wellness assessments available, including the Life Assessment Questionnaire (LAQ; National Wellness Institute, 1983) which measures the six dimensions of wellness identified by Hettler (1980). Other assessments include the modified LAQ known as TestWell (Owen, 1999), the Perceived Wellness Survey (PWS; Adams et al., 1997), the Optimal Living Profile (OLP; Renger et al., 2000), and the Wellness Inventory (WI) created by Travis (1981). However, this study does not extensively evaluate the validity of these assessments. Instead, the author provides a general overview of commonly used wellness assessment tools.

Overall, frameworks are useful for identifying critical aspects related to a phenomenon like wellness, through a focus on wellness (rather than illness) health professionals are able to shift



their focus to enhancing the individuals life. Wellness framework influences policy and broader directives such as within a workplace (Merrill et al., 2011), education (Soutter et al., 2012), health care (Nathenson et al., 2014) and urban environments (Sallis et al., 2016). At an individual level, wellness assessments are useful in conjunction with wellness frameworks to direct professionals and individuals attention to where their strengths are and how to support the areas of concern for their wellness.

**Critical Perspectives of Wellness in Western Culture.** It is important to acknowledge the criticisms of the wellness in Western culture, which has been accused of cultural appropriation, commodification, and promoting a one-size-fits-all approach to wellness that does not take into account the diversity of individual experiences and cultural contexts (Lomas, 2015; Kuokkanen, 2020; Yao, 2022).

The appropriation of Indigenous concepts of wellness by Western societies raises further issues surrounding the commodification and exploitation of cultural knowledge for economic gain. Practices such as yoga from India (Bartholomew, 2020) and sage from Native American cultures (Berger, 2023) are often cherry-picked and dislocated from their broader socio-cultural contexts. The act of selectively taking elements of these practices without understanding their underlying meanings and significance to the originating culture can be seen as a form of cultural appropriation. As such, the wellness movement can be viewed as a manifestation of broader societal power structures that marginalise Indigenous peoples and exploit their knowledge for economic gain.

Additionally, there is a risk of universalising Western definitions and practices of wellness, which can overlook the unique ways that different cultures understand and approach wellness (Lomas, 2015; Dalziel et al., 2019; Kuokkanen, 2020). It is important to approach the study of wellness with a critical and culturally sensitive lens, acknowledging the limitations and potential harm of certain approaches.

The complex and evolving nature of wellness presents challenges in developing a precise, universally applicable definition. Therefore, it is common to define wellness within specific contexts, such as cultural settings, to gain a more nuanced understanding of its meaning and the contributing factors to an individual and collective sense of wellness. The implementation of wellness frameworks can aid in the identification of crucial factors related to wellness within diverse policies and broader directives in various fields, ultimately leading to improved outcomes for the respective communities.

## ***Māori Culture Shaped by a Western Context of Colonisation***

Māori culture has a rich history that has evolved over time, including language, art, music, and storytelling. However, the current context of Western values dominating Māori culture has had a significant impact on the way that Māori people live and interact with their culture. Wider determinants, such as colonisation, socio-economic status, and health disparities, also play a role in shaping the experiences of Māori people today. This section will explore the impact of cultural pressures shaped by a Western context of colonisation on Māori culture and the wider determinants affecting Māori.

Māori are the Indigenous peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand. The word Māori is a relatively modern term which was used to distinguish between people of Māori descent and Pākehā (European settlers), extending from the meaning of common or ordinary. It is believed that Māori descend from eastern Polynesia who arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand in stages between approximately 1350-1408 (Simmonds & Tanikawa, 2018). Māori culture evolved independently from other eastern Polynesian cultures over several centuries of isolation, giving rise to distinctive language, narratives, technologies, and arts. In 1840, Aotearoa New Zealand had an estimated Māori population of about 60,000 and 2,000 Europeans (Pool & Kukutai, 2018). In 2022, estimates of the Māori population within Aotearoa New Zealand as 892,200, or 17.2% of the total population (Stats NZ, 2022).

Culture is widely accepted as far from static; it is a fluid construct evolving with uniqueness, subtleties and nuances specific social groups. As such, sociologists often refer to culture as a social construct; it does not hold any intrinsic meaning outside of the broader social

and political values (Cohen, 2012). As culture evolves, cultural diffusion is the spreading or merging of assumptions, values and artefacts from one culture to another (Spencer-Oatey, 2012). The Māori renaissance is an example of the call for resistance to such cultural diffusion. It was a turning point in history, loosely defined between 1970 and the early 2000s, in which Māori took action to preserve and protect their culture, language, values and traditions that had been declining since the early days of European settlement (Moon, 2009).

Understanding the historical and political forces that have shaped the context of Aotearoa New Zealand in the present day is essential. The values immigrating from Western culture became the symbols of dominant mentality that transcended through power and authority (Gray, 2012). Māori developed the ability to pass quickly and effectively between a Māori culture to Western culture, including social norms, ethical values, belief systems, political systems, artefacts and technologies (Nikora, 2006). The fundamental pillars of health are not limited to the mind and body alone, but extend to external factors such as families, communities, employment opportunities, housing conditions, educational values, transportation, health policies, equitable access to goods and services, safety and security, and intergenerational experiences.

According to Durie (2001), Hamley and Le Grice (2020), the field of psychology in Aotearoa New Zealand has predominantly followed a Western interplay of biological, psychological, and social factors. However, it has been widely criticised for neglecting cultural factors. Culture can influence health beliefs, practices, and behaviours, and can impact how patients perceive and respond to illness (Tukuitonga, 2018). Without considering cultural factors, healthcare providers may not fully understand the needs and concerns of their patients and may

inadvertently perpetuate health disparities and inequalities. Further, mainstream psychology is seen to perpetuate Māori health inequities by underplaying the role of colonisation, institutionalised racism, and interpersonal racism. Hamley and Le Grice (2020) highlight the neoliberal structuring of the mental health system as constraining Māori healing possibilities. The prevailing Western psychological approaches prioritise structured, brief, and replicable interventions, often neglecting the spiritual, holistic, and non-linear methods of healing and recovery commonly utilised by Māori people (Bennett and Liu, 2018).

Widespread determinants can impact Māori wellness and contribute to the ongoing disparities in Māori outcomes. Positive wellness is challenging to maintain if environmental, social, political, historical and economic determinants impact the person's ability to live a self-determined life. Durie (1999) highlights the importance of health and wellness promotion to consider the nature and quality between a person and their surrounding environment. According to the Living Standards Framework (The Treasury, 2021), wider determinants of wellness include:

1. Environmental amenities: access to the natural environment, uncontaminated water, and good air quality.
2. Housing: access to low-cost and good-quality housing, free from overcrowding.
3. Income, consumption and wealth: free from child poverty or material hardship, nutritious food security, and access to disposable income.
4. Safety: free from injuries and violence, feeling safe within the house, workplace and community.

5. Employment: gaining adequate employment suitable for skillset and maintaining a work-life balance.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, pervasive determinants impact wellness, as shown in the examples below. As of June 2019, approximately 92,300 children, or 8.2%, lived in households that faced both moderate-severe material hardship (150,000 children, 13 in every 100) and income poverty (235,400 children, 21 children in every 100), according to Stats NZ (2020). Furthermore, low household income is strongly linked to food insecurity (Stats NZ, 2020), with the 2015/16 NZ Health Survey (Ministry of Health, 2019) showing that 42.8% of households earning \$50,000 per year or less experienced severe-to-moderate food insecurity. The 2018 Census revealed that 1% (41,644 people) of the total population is severely housing deprived, and over 200,000 children live in damp or mouldy housing (Stats NZ, 2020). According to the research conducted by Fanslow & Robinson (2011), around a third of women have reported experiencing physical or sexual intimate partner violence (IPV) at some stage during their lifetime. Lastly, physical and sexual IPV is experienced more than twice as often as other New Zealanders for gay, lesbian and bisexual adults (Ministry of Justice, 2021).

In conclusion, this section highlights the impact of Western values on Māori culture and the wider determinants affecting Māori people in Aotearoa New Zealand. It emphasises the importance of preserving the unique Māori worldview in promoting wellness for Māori people and communities. This section suggests that a bio-psycho-social-cultural approach is required to improve the wellness of Māori people, and there is a need to situate Māori epistemology through this approach. Current Māori wellness frameworks are examined to better understand the factors

that contribute to Māori wellness and the implementation of these frameworks that affirm their aspirations for flourishing futures.

## *Māori Wellness Frameworks in Practice*

The Māori wellness frameworks currently in use are based on a holistic approach informed by Māori values, beliefs, and practices. This study presents three prominent Māori wellness frameworks endorsed by the Ministry of Health (2015) and illustrates their practical application. The frameworks Te Wheke (Pere, 1982) and Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie, 1985), have established the foundation for various programs and subsequent frameworks designed for assessment and intervention, primarily aimed at promoting individual and whānau wellness. On the other hand, Te Pae Mahutonga (Durie, 1999) is often employed as a community framework for health promotion. The author draws parallels between these frameworks and the current research findings in the subsequent discussion chapter. In the conclusion chapter, the author evaluates the utility of the Hine Tē Rēhia framework in relation to these existing Māori wellness frameworks. It is important to recognise that efforts by Māori to implement Māori wellness frameworks are frequently encountered with resistance instead of endorsement within mainstream institutions (McNeill, 2009).

**Te Wheke.** The framework of Te Wheke (Pere, 1982), or the octopus, is a powerful metaphor that represents wellness within a unique social-cultural context. As Rangimarie Rose Pere theorised, the head of the octopus represents whānau, which is the foundation of Māori society and culture. Waiora, which is essential for achieving balance and harmony in life, is symbolised by the eyes of the octopus, representing total well-being for the individual and whānau. Each of the eight interwoven tentacles represents a specific dimension of wellness, which are all interconnected and essential for achieving a state of holistic well-being. These dimensions are:



1. Wairuatanga (spirituality): This dimension acknowledges the importance of spiritual connection, which is essential for a sense of purpose, meaning, and connection to the world.
2. Hinengaro (the mind): This dimension recognises the importance of mental well-being, including mental clarity, emotional stability, and a positive attitude towards life.
3. Taha Tinana (physical well-being): This dimension focuses on physical health and well-being, including exercise, nutrition, and rest.
4. Whanaungatanga (extended family): This dimension recognises the importance of relationships and social connections, with extended family, community, and culture.
5. Mauri (life force in people and objects): This dimension acknowledges the importance of the life force that exists within people and objects, which is essential for achieving balance and harmony in life.
6. Mana ake (unique identity of individuals and family): This dimension recognises the importance of individual and family identity, including culture, language, and heritage.
7. Whatumanawa (the open and healthy expression of emotion): This dimension recognises the importance of emotional well-being, including the ability to express emotions in a healthy and constructive way.
8. Hā a koro ma, a kui ma (breath of life from forbearers): This dimension recognises the importance of ancestry, history, and tradition, which provide a sense of connection and continuity across generations.

Te Wheke (Pere, 1982) presents a comprehensive and holistic approach to achieving wellness that is distinctive of Māori philosophical values and beliefs. The octopus is imbued with significant cultural importance in Māori society, given its believed role in facilitating Kupe's (early

explorer) navigation from Hawaiiiki, the ancestral homeland of the Māori, to Aotearoa New Zealand. Te Wheke (1982) has achieved broad recognition, yet it is crucial to acknowledge that its creation was shaped by cultural perspectives unique to Ngāi Tūhoe (iwi based in eastern North Island; McNeill, 2009). Nonetheless, it has been utilised to design various programs for assessment and intervention, primarily addressing the specific needs and priorities of Māori wellness. Numerous applications of Te Wheke (Pere, 1982) have been implemented, including mental health (Hodgson, 2018) and forensics (Leaming & Willis, 2016). Additionally, Te Wheke (Pere, 1982) is frequently utilised in research to explore Māori wellness (Hawaikirangi, 2021). The subsequent section will examine these applications in greater detail.

Hodgson (2018) examines the potential of aligning music therapy with Te Wheke (1982) to promote holistic wellness in modern mental health practices. The study focuses on the integration of taonga puoro, traditional Māori instruments, in music therapy in Aotearoa New Zealand, highlighting the opportunity to foster a sense of purpose and connection to culture and heritage. The integration of these approaches, according to Hodgson (2018) can facilitate the development of therapeutic techniques that recognise and support the unique cultural, social, and environmental context of Māori people.

Leaming and Willis (2016) identifies the potential incompatibility of the Risk Needs Responsivity (RNR) model, a widely used rehabilitation framework in offender treatment programs, with Te Wheke (Pere, 1982). The researchers contend that the RNR model may not adequately address the unique needs of Māori offenders or align with their values, beliefs, and practices. In contrast, they suggest that the Good Lives Model (GLM) may be a more appropriate

framework to align with Te Wheke (Pere, 1982) into treatment programs for offenders. The authors argue that by incorporating Te Wheke (Pere, 1982) with the GLM, Māori cultural values and identities are validated, and negative biases towards Māori, which are prevalent in society and the criminal justice system, can be addressed. This approach can help to combat institutional biases contributing to high rates of incarceration among Māori.

In the academic context, Pere's Te Wheke framework (1982) has been utilised in research to gain insights into Māori individual and whānau wellness. The framework has been employed to direct data collection and analysis, and to investigate the intricate interplay among the various dimensions of wellness within Māori communities. For instance, Hawaikirangi (2021) employed Te Wheke (1982) as an analytical framework to explore how individuals and whānau encounter wellness in a kaupapa Māori antenatal education program, Hapū Wānanga. In this context, the experiences of the individuals and whānau revealed the presence of all eight dimensions of wellness. However, two dimensions, namely whānaungatanga and hā ā koro mā ā kuia mā, emerged as particularly significant for their overall wellness. The implementation of this wellness framework was deemed advantageous for capturing the whānau's experiential content, as it underscored the importance of a holistic approach to healthcare interventions for Māori wellness.

Te Wheke, a wellness framework developed by Pere in 1982, is a holistic approach to achieving wellness based on Māori philosophical values and beliefs. The model has gained recognition and has been used to design various programs for assessment and intervention, particularly addressing the specific needs and priorities of Māori individuals and whānau. Although its development was influenced by cultural perceptions specific to the people of Ngāi

Tūhoe, Te Wheke (Pere, 1982) has been applied in mental health, forensics, and research to explore Māori wellness.

**Te Whare Tapa Whā.** Developed by Sir Mason Durie, a respected Māori health advocate and academic, Te Whare Tapa Whā (1985) is a widely acclaimed framework of wellness. Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie, 1985) is regarded as a universal Māori framework that embodies the majority of cross-tribal philosophical thought, in contrast to Te Wheke (1985; McNeill, 2009). The former incorporates significant Māori cultural influences into its model, and as such, it is widely accepted as a comprehensive and inclusive framework (McNeill, 2009). The framework is built around the metaphor of a house, where each wall signifies a distinct dimension of wellness. The four walls of the house are:

1. Taha tinana (physical health): This dimension focuses on the physical body, including physical activity, nutrition, sleep, and vitality.
2. Taha wairua (spiritual health): This dimension recognises the importance of spiritual connection, which is essential for a sense of purpose, connection to the universe, and belonging.
3. Taha hinengaro (mental health): This dimension focuses on mental health and well-being, including mental clarity, emotional stability, and a positive attitude towards life.
4. Taha whānau (family health): This dimension recognises the importance of relationships and social connections, including relationships with their family, friends, community, and wider society.

Māori advisers from the Ministry of Education (1999) recommended the inclusion of a taha whenua dimension in the Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie, 1985) framework. The dimension acknowledges the role of whenua as the foundation for the wharenuī (meeting house) and, subsequently, the wellness of Māori individuals and whānau. However, this dimension was dismissed due to potential controversy regarding ongoing land grievances under Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi) with the State (Hokowhitu, 2004; Heaton, 2015). Durie (1985) implicitly recognised whenua as a critical component of Māori wellness however, does not explicitly state it as a dimension in this framework. This omission could result in practitioners unfamiliar with Māori culture and values overlooking the significance of whenua, which could limit their ability to address Māori needs effectively (Hokowhitu, 2004; Heaton, 2015).

The framework, Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie, 1985), has gained widespread acceptance and implementation among cross-government sectors, organisations, communities and individuals. The model has also been influential in shaping health policies and planning in Aotearoa New Zealand to enhance Māori wellness in diverse contexts. In the subsequent section, this paper explores various examples of the application of Te Whare Tapa Whā in different contexts, such as health (Thorp, 2021) and corrections (Hazou et al., 2021). Moreover, the author discusses the need for increasing Te Whare Tapa Whā training and education in the social-service field (Tallon & Domdom, 2022; Phillips, 2016).

The implementation of Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie, 1985) framework to examine the benefits of dance is demonstrated by Thorp (2021). The author suggests that dancing can be a way

to focus on and attune to different aspects of wellness, including spiritual, family, and physical health. The idea of the "thinking body" suggests that the body is not just a physical entity, but also an integral part of the mental dimension (Thorp, 2021). Through dance, individuals can become more aware of their bodies and their needs, and develop a greater sense of connection with themselves. The author also highlights the importance of shared experiences and connections in promoting holistic wellness. The idea of a "muscular bonding" suggests a physical connection between dancers, which can promote a sense of belonging and connection to others (Thorp, 2021). This connection is not just limited to the physical aspect of dance, but can also extend to other aspects of wellness, such as whānau and community.

A documentary theatre production based on the Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie, 1985) framework, explored by Hazou et al. (2021). The group of participants used it as a part of their rehabilitation program for being convicted of sex offences in Aotearoa New Zealand. The group, Ngā Pātū Kōrero, was able to demonstrate how Māori approaches to justice prioritise a holistic approach, rather than punishment and retribution (Hazou et al., 2021). Through the production, the incarcerated men were able to share their stories and perspectives with the audience, challenging stereotypes and stigmas associated with sex offenders and promoting a more nuanced and empathetic understanding of their experiences (Hazou et al., 2021). Ultimately, the use of Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie, 1985) as a dramaturgical and theatrical device highlights the importance of Māori culture and knowledge in addressing the legacies of colonialism within Western criminal justice systems.

A concerning gap in social-service training was identified by Tallon and Domdom (2022) in relation to the spiritual aspect of Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie, 1985). The authors suggest that social-service practitioners in Aotearoa New Zealand may not be adequately equipped to address with wairua in their client's lives. This can lead to a lack of understanding and support for clients who may be struggling with spiritual issues or seeking guidance in this area. In addition, Phillips (2016) identified that non-Māori social-work students are less likely to apply spirituality to their practice, suggesting that increased education and training in this area could be beneficial for all social-service practitioners.

Te Whare Tapa Whā incorporates significant Māori cultural influences. It is widely accepted as a comprehensive and inclusive framework, and has gained widespread acceptance and implementation among cross-government sectors, organisations, communities, and individuals. The model has been influential in shaping health policies and planning in Aotearoa New Zealand to enhance Māori wellness in diverse contexts. Te Whare Tapa Whā has been applied in different contexts, such as health and corrections, and there is a need to increase training and education in the social-service field.

**Te Pae Mahutonga.** Te Pae Mahutonga (1999) is a Māori framework of wellness by Sir Mason Durie, widely adopted for health promotion. Te Pae Mahutonga derives its name from the Southern Cross constellation that holds immense importance in Māori culture, serving as a vital navigational aid and featuring prominently in Māori mythology. Te Pae Mahutonga (1999) is considered an exclusively Māori framework as it provides an articulation of the intricate nature of Māori philosophical concepts and incorporates the socio-cultural outcomes of the colonial experience into the framework. It focuses on six key elements to enhance individuals and whānau to have greater control of their wellness. These six elements are:

1. Mauriora: the life force that sustains well-being and vitality, cultural identity, and access to Māori culture.
2. Waiora: the essence of life and is associated with the environment and the interconnectedness of all things.
3. Toiora: promoting healthy lifestyles.
4. Te Oranga: facilitating participation in society.
5. Ngā Manukura: leaders who are responsible for guiding and supporting others towards well-being.
6. Te Mana Whakahaere: the power of self-determination and the ability to make choices that support well-being.

Good health cannot be prescribed. Communities... must ultimately be able to demonstrate a level of autonomy and self-determination in promoting their own health. It is important therefore



that health workers do not assume such a high level of leadership that community autonomy is unwittingly undermined (Durie, 1999, p. 5).

Durie extended the frameworks of Te Wheke (1982) and Te Whare Tapa Whā (1985) to develop Te Pae Mahutonga (Durie, 1999). The penultimate framework has similarities to previous models, but it specifically prioritises the advancement of Māori individual and whānau wellness by emphasising the significance of ngā manukura (leadership) and te mana whakahaere (autonomy). Its use has contributed to the development of policies and strategies that prioritise Māori aspirations, values, and practices. In the next section, the author explores examples of how Te Pae Mahutonga (1999) has been applied in several settings including health policy (Herbert et al., 2019) and infrastructure policy (Ryks et al., 2018).

The shortcomings of previous health policies highlight the need for a transformational approach that prioritises health equity in Aotearoa New Zealand (Herbert et al., 2019). The framework of Te Pae Mahutonga (Durie, 1999) offers a valuable pathway for achieving this goal, to allow Māori to re-establish ngā manukura and te mana whakahaere as prerequisites for healthy populations. The two aforementioned components are imperative in facilitating the empowerment of Māori individuals, affording them agency over their own health outcomes. However, it was argued by Herbert et al. (2019) that these prerequisites were not upheld in the previous health policy context, which in turn contributes to the ongoing disparities in health, sense of cultural disconnection and disempowerment experienced by Māori. Without effective leadership and self-determination, Māori may feel powerless in determining their own health outcomes, which can lead to a lack of engagement with health services and poorer health outcomes. The emergence of

the Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) Act 2022 within the current health policy context is a positive indication of progress.

Ryks et al. (2018) propose a new framework that links Te Pae Mahutonga (Durie, 1999) with the evaluation of various forms of community capital and infrastructure in small settlements in Aotearoa New Zealand. The authors propose the prospect of amalgamating various measurement frameworks to establish an inclusive space where Māori frameworks are incorporated and official statistics are aligned with the requirements of iwi and hapū, thus enhancing their participation and engagement in the process. This approach can provide culturally appropriate tools for measuring wellness and improve policies and interventions tailored to the unique needs of these communities. However, the study acknowledges the potential unreliability of data from the 2018 New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings, which could affect its results.

Hapeta et al. (2019) have utilised Te Pae Mahutonga (1999) as a framework for guiding data collection and analysis. They found that the integration of Māori knowledge and cultural practices had a positive impact on the sense of belonging, identity, and leadership of a provincial rugby team, as well as their mental and emotional well-being. The use of Māori forms of storytelling, such as pūrākau and whakataukī, proved to be effective in communicating cultural values and knowledge (Hapeta et al., 2019). The study provides a powerful example of how the incorporation of Māori knowledge can improve wellness and build strong relationships with local communities. The success of the rugby team on the field demonstrates the link between wellness and performance, while also highlighting how organisations can utilise Māori knowledge and

cultural practices to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for all team members and fans (Hapeta et al., 2019).

Te Pae Mahutonga (Durie, 1999) is a Māori wellness framework that focuses on six key elements to enhance individuals and whānau wellness by prioritising ngā manukura and te mana whakahaere. It is exclusively Māori, incorporating the complexity of Māori philosophical thought and the socio-cultural outcomes of the colonial experience. It has been widely used for health promotion and policy development, and has been applied in various settings including health and infrastructure policies.

These three Māori wellness frameworks have been endorsed by the Ministry of Health (2015) and have been widely used across various fields. These frameworks were developed to prioritise and foreground Māori values, beliefs, and perspectives on wellness, which differ from those in Western wellness literature. The frameworks acknowledge the holistic nature of Māori wellness and emphasise the interconnectedness between the individual, their whānau, their environment, and the social, cultural, historical, and political context of Māori. The objective of this research is not to supplant existing Māori wellness frameworks, but rather to propose an alternative tool for expanding the scope of research parameters. The present study examines the relationship between the current Māori wellness frameworks and participants' feedback on whānau wellness in the discussion chapter. In the concluding chapter, the author evaluates the applicability and relevance of the Hine Tē Rēhia framework (Nikora et al., 2021) in relation to these three Māori wellness frameworks.

### *The Vehicle of Kapa Haka*

Kapa haka is a customary cultural practice among the Māori people, characterised by group performances of action songs. Its roots can be traced back to pre-European times, and over time, it has undergone transformations to adapt to modern-day contexts. A typical kapa haka performance involves synchronised singing, dancing, and coordinated movements, encompassing action, timing, posture, footwork, and sound. The performance typically comprises various brackets, including the warm-up song (waiata tira), entrance song (whakaeke), action song (waiata-ā-ringa), challenge (haka), traditional chant (mōteatea), coordinated swinging of light ball on a string (poi), and closing song (whakawātea). Each bracket, except for mōteatea and haka, is harmonised and often performed alongside a guitar, conch shell, the sounds of poi and weaponry, and body percussion, such as the stamping of feet. The songs feature distinctive bodily and aural signals, such as pūkana (dilating of the eyes), unique to Māori culture. Kapa haka groups may comprise several to dozens of individuals, connected by family, iwi, school, or other associations.

Kapa haka is a means by which tūpuna and Atua impart important teachings and wisdom, which are transmitted from one generation to the next. In Māori cosmology, the sun god Tama-nui-te-rā had two wives, Hine-raumati (summer maiden) and Hine-takurua (winter maiden). According to the pūrākau, haka originated from the arrival of Hine-raumati, whose presence on hot days is signified by a quivering appearance in the air rising from the ground. Kapa haka performances often tell pūrākau of Māori history, which convey important lessons about courage, resilience, and the interconnectedness of all living things. Through these narratives, participants are encouraged to reflect on their place in the world and to think

critically about their relationship with themselves, others, and the environment. It is a long-standing lifestyle in Māoridom and connects to eastern Polynesian cultures.

The importance of kapa haka as a cultural practice is widely acknowledged; however, its value has only recently been comprehensively documented or understood. In the last decade, recent studies have begun to explore the multifaceted and multi-layered benefits of kapa haka beyond its cultural and artistic significance (Pihama et al., 2014). These studies propose that kapa haka has a positive impact on various aspects, including social cohesion, health, education, and economic vitality (Pihama et al., 2014). Kapa haka also contributes to the vitality of Māori culture and language revitalisation, fostering cultural pride and identity (Pihama et al., 2014). The significance of kapa haka as a wellness tool has long been acknowledged in the te ao Māori context. Efforts are underway to incorporate it into various programs designed for assessment and intervention, primarily aimed at promoting individual and whānau wellness. The transformative effects of kapa haka on wellness are expected to benefit more people as efforts to promote and recognise its importance continue to grow.

This study introduces the national-level kapa haka competition in Aotearoa New Zealand, emphasising its significance as a platform for cultural reclamation both at the individual and collective levels, as well as its economic contribution. Following this, a scoping report of current literature is conducted within the health, corrections, and education sectors in Aotearoa New Zealand and globally. In doing so, we demonstrate the therapeutic application of kapa haka, its role in cultural restoration for individuals, and its potential to nurture skills and values for a flourishing life.

**Te Matatini.** “The place that Matatini holds cannot be underestimated” (Sharples, 2023). Te Matatini is a nationally recognised Māori kapa haka festival and competition for kaihaka (performers) and enthusiasts across Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia, held for 50 years. Te Matatini plays a vital role within Māori culture and cultural reclamation, promoting tikanga, mātauranga and te reo Māori. According to Dale (2023), the compositions are inspired by current issues and events, urging Māori to take action. Thus, it is a balance between competition and kaupapa. Moreover, Te Matatini provides a valuable experience for the people of Aotearoa New Zealand and worldwide, with the festival attracting over 1 million participants and spectators, online and in-person (Te Pāti Māori, 2019). Te Matatini, and kapa haka in general, is more than a performance. The flourishing of kapa haka in the 21st century can be attributed to a well-established regional and national infrastructure that ensures the continuity of kapa haka and its associated activities. Te Matatini takes an active role in developing kapa haka in communities, promoting the value and transferable skills gained through kapa haka engagement.

Kia ūkaipō anō te reo. Revitalise and normalise te reo Māori in the home and community (Dale, 2023, p. 17).

According to Te Puni Kōkiri (2019), the UNESCO Atlas of Languages has categorised te reo Māori as a vulnerable language, and participation in Te Matatini could enhance language proficiency, which is crucial for engaging in the range of kapa haka disciplines at the event. Te Huia and Fox (2020) conducted a survey of 980 individuals to understand the motivations and barriers to using te reo Māori, of which 432 people completed the survey while present at Te

Matatini and 548 completed the survey elsewhere. According to the results, participants who attended Te Matatini were more likely to report a high level of proficiency in speaking te reo Māori compared to those who did not attend. Additionally, the study found a connection between individuals who perceived te reo Māori as both "cool" and "useful" and their attendance at Te Matatini, despite reporting higher levels of language anxiety. Overall, Te Matatini provides a relevant and contextual environment for the use of te reo Māori not only during the festival but year-round, and it reinforces the cultural identity of Māori people.

The scoping report by Pihama et al. (2014) identified two crucial and mostly unrecognised economic contributions related to kapa haka. The first area is the 'silent' economy, which involves a surge of individuals to a specific area with the intention of endorsing a kapa haka event or undertaking. This can generate benefits for businesses in the area, including increased tourism, accommodation bookings, and local spending. The second area pertains to the considerable amount of "productivity" activity, which involves the number of unpaid hours that volunteers contribute to support kapa haka events and activities. This includes the time and effort put in by performers, tutors, administrators, and volunteers, who contribute their skills and knowledge without financial compensation. The scoping report revealed economic advantages related to kapa haka; however, it also recognised some obstacles, especially for those who participate at the competitive level, which may cause financial difficulties. Nevertheless, the report (Pihama et al., 2014) acknowledged that kapa haka communities are highly skilled in generating funds, and they often utilise methods such as fundraising events and sponsorships. Overall, the report highlights the significant economic contribution of kapa haka and the need for ongoing Government support and resources to ensure the sustainability of this important cultural practice.

Te Pāti Māori, after Te Matatini 2023, is advocating for more funding towards future kapa haka events; “within kapa haka lies our health strategy, mental health strategy, education strategy, te reo strategy, reconnection strategy, wellbeing strategy... and more funding means all of these” (2023). Meade (2021) has discovered a model centred on Māori perspectives to comprehend the financial impact of Te Matatini on the national economy. This model utilises data from post-event surveys conducted in 2017. The author shows that the willingness to pay (WTP) is estimated to be \$1,400 to \$1,800 per visitor group (10 people), or \$4.3 million to \$5.6 million for all visiting groups. Meade (2021) presents evidence suggesting that official assessments underestimate the consumer well-being or willingness to pay (WTP), which should be further investigated in future studies. The exploratory report can contribute to the growing number of research leveraging policy-making for the allocation of funds towards kapa haka.

Overall, Te Matatini plays an important role in Māori culture by providing a platform for performance, cultural reclamation, and economic-growth, and by promoting Māori language and culture to a wider audience. In summary, the positive impacts of Te Matatini are abundant and can have far-reaching effects on both individuals and communities.



**Benefits of Kapa Haka in Healthcare.** Empirical evidence suggests a positive correlation between participation in kapa haka and improved wellness outcomes in the healthcare domain. Moy et al. (2006) reported that kapa haka was a physical activity of moderate to vigorous intensity for females and males, respectively, with Metabolic Equivalent of Task (MET) values ranging from 4.3 to 7.1. The authors compared this finding to golf, which had a MET value of 4.8, and rugby, which had a MET value of 8.3, as noted in the Compendium of Physical Activity (2011). In 2018, Zhu and colleagues found that kapa haka meets intensity guidelines and anaerobic energy expenditure scores which qualifies the activity for health promotion and disease prevention.

Riegle van West et al. (2017) inferred that poi is equally efficacious as Tai Chi in enhancing both physical and cognitive function. The study investigated the comparison between the disciplines of poi and Tai Chi in a sample of healthy adults, revealing enhancements in postural stability, limb strength and range of motion, memory, and simple attention. More recently, Sirs and Meek (2021) examined the benefits of poi practice for social workers, as well as their colleagues and clients. The results of their investigation demonstrated that self-regulation, expression, and body awareness were enhanced by the utilisation of rhythmic movement, embodied flow states, creative and emotional expression, introspective subjective experience, joviality and positive affect, instantaneous sensory feedback, reciprocal social attunement, and symbolic learning.

Wirihana (2008) provides a brief account of the positive impact of a kapa haka programme on mental wellness and feelings of accomplishment among participants with significant mental

health diagnoses. Similarly, Hollands and colleagues (2015) explored kapa haka as a sensory modulation activity from an occupational therapy context. The study identified three primary themes in relation to the practice of poi: developing a sense of connection and identity, enhancing physicality, and experiencing embodied emotions.

In 2012, Te Huia and Liu found that Māori participants belonging to a kapa haka group had reduced stress from acculturation in Japan compared to their non-Māori counterparts. The findings added weight to the Te Puni Kōkiri (2007) report of Māori who belong to kapa haka groups in Australia. The activity was found to have provided a safe space where Māori values and beliefs could be practised and respected within an international context, allowing Māori an expression of identity within a minoritised environment (Te Huia & Liu, 2012). Ting-Toomey (2005) suggests that these factors likely contributed to the participants ability to practise identity negotiation without an overbearing level of vulnerability.

There exist significant health disparities faced by the Māori population in Aotearoa New Zealand. Compared to non-Māori, the likelihood of mortality due to cardiovascular disease is twice as high among Māori people (Ministry of Health, 2018), and in contrast to non-Māori children, Māori children have a mortality rate that is 1.5 times higher (Health Navigator, 2022). On average, Māori people also die seven years earlier than non-Māori (Health Navigator, 2022). In addition to these concerning statistics, Māori people exhibit a higher prevalence of type 2 diabetes, asthma, and arthritis compared to non-Māori populations (Lyndon, 2021). Māori women have lower rates of access to cervical and breast screening (The Lancet Oncology, 2021), and Māori people exhibit higher incidence and mortality rates for various forms of cancer compared to non-Māori

populations (Health Navigator, 2022). The issue of mental health is also of significant concern, as Māori people are more susceptible to being diagnosed with a mental health condition and experiencing suicide-related deaths (Ministry of Health, 2018). These health disparities reflect long-standing inequities in healthcare access and outcomes for Māori people in Aotearoa New Zealand. Addressing these disparities will require concerted efforts to address systemic barriers and to provide equitable access to healthcare services and resources for Māori communities.

**Kapa Haka as a Rehabilitative and Educative Pathway in Correctional Settings.** Kapa haka has been included in various programmes in Aotearoa New Zealand prisons for many decades, yet its potential as a key rehabilitative and educative pathway remains to be fully explored in the corrections system. In Aotearoa New Zealand, Māori represent 17.4% of the overall population (Stats NZ, 2022), yet Māori men make up 25% of men in prison and Māori women represent 67% of women in prison (Ministry of Justice, 2022). For the past four decades, the level of over-representation of Māori in the corrections system has remained constant (Mihaere, 2015).

In 2020, an annual inter-site Whakataetae kapa haka competition was initiated at the request of the Minister of Corrections Hon Kelvin Davis. His request came on the heels of the launch of the departmental strategy, Hōkai Rangi, which focuses on changing how the department works to redress the disproportionate representation of Māori within the criminal justice system. "This is a chance for prisoners and staff to celebrate Māori culture while building teamwork, discipline and a sense of achievement" states Hon Kelvin Davis (New Zealand Government, 2021). Moreover, Davis recognised the competition's positive impact on the relationships; "it created whanaungatanga within the groups" (New Zealand Government,

2021). Sixteen of the country's 18 prisons participated in the 2021 Whakataetae kapa haka competition, performing 13 brackets to wide audiences including whānau and mana whenua.

Research has shown widespread acceptance that the validation of Māori cultural identity is positively associated with a reduction in Māori offending, imprisonment, and recidivism. Appropriately, the response from Ara Poutama Aotearoa Department of Corrections has been to focus policies and programmes towards providing culturally relevant environments with increased opportunities and resources to support the development of cultural identity. Mihaere (2015) argues that the current response to "individualise Māori offending by focusing on the degree of Māori cultural identity inherent in specific Māori offenders" (p. 3) is inadequate. Despite the significant impact of socio-economic inequalities on Māori communities, there is a tendency to overlook these factors and focus solely on the role of cultural identity. Moreover, Mihaere (2015) questions the authenticity of Māori cultural identity policy and programmes the Department of Corrections have nestled within pre-existing western-based therapeutic programmes. Māori argue that such policies and programmes do not resemble Māori culture which leads Mihaere (2015) to claim that the response from Corrections is an attempt to meet Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations rather than a sincere attempt to decrease the number of Māori within the corrections system.

In addition, McIntosh (2007) applauds initiatives in the rehabilitation and restorative justice sector that recognise the importance of a robust cultural identity. The socio-political realities in which individuals and collectives are situated shape and inform individual and collective identities. One principle explanation is the parallel between powerlessness and identity formation. McIntosh (2007) posits that forced identities are primarily shaped by the

external group's perceptions as opposed to being internally formulated by the individual. Elizabeth Stanley brings light to the power of state violence to imprint a sense of shame and stigma on people within correctional settings (McIntosh & Coster, 2017). The sobering note is that many Māori have moved beyond the cloud of shame and fear to learn te reo Māori or develop their cultural competence only when they have entered the corrections system. McIntosh (2007) highlighted that funding for such initiatives only comes at the prison juncture rather than at more positive stages such as mainstream schooling.

Kapa haka has not been fully integrated into the corrections system in a way that maximises its benefits. Further exploration of kapa haka as a rehabilitative pathway could provide new opportunities for addressing issues such as recidivism and improving the outcomes of prisoners as they transition back into society.

**The Cultural Pedagogy of Kapa Haka in Education.** The 2018 Census data reveal disparities in educational attainment between Māori and non-Māori students in Aotearoa New Zealand. Although 80.6% of Māori aged 15 to 24 possessed at least a level 1 qualification, which indicates a positive trend, it remains inferior to the national rate of 85.8% (Stats NZ, 2020). There is also a significant gap in reading, writing, and mathematics between the progress of Māori students and their NZ European peers (Stats NZ, 2020). One of the contributing factors to the lower rates of educational attainment among Māori students is their lower rates of regular attendance in both primary and secondary school (Stats NZ, 2020). A noteworthy statistic is that only one out of every eight young Māori pursue bachelor-level education, while one in every five young non-Māori do so (Stats NZ, 2020). This highlights the need for greater support and resources to be directed towards increasing Māori participation and success in education.

An important decision to include kapa haka as an academic, credit-earning subject for students was in 2002 by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA; Whitinui, 2010). Prior to this milestone, kapa haka was a widely-accepted extracurricular activity that merely recognised the unique learning context employing culturally-responsive pedagogies. Boyd et al. (2021) found that kapa haka in schooling was “a vehicle for many things – learning te reo Māori, growing understandings about mātauranga, strengthening cultural identity and pride, and fostering learning, and a sense of belonging to a collective” (p. 2). Moreover, participating in kapa haka was observed to benefit those who participated as tutors, organisers, and audience members (Boyd et al., 2021).

In a year-long study, authors Rubie and colleagues (2004) conducted a cultural intervention to increase self-esteem and locus of control for a primary school kapa haka team. The authors

found that kapa haka students demonstrated marked improvements in their perception of school life and engagement in learning compared with other groups. Though not statistically significant, the kapa haka students scored higher on self-esteem and locus of control psychometric tests (Rubie et al., 2004).

Whitinui (2010) conducted a study examining the utilisation of kapa haka as an Indigenous-based pedagogy to enhance educational outcomes for Māori secondary school students. The study involved Māori students and teachers in a mainstream school to evaluate the implications for schooling and teacher practices. The findings indicate that the integration of a collaborative and effective pedagogy such as kapa haka into the curriculum can increase Māori student participation, including interest, attendance, engagement, and academic success. Adopting an Indigenous-based learning pedagogy enhances academic benefits, allowing students to demonstrate and share their acquired knowledge.

Hall and Bowden's (2021) report investigates the participation of students in NCEA Māori Performing Arts (MPA) Levels 1-3 from 2014 to 2019 in Aotearoa New Zealand. The report highlights that the MPA cohorts consistently achieved higher than the 'all Māori' and 'all students' cohorts across all three levels of NCEA, except for University Entrance (UE) attainment through Achievement Standards. This is due to the fact that MPA is solely based on the accumulation of Unit Standards, which are not considered in the attainment of UE. Subsequent to the previous curriculum, modifications have been implemented to incorporate a novel subject, Te Ao Kapa Haka, into the NCEA programme. This subject will undergo initial testing in 30 schools, in conjunction with the recently launched Te Takanga o te Wā and Aotearoa New Zealand Histories

(Dale, 2023). Standards for NCEA Level 3 are currently under development, hence Te Ao Kapa Haka is not yet accessible to secondary schools (Dale, 2023).

There is growing research exploring the value of kapa haka within the education system in Aotearoa New Zealand. The need for greater support and resources to be directed towards increasing Māori participation and success in education using a culturally-responsive context such as kapa haka. Overall, kapa haka is a long-standing Māori activity that has recently been recognised for its multifaceted benefits beyond cultural and artistic significance. Participation in kapa haka has been identified as contributing to various benefits, such as fostering social cohesion, promoting positive health and educational outcomes, contributing to economic vitality, and supporting the revitalisation of Māori culture and language. Efforts are underway to understand the transformative effects of kapa haka on wellness.



## *Hine Te Rēhia Framework*

Kapa haka can be recognised as a prominent vehicle of wellness. The development of the Māori framework Hine Te Rēhia, which encompasses the interconnectedness of a Māori perspective, was initiated by Nikora et al. (2021). The Hine Te Rēhia framework (Nikora et al., 2021) was developed to understand the importance and contribution kapa haka makes to the lives of people involved from supporters and spectators to those involved in kura (school) and Te Matatini. The authors have discerned 49 factors that contribute to value, which are categorised into four value domains that correspond to the Hine Te Rēhia framework (Nikora et al., 2021), namely Tūrangawaewae, Mātauranga, Ihiihi, and Hauora.

1. Tūrangawaewae – a sense of belonging and community: kapa haka provides invaluable opportunities to be Māori and an integral foundation for belonging, community and identity. Kapa haka renews and reconnects people to whakapapa, whanaungatanga, whenua, te reo Māori and te ao Māori. Kapa haka is a group activity; building connections and resources of support.
2. Mātauranga – knowledge and learning: kapa haka provide pathways to mātauranga, learning, growth, heritage and Māoritanga through a unique context employing a culturally-responsive pedagogy. It demands rigorous intellectual undertaking for kaihaka builds positive capabilities and skills for people.
3. Ihiihi – expression: kapa haka provides expressions of emotions in creative and ineffable ways, to perform the Māori world into everyday existence. The vocal and physical activity allows various feelings and emotions to be held, channelled, regulated and expressed.

4. Hauora – well-being: there exist unique Māori hauora practices in kapa haka. It is a holistic practice that balances and integrates social, physical, mental and spiritual domains.

The Hine Te Rēhia framework (Nikora et al., 2021) is a Māori framework developed to understand the contribution kapa haka makes to the lives of people involved. Kapa haka provides opportunities for people to connect with their Māori identity, community, and heritage, while also promoting learning, creative expression, and holistic wellness through culturally-responsive pedagogy and unique Māori hauora practices.

## ***Overall Research Objective***

The research investigates the transferability of the Hine Te Rēhia framework (Nikora et al., 2021) by employing empirical evidence to comprehend whānau wellness. The study explores compatibility between the findings and the framework, and whether further elaboration of the framework is necessary through specification of additional variables.

## ***Research Question***

The overarching research questions will guide this research:

1. How does the Hine Te Rēhia framework inform whānau wellness?
  - a. How does Tūrangawaewae inform whānau wellness?
  - b. How does Mātauranga inform whānau wellness?
  - c. How does Ihiihi inform whānau wellness?
  - d. How does Hauora inform whānau wellness?

This study explores how the concept of wellness is perceived across cultures, specifically within the Māori perspective, which encompasses physical, spiritual, mental, emotional, and social dimensions, and is interconnected with the natural environment and the universe. However, the Western paradigm of colonisation has influenced the cultural context of Māori, resulting in significant impacts on their wellness outcomes. To address this issue, Māori wellness frameworks have been developed, including kapa haka, which lacks academically-grounded attention to its wellness benefits. This study aims to deepen understanding of whānau wellness through the application of the Hine Te Rēhia framework (Nikora et al., 2021), highlighting the importance of

context in shaping wellness and providing valuable insights into the relevance of these frameworks for improving wellness outcomes for Māori.

## **Chapter Four: Methods**

In this chapter, the theoretical framework that informed the research and ensured adherence to the research objectives while upholding the participants' mana is delineated. The project is firmly rooted in the principles of Kaupapa Māori research, which acknowledges Māori ways of being and seeks to validate our mātauranga and tikanga in order to advance tino rangatiratanga for Māori (Henry & Pene, 2001; Moewaka Barnes, 2000; Pihama, 2001). An essential aspect of Kaupapa Māori research is the critical examination of how knowledge is created and presented, which requires personal involvement in the research process to convey how the author's own identity has actively shaped it, and the inclusion of participants' accounts (Le Grice, 2014). Subsequent to this, a comprehensive explanation of the research methods will be presented, encompassing a retrospective, qualitative examination of the meaning and value of whānau wellness. The chapter will culminate by explicating the methodology for scrutinising the acquired data. It is noteworthy that the study was sanctioned by the Waipapa Taumata Rau University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee [UAHPEC24371].

### ***Kaupapa Māori Research***

The development of Kaupapa Māori research was driven by Māori political resistance and recalcitrance for mana motuhake (sovereignty, authority) and tino rangatiratanga. It offers a theoretical and practical transformative strategy for Māori to challenge an oppressive social order maintained through colonial imperialism (Pihama, 2012). This builds upon the heritage of tūpuna, who were adept at holding knowledge and formulating theories about their own world (Pihama, 2001; Pihama, 2012). However, a central challenge for Kaupapa Māori researchers is addressing

the tensions between our communities and the academy, which has perpetuated epistemological violence upon Indigenous peoples by granting universal applicability to Eurocentric positivist approaches (Henry & Pene, 2001; Le Grice, 2014). To challenge this systemic racism, Kaupapa Māori research centralises diverse knowledge forms within our research, rendering our communities as experts of knowledge (Henry & Pene, 2001).

Kaupapa Māori Theory (Smith, 1997) principles were essential in shaping the research's design, methods, and implementation to uphold the tapu of participants, their relationships, and knowledge. Online recruitment and surveys were employed to acknowledge and mediate participants' socioeconomic and home complexities while also providing inexpensive and safe access to a diverse network of participants beyond the researcher's geographic location. The online survey was estimated to take 5-10 minutes to complete, and participants were given the option to leave answer spaces blank or exit the survey without saving their responses. The research team, the Head of School, and the Ethics Committee were available to address any questions or concerns regarding the research. To respect the participants' tapu, anonymity was guaranteed throughout the research process, and participation was voluntary, ensuring tino rangatiratanga.

Eketone (2008) emphasises the importance of Māori voices within communities to build understanding and knowledge, rather than solely relying on the Western academy. The survey design centred on valuing and legitimising how participants collectively understand and value wellness from a Māori perspective. The research prioritised participants deeply embedded in relationships and whānau structures, and survey responses were treated as taonga (treasures), with researchers upholding the tapu of participants, their relationships, and knowledge. The data was

password-protected and only accessible to the research team. Te Tiriti o Waitangi is the foundation of this study, acknowledging participants' right to self-determination, autonomy, and freedom to decide their destiny without inequality barriers. The research preface recognises the Crown's responsibility to safeguard Māori values, traditions, practices, and taonga such as te reo Māori, mātauranga Māori, and te ao Māori.

### *Epistemology*

Kaupapa Māori, while it shares similarities with some Western theories like critical theory, maintains its unique epistemological and ontological perspective. Although similar theories aim to challenge the power dynamics in research and wider society, Kaupapa Māori situates power dynamics within the context of ongoing colonisation in Aotearoa New Zealand. It originates from Māori ways of being and knowing, from mātauranga and tikanga Māori (Pihama, 2012), which encompasses distinctive theories about understanding visible and invisible phenomena (Hikuroa, 2017; Smith et al., 2016). It does not seek to claim superiority over Western paradigms or divide knowledge forms, but rather privileges Māori ways of understanding and knowing (Smith, 1999).

As Attride-Stirling (2001), Holloway and Todres (2003) suggest, it is essential that researchers outline their epistemological and knowledge assumptions, in addition to applying a method to a sample. In doing so, the researcher is guided by the epistemology in how they theorise meaning. The current research was initially planned to employ reflexive thematic analysis with a critical realism perspective, which centred around the lived experiences of the participants while also highlighting the cultural and social foundations underlying their narratives. However, as the

analysis stage progressed, it became evident that social constructionism was more apt to capture the subjective experiences of the participants.

A social constructionism epistemology was utilised to shift the focus away from Western discourses and instead centre the diverse ways Māori whānau make sense of the world. Social constructionism argues that there is no singular objective truth and knowledge is constructed through language, culture, history and social interactions (Braun & Clarke, 2021). According to social constructionism, there is no objective reality that exists independent of our perceptions and interpretations of it; rather, our understanding of reality is shaped by the social and cultural contexts in which we live (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Social constructionism and Kaupapa Māori research open up new possibilities and alternatives to the current status quo that can limit and marginalise.

Subsequent discussion will provide more in-depth analysis of data, which commonly focuses on either the semantic or latent level (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A semantic approach involves identifying themes based solely on what participants have explicitly stated or written, without considering any underlying meanings. In contrast to a semantic approach, a latent approach involves a deeper analysis that goes beyond the surface level of the sample to uncover and examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualisations that shape the semantic content. As this research is framed by a social constructionism perspective, a latent approach is utilised to represent the subjective reality of participants, which is influenced by their social and cultural contexts. This approach is more appropriate for uncovering the underlying social constructs that shape participants' experiences and perspectives.



## *Ontology*

Western research has undermined Indigenous knowledge forms and suppressed Māori ontologies (ways of being). Indigenous ways of being and knowing are tied to the environment and whakapapa, whanaungatanga, whenua and Atua (Smith et al., 2016). The degradation of relationships between these domains diminishes the mana and tapu. In contrast, Western ways of knowing emphasise individualism and locate the person as a unique entity separate from the world (Smith, 1999). A Māori ontological position recognises that subjective perspectives validate the diverse lived realities of Māori and questions the idea of a singular truth that can represent us all (Le Grice, 2014; Pihama 2012). Rejecting an objective ontology, Māori "being" is in a constant state of flux and influenced by relational, cultural, and socio-cultural factors. The dynamic and fluid lives of Māori are shaped by the diverse dynamics of whānau, hapū, and iwi (Pihama, 2012). The impacts of colonisation further complicate the embodiment of Māori identity, with vast differences in te reo Māori, tikanga, and mātauranga Māori retention (Pihama, 2001; Le Grice, 2014). When considering intersections of gender, sexuality, religion, social location, and socio-economic class, the identities, experiences, and realities of Māori are shaped by a range of influences and shared meanings (Le Grice, 2014). Thus, while it is essential to acknowledge the experiences of Māori as valid, it is equally crucial to recognise their fluidity and multiplicity (Le Grice, 2014).

## ***Whānau Recruitment***

The preferred method for collecting participant perspectives on the meaning and value of whānau wellness was an online survey. Recruitment was conducted through purposeful sampling of a private community social media (Facebook) page consisting of approximately 50 members of a whānau. Utilising online delivery presents an expedient and economically efficient avenue for participant recruitment that extends beyond the geographic boundaries of the author's location, thereby facilitating a broader and more diverse sample. Following ethical protocols, the recruitment post (Appendix A.) briefly introduced the research, linked to the Participant Information Sheet (Appendix B.) and online survey via Qualtrics (Appendix C.), and the inclusion criteria (listed below). To extend the recruitment strategy beyond the initial Facebook posts, the author encouraged recipients to repost the invitation to whānau who may not be part of the community pages (see snowball sampling, Morgan, 2008).

Inclusion criteria:

1. Self-identifies whakapapa to Ormsby whānau.
2. 16 years of age and above.
3. Consent to participate anonymously in the research report and any subsequent outputs.

## ***Whānau Demographics***

Table 1 presents the demographic details of the participant group (N=22) who completed the survey between June and August 2022. All participants who completed the survey were eligible to participate. Three emergent categories were used to organise responses into ethnicity groups

(Ministry of Health, 2010). Most identified as Māori and European (N=18), followed by Māori (N=3) and Māori, Pacific and European (N=1). Participants were primarily aged between 25-44 years (N=10) and 55-74 years (N=11), with 1 participant aged between 45-54 (N=1). No participants were younger than 25 years or older than 75 years. Consistent with trends of general and international online survey participants, more women (N=15) than men (N=7) participated in this survey, requiring a conservative approach to describing the findings. No participants self-identified as gender diverse or preferred not to answer the question.

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>		<b>Gender</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Māori	3	14%		Female	15	68%
Māori, European	18	82%		Male	7	32%
Māori, Pacific, European	1	4%		Gender diverse	0	0%
				Prefer not to say	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100%</b>		<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Age</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>				
16-24	0	0%				
25-34	5	23%				
35-44	5	23%				
45-54	1	4%				
55-64	5	23%				

65-74	6	27%				
75+	0	0%				
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100%</b>				

### ***Engaging in Whānau Perspectives***

Six open-ended questions (listed below) comprised the online survey allowing participants to give unlimited, detailed, subjective and unrestrained responses (Nulty, 2008). To achieve the aim of understanding the meaning and value of wellness in people's lives, the survey was designed with open-ended questions. This approach allowed for a wide range of responses and insights to be captured. The survey instrument comprised six open-ended questions, with the first three (Q1-3) aimed at eliciting standard demographic information on age, ethnicity, and gender. The remaining three questions (Q4-6) were designed to gather participants' perspectives on the meaning, dimensions, and significance of wellness. It was anticipated that the participants would define and describe the various domains that contribute to their wellness. For example; doing regular physical exercise and visiting their General Practitioner (GP). It was expected that the domains would be consistent with the Hine Te Rēhia framework (Nikora et al., 2021). It was specified that participants do not need any kapa haka experience to participate.

#### Questions:

1. What is your age?
2. What is your ethnicity?
3. What is your gender?
4. What does wellness mean to you?

5. List and describe the different dimensions of wellness that are important to you.
6. List the three most important dimensions you have described.

The survey was fashioned, in consultation with two adept research academics, using a format akin to the original Hine Te Rēhia research (Nikora et al., 2021). The research team, collectively, possess substantial expertise in survey-design, qualitative data collection, and application of Kaupapa Māori Theory in different research projects, serving as principal investigators or academic supervisors. Due to the temporal constraints of the research, pilot testing of the survey or seeking additional advisory support was unfeasible.

The survey was expected to take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. However, the average duration was 30 minutes (rounded to the nearest minute) based on the Qualtrics report. The survey was anonymous and the author did not collect any identifiable information. The potential conflict of interest was clarified as the author is a member of the whānau invited to participate. Their participation in the study was voluntary, and their decision not to participate would not prejudice their relationship with whānau or Waipapa Taumata Rau University of Auckland at any time. Their consent to participate in this research was assumed once they had selected "submit." Participants were requested to respond in their individual capacity and not on behalf of any affiliated organisation. They were given the option not to answer questions in the survey by leaving answer spaces blank, or they could exit the survey and their responses were not saved. Once they selected "submit", they could not withdraw their data due to the anonymous nature of the survey. The survey was anticipated to not be stressful or cause harm in any way, however, if they had any questions or concerns about the research, they were welcomed to contact

the research team or Head of School or Ethics Committee. An agreement was made to publicly disseminate a summary of the study's findings through journal publications and postings on private whānau Facebook community pages.

### ***Reflexive Thematic Analysis***

Thematic analysis represents a qualitative method or procedure used for the analysis of data. The purpose of thematic analysis is to view the content in a sample, develop patterns of meaning or themes that address the research question, tally the frequency and importance, and draw meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A rigorous six-step process of data familiarisation, coding, theme development and revision to generate patterns was followed (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The method can be applied to many theoretical frameworks, making it a versatile and accessible method widely used across disciplines and fields including psychology (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis refers to a group of approaches that fall under the same umbrella term such as coding reliability, codebook, and reflexive thematic analysis.

Reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021) was employed in this study due to its distinctive philosophy and procedures for theme development. Coding reliability and codebook thematic analysis typically employs pre-existing code descriptions or codebooks before the analysis process. In contrast, reflexive thematic analysis allows the flexibility of the researcher to add, change, and remove codes as they work through the sample. Researcher subjectivity is at the heart of reflexive thematic analysis, as knowledge generation is inherently subjective, situated and valuable (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Regular reflection on the researcher's role, research practices,

and process is crucial. Braun and Clarke (2021) note that Indigenous iterations of reflexivity emphasise that power and culture is part of knowledge production.

There are several overarching data orientations to reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher's orientation will depend on what is most suitable for their research design. An inductive orientation involves deriving meaning and creating themes from data without any existing assumptions. Whereas, a deductive orientation involves conducting an analysis with an already existing set of themes or preconceptions. Usually, this orientation is informed by an existing theory, knowledge or research. Some argue that early engagement with literature relevant to the analysis leads the researcher to restrict their focus with the potential to sacrifice crucial aspects of other data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Early engagement with the literature has been posited by scholars as a means of improving analysis through increased sensitivity to the finer nuances present in the data (Tuckett, 2005).

An abductive orientation was employed when analysing the data, as the research examines the transferability of the existing Hine Te Rēhia framework (Nikora et al., 2021). The research seeks to explore whether the findings are compatible with the framework or suggest an elaboration of the framework is necessary through the specification of other variables. An abductive orientation aims to strike a balance between the inductive and deductive methods (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Tavory & Timmermans, 2014). The pragmatic philosophy underpinning the abductive orientation necessitates an equal and simultaneous engagement with both empirical data and theoretical comprehension (Atkinson et al., 2003; Hurley et al., 2021; Kelle, 1997; Rinehart,

2021; Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). Familiarity with anticipated themes to arise from the Hine Te Rēhia framework (Nikora et al., 2021) did not preclude openness to developing new themes.

The analysis phases were performed by the author. During the first phase of the analysis, I began familiarising myself with the data in each survey to become engaged and intimately familiar with the responses. Next, I began taking notes to generate ideas for the preliminary codes and analytic observations, both in relation to the individual data item (i.e. a survey) and the entire sample. In the next phase, I began assigning succinct codes to the data that elicit significant features of the data. The phase involved more rounds of coding and collating for further analysis. In the third phase, I searched for broader patterns of meaning within these codes relating to the research question and interests which then became the themes. Next, in extracting important sections of the data that represented the theme's purview, I clarified each theme. During the fifth phase, I cross-checked the candidate themes against the coded data and the entire sample to ensure their coherence and relevance to the research question. The final step entailed a comprehensive analysis of each theme, encompassing its scope, essence, narrative, and a corresponding title.

The research methods discussed have significant implications, particularly those involving Indigenous peoples. Incorporating these approaches and frameworks can be conducted in a manner that is culturally-sensitive, respectful, and pertinent to the communities under study. In combining these methods, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the social and cultural processes that shape individuals' experiences and perspectives, and generate insights that may not be accessible through Western research methods.



## **Chapter Five: Results of Whānau Perspectives**

The forthcoming chapter will explicate the results concerning whānau perspectives and subsequently explore the four principal themes which have been classified into four subsequent chapters including Tūrangawaewae, Mātauranga, Ihiihi and Hauora. Reflexive thematic analysis that employed abductive reasoning was conducted on the sample, which led to the identification of noteworthy themes that align with the Hine Te Rēhia framework proposed by Nikora and colleagues (2021). This framework depicts the participants' four fundamental domains of whānau wellness, which exhibit interdependence and are not mutually exclusive.

Table 2 and 3 provide a synopsis of the themes and codes employed in the study. The 49 codes from the Hine Te Rēhia framework (Nikora et al., 2021) were utilised to index the sample, which were then classified into domains reflective of the Hine Te Rēhia framework (Nikora et al., 2021). Analysis revealed that connectedness, whānau, and community were the most prevalent codes in the Tūrangawaewae domain. In the Mātauranga domain, the codes learn, growth, and Māoritanga were frequent, whereas the Ihiihi domain exhibited a consistent occurrence of the emotion and expression code. The Hauora domain relied significantly on the codes tinana, mental, wairua, lifestyle, and diet to describe whānau wellness. The subsequent chapters aim to elaborate on the results related to whānau perspectives.

<b>Table 2. Results</b>							
<b>Tūranga-waewae - Sense of Belonging and Community</b>				<b>Mātauranga - Knowledge and learning</b>			
No.	Code	Times applied	%	No.	Code	Times applied	%
1	B-connectedness	17	19%	28	L-reo	0	0%
2	B-identity	8	9%	29	L-learn	8	29%
3	B-whānau	22	24%	30	L-heritage	3	11%
4	B-community	22	24%	31	L-māoritanga	6	21%
5	B-whakapapa	6	6%	32	L-discipline	0	0%
6	B-unity	2	2%	33	L-growth	7	25%
7	B-world	3	3%	34	L-skills	2	7%
8	B-tupuna	1	1%	35	L-children	0	0%
9	B-pride	0	0%	36	L-confidence	2	7%
10	B-manaakitanga	1	1%				
11	B-whenua	6	6%				
12	B-celebrate	1	1%				
13	B-politics	2	2%				
14	B-future	2	2%				
15	B-competition	0	0%				
	<b><i>Total of sample</i></b>	<b>93</b>	<b>19%</b>		<b><i>Total of sample</i></b>	<b>28</b>	<b>8%</b>

<b>Ihiihi - Expression</b>				<b>Hauora - Well-being</b>			
No.	Code	Times applied	%	No.	Code	Times applied	%
16	E-emotion	21	68%	37	W-tinana	50	21%
17	E-waiata	0	0%	38	W-wairua	33	14%
18	E-express	2	6%	39	W-mental	43	18%
19	E-perform	0	0%	40	W-health	14	6%
20	E-share	1	3%	41	W-hauora	12	5%
21	E-art	1	3%	42	W-wellbeing	2	1%
22	E-mana	0	0%	43	W-work	6	2%
23	E-entertain	0	0%	44	W-resilience	8	3%
24	E-ki te ao	0	0%	45	W-lifestyle	42	17%
25	E-beauty	0	0%	46	W-protect	0	0%
26	E-creativity	0	0%	47	W-intervention	0	0%
27	E-fun	6	20%	48	W-taiao	11	4%
				49	W-diet	21	9%
	<b>Total of sample</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>8%</b>		<b>Total of sample</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>65%</b>

## Chapter Six: Tūrangawaewae

*Connection to self, to whakapapa, to whānau, to whenua, to Atua and having perspective of how I belong and am a part of all of these connections.*

The majority of participants described values of connectedness, whānau, and community to express their understanding of positive whānau wellness. While other values, such as identity, whakapapa, tūpuna, manaakitanga, and whenua, were also mentioned by participants, they were not as commonly cited. Through the lens of social constructionism, the author emphasises the perspectives of the participants and delves into the concept of Tūrangawaewae. Social constructionism enables the author to place the "lived experience" of participants at the forefront, while also highlighting the social constructs of whakapapa and whanaungatanga that serve as the foundation for their narratives. As an introduction to this section, it should be noted that Māori hold a deeply holistic perspective of the universe, where there is no clear separation between the tangible and intangible, physical and spiritual, past and future, as well as the living and the dead, and the connection between people and the land (Owen Ormsby, personal communication, 2021).

In Chapter Three, it was discussed that the concept of Tūrangawaewae pertains to a place where an individual feels a sense of belonging, security and connection, often to their ancestral roots (Royal, 2007). This term is associated with a physical location, such as land, mountains and waterways and holds cultural or historical significance in ancestry. For Māori people, understanding their Tūrangawaewae is crucial in comprehending their identity and heritage (Kāretu, 1990). It also plays a significant role in shaping their relationships with others (whanaungatanga) and their connection to everything in the universe (whakapapa; Rameka, 2008;

Cheung, 2008). These concepts hold a crucial position in promoting wellness within Māori communities, which we will examine in greater depth.

### ***Exploring the Intersection of Connectedness and Whakapapa***

*Connecting with nature. (Māori/European, male, 25-34 years old)*

*Connecting with papatuanuku [sic] and all that it has to offer. (Māori/European, female, 65-74 years old)*

*Environment, access to land, natural resources. (Māori/European, male, 35-44 years old)*

*Doing things that honour and care for the land, ocean, forest, waterways. (Māori/European, female, 35-44 years old)*

*Connection to self, to whakapapa, to whānau, to whenua, to Atua and having perspective of how I belong and am a part of all of these connections. (Māori/European, female, 35-44 years old)*

*Having a personal connection to God, actively connecting to whakapapa through meditation and spiritual communication, listening to the needs of my own spirit and offering things to fill those needs by connecting to the land, ocean, forest and our tūpuna. Seeking things that develop qualities about myself that I value and that honour my whakapapa. (Māori/European, female, 35-44 years old)*

*Seeing all live beings as equals. (Māori/European, female, 35-44 years old)*

Numerous participants emphasised the significance of establishing a connection to a palpable entity, be it a collective, object, location, or entity. They underscored the importance of the symbiotic relationship with Papatūānuku, comprising the land, mountains (maunga), oceans (moana), forests (ngahere), and waterways (awa), in promoting the wellness of whānau. These natural resources provide tangible benefits, such as water, food, air, and rain. As a result of this reciprocal connection, many participants perceived a responsibility and obligation to act as kaitiaki of these places through practices that respect and care for them. Participants recognised the whenua as Tūrangawaewae, a place to stand both physically and spiritually, connecting them to their whānau, ancestors, and future generations. Furthermore, some participants acknowledged that all living organisms (kaiao) are equal.

The nexus between wellness and the natural world has its foundation in Māori whakapapa, tikanga, and customary practices. Whakapapa is regarded as the foundation for connectedness, interdependence, and relationships between Māori people and all aspects of the natural world (Cheung, 2008; Rameka, 2018). The connection between individuals and ecosystems is built on a mutual relationship of manaaki whenua, which refers to caring for the land, and manaaki tangata, which refers to caring for people, rather than the notion of ownership or control over the natural world (Rameka, 2018). Māori contribute significantly to environmental wellness through both official and private practices. For instance, Māori employ safety practices such as rāhui, which involves the temporary cessation of an area, typically for conservation purposes. In addition,

rongoā is used for both the healing of people and maintaining environmental wellness. The concept of kaitiakitanga captures this interdependence, and refers to the guardianship and protection of the natural environment (Rameka, 2018). Durie's Te Pae Mahutonga (1999) similarly emphasises the connection and association with all elements of the environment, akin to the concept of Waiora.

The recognition of the importance of the natural world has been a longstanding practice amongst Māori people, and recently among Western scholars and researchers in the field of wellness literature. Exposure to nature can lead to a reduction in negative behaviours and states such as aggression, anxiety, depression, and illness while increasing positive behaviours and states, such as recovery from stress and attention fatigue, exercise motivation, and social contact facilitation (Mayer et al., 2009). Kellert and Wilson (1993) propose the biophilia hypothesis which posits that individuals possess an innate, biological need to form affiliations and establish connections with the wider natural world. Moreover, establishing a connection with the natural world facilitates a sense of belonging leading to psychological benefits (Roszak, 1995; Richardson et al., 2019).

*Connection is another aspect I need to feel purpose. (Māori/European, female, 25-34 years old)*

*Whakapapa, whanau, whenua ties hold my world together. (Māori/European, female, 65-74 years old)*

*My faith in God and my religious observance brings me peace and understanding.  
(Māori/European, male, 55-64 years old)*

*Being true to the wairua to those who have come before. (Māori/European, female, 55-64 years old)*

*Having a personal connection to God, actively connecting to whakapapa through meditation and spiritual communication, listening to the needs of my own spirit and offering things to fill those needs by connecting to the land, ocean, forest and our tūpuna. Seeking things that develop qualities about myself that I value and that honour my whakapapa. (Māori/European, female, 35-44 years old)*

*Wellness is a personal communication with the Lord. Its [sic] that fluidity of knowing how to talk to him and that any time of the day or night he is with you/me. Through the Lord my 'wellness' is secure. The Lord created Ethnicity/Culture/Identity. What a wonderful combination. (Māori/European, female, 55-64 years old)*

*Our creator allowed this WELLNESS and JOYx. (Māori/European, female, 55-64 years old)*

In this study, the participants employed a variety of practices, such as karakia, pepeha (introduction of connection), engagement with nature, meditation, and art, in order to establish or re-establish connections with their whakapapa, tūpuna, and Atua to promote positive wellness.



These participants reflected on their relationship with these connections and the individual and collective responsibilities they hold in maintaining them in the present and future. Additionally, the participants sought to develop qualities that honour and care for whakapapa, tūpuna, and Atua. The significance of knowing and reciting whakapapa in a proper order, tracing the universe back to its origins, was also emphasised as a means of connecting with all things. Participants recognised the importance of having a Tūrangawaewae, a physical and spiritual place to belong to, as a crucial part of their identity as Māori, which contributed to their positive wellness.

E kore au e ngaro, he kākano i ruia mai i Rangiātea. I shall never be lost, I am a seed sown from Rangiātea. (Hinemihi Rāwiri, 2016, p. 23)

Whakapapa, akin to Te Wheke's (1982) dimension of "Hā a koro mā, a kui mā" (breath of life from forbearers), acknowledges the significance of ancestry, history, and tradition in establishing a sense of connection and continuity across generations. Whakapapa establishes a continuous line of life, connecting individuals to past, present, and future generations, from the spiritual realm to the physical realm (Rameka, 2018). The term hapū, which also signifies pregnancy, represents the idea of being born from common tūpuna (ancestors) and the same womb, emphasising the interconnectedness of individuals within the group (Ministry of Justice, 2001). Establishing personal and collective identities, positioning, and connections through whakapapa is a fundamental aspect of Māori culture, as emphasised by Berryman (2008) and Walker (1996).

*Rivers carrying life giving energy, lymphatic fluids, blood, and oxygen flow unimpeded. Blockages swiftly become a critical event. The body's waters, inner seas and rivers respond to the lunar pull as do Earth's mighty oceans. (Māori/European, female, 65-74 years old)*

This participant's passage highlights that whakapapa serves as both a physical and spiritual connection between people and whenua. This connection is illustrated by the proverb "ko au te whenua, ko te whenua, ko au. I am the land and the land is me" (Townsend, 2014, p. ii). The Māori people consider Papatūānuku as the progenitor of their genealogy, thereby establishing a profound connection with the land, making them not only inhabitants but also an inseparable part of it (Ministry of Justice, 2001). Diverging from numerous Western perspectives, the Māori stance regards the land not as a tradable good, but rather as a source of identity, belonging and continuity that is collectively shared across generations (Ministry of Justice, 2001; Durie, 2006). The burial of the placenta, also called whenua, in the land recognises both the symbolic and physical connection to the land.

Land loss is viewed as the most significant aspect of colonisation, leading to the severing of spiritual sustenance and access to spiritual ties with Papatūānuku (NiaNia et al., 2017). Urban Māori often face difficulties in developing a sense of belonging, possibly due to traditional places of belonging, such as land, being typically located outside their urban environment (Durie, 2006). McLachlan et al. (2017) suggest that retaining land has a positive impact on contemporary cultural wellness outcomes, given the critical role of whenua and Tūrangawaewae in Māori perspectives. Reconnecting with the whenua is seen as a form of active healing, enabling individuals to

strengthen and express their culture, rebuild relationships, and address trauma and grief, as highlighted by Barnes and McCreanor (2019).

### ***Whanaungatanga Intimately Connected to Wellness***

*Wellness is FAMILY. We now enjoy our 6 children with their 6 spouses and our 18 grandchildren (some that are shared). They are all our WELLNESS. (Māori/European, female, 55-64 years old)*

*Flourishing whanau [sic] connections, flourishing in all personal relationships. (Māori/European, male, 35-44 years old)*

*Loving whanau - being involved in all aspects of whanau life - happy times, sad times - Sharing. (Māori/European, female, 65-74 years old)*

*Whanau [sic] - being around them - to love and to be loved is healing, especially mokopuna. (Māori/European, female, 65-74 years old)*

*Enjoying the later years with my wife and moving forward together. My family is also a lifeline that keeps me well. Enjoying the success of my children, and now being part of my grandchildren's lives. (Māori/Pacific/European, male, 55-64 years old)*

*Social - Relationships, spend time with family and friends. (Māori/European, male, 25-34 years old)*

*Social health - being involved in social activities that fulfil me, spending wholesome time with my whanau [sic]. (Māori/European, female, 35-44 years old)*

*Whakapapa, whanau, whenua ties hold my world together. Not dwelling on negative thoughts, emotions or people. (Māori/European, female, 45-54 years old)*

*Emotional stability is achieved through honest inter and intra communication, doing things like going out with friends, and spending time with family and loved ones. (Māori/European, male, 25-34 years old)*

*Mental stability is about taking time out for myself to recenter, refocus and reaffirm any goals and aspirations while also working through any difficulties and problems I might have. Sometimes I can do this alone but often I will talk to someone about this. (Māori/European, male, 25-34 years old)*

*Staying off social media. (Māori/European, female, 25-34 years old)*

*Talking through issues that arise for me with trusted others. (Māori/European, female, 35-44 years old)*

*Emotional health - maintaining healthy and respectful boundaries in relationships, having compassion for myself and others, honouring the experience of emotion and allowing space for others to do the same. (Māori/European, female, 35-44 years old)*

*Social health - being involved in social activities that fulfil me, spending wholesome time with my whānau. (Māori/European, female, 35-44 years old)*

*Support networks that help me thrive. (Māori/European, female, 25-34 years old)*

Whānau wellness was intimately connected to individual wellness. Whānau was consistently drawn on by participants as a significant contributor to positive individual wellness. Participants declared action statements such as spending quality time, daily practices (i.e. meals), social activities and 'just being' surrounded by whānau. Participants commented on the emotional state that whānau relationships foster; feeling fulfilled, at peace, a sense of unity, good, balanced, flourished and thriving. A notable proportion of participants' responses acknowledged the sentiment to love and be loved, actively seeking to strengthen whānau relationships with partners, tamariki (children), and mokopuna (grandchildren). Within these relationships, maintaining healthy and respectful boundaries, having compassion and honouring the experience of emotion and space as a reciprocal transaction. The notion of whānau as a lifeline; participants give or receive support from trusted others during difficult times. In addition, participants discussed relishing with others in happy and prosperous times, the balance between joy and heartache.

The Māori term whānau encompasses a more intricate meaning than its English translation, family. Whānau can encompass the immediate family unit, extended family, whāngai (foster children), and even deceased members, known as whakapapa-based whānau (Metge, 1995). In modern times, whānau may also refer to friends, associates or colleagues who do not have familial connections with other members. Metge (1995) describes this social structure as kaupapa-based whānau, who unite for a shared purpose. Whanaungatanga is a Māori concept that refers to the building and maintenance of relationships between individuals, groups, and communities (Rameka, 2018). Whanaungatanga, as described by Mead (2016), promotes a sense of belonging and shared identity through shared experiences, while also encompassing rights, obligations, responsibilities, and commitments among its members. This generates cohesion and collaboration within the group, as noted by Reilly (2004). Te Wheke (1982) and Te Whare Tapa Whā (1985) have long recognised the importance of whānau and whanaungatanga in positive wellness.

In Māori society, the concept of whakapapa plays a central role in uniting individuals and regulating kinship relations. As Ritchie (1992) notes, even if an individual is not aware of their whakapapa, someone else may have knowledge of it, thus linking them to collective identities that transcend personal identity. In contrast to mainstream psychology, which views the self as an independent and distinct entity, the Māori sense of self is fundamentally interconnected. Royal (2003), Love and Waitoki (2007) expound upon the Māori understanding of the self, which is shaped by continuous engagement with various factors such as other individuals, the natural world, physical and spiritual realms, as well as historical and contemporary contexts. The Māori self is not limited to an individual's physical body but extends to encompass personal and collective

identities. It has been suggested that individuals who experience disconnection from their cultural roots and physical location may be at risk of experiencing a fragmented sense of identity (Durie, 1997).

At the core of whanaungatanga in Māori culture is the principle of manaakitanga, which embodies the practice of reciprocal hospitality and mutual respect amongst either individuals or groups of people (Pere, 1991; Davies et al., 2022). Pere (1991) highlights the importance of relational care through actions and everyday practices that contribute to the wellness of whānau, emphasising that "each person respecting and caring for the other engenders a climate of goodwill and support" (p. 6). Moreover, manaakitanga advocates for treating all living things with respect and kindness, regardless of the situation, without judgement, and in turn, expecting the same treatment from others (Davies et al., 2022).

### ***Sense of Community Linked to Wellness***

*As a young couple with a big family trying to make a living (financially), trying to allow our children opportunities in life along the way, trying to continue to strengthen our relationship as husband and wife, trying to contribute to our different communities that we were involved in. It certainly adds up to a most hard working, a lot of effort, a lot of tears alot of challenges and trials but the most rewarding, conquering, sustaining and amazing life. To me this is WELLNESS at its best. (Māori/European, female, 55-64 years old)*

*Serve others. (Māori/European, female, 65-74 years old)*

*Good relationships contribute to my emotional well being. Attending recovery meetings also keeps my mental and spiritual health well. (Māori/European, female, 35-44 years old)*

*Playing sport was a big help but age now prevents this. (Māori/Pacific/European, male, 55-64 years old)*

*We lived a great life with what we had what we shared what we gathered what we were given what we saw and heard....even when we had rice and potatoes and fried bread on the same plate so that everybody could get full...then thats [sic] how we did it. (Māori/European, female, 55-64 years old)*

The feeling of belonging to a group of people who share a common place, value, responsibility, or interest is known as a sense of community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). The geographical component was implicitly recognised because of the types of activities participants engaged in, such as martial arts classes, stretching classes, attending church or temple, playing sports, and attending the gym. Many participants highlighted the need to contribute to the communities they are involved with because of having a shared value, responsibility or interest. As revealed, the contribution towards community interests, in turn, supports the wellness of the participant. Drawing on a participant's example; recovery meetings are peer support groups whose members gather regularly to help one another recover from addiction. This type of community is a powerful tool for understanding issues, overcoming urges, talking with others who can help, and supporting others through their journey and identity development.



The term Tūrangawaewae, while often translated as a sense of community, carries a cultural nuance that is absent from the Western concept (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). In recent decades, Western literature has focused on understanding the nature and significance of community, belonging, and connectedness, particularly in response to the challenges of urbanisation, globalisation, and social isolation (Fisher et al., 2002). Communities can be locational, based on a specific geographic area, or relational, formed around a shared interest or characteristic (Gusfield, 1975). McMillan and Chavis (1986) have developed a widely accepted definition of a sense of community, which includes a feeling of belonging, a sense of mutual importance among members, and a shared belief that needs will be met through commitment to the group. According to McMillan and Chavis (1986), culturally-informed interpretations of a sense of community can serve as a foundation for policymakers and planners to develop programs that promote and preserve communities. Akin to Te Pae Mahutonga (1999) framework, Te Oranga or the facilitation of community participation.

Participants drew on connectedness, whānau and community as the premise for wellness. Belonging to someone or someplace within the social and natural environment, connects us with each other, and presents a sine qua non to wellness and identity. Overall, Tūrangawaewae is a fundamental aspect of Maori culture and is essential for the wellness of Maori people.

## Chapter Seven: Mātauranga

*The dual soul being 'tuned up' to feel the myriad messages is a lifelong learning being quest.*

This study illuminates a complex of learning, growth, heritage, and Māoritanga as the predominant factors that participants have drawn upon to articulate their understanding of positive wellness. Although confidence and skills were also mentioned by some participants, they were not as frequently cited. Adopting a social constructionism vantage point, the focal point of the study rests upon the viewpoints of the participants, with specific consideration allocated to the concept of Mātauranga. This approach prioritises the lived experiences of the participants, while concurrently highlighting the interdependent Māori social constructs of māramatanga and taha Māori, which serve as the foundational pillars of their narratives.

In Chapter Three, the concept of mātauranga Māori was discussed, a framework of knowledge that emphasises the importance of a Māori way of being and engaging with the world, which contributes to personal and collective wellness. The cycle of mōhiotanga, mātauranga, and māramatanga is continuous, reflecting the ongoing nature of learning (Moorfield, 2011; Rangiwai, 2021), and the recent revival of mātauranga in various domains (Warbrick, 2023; Ahuriri-Driscoll et al., 2008). Cultural identity, particularly Māori cultural identity, is closely linked to wellness outcomes, and cultural practices like speaking te reo Māori and engaging in customs are important for improving wellness (Fox et al., 2018; Muriwai et al., 2015; Stuart & Jose, 2014).

### ***Māramatanga: Journey Towards Wellness***

*People share their gifts and talents and long studied educational pursuits. They teach us and they inspire us. That is wellness to me. That is their wellness gift that we are blessed with as well. Wellness is a journey. I believe you can actually feel 'complete' even before you think your journey is through. And it is that journey that is multiplied in experience that allows your whole tinana to be aware/to enjoy and to embrace. (Māori/European, female, 55-64 years old)*

*Mental stability is about taking time out for myself to recenter, refocus and reaffirm any goals and aspirations while also working through any difficulties and problems I might have. Sometimes I can do this alone but often I will talk to someone about this. (Māori/European, female, 25-34 years old)*

*It means having opportunities for growth and support networks that help me thrive. (Māori/European, female, 25-34 years old)*

*Fulfilled and challenged at work. New experiences. (Māori/European, male, 25-34 years old)*

*Living well in spite of all that challenges you to bring you down. (Māori/European, male, 55-64 years old)*

*Access to information and passions. (Māori/European, male, 35-44 years old)*

*The dual soul being 'tuned up' to feel the myriad messages is a lifelong learning being quest. (Māori/European, female, 65-74 years old)*

*As a young couple with a big family trying to make a living (financially), trying to allow our children opportunities in life along the way, trying to continue to strengthen our relationship as husband and wife, trying to contribute to our different communities that we were involved in. It certainly adds up to a most hard working, a lot of effort, a lot of tears alot of challenges and trials but the most rewarding, conquering, sustaining and amazing life. To me this is WELLNESS at its best. (Māori/European, female, 55-64 years old)*

*The JOY and the HEARTACHE that Life brings is our wellness. (Māori/European, female, 55-64 years old)*

The participants highlighted the importance of continuous learning and personal growth as fundamental to achieving positive wellness. They reported acquiring new knowledge and insights from various sources, such as reading, new experiences, and specific learning contexts. The participants recognised the privilege of access to information and showed interest in local and global topics, history, and culture. Some participants reported striving for honesty and authenticity in educational settings, aligning their values with their communication. It was suggested that the pursuit of wellness is an ongoing, dynamic process that involves continuous learning, development, and growth, nourishing all aspects of an individual's being.

Participants highlighted the role of challenging experiences in the workplace and other areas of life, such as sports, as instrumental in nurturing their sense of personal growth and self-efficacy. The pursuit of goals and aspirations was identified as a key factor in fostering confidence across the occupational, social, and personal domains. However, participants acknowledged that life is fraught with challenges that can impede progress towards goals and undermine overall wellness. While some of these challenges, such as those beyond one's control (e.g. inflation), may be perceived as inevitable, participants expressed a willingness to embrace them as opportunities for learning and development. In contrast, internal challenges that can be directly controlled (e.g. unhealthy eating) were identified as areas where greater self-awareness and self-regulation could support enhanced wellness outcomes.

Whāia ngā pae o te māramatanga, ko te pae tawhiti, whāia kia tata, ko te pae tata, whakamaua kia tina, e puta ai ki te whaiao, ki te ao mārama! Pursue the many horizons of insight, bring each one closer, master them and emerge enlightened! (Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga, 2021, p. 6).

The cyclic nature of knowledge production involving mātauranga, mōhiotanga, and maramatanga leads to improved wellness. Rangiwai (2021) proposes a framework that defines mōhiotanga as experiential knowledge, encompassing knowing, understanding, realising, recognising, or comprehending (Moorfield, 2011; Rangiwai, 2021). Mātauranga refers to acquired knowledge, including knowledge, wisdom, ability, and skill (Moorfield, 2011; Rangiwai, 2021). Māramatanga denotes emerging knowledge, which encompasses enlightenment, insight, understanding, meaning and significance (Moorfield, 2011; Rangiwai, 2021). The cycle of mōhiotanga, mātauranga, and māramatanga is continuous, reflecting the ongoing nature of

learning. Recently, there has been a revival of mātauranga in various domains, providing unique Māori ways to reconnect people and their wellness such as maramataka (Warbrick, 2023) and rongoā (Ahuriri-Driscoll et al., 2008).

The idea of continuous learning has gained traction in recent years as an essential component of maintaining a healthy and fulfilling life. As Butcher and Street (2009) suggest, the benefits of engaging in lifelong learning activities are numerous and wide-ranging, including both physical and mental health outcomes. Research has shown that older adults who engage in learning activities have lower rates of depression, a better sense of wellness, and are more likely to engage in healthy behaviours such as exercise and regular health checkups (Park et al., 2014). Lifelong learning also provides opportunities for social engagement and the development of new relationships, reducing the risk of social isolation and loneliness in adults (Butcher & Street, 2009).

Moreover, engaging in lifelong learning has been found to enhance cognitive abilities, such as memory, attention, and reasoning skills, which may otherwise decline with age (Park et al., 2014; Seeman et al., 2011). This is because learning new things challenges the brain and encourages the development of new neural pathways, promoting cognitive reserve and resilience. Lifelong learning can also help older adults maintain their independence by enhancing problem-solving skills, enabling them to navigate daily challenges and adapt to changing circumstances (Butcher & Street, 2009).

Participants emphasised the importance of continuous learning and personal growth for achieving positive wellness. Challenging experiences were identified as instrumental in nurturing

personal growth and self-efficacy, while the pursuit of goals and aspirations was seen as key in fostering confidence across occupational, social, and personal domains. The cyclic nature of knowledge production involving experiential knowledge, acquired knowledge, and emerging knowledge leads to improved wellness. Engaging in lifelong learning activities has numerous benefits, including physical and mental health outcomes, social engagement, and cognitive abilities.

### ***Taha Māori and Wellness***

*Access to whakapapa kōrero and your own history and identity, access to your culture, resources, access to information... intergenerational learning. (Māori/European, male, 35-44 years old)*

*It is about have [sic] peace in who I am and having practices for myself and in the relationships I belong to that maintain peace. (Māori/European, female, 35-44 years old)*

*Access to whakapapa korero [sic] and your own history and identity , access to your culture , resources , access to information. (Māori/European, male, 35-44 years old)*

*So thankyou [sic] for this opportunity to share my thoughts on two most important aspects of my life: My spiritual well being and my Identity well being. This is 'wellness' to me. We were blessed with 6 beautiful children and we were basically in the prime of our lives..with strong morals and values and fabulous goals for when the children were grown up (touring Australia on a HARLEY). [REDACTED] was Samoan/Nieuan [sic] and he identified strongly with both. I am*

*Maori European and felt the same way about my heritage.(Greatful) [sic] we embraced each others [sic] cultural identities (as much as we could and knew how to) and respected and loved them all. That was a Wellness for us and an influence that we hoped would be created in our children. Our Spiritual identity monopolised our way of life and how we lived daily but we also realised that many many of our spiritual values went hand in hand with our cultural values, this was Another aspect of our Wellness. (Māori/European, female, 55-64 years old)*

*The JOY and the HEARTACHE that Life brings is our wellness. And when it is coupled with our ethnicity and we can have that near choking feeling of emotion when we hear or see things in life that we can truly identify with...that is LOVE and our creator allowed this WELLNESS and JOYx. (Māori/European, female, 55-64 years old)*

*The Lord created Ethnicity/Culture/Identity. What a wonderful combination. (Māori/European, female, 55-64 years old)*

For Māori people, cultural identity is of particular significance, as it forms a connection to their ancestral land, culture, and traditions (Rameka, 2018). Māori identity encompasses language, customs, spirituality, and a deep sense of community belonging, constituting a fundamental aspect of Māori wellness that is closely associated with concepts such as mana, whakapapa, and tikanga (Rameka, 2018). Furthermore, recognition and respect for Māori identity are not only vital for Māori individuals but also for the broader Aotearoa New Zealand society, as they are essential in promoting a more inclusive, equitable, and harmonious society (Pihama et al., 2014). These findings are similar to Pere's (1982) notion of Mana Ake, which emphasises the individual and



familial uniqueness of Māori identity, and Durie's (1999) *Mauri Ora*, highlighting the importance of cultural identity.

The prevalent perspective espoused by modern-day Māori scholars maintains that limited cultural learning prospects ought not to hinder the development of a robust Māori identity. Rather, they posit that various and diverse methods currently exist for embodying Māori identity (Houkamau & Sibley, 2010). This standpoint contradicts the long-standing conviction that one must exhibit a high level of proficiency in cultural customs (Durie, 1995) and have in-depth knowledge of cultural beliefs to qualify as Māori. The diverse perspectives regarding the essence of Māori identity are multifaceted and, on occasion, emotionally charged (Mead, 2016). Despite the consensus among Māori people that cultural customs and beliefs hold immense significance, there exists a benevolent outlook that one should not be viewed as less Māori if they have not had access to learning cultural customs and beliefs.

Research that focuses on Indigenous peoples has consistently provided evidence to support the hypothesis that an increase in cultural beliefs, values, and practices, or enhancing cultural embeddedness, can have a positive impact on the wellness of Indigenous peoples (Fox et al., 2018; Muriwai et al., 2015; Stuart & Jose, 2014). Houkamau and Sibley's (2010) study specifically indicated that Māori cultural efficacy, or the ability to navigate within Māori culture, can enhance the wellness of Māori individuals. Moreover, Fox and colleagues (2018) conducted research on Māori youth and discovered that being culturally embedded can promote better adaptive coping strategies and enhance overall wellness. In contrast, it has been established that low self-esteem and discriminatory attitudes, when accompanied by a sense of disconnection or lack of belonging,

can have deleterious effects on an individual's identity (Phinney, 1990). Moreover, the adverse consequences of these factors are compounded by feelings of detachment from culture and environment.

This section discusses the significance of identity for individuals and communities, particularly for Māori people, as it connects them to their ancestral land, culture, and traditions. Presenting varying perspectives on what constitutes a robust Māori identity, with modern-day Māori scholars rejecting the notion that proficiency in cultural customs is necessary. The article also provides evidence from research conducted with Indigenous peoples, indicating that an increase in cultural beliefs, values, and practices can enhance their wellness.

## Chapter Eight: Ihiihi

*The JOY and the HEARTACHE that Life brings is our wellness.*

In this study, participants articulated their understanding of positive wellness by drawing upon emotions, expression, and art. Other values such as waiata, performance, mana, beauty, entertainment, and creativity were mentioned; however, they were not as frequently cited as the complex of emotion, expression, and art. Employing a social constructionist lens, this analysis foregrounds the viewpoints of the participants and explores the idea of Ihiihi. The "lived experience" of the participants is highlighted through the lens of social constructionism, with an emphasis on the interconnected social constructs of hauora kare ā-roto and ihi, wehi, wana that underpin their stories.

In Chapter Three, Ihiihi was discussed as a practice in Māoridom that involves creative expression through various forms such as art, singing, dancing, and storytelling. It is considered vital for personal and collective wellness, as it allows individuals to connect with their emotions, experiences, and aspirations, fostering a sense of purpose, empowerment, and belonging (Livermore, 2016). Toi Māori, the traditional art of Māori people, is also an important component of expression that reflects Māori heritage, values, and identity. It is considered a spiritual practice with therapeutic effects, providing individuals with a sense of pride, identity, and connection to others, contributing to personal and collective wellness (Mead, 1996).

### ***Hauora Kare ā-roto: Emotional Wellness***

*When something you read or see or hear makes your heart stand still for a second, or that lump in your throat almost stops you from breathing and the tears and emotions cause elation of the best kind! (Māori/European, female, 55-64 years old)*

*Emotional stability is achieved through honest inter and intra communication. (Māori/European, female, 25-34 years old)*

*Enjoying life. Finding what makes you happy. Not dwelling on negative thoughts, emotions or people. (Māori/European, female, 45-54 years old)*

*Emotional health - maintaining healthy and respectful boundaries in relationships, having compassion for myself and others, honouring the experience of emotion and allowing space for others to do the same. (Māori/European, female, 35-44 years old)*

*To be physically fit, emotionally stable and mentally able. (Māori/European, male, 25-34 years old)*

*Basically, I live my life to enjoy it. I've done the corporate ladder thing and decided not to put emphasis on earning a lot of money, I'd rather be enjoying my time! Do you work to live or live to work? Find your happiness! (Māori/European, female, 45-54 years old)*

The significance of emotional wellness, or hauora kare ā-roto, was consistently emphasised by the participants in the study. The participants demonstrated a commitment to upholding healthy and respectful emotional boundaries in their relationships, and they recognised the importance of acknowledging and sharing space for emotions. Participants identified the ordinary and commonplace nature of emotions, including grief, anger, anxiety, adoration, and sadness, as well as the need to channel and regulate these emotions. Emotional stability was deemed desirable, particularly in the face of challenges or threats, and the majority of participants acknowledged that happiness, fun, and enjoyment contributed to overall wellness in various areas of life. Participants actively pursued activities, practices, and passions that promoted positive feelings, prioritising these over conventional notions of success such as financial gain or career advancement. Some participants created space for positive and affirmed expressions of their Māori identity, such as through karakia and waiata. Participants consistently expressed a yearning for inner peace and liberation from disruptive and oppressive emotions to foster wellness. Additionally, participants highlighted the significance of expressing, receiving, and sharing aroha (love), pursuing meaningful objectives in one's life, and engaging in purposeful activities. In a manner reminiscent of Te Wheke framework by Pere (1982), the concept of Whatumanawa pertains to the open and healthy expression of emotions.

Drawing on Western research, emotions serve as a "grammar of social living," functioning as a means for individuals to position themselves within a social and moral order (Keltner et al., 2019). Emotions play a pivotal role in shaping social interactions, equipping individuals with the capacity to respond to significant stimuli both internally and within their environment through diverse modalities such as facial expressions, vocalisations, bodily movements, gaze, gestures,

touch, autonomic responses, and posture (Keltner et al., 2019). Fundamentally, emotions are about initiating action and modifying the likelihood of future actions (Keltner et al., 2019). According to Darwin's Basic Emotional Theory, emotions represent distinct and fleeting states characterised by physiological, subjective, and expressive constituents (Keltner et al., 2019). This theory presumes that emotions serve as adaptive mechanisms for individuals to cope with significant environmental threats and opportunities, such as attending to the cry of progeny, confronting an adversary, or encountering a potential mate (Keltner et al., 2019).

He ora te whakapiri, he mate te whakatariri. There is strength in unity and defeat in anger. (Te Kotahi Research Institute, 2019, p. 21).

Whakataukī offer valuable insights into Māori perspectives on emotions and emotional expression within collective cultural frameworks. The term 'kare-ā-roto' refers to the physical and spiritual manifestations of how emotions are experienced and understood (Pihama et al., 2019). The ripples or movements of water serve as a useful metaphor for the impact of emotions, which extend beyond the individual to affect the collective (Pihama et al., 2019). Tamihere-Waititi (2023) posits that Indigenous practices have influenced various Western wellness trends such as mindfulness, gratitude, and journaling. In particular, Māori journaling involves the creation of waiata that express emotions and serve as a means of passing down cultural knowledge to future generations. Additionally, Tamihere-Waititi (2023) highlights that cultural practices, such as kapa haka, provide a platform for performers to convey a range of emotions, including anger, sadness, grief, love, sympathy, and seduction. These Māori practices not only contribute to emotional

expression but also serve as a means of transmitting cultural knowledge and promoting intergenerational wellness.

In popular discourse, the expression of so-called negative emotions, such as crying, is commonly viewed as beneficial for one's wellness. In contrast, suppressing or repressing emotions is thought to trigger chronic bodily activation, resulting in maladaptive outcomes and poor health. The notion of catharsis, or the release of negative emotions through discussion with others, is widely believed to promote emotional recovery. Freud, for instance, encouraged patients to recall traumatic experiences and vividly relive the associated negative emotions (Freud, 1915; 1957), an approach that was later criticised and eventually abandoned by Freud himself. Nevertheless, many others in the psychology field persisted with this concept. Symonds (1954), for instance, in his literature review, identified catharsis as the most prevalent catalyst for successful psychotherapeutic outcomes. In contrast, Rimé et al. (1991), Lepore and Greenberg (2002) contend that social sharing or disclosing of emotions is more valuable for cognitive reappraisal and validation than catharsis. Meanwhile, Woolery and Salovey (2004) confirm the correlation between emotional intelligence and good physical health. Emotional intelligence encompasses a set of abilities, such as the capacity to express emotions and recognise, assess, comprehend, and regulate both one's own and others' emotions.

Ekman and Friesen (1971) conducted a seminal study on the cross-cultural universality of non-verbal "basic" emotions such as anger, fear, happiness, sadness, disgust, and surprise. Their findings suggest a certain level of universality in the production and recognition of these emotions across cultures. However, Stephan and colleagues (1996) demonstrated that individuals from

collectivist cultures tend to express negative emotions less openly than those from individualistic cultures. Even emotions that are considered universal, such as happiness and sadness, are shaped by cultural norms regarding how they are expressed and to what extent they are deemed appropriate. Sexton and Pennebaker (2009) explored the effects of emotional non-expression and disclosure in socially stigmatised groups. They found that non-expression of emotions can have adverse effects on self-esteem and health outcomes. On the other hand, disclosure can enhance one's narrative and identity, providing some protection against the distress of being stigmatised. These findings highlight the importance of emotional expression and the benefits of disclosure in reducing the negative effects of social stigma.

Durie (1985) posits that traditional psychological theories are misaligned with Māori emotional beliefs. In Māori culture, emotional expression is often conveyed through artistic performances, including song, chant, formal speech, and dance, which possess therapeutic and remedial properties for emotional distress. Additionally, Māori people typically express their emotions through physical gestures rather than verbal communication, leading to a high frequency of emotional expression. This is exemplified in the traditional Māori funeral ceremonies of tangihanga, where Māori people express their grief through tears and wailing, rather than words of comfort (Durie, 1985). According to Nikora et al. (2010), during tangihanga, the spontaneous composition of farewell speeches and enduring chants represents a powerful expression of sorrow and bereavement. These examples serve as an impetus for therapeutic interventions that foster Māori perspectives and constructive channels for emotional expression.



This section delves into the significance of emotional wellness, particularly within the context of Māori culture. The research participants underscore the significance of recognising and communicating emotions, fostering healthy emotional boundaries in relationships, and engaging in activities that facilitate positive affect. Furthermore, the study delves into contrasting perspectives on emotions from both Western and Māori cultures, and the role of emotions in shaping social interactions. Additionally, the discourse explores different theories regarding emotional expression and suppression, such as the concept of catharsis and emotional intelligence. Emphasis is placed on the importance of cultural practices that facilitate emotional expression and intergenerational wellness.

### ***Ihi, Wehi and Wana Connected to Wellness***

*Rongoa brings peace. Toi is rongoa. Art is healing. (Māori/European, female, 65-74 years old)*

*When something you read or see or hear makes your heart stand still for a second, or that lump in your throat almost stops you from breathing and the tears and emotions cause elation of the best kind! (Māori/European, female, 55-64 years old)*

*The JOY and the HEARTACHE that Life brings is our wellness. And when it is coupled with our ethnicity and we can have that near choking feeling of emotion when we hear or see things in life that we can truly identify with...that is LOVE and our creator allowed this WELLNESS and JOYx. (Māori/European, female, 55-64 years old)*

A modest cohort of participants in this study evinced the correlation between the realm of artistic expression, *toi*, and the state of wellness. However, it is noteworthy that *Toi Māori*, an artistic discipline deeply ingrained in the heritage of Māori people, is a salient component of Māori culture. It amalgamates diverse modes of artistic expression that adhere to the styles, traditions, and values of Māori culture and specific Māori groupings. Participants implicitly drew upon the Māori philosophy of *ihi* (essential force), *wehi* (powerful emotional reaction to *ihi*), and *wana* (the unity of forces) inherent in art.

In the Māori culture, the emotional construct of *ihi* is recognised as a relational sentiment that establishes a connection between the physical and spiritual dimensions of an individual (Maclean, 2021). *Ihi* can be interpreted as a vital force, thrill, power, charm, or personal magnetism that emanates from a psychic energy, distinct from the spiritual power of *mana* (Livermore, 2016). The possession of *ihi* is a ubiquitous attribute among individuals and is not considered an isolated phenomenon; rather, *ihi* begets *wehi*, and *wehi* begets *wana*. The positive energy of *ihi* is activated by sensory inputs such as visual, auditory, and tactile experiences, and it is regarded as a potential force that exists within oneself (Livermore, 2016). Moreover, *ihi* embodies confidence and self-esteem to navigate the dynamic and ever-evolving world, grounded in an individual's connection to their people and heritage through *whakapapa* (Cram, 2019).

The emotional reaction of *wehi*, which recognises *ihi*, the potential activated force of another, can elicit feelings of awe, respect, or wonder, as well as the realisation of potential (Timoti et al., 2017). Additionally, individuals can also experience *wehi* within themselves and be struck with wonder and amazement at their own ability to generate such thoughts or power (Cram, 2019).

Wana can be understood as the collection of energy or force that unites and connects people to their environment and kaupapa, or the sense of thrill, exhilaration, and excitement (Timoti et al., 2017). These concepts of ihi, wehi, and wana have the capacity to function as individual emotions or coalesce into assemblages.

Te ihi, te wehi, te wana. Those are your emotions. Those are your indicators in a Māori worldview to assess the vitality of the mauri and the mana. (Timoti et al., 2017, p. 4).

The cultural practices and everyday activities within Māoridom can evoke the emotional constructs of ihi, wehi, and wana. For example, during the performance of haka, an internal connection is kindled within and between individuals and the universe. The ihi is analogous to a psychic force that the performer can exert, inciting an affective response from the audience. The audience's response, known as wehi, is characterised by physiological, cognitive, emotional, and psychic components that arise in response to the performer's ihi. Wana is the resulting state of being that emerges from a harmonious resonance between ihi and wehi, uniting performers and the audience. Collectively, ihi, wehi, and wana serve to replenish the mauri, the essential and distinctive life force that exists within humans and other entities (Timoti et al., 2017). The activation and expression of this life force enlivens every connection within the physical world, such as those between people, animals, nature, and the spiritual realm of tūpuna and Atua.

Expression is what makes us human. For Indigenous peoples residing in settler societies, creating room for positive and validated manifestations of Māori expressions is of great significance to the welfare of both the individual and the community. Expression can play a

significant role in promoting wellness. When people express themselves through various forms of creative outlets it can help them to process their emotions and experiences, leading to improved mental and emotional wellness.

## Chapter Nine: Hauora

*My eternal being is ancient intelligence clothed in spiritual body, further clothed in physical or temporal body, then clothed in the 'cultural robes' of this world and/or the 'royal robes' of the Celestial sphere.*

In the study, the participants articulated their perception of positive wellness by incorporating various factors such as tinana, nutrition, lifestyle, mental and wairua. While other values like health, hauora, well-being, work, resilience, and taiao were also brought up, they were not as commonly emphasised as the combination of tinana, nutrition, lifestyle, mental wellness, and wairua. Through the lens of social constructionism, the author emphasises the perspectives of the participants and delves into the concept of Hauora. Social constructionism allows the author to place the "lived experience" of participants at the forefront, while also emphasising the interrelated Māori social constructs of hauora tinana, nutrition, taha hinengaro and taha wairua that serve as the foundation for their narratives.

In Chapter Three, Hauora was discussed as a unique and holistic approach to wellness that is significant in Maori culture. It encompasses physical, mental, social, spiritual, and environmental dimensions of wellness, and emphasises the interconnectedness between people, environment, and culture. Hauora is rooted in traditional Māori oral traditions and practices, such as pūrākau, whakataukī, karakia, and whakapapa. The concept of hauora acknowledges the cultural and social factors that influence health outcomes, and highlights the need for culturally appropriate approaches to wellness for Maori communities.

## ***Hauora Tinana and Lifestyle***

*Physical health - being active, eating wholesome kai, getting good sleep, being body aware, having and speaking gratitude for and to my tinana. (Māori/European, female, 35-44 years old)*

*Being active, swimming, walking and martial arts classes. Exercising with ease. Monthly massage. Stretch classes. Self care. (Māori/European, female, 65-74 years old)*

*Being physically fit means being active, eating right, having good hygiene and sleeping well. (Māori/European, female, 25-34 years old)*

*Going to the gym, walking the dog, just being active and healthy...having regular health checks with my GP. (Māori/European, male, 55-64 years old)*

*Physical and mental health. Physical is just as important as mental for me to feel confident and well in myself. When I am exercising and feeling fit, I look good and feel good which helps me feel more confident in myself, in my work, in any personal and social engagements. (Māori/European, female, 25-34 years old)*

*Physical health - Being active and regular health check ups at doctor, mole map, dentist. (Māori/European, male, 25-34 years old)*

*Physical health - nourishing/providing your body with the correct vitamins/minerals to sustain yourself. Being active and staying on top/in front of any ailments that surface by seeing your gp [sic] or supplementing with natural remedies. (Māori/European, female, 25-34 years old)*

*Being able to do everyday activities, drive myself to appts [sic], take care of my own body. Staying on top of health problems. (Māori/European, female, 65-74 years old)*

*Being able to undertake tasks pain-free and energetically. (Māori/European, female, 65-74 years old)*

*Good health physically and mentally. Enjoying your time of life as you age. Meaning things I can't do now that I could do when I was younger. Accepting and embracing my life with health challenges related to age causing some problems. (Māori/Pacific/European, male, 55-64 years old)*

*Being as active as one can be, even when things are restrictive. (Māori/European, female, 65-74 years old)*

*Not sick. (Māori/European, female, 65-74 years old)*

*I think the most important is having my health so I can be independent, Live on my own, take care of myself and serve others. (Māori/European, female, 65-74 years old)*

*Though I have had a couple of health scares, I don't spend time worrying about my health. I'm not a big believer in the whole Covid thing and I haven't been vaccinated. If my body craves something, I figure I must need it. Everything in moderation. Crystals and stones give a lot of healing benefits. (Māori/European, female, 45-54 years old)*

*Strengthening the inner terrain, the immune system is paramount. Terrain/whenua of our bodies requires nutrients macro and miocro [sic] nutrients. Each dimension of wellness is interrelated; integrated in wholeness. Rivers carrying life giving energy, lymphatic fluids, blood, and oxygen flow unimpeded. Blockages swiftly become a critical event. The body's waters, inner seas and rivers respond to the lunar pull as do Earth's mighty oceans. Biomedical science has unlocked hidden knowledge that is translational to being delivered across the physician's desk, but no! A massive paradigm shift, a tectonic scale shift creating a great wave must come first. Political forces want to occupy the space between the waves. Disruptive technologies are being embraced by self governing 'sovereign' souls. Indigenous peoples accept endogenous (from the inside out) solutions. Rongoa brings peace. Toi is rongoa. Art is healing. The healing arts are being revived and the old wells re dugged [sic]; the dirt dug out and waiora, life giving water wells up. (Māori/European, female, 65-74 years old)*

*My eternal being is ancient intelligence clothed in spiritual body, further clothed in physical or temporal body, then clothed in the 'cultural robes' of this world and/or the 'royal robes' of the Celestial sphere. (Māori/European, female, 65-74 years old)*



In alignment with the Te Wheke (Pere, 1982) and Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie, 1985) frameworks, hauora tinana, or physical health, was found to be a crucial aspect of wellness among participants in this study. Participants highlighted the importance of maintaining hauora tinana through various practices such as regular exercise, body awareness, gratitude towards their bodies, and frequent health checks. Engaging in daily physical activities such as swimming, martial arts, massages, and walking, as well as ensuring good sleep, hygiene, and engagement in hobbies or projects were also noted as important practices. Additionally, some participants noted that the absence of disease and discomfort contributed to positive hauora tinana.

The concept of lifestyle refers to an individual's manner of living, and imbalances in it can lead to poor wellness. Healthy lifestyles encompass not only physical aspects but also psychological, social, and spiritual factors that are essential for overall wellness (Stoewen, 2017). Numerous studies indicate that lifestyle practices such as singing (MacDonald, 2013), dance therapy (Strassel et al., 2011), martial arts (Fuller, 1988), religious chanting (Gao et al., 2019), and mindfulness and meditation (Wielgosz et al., 2019) can promote benefits, as highlighted by the participants in this research. Therefore, decision-making, planning, and policy development aimed at preserving and promoting healthy lifestyles are critical as shown in Te Pae Mahutonga (Durie, 1999).

The importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle to prevent or delay chronic conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, and cancer is widely recognised. Te Whatu Ora Health New Zealand (2023) promotes healthy lifestyle choices, which encompass proper nutrition, physical activity, weight management, abstinence from tobacco, prioritisation of mental wellness,

controlled alcohol consumption, self-care, and adequate sleep. Achieving a healthy lifestyle requires a long-term perspective, with a clear direction and intention (Tamihere-Waititi, 2023). The value of kaitiakitanga embodies this long-term orientation, emphasising the preservation of the environment for future generations and honouring the wisdom of past generations (Puhato, 2011; Rameka, 2018).

### ***The Vital Role of Nourishment in Wellness***

*My Mantra: "If all else fails, eat!" Constant nourishment to body and spirit is the remedy for the myriad deficiency diseases. (Māori/European, female, 65-74 years old)*

*Eating well Hydrating. (Māori/European, female, 65-74 years old)*

*Eating nourishing foods regularly. (Māori/European female, 25-34 years old)*

*It is being well in all aspects. Physical, mental, spiritual. It's about being balanced and taking care of yourself by eating right, moving your body and doing things that make you happy mentally. (Māori/European, female, 35-44 years old)*

*Eating the right food to nourish my body. (Māori/European, female, 45-54 years old)*

*Eat well, everything in moderation. (Māori/European, male, 25-34 years old)*

*For me Physical Health - eating from the sea and fresh produce - being as active as one can be, even when things are restrictive. (Māori/European, female, 65-74 years old)*

*Food the provides a health tinana. (Māori/European, male, 35-44 years old)*

*Eating right - making sure my family and I are choosing the right Kai to eat. (Māori/European, female, 35-44 years old)*

*Eating well, enjoying meals with friends and family. (Māori/European, female, 65-74 years old)*

*We lived a great life with what we had what we shared what we gathered what we were given what we saw and heard....even when we had rice and potatoes and fried bread on the same plate so that everybody could get full...then thats [sic] how we did it. (Māori/European, female, 55-64 years old)*

Most participants commented on healthy eating and nourishment to sustain wellness for themselves and their whānau. For some, it was about eating all food in moderation or choosing the right balance of vitamins, minerals and nutrients. For others, it was about mindful eating, hydration and access to wholesome foods from the moana and whenua. A participant poetically referenced their ongoing desire to strengthen their "inner whenua" with sustenance. What's more, connections between hauora and taiao were consistently drawn upon as significant to whānau wellness.

Maintaining a nutritious and well-balanced diet throughout life is crucial for achieving wellness. According to the Bay of Plenty District Health Board (2012), adopting a diet that promotes healthy weight management can enhance the ability to engage in regular physical activity and decrease the risk of chronic illnesses, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and specific cancers, including bowel cancer. The role of food holds paramount importance for numerous Indigenous communities, serving as a symbol of reverence towards humanity, ecological longevity, organic wealth, and posterity (DeShutter, 2012; Hutchings et al., 2012; McKerchar et al., 2014; Nabigon, 2006; Panelli & Tipa, 2008). In Indigenous cultures, food relationships are characterised by a deep sense of respect and reverence for life, which fosters healthy interactions among individuals, communities, species, and spiritual entities (Hutchings et al., 2012; King et al., 2010; La Duke, 2005; Pimbert, 2006; McKerchar et al., 2014; Nabigon, 2006).

In Moeke-Pickering and colleagues (2015) study, participants shared stories about their connections to food and how it relates to their family members, including grandparents, parents, children and mokopuna. “Healthy kai is medicine, good for the spirit and body, a vital connection to history, ancestors and the land” (Moeke-Pickering et al., 2015, p. 35–36). Many of these memories were joyful and inspiring, filled with pride and love, and involved gathering, preparing, planting and sharing food. Participants in the current research emphasised the importance of passing on knowledge about healthy food to the younger generations, including where to find it and how to enjoy it. A healthy and holistic lifestyle that integrates spirituality and culture, and has a clear sense of purpose, is the definition of wellness (Moeke-Pickering et al., 2015).

In order for whānau to achieve good wellness, it is crucial to have access to adequate, safe, and nutritious food (Stevenson, 2013). Te Hotu Manawa Māori (2009) provides a definition of food security, which pertains to the reliable ability of individuals, households, and communities to obtain suitable and nutritious food. The loss of the ability to grow and acquire food due to legislative policies and environmental pollution has resulted in food insecurity among many Māori (Te Hotu Manawa Māori, 2009). Research suggests that individuals residing in households afflicted by food insecurity typically exhibit poorer physical and mental health, as well as heightened levels of stress, compared to their counterparts who have access to reliable and nutrient-rich food (Carter et al., 2010; Kuhle et al., 2011). Additionally, empirical evidence has established a significant correlation between food insecurity and adverse mental health outcomes, with heightened rates of depression and anxiety observed among individuals who encounter food insecurity (Anema et al., 2010; Carter et al., 2010; Strike et al., 2012). Therefore, it is essential to have consistent economic resources and access to sufficient nutritious food to achieve wellness (Socha et al., 2012; Stevenson, 2013; Te Hotu Manawa Māori, 2009).

### ***Exploring the Interconnectedness of Hinengaro and Wellness***

*Wellness is mobility whether it be in your mind or in your strength. (Māori/European, female, 55-64 years old)*

*Mental stability is about taking time out for myself to recenter, refocus and reaffirm any goals and aspirations while also working through any difficulties and problems I might have. Sometimes I can do this alone but often I will talk to someone about this. (Māori/European, female, 25-34 years old)*

*Physically and mentally healthy...feeling good and content, being positive and able to deal with life's highs and lows. (Māori/European, male, 55-64 years old)*

*Positive outlook. (Māori/European, male, 55-64 years old)*

*Physical and mental health. Physical is just as important as mental for me to feel confident and well in myself. When I am exercising and feeling fit, I look good and feel good which helps me feel more confident in myself, in my work, in any personal and social engagements. (Māori/European, female, 25-34 years old)*

*Mental health - Eating nourishing meals mindfully, taking time for yourself to breathe (having alone time), staying off social media, reconnecting with nature, spending time with family and friends, finding a balance that works well for you. (Māori/European, female, 25-34 years old)*

*Putting myself first when it comes to needing time alone to re balance [sic] my mind. (Māori/European, female, 25-34 years old)*

*Wellness encompasses a number of things to create the whole probably starting with what's going on in your head. (Māori/European, female, 55-64 years old)*

*Communing with nature keeps my mental health well, my spiritual health. Good relationships contribute to my emotional well being. Attending recovery meetings also keeps my mental and spiritual health well. (Māori/European, female, 35-44 years old)*

*Doing things that make you happy mentally. (Māori/European, female, 35-44 years old)*

*Mental health - having regular time out doing something I enjoy like catching up with friends that make me feel good. (Māori/European, female, 35-44 years old)*

*Mental Health - reading to increase my knowledge and understanding of interests and social issues, learning and developing new skills, talking through issues that arise for me with trusted others. (Māori/European, female, 35-44 years old)*

*Mental health - Participate in hobbies. (Māori/European, male, 25-34 years old)*

*Good health physically and mentally. Enjoying your time of life as you age. Meaning things I can't do now that I could do when I was younger. Accepting and embracing my life with health challenges related to age causing some problems. (Māori/Pacific/European, male, 55-64 years old)*

*I'm just embracing the day. Depression has been a constant in my life. I have found having projects to do has been the best remedy. Keep busy. Go for walks. Playing sport was a big help but age now prevents this. (Māori/Pacific/European, male, 55-64 years old)*

*Doing that which is right for ones [sic] mental well being, at any cost. (Māori/European, female, 65-74 years old)*

*Mental Health is hugely important and is intertwined with spirituality, nothing can function well if this is neglected. (Māori/European, female, 65-74 years old)*

*Good state of mind. (Māori/European, male, 55-64 years old)*

*Mentally strong, happy and contented. (Māori/European, female, 65-74 years old)*

*I choose to live without negativity. I don't see any benefit coming from living under a dark cloud. Keep looking at the sunshine and you can't see the shadows. (Māori/European, female, 45-54 years old)*

Mental wellness was a significant pattern in the responses from participants. Mental stability, or a good state of mind, was reported as being in control of one's thoughts and actions and the ability to trust oneself - being mentally strong, mindful and content. If difficulties arise, participants take time to work through them alone, with trusted others or engage in activities (i.e. recovery meetings, projects, grounding, time off social media) to build resilience. The prioritisation of mental wellness was mentioned numerous times as being of the utmost importance over other areas of wellness. Many participants have a positive outlook and choose to distance themselves from negative thoughts or people.



Similar to the mental dimension in Te Wheke (Pere, 1982) and Te Whare Tapa Whā (1985), Māori mental wellness, or hinengaro, is crucial for the wellness and flourishing of Māori people. Māori view mental wellness from a holistic perspective, acknowledging the significance of good physical, social, and spiritual health in promoting mental wellness. However, the phenomenon of mental distress among Māori is primarily attributed to the impact of colonisation, which has led to the construction and perpetuation of the concept of mental distress (Gordon et al., 2017). As per Mātauranga Māori, historical evidence suggests that Māori people were relatively unacquainted with psychological distress, although the possibility of some level of influence from what contemporary medicine terms "mental disorders" cannot be entirely discounted (Kingi et al., 2018). Traditionally, mental distress was thought to stem from violations of tapu or māku, leading to uncommon manifestations of the mind, but these were distinct from "illnesses of the mind" (Kingi, 2002). Furthermore, Kingi et al. (2018) affirm that mental distress was not always a salient issue for Māori. The contemporary upsurge in the incidence of mental distress among the Māori community is a recent phenomenon that can be attributed to a host of factors including but not limited to colonisation, racism, and socio-economic stressors as explicated by Russell (2018).

### ***Wairua for Optimal Wellness***

*Wellness is a personal communication with the Lord. It's that fluidity of knowing how to talk to him and that any time of the day or night he is with you/me. Through the Lord my 'wellness' is secure. (Māori/European, female, 55-64 years old)*

*My spiritual health would probably head the list. Being true to the wairua to those who have come before. (Māori/European, female, 55-64 years old)*

*Communing with nature keeps my mental health well, my spiritual health. Good relationships contribute to my emotional well being. Attending recovery meetings also keeps my mental and spiritual health well. (Māori/European, female, 35-44 years old)*

*Spiritual - being true to my values, seeing all live beings as equals. (Māori/European, female, 35-44 years old)*

*Spiritual health - having a personal connection to God, actively connecting to whakapapa through meditation and spiritual communication, listening to the needs of my own spirit and offering things to fill those needs by connecting to the land, ocean, forest and our tūpuna. Doing things that honour and care for the land, ocean, forest, waterways. Seeking things that develop qualities about myself that I value and that honour my whakapapa. (Māori/European, female, 35-44 years old)*

*Spiritual health - Having purpose. (Māori/European, male, 25-34 years old)*

*Spiritual well being - engaging in that which brings you peace, be it an organized [sic] activity or one of nature. (Māori/European, female, 65-74 years old)*

*Spiritual : Karakia is vital to keep the spiritual portal open for the inspiration to safely and successfully negotiate daily life. Spiritual wellbeing influences and enlivens all other spheres: emotional, intellectual, relational, financial... Inner well is to be guarded from pollution: kept wai maori - pure. (Māori/European, female, 65-74 years old)*

*Temporal is temporary, designed to teach spiritual lessons - spiritual self actualisation; not just do but be. (Māori/European, female, 65-74 years old)*

*My eternal being is ancient intelligence clothed in spiritual body, further clothed in physical or temporal body, then clothed in the 'cultural robes' of this world and/or the 'royal robes' of the Celestial sphere. (Māori/European, female, 65-74 years old)*

*Our Spiritual identity monopolised our way of life and how we lived daily but we also realised that many many of our spiritual values went hand in hand with our cultural values, this was Another aspect of our Wellness. (Māori/European, female, 55-64 years old)*

There was an overwhelming commentary on wellness linked to wairuatanga (spirituality). Wellness practices are imbued with the spirituality realm such as mana, mauri, tapu and wairua. The concept of wairua was found to be interpreted differently by participants, with some perceiving it as an integral aspect of the whole person, while others considered it to reside solely in the heart and mind. Some refer to a specific deity as their spirit or faith and connect through spiritual communication (i.e. karakia, meditation, prayer, church, temple). Participants comment on staying true to their own and tūpuna values and purpose. Wairua, for participants, often

monopolises everyday life to safely and successfully navigate. As a participant reflection, it is an "inner well to be guarded against pollution and kept pure", which enlivens all other spheres of wellness.

Māori typically uses wairua to reference the spiritual dimension of existence, an intrinsic part of the Māori psyche (Moewaka Barnes et al., 2017). The word wairua is composed of two parts; wai, meaning water and rua, meaning two. It implies the presence of two oppositional yet complementary entities, implying the notion of a balanced whole. Wairua exists on a continuum with many different dimensions (Valentine, 2017), for example; wairua of a person, people, land, the dead, and ancestors. According to Māori beliefs, the concept of wairua refers to an entity or essence that is infused at the moment of conception (Kennedy et al., 2015). It is believed that wairua is a unique synthesis of genetic material from both parents, which is also linked to earlier ancestors, referred to as te iho matua. Wairua is considered the source of life in its entirety, while mauri is associated with physical vitality, providing the groundwork for holistic flourishing. Wairua is commonly drawn upon to understand wellness, as described in Te Wheke (Pere, 1982) and Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie, 1985).

I hangaia tātou e te kaihanga, kia hīkoi tātou te hīkoi tāngata. We were created by Io to journey this earth as humans. First and foremost, we are spiritual beings experiencing a human existence. (NiaNia et al., 2017, p. 16)

The purpose of Valentine's (2017) article was to explore the construct of wairua with contemporary informants who share in the best way they know how. The informants conceptualise

wairua organised into four themes. Wairua is considered a fundamental part of being Māori, where the absence indicates a lack of wholeness and can adversely affect wellness. Wairua knows no boundaries; many consider wairua to exist outside sensory modalities that cannot be seen or touched. Some acknowledge wairua to exist even without a person's awareness. Wairua is often described as a perceived sensation, a particular type of knowing which may not align with rational or logical explanations. Lastly, and significantly, wairua is considered to be the connection with everything in existence; past, present and future. It can transcend space and time boundaries and can connect a person to ancestors, future generations, places, events, issues, people, self, Atua, spirits and Māori ways of knowing and being.

Expressions of wairua are used in everyday life, not limited to the supernatural, ritualistic or organised (Moewaka Barnes et al., 2017). As people become more self-aware, they understand and recognise what wairua is for them and can perceive it more readily (Valentine, 2017). In certain contexts, wairua may manifest as a subtle inner voice or a persistent, overwhelming thought or feeling that guides an individual's behaviour. For others, it may be seen or exemplified in their environment or interactions. For instance, its duty can often warn people of danger within the physical realm (Best, 1934). Māori understandings of wellness are heavily influenced by beliefs, practices, and behaviours related to wairua. Consequently, perceptions of illnesses and healing practices were moulded by such conceptualisations, engendering the notion that they were frequently instigated by erroneous lifestyles or intervention from the spiritual realm (Parsons, 1985).

Tinana, wairua, hinengaro, and kai are all interrelated concepts that contribute to overall wellness. Tinana refers to the physical body, wairua refers to the spiritual dimension, hinengaro refers to the mental dimension, and kai refers to the importance of nutrition and food in maintaining wellness. Together, these concepts form a holistic approach to wellness that considers the interconnectedness of physical, spiritual, mental, and nutritional aspects of wellness.

### **Summary**

*It means having needs met in the areas of tinana, wairua, whanau [sic] and hinengaro. (Māori/European, female, 25-34 years old)*

*Wellness encompasses all facets of life. (Māori/European, female, 45-54 years old)*

*Wellness means being well in every aspect of life. (Māori/European, female, 25-34 years old)*

*Wellness is multi sphered [sic]. (Māori/European, female, 65-74 years old)*

*It is being well in all aspects. (Māori/European, female, 35-44 years old)*

*I can't...I believe they are of equal importance. The balance would be off to make one more important than another. I think seeking the balance is the most important and being aware of where I need to place priority at any particular time. (Māori/European, female, 35-44 years old)*

*To me wellness means being content in all aspects of life. (Māori/European, male, 25-34 years old)*

*Being happy and healthy in every facet of your life. (Māori/European, female, 35-44 years old)*

The findings of this study indicate that the participants consistently perceived wellness as a multi-dimensional construct that encompasses various facets of life. The interconnectedness of each dimension was highlighted, with all dimensions being essential for attaining overall wellness. Wellness, in this context, is not merely confined to physical health but encompasses mental, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions. Adopting a holistic approach that addresses each of these dimensions can lead to optimal wellness for Māori people and whānau.

## Chapter Ten: Conclusion

In qualitative research, the concept of transferability is often equated with that of generalisability. The Hine Te Rēhia framework, developed by Nikora and colleagues (2021), sought to explore the significance and contribution of kapa haka to various individuals, ranging from supporters and spectators to those involved in kura and Te Matatini. Through the identification of 49 value contributors, categorised into four value domains - Tūrangawaewae, Mātauranga, Ihiihi, and Hauora - the Hine Te Rēhia framework was established. The current study demonstrates a significant level of compatibility and transferability between the Hine Te Rēhia framework (Nikora et al., 2021) and its ability to comprehend whānau wellness based on empirical evidence. No further elaboration of the variables within the framework is proposed, as each domain contained within the Hine Te Rēhia framework (Nikora et al., 2021) contributes to the understanding of whānau wellness.

The Hine Te Rēhia framework (Nikora et al., 2021) is a Māori perspective (using empirical evidence and public health findings) on wellness that recognises the interconnectedness of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual wellness within the specific social-cultural context of Aotearoa New Zealand. It is grounded in Māori cultural values, practices, beliefs, and aspirations and advances the work of Nikora et al. (2021) in seeking the benefits and value of kapa haka. These ideals are closely tied to tino rangatiratanga, as Māori are actively promoting Māori ways of being that extend beyond the mere reclamation of rights from the Crown. To establish the Hine Te Rēhia wellness framework's place in society, its relevance is highlighted in comparison to other Māori wellness frameworks.



For centuries, Māori have consistently advocated for the integration of traditional knowledge and practices to augment wellness. The concept of health promotion seeks to empower individuals to attain agency over their health and enhance it, by prioritising social and environmental determinants, rather than exclusively individual behaviours, as outlined by Durie (1999). To be effective for Māori, health promotion should align with their values, attitudes, and aspirations, as seen in existing models such as Te Wheke (Pere, 1982), Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie, 1985), and Te Pae Mahutonga (Durie, 1999). The Hine Te Rēhia framework (Nikora et al., 2021) also adopts a Māori perspective, enhancing understanding and increasing its relevance.

The practical implications of the current research show that the Hine Te Rēhia framework (Nikora et al., 2021) can be an additional instrument to identify and generalise different wellness domains for Māori. With disparities between Māori and non-Māori populations, health promotion efforts are critical for improving the wellness of Māori. However, these efforts are more likely to succeed if they are consistent with Māori worldviews (Durie, 1999). The Hine Te Rēhia framework (Nikora et al., 2021) acknowledges Māori perspectives on wellness and recognises the numerous determinants of good wellness at multiple levels. Te Wheke (Pere, 1982), Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie, 1985), and Te Pae Mahutonga (Durie, 1999) frameworks have been made accessible through the use of infographics to increase awareness. Similarly, promoting the Hine Te Rēhia framework (Nikora et al., 2021) and its benefits can be effectively achieved through infographics.

The Hine Te Rēhia framework (Nikora et al., 2021) presents an opportunity to apply decision-making, planning, and policy development strategies akin to Te Pae Mahutonga (Durie, 1999). The author posits that future directions for the framework include the implementation of

health impact studies to gauge its effectiveness. Health Impact Assessment (HIA) constitutes a methodical approach to evaluating the potential effects of any proposed policy, strategy, plan, or project on the population's wellness prior to implementation, as expounded by the Ministry of Health (2023). HIA's value is evident from international experience, which demonstrates that the available technical information concerning the expected health impacts may not be enough to significantly influence decision-making without an explicit process like HIA (Ministry of Health, 2023). The identification of potential impacts via HIA enables evidence-based and outcome-focused recommendations for informing decision-making in the proposal process, which outline practical approaches to enhance positive outcomes and mitigate any adverse effects. HIA is, therefore, a critical tool for mitigating Māori health inequalities, and its application can extend to policy-making at both central and local government levels.

Similar to existing Māori wellness frameworks, the Hine Te Rēhia framework (Nikora et al., 2021) can be used as a guide for the development of programmes and services that address the specific needs and priorities of Māori communities. Drawing on the research discussed in Chapter Two, existing frameworks have been integrated into different settings, such as health, mental health, training and education, forensics, and correctional services, to offer more culturally relevant and holistic care for Māori. In addition, the Hine Te Rēhia framework (Nikora et al., 2021) can be used by researchers to guide data collection and analysis across industries. The framework can be used in research to better understand Māori wellness and to explore the complex interplay between the different domains of health in Māori communities.

By integrating this framework into their services, practitioners can gain a better understanding of the unique needs and perspectives of Māori, who may have different cultural beliefs and practices surrounding wellness. The author described the education and training gap in addressing the spiritual aspect of Māori for social-service practitioners in Aotearoa New Zealand (Tallon & Domdom, 2022). With an increasing awareness of the need to acknowledge different cultural traditions and practices related to wellness, the Hine Te Rēhia framework (Nikora et al., 2021) provides a tool for practitioners within multicultural societies to provide more culturally-relevant care. Correspondingly, practitioners in countries with Indigenous peoples must actively engage with and respect unique cultural heritage and expectations to provide appropriate services to individuals, families, and communities (Muircroft et al., 2010).

As the overwhelming literature on wellness continues to grow, the study makes an important contribution as a means to conceptualise whānau wellness from a Māori perspective and extend the research parameters. In doing so, presenting an instrument to inform decision-making, planning, and policy that aligns with Māori aspirations and flourishing futures, it is imperative to explore factors that contribute to population wellness. This is particularly important as the incidence of diseases linked to lifestyle factors has risen. An essential step in creating policies is to define wellness from a Māori perspective and the factors contributing to a thriving person supported by communities.

## *Limitations*

Despite the research being conducted with care, the presence of methodological limitations and shortcomings is acknowledged. To address these limitations, a detailed description of the shortcomings is provided, leading to recommendations for future research.

The use of open-ended survey questions allowed for a wide range of responses and insights to understand the significance and value of whānau wellness. However, the broad nature of the questions required a thoughtful approach from participants which resulted in a few responses containing minimal detail. This lack of elaboration could be attributed to several factors such as a lack of motivation, time constraints, difficulty with open-ended questions, social desirability bias, and a lack of understanding. Since the research was conducted within a limited timeframe, there was no opportunity to pilot the survey or obtain additional support from advisers. Therefore, while the research was carefully planned, there are limitations of open-ended questions that could affect the extent of the findings.

A purposeful sampling approach was utilised to recruit participants from a private community social media (Facebook) page that consisted of about 50 members of a whānau. Participants were encouraged to repost the invitation to include those who are not part of the community pages, using snowball sampling (Morgan, 2008). Initially, it was suggested to recruit from a private community social media page with over 1,000 members who met the inclusion criteria, but this was not possible due to page rules. The participant group thus consisted of only 22 participants and may not represent the majority of the Māori population.

Moreover, it is important to note that the characteristics of the sample population may differ substantially from the original group for which the Hine Te Rēhia framework (Nikora et al., 2021) was initially designed. The original study included 175 participants who identified solely as Māori and 38 participants who identified as both Māori and another ethnicity, constituting 88% of the overall sample. Notably, a substantial portion of the respondents, specifically over one-third of the sample (36%), possessed significant experience competing at Te Matatini. Additionally, the kura and whānau categories comprised 19% and 14% of the sample, respectively, reflecting a heightened level of experience in kapa haka gained through involvement within the secondary school and local community environments. These proportions correspond to 69% of the overall sample. In contrast, the smaller percentages of respondents in the supporter, spectator, parent, work, and kōhanga categories indicate minimal or vicarious experience in kapa haka. Based on the extent of their participation, it can be inferred that the majority of respondents in the initial survey exhibit a significant affiliation with Māori culture, knowledge, values, practices, and identity.

While whakapapa remains the sole cultural marker for Māori identity, the author notes that some mixed-ethnicity Māori (86% of the overall sample in the current study) may experience challenges in asserting their cultural identity and connection to their Māori heritage due to various factors, such as upbringing, environment, and personal experiences. It is important to acknowledge and respect the diverse experiences of mixed-ethnicity Māori and not make assumptions about their cultural identity. Nonetheless, participants in this study may not be as confident in their Māori identity and knowledge of Māori culture, which could affect their engagement and participation in Māori cultural values and practices. This may be reflected in the study's findings, which reveal that two value domains, Mātauranga and Ihiihi, were less commonly reported, while

Tūrangawaewae and Hauora were more frequently expressed. As such, it is acknowledged that the nature of the participant group may not be indicative of the broader Māori population because of its fluidity and multiplicity (Le Grice, 2014).

### ***Recommendations***

Utilising the Hine Te Rēhia framework in various ways in Aotearoa New Zealand is recommended based on the current research findings. The research shows that the Hine Te Rēhia framework (Nikora et al., 2021) can be an additional instrument for health promotion. To make the framework more accessible and equitable, developing it into an infographic for communities is suggested. Visual communication through illustrations or pictures is a powerful way to engage communities and help them retain information (McCrorie et al., 2016). Infographics are a well-organised way to combine text, images, and design to convey a story or perspective, and can be shared on social media and relevant websites. It underpins the ability to deliver an equitable and accessible health system for its people, consistent with the Pae Ora (Health Futures) Act 2022. Using infographics can be a suitable tool for promoting serious and important wellness issues (McCrorie et al., 2016). It is a tool to raise awareness of the Hine Te Rēhia framework (Nikora et al., 2021) and help people understand its benefits, contributing to the promotion of Māori health and wellness.

However, the study had limitations, and it is recommended to improve the population sample used to understand whānau wellness to better represent the Māori population. Further research is also necessary to determine the effectiveness of the Hine Te Rēhia framework (Nikora et al., 2021) and the relative importance of each domain in understanding whānau wellness. The

Hine Te Rēhia framework (Nikora et al., 2021) can aid decision-making, planning, and policy development, and it is suggested to conduct health impact studies to identify potential impacts on wellness before implementing the framework. Health Impact Assessments (HIA) can significantly influence decision-making by providing evidence-based and outcome-focused recommendations to inform the decision-making process. HIA's are vital tools for reducing health inequalities among Māori and can be applied to policy-making at the central and local government levels.

### ***Author Reflections***

With pride, I can say that my research journey has fostered a profound reconnection with my Māori heritage. I have rediscovered traditional Māori knowledge, felt a sense of belonging, and gained more confidence to navigate in this cultural space. This personal growth and development have been complemented by a transformational shift in perspective, a deeper understanding of the subject, and enhanced critical thinking skills.

My research has positively impacted me professionally, too. It has boldly challenged assumptions and preconceptions about wellness, kapa haka, and the specific context for Māori, leading to a more nuanced and complex understanding. I have learned to value the crucial role of critical thinking. This process has required me to develop a vast array of skills, including data analysis, synthesis, and interpretation, whilst also navigating epistemological and ontological perspectives that were once foreign to me. I now have a newfound appreciation for the power of critical thinking in research and believe that it will equip me to tackle a range of challenges in the future.

Throughout my postgraduate journey, I have faced an array of daunting challenges. Juggling multiple roles has been no easy feat, and like many of my fellow student researchers, I've had to balance my research with two part-time jobs and community responsibilities. The demanding and competitive nature of financial scholarships for student research has also loomed heavily on me. However, the isolation of conducting research independently has been the most trying challenge. It has tested my self-doubt and self-confidence, and the pressure to succeed has been overwhelming. Ensuring my wellness has been an unwavering priority throughout this journey. Despite these challenges, I have persevered and developed crucial skills such as time-management, work ethic and resilience.

As a researcher and emerging scholar, my goal is to use my expertise and knowledge to make a meaningful contribution to my field and community. In particular, I am deeply committed to improving health outcomes for Māori whānau with effective solutions. In light of this commitment, I am excited to explore opportunities with the newly established Māori Health Authority. This presents a unique opportunity to apply my research findings of the Hine Te Rēhia framework (Nikora et al., 2021) within a health organisation. Going forward, I am resolute in pursuing my scholarship and growth in this area, building upon the insights and experiences acquired during my research journey.



## Appendix A. Recruitment Post

Tēnā koe, ko Ngāti Maniapoto te iwi, ko Robert Ormsby te tupuna tane, ko Tyla Pearse tōku ingoa. I am a Master of Arts, Psychology student at Waipapa Taumata Rau University of Auckland. I write to invite you to take part in a research project about whānau wellness.

Herewith a link to the Participant Information Sheet followed by the online survey. Please feel free to repost to other whānau members who may not have received it as long as they are eligible to participate.

Eligibility to participate:

- You must be 16 years of age or older to participate in this research.
- You must whakapapa to the Ormsby whānau.
- You must consent to participate anonymously.

Any communication regarding this research should be directed to the Principal

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## **Appendix B. Participant Information Sheet**

### Researcher introduction

Tēnā koe, ko Ngāti Maniapoto te iwi, ko Robert Ormsby te tupuna tane, ko Tyla Pearse tōku ingoa. I am a Master of Arts, Psychology student at Waipapa Taumata Rau University of Auckland.

### Research description

In te ao Māori, kapa haka is more than a performing art. It is a platform to learn te reo Māori, grow mātauranga Māori, strengthen cultural identity, foster positive well-being and nurture a sense of belonging. However, scant attention has been accorded to kapa haka from a whānau wellness perspective. I write to invite you to take part in a research project about whānau wellness via an online survey. You do not need any kapa haka experience to participate.

### Participant Information Sheet

The survey will take about 5-10 minutes to complete. The survey is anonymous. We will not be collecting any identifiable information. Your participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision to take part or not in this study will not prejudice your relationship with whānau or the University of Auckland presently or at any time in the future. Your consent to participate in this research is assumed once you have selected “submit.” We ask you to answer in your capacity as an individual and not on behalf of any organisation to which you may be affiliated. You may choose not to answer questions in the survey by leaving the question blank or you may exit the survey and your responses will not be saved. Once you select “submit”, you cannot withdraw your data due to the anonymous nature of the survey. Responses to the survey will be stored

electronically [password protected] and destroyed after six years. The survey will not be stressful or cause you harm in any way. However, if you wish, please feel free to contact the researchers or the Head of School below. The findings of the study and summary of the research will be made publicly available via journal publications, and will be posted on the whānau Facebook private community pages.

Eligibility to participate:

- You must be 16 years of age or older to participate in this research.
- You must whakapapa to the Ormsby whānau.
- You must consent to participate anonymously.

If you have any questions about the research, please contact the researchers or Head of School:

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For any queries regarding ethical concerns, please contact: Chair, University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, Ethics and Integrity Team, University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142.

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Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 17/06/2022 for three years. Reference Number UAHPEC24371.

## Appendix C. Online Survey

Survey questions via Qualtrics:

1. What is your age (in years)?
  - a. Short-answer
2. What is your ethnicity? Please feel free to enter more than one ethnicity.
  - a. Short-answer
3. What is your gender?
  - a. Female
  - b. Male
  - c. Gender diverse
  - d. Prefer not to say
4. What does wellness mean to you?
  - a. Long-answer
5. List and describe the different dimensions of wellness that are important to you. For example: physical health - being active and visiting my GP regularly.
  - a. Long-answer
6. List the three most important dimensions you have described.
  - a. Long-answer

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