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**Angitūtanga o Ngā Taurira Māori:
Supporting Māori Students to Succeed in Psychology**

A thesis
submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree
of
Master of Arts [Psychology]
at
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by
DIONNE MARTIN



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Abstract

Many Māori seek out university degrees to make a meaningful impact on the health of their community. Psychology, is one avenue that attracts Māori to do so. Psychology training has often failed to meet the needs of Māori students, often creating barriers to Māori student success. This thesis will explore barriers and support mechanisms that Māori students experience while attending university in pursuit of psychology degrees. This study will focus on experiences had by those enrolled in The School of Psychology at The University of Waikato, on the Hamilton campus. Informed by kaupapa Māori guidelines and analysed through the use of pūrākau this thesis highlights some key experiences shared by Māori psychology students. Three key experiences were identified. First, the prominence of Western culture in The School of psychology and the impact that has on Māori sense of belonging and whanaungatanga. Second, support system realities for Māori, identifying key university supports systems and realities associated with one home environment. Third, the transitional journey to becoming a psychologist and what impact that has on the university journey. With this in mind, some recommendations are made to support Māori student success in psychology. These recommendations advocate for the provision of a more bicultural learning experience, creation of a culturally affirming environment, recruitment and retention of culturally capable staff, appropriate resourcing, funding and training for support services, better support for Māori realities and pathway navigation support.

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To our Māori people. Your stories and experiences motivate me to succeed. You are more than deserving of a psychology system fit to our culture. I will always hold that goal close.

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Glossary

Aotearoa – New Zealand

Hapū- subtribe

He Whakaputanga – Declaration of Independence

Hui- meeting

Iwi- tribe

Kaitiakitanga- guardianship

Kanohi-ki-te-kanohi- face to face

Kapa haka- performing arts

Karakia – incantation/prayer

Karanga- welcome call

Kaupapa Māori – Māori way or approach

Koha – gift

Kotahitanga- unity

Kōrero- conversation/discussion

Mahi- work

Manaaki/Manaakitanga – generosity and support

Māori – Indigenous people/culture of New Zealand

Marae- Māori meeting house

Mātauranga Māori – Māori knowledge

Mōteatea- chants

Oriori- lullaby

Pākehā - European

Pepeha – introductory custom

Pōwhiri- welcome ceremony

Pūrākau- story

Rangahau- research

Rāranga- weaving

Tangata whenua- people of the land

Tangihanga- Māori funeral processions

Tāmoko- tattoo

Tāniko- embroidery

Tauira – student

Te ao Māori – Māori worldview

Te ao Pākehā – European worldview

Te Tiriti o Waitangi- The Treaty of Waitangi

Tika- true/correct/right

Tino rangatiratanga- sovereignty

Tuakana-teina – older sibling/younger sibling

Wā - time

Wāhi- place

Waiata- songs

Wairuatanga- spirituality

Whakairo- carving

Whakapapa – genealogy

Whakatauki- proverbs

Whakawhanaungatanga – process of establishing whanaungatanga

Whānau- family

Whanaungatanga- Relationships

Chapter 1: Introduction

Ko wai au? Who am I?

I te taha o tōku māmā, ko Ngāti Tūwharetoa me Ngāti Maniapoto nga iwi

I te taha o tōku pāpā, ko Ngāti whātua me Whānau-ā-Apanui nga iwi

No Taupō ahau

Ko Dionne Martin tōku ignoa

On my mother's side, I hail from the tribal lands of Ngāti Tūwharetoa and Ngāti Maniapoto

On my father's side, I hail from the tribal lands of Ngāti Whātua and Te Whānau-ā-Apanui

I am from Taupō

My name is Dionne Martin

Above I have shared my pepeha. Pepeha is as an introductory custom utilized by Māori (indigenous people/culture of New Zealand) that shares information about ones whakapapa (genealogy) and aims to create connection between people (Opai, 2023).

Ordinarily, this is a usual way for Māori to introduce themselves. Though in this instance I have also chosen to introduce myself this way as this rangahau (research) aims to tell a pūrākau (story). As storytelling involves a relationship between the storyteller and the listener, I hope that sharing my pepeha has created some connection between us. The pūrākau in this thesis will tell the story of 'Kimai' a Māori psychology student. Her story (informed by the experiences had by participants of this study) will explore what it is like to be a Māori psychology student existing within a Western university system, navigating challenges and chasing dreams of becoming a psychologist in Aotearoa (New Zealand).

Rationale

For decades psychologists, researchers and students alike have all shared concerns around barriers to Māori educational success within psychology programmes at the

university's in Aotearoa (Levy, 2008; Levy, 2018a; Theodore et al., 2017; Waiari et al., 2021, Waitoki et al., 2024). Research into the School of Psychology at the University of Waikato (UoW) alone has been conducted for 20+ years, with many of the same issues persisting until today (McAllister et al., 2018; MacLennan et al., 2013; Masters & Levy, 1995; Hunt et al., 2001).

Briefly, some of the major persisting issues include the dominance of Western ideologies, systems and knowledge, low numbers of Māori representation, lack of and poor integration of kaupapa Māori content, absence of whanaungatanga, financial hardship and whānau obligations (Hunt et al., 2001; Theodore et al., 2017, Waiari et al., 2021, Waitoki et al., 2023a).

As a somewhat 'newbie' to the Aotearoa New Zealand University scene, I had my hopes set high for a culturally rich experience at UoW. Following many years of overseas travel and study, I returned ready to engage in a Māori educational setting. With my sights set on postgraduate qualifications and aspirations of being a clinical psychologist, I began to consider how inclusive universities are of te ao Māori (Māori worldview). Very shortly into my postgraduate diploma I found myself frustrated and angry at the almost non-existence of anything kaupapa Māori in my coursework. Attempting to funnel that frustration into something feasible (this thesis) then became a goal.

Pursuance of such research is further validated when considering the current state of psychology in Aotearoa. Māori are continually overrepresented in mental health services, yet the workforce fails to meet the needs of these whānau (families). It is well known within the psychology community that there are only 6% of Māori psychologists in Aotearoa (Kennedy et al., 2021). Yet Te Whatu Ora report that in 2022-2023 Māori utilized mental health and addiction services at the highest rate (Te Whatu Ora, 2023). Further statistical data obtained in 2022-2023 backing this up, reporting that 18.2% of Māori (15+ years) experienced

elevated psychological distress, compared to 11.9% of non-Māori, this percentage difference evident in the five years preceding also (Te Hiringa Mahara, 2024). This making research into Māori student success and retention crucial in creating a workforce suited to the needs of Māori whānau.

Collaboration

This thesis is a part of a wider research project named '*Poipoia te kākano hei puāwai: nurturing Māori pathways through Psychology.*' Guided by Dr. Logan Hamley, this project was comprised of an entirely Māori research team. Collaboratively, our group explored the experience of taurira Māori enrolled in the School of Psychology at The University of Waikato. Being able to do this work with like-minded Māori people was an experience I am truly grateful for. A rare opportunity within my university studies thus far.

Alongside this thesis, two other important pieces of work were produced. Hamley (2024) submitted a report to the School of Psychology outlining the key findings of the wider Poipoia project, this covering experiences and challenges from both the Hamilton and Tauranga campuses. Bidois (2024) submitting a master's thesis outlining key experiences had on the Tauranga campus, highlighting the Western educational environment, pathways through psychology and equity. Finally, my work will focus on the experience of those enrolled on the Hamilton campus. An outline of this thesis below.

Outline

To follow this introduction, a review of the literature will outline key implications that have led us to the psychology education system we have today. Chapter two, will take a trip back into Aotearoa's history, outlining the implications of *the colonisation of education and psychology*. Chapter three, then *setting the context for the research* by providing more current issues in psychology education, adding specific context around the Univeristy of Waikato.

Chapter four will then speak to the *methodology* adopted in this mahi (work), that being methodology informed by kaupapa Māori (a Māori way or approach) and the utilisation of pūrākau analysis. Chapter five then describing the methods used. The *methods* will describe the ways in which kaupapa Māori principles were applied to semi-structured interviews and focus groups, and outline how pūrākau has been used as an analytical tool.

Chapter six then begins the analysis. This chapter will cover what it is like for taurira (students) Māori to exist in *Western culture within the School of Psychology*. Chapter seven then speaking the *support system realities* that Māori face when navigating the university journey. Chapter eight then highlighting the *transitional journey to becoming a psychologist for Māori students*.

The final chapter, *concluding thoughts*, will then wrap up key ideas, reflecting on learnings and making recommendations for the future.

Chapter 2: The Colonisation of Education and Psychology

As this thesis relates to both education and psychology, the first chapter will look at the impacts of colonisation on both of these areas. Looking first at the broad *implications of colonisation* in Aotearoa, this chapter will then explore *Aotearoa's education history* before looking at *Māori in Western healthcare* and finishing with literature around *Western psychology in Aotearoa*.

2.1: Implications of Colonisation

Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Te Tiriti o Waitangi (The Treaty of Waitangi) is a founding document of Aotearoa. This document, signed in 1840, intended to bring together Indigenous Māori and the British Crown (Barlow, 1991). Despite its intentions, broken promises of Te Tiriti would see Aotearoa New Zealand become a colonised nation. To set the context of colonisation, a brief overview of how Te Tiriti o Waitangi came to be is provided next.

The first British explorer to arrive in Aotearoa was Captain James Cook, who arrived in 1769. On his arrival he would find the tangata whenua (people of the land) in Aotearoa- these people were Māori. Before long, relationships began between Māori and Pākehā (Europeans) as the two began to trade resources with one another. Over the next few decades, some British trader-settlers would begin to settle in Aotearoa. Fast-forward to 1835, James Busby called a hui (meeting) at Waitangi where Māori northern chiefs would sign He Whakaputanga- a Declaration of Independence. This document would make Aotearoa an independent country with Crown (British) protection. Just four years later in 1839, William Hobson would set sail for Aotearoa. Hobson had been given authority to create a treaty with Māori to address (exaggerated) unrest between Māori and Pākehā. Hobson was instructed to obtain agreement from Māori in a free, consensual and open manner, securing sovereignty over all or parts of the country that Māori wished to cede (Orange, 2015). Thus, in 1840, Te Tiriti o Waitangi would be created and signed.

Māori signed Te Tiriti o Waitangi with the understanding that Māori would keep tino rangatiratanga or sovereignty of their people and land; yet this was not the way it unfolded. It was not long before settlers began breaking treaty promises through deceitful dealings (Barlow, 1991; Ka'ai-Mahuta, 2011). Like many others around the world, colonisation had been painted as an great opportunity, yet it resulted in the marginalisation, oppression and exploitation of the indigenous people (Walker et al., 2006). Māori lost power and control, land was confiscated, cultural practice was suppressed and disease was introduced. Māori were left socio-economically disadvantaged in housing, employment and education (Kennedy et al., 2021; Nikora, 2014). Thus, we can see how broken promises made in Te Tiriti o Waitangi played a role in the colonisation of Māori.

Assimilation

British subjects saw Māori social, political and cultural organizations as primitive and inferior to the European systems they brought with them (Waitoa & Dombroski, 2020).

Assimilation would see Māori political and economic structures systematically destroyed or pushed outside of the mainstream norms (Smith, 1989). Pākehā believed that monoculturalism and monolingualism was the right answer for New Zealand, and through policy and practice, they would begin to assimilate Māori to their norms (Walker, 1989; as cited in Thomas & Nikora, 1996). Cultural beliefs, practice, identity and norms were pushed to the outskirts of society, only acceptable within the privacy of the Māori home or marae (meeting house) (Smith, 1989). To gain more insight on the effects of colonisation the following provides some examples of assimilation in early Aotearoa.

First, take for example language loss through state education. Not only did early education systems forbid Māori from speaking their own language, the dominance of Western education, curriculum, class structures, cultural subordination, meritocracy, testing and racism, all contributed to language loss (Ka'ai-Mahuta, 2011).

Next for example the shift towards a capitalist society. Māori began to move away from their rural communities and into the bigger cities, causing the necessity to assimilate to the Pākehā norms and go through significant lifestyle changes (Mooney et al., 2020). Traditional Māori were people who lived within an economy of affection, one that prided itself on reciprocity, but the arrival of colonisers caused a shift towards a capitalist economy of exploitation (Henare, 1994).

A final example considers land ownership. In traditional Māori society, land was cared for by the collective, the notion of individual ownership was non-existent (Kelly, 2003). Yet, Māori were forced to assimilate to the idea of individual ownership through lands sales and confiscation.

Despite, 200+ years of attempts at assimilation, Māori continue to resist full assimilation. This had been evident in the past and continues today.

2.2: Aotearoa's Education History

The implementation of British educational systems played its part in the colonisation of our Māori people. Through colonisation came a new or 'foreign' way of living for Māori. State education systems were utilized as a powerful tool to assimilate Māori to Pākehā norms and further used to colonise and control indigenous peoples by eliminating one's culture, language and worldview (Pihama & Lee-Morgan, 2019; Wilson et al., 2011a). British modes of learning and knowledge took precedence over mātauranga Māori resulting in the loss of access to cultural, social and familial support, while asserting western political and intellectual power (Smith, 2018).

Tooley (2000) describes successive eras of government educational philosophies. First, assimilation (1800's-1950's), next integration (1960's), followed by multiculturalism (1970's) and finally biculturalism (1980s-2000's). Today's education system still seeks to be a bicultural system, but it may be argued that we are still far from that goal.

Education as a tool of assimilation

Eurocentric education in Aotearoa, began with the introduction of Mission School's in the early 1800's. Missionaries believed that through these schools they could bring Māori from a primitive state into civilisation. Here, missionaries sought to disrupt the intergenerational transmission of Māori language, culture and worldviews, thus making Māori culture subordinate (Ka'ai-Mahuta, 2011). Despite already having their own education systems, Māori saw this as an opportunity to gain powerful Pākehā knowledge by sending their children to the mission schools (Walker, 2016).

Native schools, introduced in mid-late 1800's employed a new tactic in assimilating Māori. Deciding that mission schools placed too much emphasis on religion, the government

decided to take control of education by introducing Native Schools. Within these schools, the government would create and implement curriculum, content, knowledge and values that were cohesive with and affirming of the Western worldview (Ka'ai-Mahuta, 2011).

Educational assimilation continued strongly into the early 1900's. Education was destructive, disempowering, demoralizing and denigrating to Māori culture (Simon, 1992).

The Hunn report, published in 1960 outlined the impacts of education on Māori. This official document identified gaps in life expectancy, higher education exclusion and unemployment rates between Māori and Pākehā (Hunn, 1961). The ministry of education responded to this report by creating the Māori Education Foundation and the National Advisory Committee on Māori education. This called for inclusion of Māori in curriculum content and the introduction of bilingual schooling (Walker, 2016).

The perpetuation of educational inequality through structures, administration, content and delivery in mainstream education started to become more noticeable to Māori (Ritchie 1990; as cited in Moeke-Pickering, 1996). The introduction of Kōhanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa Māori both arriving in the late 1900's fought for the survival of Māori knowledge and language. Movements such as Generation 2000 and Māori educational development conferences recognised the gaps and too fought to uphold Māori education in the face of Eurocentric norms (walker, 2016).

This fight continues today, with Māori still resisting assimilation efforts made through education.

Introduction of Māori to the university

The introduction of the formal education systems meant Māori had to adapt to the change, with some seeking university qualifications for their social and economic survival (Bennett, 2003).

In the late 1800's, Māori began to intermittently attend university. Unsurprisingly, there was little to no regard for cultural learning preferences, knowledge or indigenous ways of knowing (Durie, 2009; as cited in Hall 2014).

The first Māori graduate Sir Āpirana Ngata, alongside the first two Māori medical graduates Sir Māui Pōmare and Sir Te Rangi Hīroa (Peter Buck) are influential figures in Māori university history. These three are often credited for the revival of Māori society, economics and culture. Aware of the necessity to succeed in Western tertiary education, these three advocated for and role modelled the ability to maintain Māori identity while embracing the Pākehā worldview and education system. The trio upheld Māori language and culture, while simultaneously navigating the Western university with success (Durie, 2005).

The trio's success though was perceived as a threat to the Western dominance and control of education. Proof that Māori could succeed, saw Westerners suppress Māori access to higher education in an effort to maintain superiority. Exclusionary practice, cultural subordination and maintenance of the Western norms all utilised to keep control. However, Māori efforts to remain in higher education persisted (Tiakiwai, 2001).

Despite persistence from Māori, Western efforts to suppress Māori success would cause a large gap in Māori tertiary success. It would not be until the mid-late 1900's that a second wave of Māori university success would be seen again (Walker, 1991; as cited in Tiakiwai, 2001).

The late 1900's saw the introduction of a bicultural education system, where Westerners proposed an equal educational opportunity for Māori. Despite this, the implications of 150 years of educational assimilation could not be rectified overnight (Hook & Raumati, 2008). Therefore, Māori in higher education are still chipping away at this goal today.

2.3: Māori in Western Healthcare

Early colonisation of Māori health

Māori health and wellbeing is understood as a balance of one's mental, physical, social and spiritual needs; and emphasises the importance a healthy connection to one's family, friends and communities (Durie, 2008; Waitoki et al., 2018). This outlook is vastly different to a Western individualistic medical view on health. Colonisation of health systems caused great harm to Māori, intergenerationally, spiritually and psychologically (Mooney et al., 2020).

Prior to colonisation, Māori had their own health systems, suitable for their people, their environment and their understanding of health (Ratima, 2002; as cited in Graham & Masters-Awatere, 2020). A particularly challenging part of colonisation was the suppression of traditionally Māori modes of healing. Holistic indigenous healing related to spirituality and wairuatanga was considered invalid in the new colonised society (Kennedy et al., 2021).

In 1907 attempts to further colonise Māori were introduced through the Tohunga Suppression Act. Tohunga were individuals known to have connections and influence in the spiritual realm, Tohunga utilised these abilities to help heal Māori (Mooney et al., 2020). The Tohunga Suppression Act forbids tohunga practices and put Westernised methods of healing and wellness at the forefront. Traditional Māori ways of healing and wellness such as mirimiri (massage) or rongoā (traditional medicines) were banned (Marks & Lyons, 2010). The introduction of the Tohunga Act caused the invalidation and marginalisation of Māori ways of healing, creating the opportunity for Western ideas of health to stand alone without input from traditional Māori knowledge (Bennett & Liu, 2018).

As you can see, Māori ways of being were once again colonised. Māori were unable to address health problems in the way most suited to them. The suppression of Māori healing has created intergenerational effects on the health of Māori.

Aotearoa's healthcare system

Aotearoa's healthcare system continually fails to meet the needs of Māori. Health inequities have been constantly seen since the colonisation of Aotearoa and the provision of racist healthcare only continues to perpetuate that.

Health inequities refer to unfair, unjust, unnecessary and avoidable differences in health (Whitehead, 1992). In the early 1900's, the introduction of universal healthcare sought to provide all New Zealanders with equal access to comprehensive healthcare (Goodyear-Smith & Ashton, 2019). Since then, New Zealand's health care system has failed to deliver equitable outcomes for Māori (Brown & Bryder, 2023). Despite this new healthcare system being promoted as an equal system, it would certainly provide unequal outcomes for Māori. When these unequal outcomes became apparent, the system blamed Māori, stating the inequalities must be due to Māori inferior genes, effort, intellect and education, aptitude and even luck (Reid & Robson, 2000).

Moving now to the current healthcare system, we can see the ways in which racism is played out, only adding the health inequities in Aotearoa. A systematic review into the experience of Māori in the Aotearoa New Zealand health system revealed many barriers to health. Graham and Masters-Awatere (2020) found issues within the Western organisational structure. This included being met with negative perceptions (such as facial expressions or body language), hostility, scepticism, disinterest, racism and discrimination (both implicit and explicit), devaluation of spiritual and cultural needs and feelings of alienation. Next, they highlighted issues related to staff interaction, such as poor ability to build rapport, absence of warmth, poor relation and connection skills, lack of continuity of care, inconsistent information provision and explanations, and staff stress causing patients and whānau to refrain from asking for help. More recent investigation into the experience of New Zealand healthcare services found that non-Māori experience higher levels of being treated with

respect and being listened too, than Māori. Further non-Māori were more likely to respond 'never' when asked if they had experience unfair treatment (Cunningham et al., 2024).

It is clear that the adoption of a universal healthcare system would not provide good outcomes for Māori back then, nor does it serve Māori well today.

2.4: Western Psychology in Aotearoa

Psychological services in Aotearoa

In general, mild to moderate mental health in Aotearoa is treated by general practitioners, primary health organizations, non-government organisations and occasionally iwi services. More severe mental health is treated by hospital services including crisis services, inpatient treatment or community mental health and addiction services. Occasionally offered across all services are kaupapa Māori services, where Māori (and non-Māori) have the choice between these services or mainstream services (Mooney et al., 2020).

Māori mental health service users

It is well known amongst the psychology community that Māori are continually overrepresented as service users in mental health organizations. 2022-2023 data from Te Whatu Ora (2023) and Te Hiringa Mahara (2024) both identify that Māori are the highest users of mental health services compared to other ethnicities. Although this high representation could be attributed a variety of different reasons, one key issue for Māori mental health is the socio-economic challenges faced by Māori. The World Health Organization (2014) state that socio-economic determinants of health, such as unemployment, low income and poorer standards of living can negatively impact one's mental health and wellbeing. This is relevant as Māori are continually overrepresented in negative social statistics such as high rates of unemployment, living in crowded housing, lower incomes, less likely to be homeowners, incarceration and higher incidents of domestic violence (Brandt 2013; Ministry of Health, 2018).

Statistics like these beg the question as to why psychology services aren't shaped to suit the needs of Māori? Psychology in Aotearoa is dominated by Western ideologies and frameworks that aren't well suited to Māori.

Dominance of Western psychology

Western Psychology's tendency to exclude Māori knowledge and worldview's results in the needs of the community not being met (Bennett & Liu, 2018).

Groot et al., (2018) offer two examples of inappropriate western ideologies that are utilised at the dissatisfaction of Māori. First, the Western tendency to see clients as an individual rather than a part of collective and subsequently assessing their mental health through this lense. Second, the use theories and testing that have been developed for use outside of Māori. These tools tend to be based on Eurocentric norms and are therefore not fit for Māori.

With Māori psychologists only accounting for 6% of the psychologist workforce in Aotearoa (Kennedy et al., 2021), it is not surprising that many of our Māori service users have to see non-Māori psychologists. In 2001, the NZPB raised some major concerns around low numbers of Māori psychologists. These included challenges (sometimes impossibility) for Māori to see a Māori psychologist, unavailability of Māori psychologists in family court, mental health services and educational settings, expectations of Māori to supervise non-Māori colleagues who are working with Māori clients, absence of and inappropriate interpretations of Māori perspectives by non-Māori psychologists and the dismissal of Māori perspectives in spaces with low Māori representation (NZPB 2001; as cited in Levy, 2018a).

In an attempt to rectify some of the Western dominance in Aotearoa, NZPB have outlined some important goals within their 2021-2025 strategic priorities that aim to better serve our Māori communities. Goals include an increase of Māori psychologists, supporting and embracing bicultural practice, training programmes teaching the application of culturally

appropriate models such as the Meihana Model, indigenous psychology being reflected in the accreditation standards, the promotion and the use of te reo Māori and adhering to bicultural obligations to elevate Māori paradigms in psychology (New Zealand Psychologists Board, n.d).

WAI2725

1975, the Waitangi tribunal was set up, a place where breaches of Te Tiriti o Waitangi could be heard. Claimants bring their concerns to the table, looking for changes and negotiations that rightly honour and uphold the commitments agreed upon in Te Tiriti (Mutu, 2019).

In 2018, Dr. Michelle Levy lodged the WAI2725 claim to the Waitangi tribunal. WAI 2725 addressed the Crown's failure to uphold their obligations to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and highlighted the ways in which Māori in the psychology community are being let down. This claim identifies three relevant affiliations of the Crown that require improvement if Māori are to flourish in the discipline of psychology and further to ensure Māori service users' needs are met in a culturally competent and safe way. These three areas include regulatory bodies (such as the New Zealand Psychologist board), training providers (such as universities) and employers (such as the Ministry of Health) (Levy, 2018b).

This claim aims to bring to light many of the issues that Māori are facing in psychology, with hope that change to our health systems, training systems and psychology systems will see more appropriate care for Māori.

Summary

In summary, Māori have faced many challenges due to colonisation. Māori have been negatively impacted in all realms of life since the arrival of British colonisers, but continue to resist assimilation and advocate for change. This chapter has helped provide some context as to how Māori have been affected through the colonisation of education and health systems in

Aotearoa. Further helping us understand the state of psychological services in Aotearoa today. The issues raised in this chapter help validate the necessity for more Māori psychologists, therefore emphasising the importance of Māori student success in psychology training.

Chapter 3: Setting the Context for the Research

The second chapter now provides some specific context for the research, focusing on the literature and policies most relevant to this research. Firstly, it covers literature focusing on the *Shared Experiences in Psychology Education* of Māori Psychology students, highlighting some common themes found in the research looking at Māori inequities within psychology. It then covers some key policy within the University of Waikato relevant to this research, specifically the *University of Waikato's Commitment to Change*. Finally, it covers a previous evaluation of the School of Psychology, looking at Māori experiences captured in the *Evaluation of Kaupapa Māori in Psychology at The University of Waikato*.

3.1: Shared experiences in Psychology Education

The experiences of Māori students have been explored across many universities within Aotearoa New Zealand (Hunt et al., 2001; Levy, 2018b; Theodore et al., 2017, Waiari et al., 2021, Waitoki et al., 2023a). Often, this research has focused on what helps and hinders Māori success in higher education, using these insights to make recommendations for change. Through previous research we can see some common experiences of Māori Psychology students. Further, despite research across the decades, we can see the persistence of many of the issues identified, a theme specifically explored in this thesis.

First, we will explore some experiences that are had by my Māori students in general. Theodore et al., (2017) provides a good general overview of Māori contributors to university success. A pool of graduate students from all eight New Zealand universities were invited to fill out a survey related to what helps and hinders qualification completion for Māori. Helpful factors included a) familial support, such as motivation, emotional support, practical and

financial support, b) academic support, such as good supervision, teaching styles, appropriate content, supportive academic staff and practical experience, c) flexibility in course structure to create life balance, d) personal characteristics such as commitment, perseverance, time management and goal orientation, e) supportive university factors such as helpful non-academic staff, facilities, resources, Māori supportive services, Māori support staff and tuakana-teina (older sibling/younger sibling) services and finally, f) other support factors such as friendships, financial support and flexible employment. Moving now to factors that hindered qualification completion. Hindering factors included a) family obligations such as childcare, caring for family members, family commitments, crises and lack of family support, b) academic factors such as inappropriate or the lack of good supervision, teaching, staff, content and practical experience, c) unhelpful personal factors such as lack of confidence, focus, interest and motivation, d) being unprepared for university such as not having the right skills or expectations of university, at times leading to failures, paper repetitions and course changes e) health issues, both physical and mental, f) financial issues such as high university fees, hardship, access to student allowances and lack of scholarships, g) employment and life commitments, h) poor university support such as administrative errors, poor course advice, lack of resources and limited course availability, i) Eurocentric environment and lack of kaupapa Māori integration and finally, j) attendance of tangihanga (funerals) and the universities poor understanding of the impact bereavement for Māori.

Now we will explore some common experiences has specifically by Māori psychology students through three influential studies.

Hunt et al., (2001) conducted an evaluation focused on identifying barriers and supports for Māori psychology students at The Univeristy of Waikato. Data was collected through questionnaires and interviews, resulting in some key findings. Supportive features included access to tutors, support from peers, engagement in kaupapa Māori tutorials and

opportunities to engage with Māori staff (or staff competent in cultural teaching). Barriers included monocultural (Western) dominance, childcare commitments, financial challenges, poor community connection and lecturer approachability and support from non-Māori staff.

Waiari et al., (2021) investigated the experience of Māori and Pacifica psychology students at The University of Auckland. Kaupapa Māori informed, semi-structured focus groups invited participants to share openly about their psychology journey. From this the researchers were able to identify some key ideas. First, they highlighted the pressures created by individualistic nature of university systems, and encouraged embracing whanaungatanga (relationships) to help mediate that. Next, they highlighted the need for collaborative, reciprocal and respectful learning relationships, as lecture style learning often places the student in passive listener role. Next, embracing Māori and Pacific expertise and knowledge systems was suggested, as these are seldom reflected within course content. Finally, the importance of supporting Māori and Pacific pathways into and throughout psychology was highlighted, as students are often ill-prepared and uninformed about what the discipline of psychology is really like.

More recently Waitoki et al., (2023a) surveyed programme coordinators at the University of Waikato, inviting them to comment on the cultural (Māori) responsiveness in psychology education. Relevant findings highlighted challenges associate with low Māori staff numbers, this a problem for students as it maintains monocultural dominance and Western norms, as well as additional cultural labour placed on Māori staff ultimately affecting students' ability to connect with Māori staff. A shortage of Māori students was also noted, highlighting the need for programmes to support Māori student retention through cultural content incorporation, recruitment of Māori staff, scholarships and culturally responsive selection for programmes. Finally, programme content was addressed.

Emphasizing the need for more kaupapa Māori and Indigenous content to be taught, more funding and resourcing, and solidarity in the importance of incorporating cultural content.

These articles are only a small piece of wider research pool. It is clear that Māori face many barriers in their university journey, each of which deserve to be addressed and changed. Many psychologists, researchers, academics and students have a shared desire to see greater Māori student success and will continue to produce research in support of that goal.

3.2: The University of Waikato's Commitment to Change

Relationship with Waikato-Tainui

The University of Waikato sits upon Waikato-Tainui land, land traditionally inhabited by the people Ngāti Wairere, Ngāti Hauā, Ngāti Korokī Kahukura, Ngāti Māhanga and Ngāti Tamainupō (local tribes). Much of this land was unsurprisingly confiscated by colonial settlers in 1864 following the Waikato Land Wars Act. This Act was found to be in breach of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and through the Waitangi Tribunal Act the land was returned to Waikato-Tainui following a settlement with the Crown in 1995. The land was returned in the title of Pōtatau Te Wherowhero, the first Māori King. Since then, the University of Waikato has leased the land on which the Hamilton campus sits on. Thus, creating a long-standing relationship with the Kīngitanga (The University of Waikato, n.d.).

Since the 1970's University of Waikato has been a desirable choice for Māori students (Ritchie, 1992). The University of Waikato's 2023 annual report found that 25% of the student body were Māori, this being a growth in Māori student population when compared to the 2018 report where Māori made up 19% of the students (University of Waikato, 2018; University of Waikato 2023). Further, the UoW has the highest percentage of Māori enrolments, with the national average of Māori students sitting as 12.5% (Education Counts, 2024). Therefore, making Māori student success an important consideration when

implementing change, creating policy and making institutional decisions for the University of Waikato.

The University of Waikato (alongside all seven other New Zealand universities) are obliged to uphold, actively promote and give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, under the Education and Training Act 2020 (Ministry of Education, 2021). Looking specifically at the breaches raised in the WAI2725 regarding Tertiary Education Institutions we can identify some themes relevant to our study at the University of Waikato. Themes include meeting Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations and commitments, active recruitment and retention of tauira Māori into Psychology programmes, ensuring programmes have a sufficient Māori focus, cultural competency and the lack of development of kaupapa Māori Psychology content and pathways (Levy, 2018b).

Documented commitments

Fortunately, the University of Waikato have acknowledged the disparities in Māori and Pākehā education, so have made multiple commitments to support Māori educational success. In 2022, The University of Waikato reviewed and released their planning and goals for the wider university, many of which outlined clear intentions and commitments to improving the experience for tauira Māori. Documents such as Te Rautaki Māori (Māori Advancement Plan), Te Rautaki Mātauranga (Academic Plan), the University Investment Plan and the University Strategy.

Te Rautaki Māori aimed at recognizing and embedding Mātauranga Māori while upholding the obligations set out in Te Tiriti o Waitangi has four key objectives. These objectives speak to the importance of making significant contributions to Māori, drawing on Māori heritage, strengthening relationships, improving capacity, enhancing visibility and ensuring the educational success of Māori (The University of Waikato, 2022a).

Next, looking at Te Rautaki Mātauranga, the first objective very simply states that the UoW aims to embed mātauranga Māori into teaching and learning. Important to Māori this plan also intends to create an inclusive teaching and learning environment, offer flexibility and provide high quality programmes that attract students (The University of Waikato, 2022b).

Appropriate allocation of finances also plays a key role in enhancing the success of Māori. The UoW investment plan makes reference to its commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and building upon Māori educational success, enhancing teaching and research capacity, drawing on regional heritage, cultural competency and the needs and aspirations of Māori (The University of Waikato, 2022c).

Lastly, goals set out in the Strategy plan include: ‘Embed mātauranga Māori into teaching, learning and the curriculum’ (Goal 2.1), ‘Increase visibility and representation by involving Māori and Pacific leaders with relevant real world experience to contribute to our teaching’ (Goal 3.6) and to make our campuses ‘places of belonging’ for all members of our University...’ (Goal 5.3) (The University of Waikato, 2022d).

Highlighting relevant policy is important, as it shows a clear commitment to making change for Māori. Policies as above warrant the necessity of studies like this thesis, to give perspective as to how well the University is upholding the responsibilities they have set for themselves.

Despite many commitments to doing better for Māori, the University of Waikato still has much work to do. A recent report by Parata and Gardiner (2020) acknowledged that the University of Waikato displayed structural, systematic and casual discrimination, adding the need for partnership and power sharing to create real change. The report highlights a clear dissonance between aspirations and realities; despite UoW marketing itself as having a true and deep commitment to Māori advancement, its structures, worldview, operation and

knowledge base aligns with the Western University system. Despite the report highlighting negatives that are longstanding, exhausting (for both individuals and the collective), repetitive and pervasive, the reported is signed off in hope for change (Parata & Gardiner, 2020). In the spirit of hope for change, we now turn to a report that focuses on describing racism within the School of Psychology at the University of Waikato, but also the recommendations made to improve the educational experience for students.

3.3: An Evaluation of Kaupapa Māori in Psychology at The University of Waikato

Researchers have been interested in the University experience for Māori across decades, more specifically research into the UoW school of psychology begun 20+ years ago (MacLennan et al., 2013; Masters & Levy, 1995; Hunt et al., 2001). Most recently McAllister et al., (2018) produced an evaluation of kaupapa Māori psychology at the University of Waikato. Requested by the Māori and Psychology Research Unit (MPRU), the researchers were asked to investigate the presence and implementation of kaupapa Māori within the School of Psychology. Guided by three main objectives; 1. exploring staff experiences integrating kaupapa Māori, 2. Barriers to student success and, 3. Identify supportive practices and structures that successfully implement kaupapa Māori, the researchers sought to gain insight into how well UoW were maintaining their commitment to Māori aspirations and educational success. Below is a summary of the main findings for each of these objectives.

Integration of kaupapa Māori

Staff experience of integrating kaupapa Māori into their work was comprised of many challenges. The first issued raised was inconsistent integration of kaupapa Māori across the school. Students believed that kaupapa Māori was only seen in Māori specific papers, staff acknowledge that it was staff responsibility to incorporate (or not) kaupapa Māori content- with some lacking the knowledge and confidence to do so, tokenistic approaches were problematic, lack of Māori practices were evident and Māori content being confined to a

single lecture occurred often. Second, cultural incompetence was raised. The lack of kaupapa Māori integration left students feeling culturally incompetent for the real world. Papers lacked relevant content for bicultural practice, students were not taught basics such as pronunciation skills, students were not made aware of (therefore did not access) supportive spaces such as the MPRU (Māori and Psychology Research Unit) and westernised ideologies and frameworks were prioritised almost all of the time. Additionally staff felt as though there was no cultural or institutional support towards the integration of kaupapa Māori often leaving Māori with additional cultural labour. Finally, harmful university policies were highlighted. Concerns included restrictive Māori advancement, challenges obtaining funding, cultural labour impacting role responsibilities (and therefore restricting promotion opportunities), high staff turnover due an unstable workplace (resulting in a lack of collaborative work) and non-supportive (towards kaupapa Māori inclusion) senior academics and staff.

Barriers to student success

Exploration of barriers to Māori student success again raised a multitude of issues. First the lack of visibility of Māori was challenging. Participants found that it was only within Māori spaces that Māori representation was evident, kaupapa Māori sessional assistants were poorly introduced, undervalued and used merely as tokens of Māori support, low numbers of Māori staff meant minimal opportunities to engage with them, perceived lack of expertise in hiring procedures (prohibiting Māori from gaining positions), lack of Māori examples in papers, lack of Māori practice, the absence of whanaungatanga and feelings of isolation. Second, participant's voiced the difficulty of navigating two worlds. These issues include being Māori in a space dominated with Western ideas caused conflict in identity for Māori, no support of being both a psychologist and Māori, a mismatch of values and again a lack of whanaungatanga. Finally, financial and practical barriers were raised. In relation to finances,

hardships, such as transport or housing were not appropriately acknowledged or supported therefore scholarships would be useful for Māori student retention. In relation to practical barriers, a lack of student guidance (for papers, placements and pathways) prevented taura from seeing a successful journey ahead.

Supported implementation of kaupapa Māori

Fortunately some positive support systems and actions were identified (as well as suggestions for improvement) when it came to implementing kaupapa Māori within psychology. First, the MPRU was acknowledged as being a supportive space founded upon whanaungatanga, cultural worldview inclusion, sharing of resources, practical experience opportunities and having supportive staff. Suggestions for improvement include greater opportunity for staff to work collaboratively within MPRU and increased marketing to raise awareness. Second, Te Aka Matua was acknowledged for having helpful direct support, but low levels of awareness meant many taura were unaware of the workshops, mentoring and social events, leaving the service underutilized. Again increased marketing was suggested, as well as increased funding allocation. Third, kaupapa Māori tutorials were acknowledged as being a comfortable and supportive environment that provided a sense of whanaungatanga. In particular taura appreciated the work done by the kaupapa Māori sessional assistants and felt as though they went over and above. Making kaupapa Māori tutorials available in all papers and entry requirement clarity (students expressed confusion as to whether they needed to be Māori or not) were suggested as improvements. Fourth, the engagement of staff was noted by students. Students appreciated when non- Māori made an effort to integrate te ao Māori (i.e. karakia) as well as supportive Māori staff (for many students this was crucial to their success). Suggestions included increased staff training so that staff could integrate more kaupapa māori safely and confidently. Fifth, taura acknowledged the integration of kaupapa Māori into their papers. Papers such as *Mauri Ora: Social Psychology of Human Flourishing*

and *Kaupapa Māori Psychology* were reflective of Māori worldviews, had appropriate content and provided better cultural awareness and competency. Taura hoped for more of this across their papers, as well as, increased use of Māori practice (i.e.. karakia) and more Māori staff. Sixth, taura acknowledged the importance of support from Māori peers. Building a sense of belonging through connecting with peers helped taura with feelings of isolation. Further, participants suggested the creation of a whānau space to help facilitate connections and the implementation of a tuakana-teina (older sibling/younger sibling) system. Seventh, participants acknowledged the importance of role models. The presence of successful Māori staff and students was encouraging and inspiring, in turn helping with Māori student retention. Finally, participant's acknowledged the importance of the presence of kaupapa Māori for workforce preparation. Supporting students to become practitioners who are culturally equipped with relevant content, practices, resources and values is crucial for those wanting practice within Aotearoa.

Recommendations

With all this being said, the 2018 evaluation produced 15 recommendations towards better implementation of kaupapa Māori within the School of Psychology. The recommendations are as follows:

- 1: Recruit more Māori staff
- 2: Further develop Kaupapa Māori tutorials
- 3: Re-establish the Kaupapa Māori Student Advisor Position
- 4: Implement discussion of psychology pathways
- 5: Include more bicultural knowledge in paper content
- 6: Include workforce preparation
- 7: Implement kaupapa Māori training for staff
- 8: Incorporate cultural practices into teaching

9: Appoint a cultural supervisor

10: Offer Scholarships to alleviate financial barriers

11: Invite a kaumatua on site

12: Create a whānau space

13: Increase the marketing of all Māori services within FASS (DALPSS) and the school of Psychology

14: Allocate funding to all Māori support services

15: Incorporate more Māori culture visually on campus

Prior to the 2018 evaluation, three previous evaluations were also conducted at the university of Waikato, sharing much of the same issues. Naturally these evaluations were discussed during interviews, staff were left unsure as to what response (if any) had been made. This begs the question as to whether there has been any response since the 2018 document? The 2018 recommendations will be revisited in the discussion of this thesis, exploring what change has been made and what recommendations remain relevant now 7 years later.

Summary

In summary, change to the university system and psychology training is long overdue. Many researchers have identified problems, and urged to need for change, yet many of the same issues persist. This chapter has outlined some common experiences had by Māori student's in psychology training and ways in which that experience could be improved. The School of Psychology and the wider University of Waikato has the opportunity to make change that is supportive of taurira Māori that is better aligned with the obligations and promises made in Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Chapter 4: Methodology

A qualitative approach, utilizing Kaupapa Māori methodology and pūrākau analysis has been used in this research. The following chapter will speak to importance aspects of kaupapa Māori research and the validation of pūrākau as a tool for making sense of Māori realities.

4.1: Kaupapa Māori Research

By, With and For Māori is a concept I have held close from the first time I heard it (Smith, 1995). This concept refers to the idea that Kaupapa Māori researchers are those who have whakapapa Māori (by), working alongside other Māori (with), for the benefit of Māori (for). As a first-time researcher I found it important to be guided by Kaupapa Māori methodology. Although my learnings thus far have been immersed in Western dominant ideas and methodologies, I felt a sense of privilege and gratitude knowing that my whakapapa gave me the ability to engage in Kaupapa Māori research (Smith, 2015). With the utmost sincere intentions to understand and improve the education journey for our fellow taura, I believe this mahi aligns as kaupapa Māori research.

Before exploring what it means to conduct kaupapa Māori research, we might first look at what it means for something to be kaupapa Māori. Kaupapa Māori relates to traditional and culture Māori ways of being, doing and thinking, founded on a Māori worldview (Henry & Pene, 2001). The term kaupapa Māori is used broadly to refer to any type of action that is created by Māori, with Māori values, ideals, perspectives principles and aspirations (Royal, 2017). Kaupapa Māori research similarly is focused on the use of Māori culture, customs, language, belief systems, protocols and worldviews (Hiha, 2016; Pihama et al., 2002).

Hereafter follows some key points related to conducting effective kaupapa Māori research. Points include *creating a supportive experience for Māori participants, inclusion of*

te ao Māori, Māori researchers, research flexibility, transformation and aspirations. Further some warnings about *challenges* associated with kaupapa Māori research.

First and foremost, kaupapa Māori research should *supportive of its participants*. Curtis (2016) highlights that research should be beneficial to Māori. Related to the previous point, the research should have direct benefit to Māori. Pihama (2011) adds that this can be achieved through the research topic, methodology, dissemination method and the value placed on the findings. Research should also be non-victim blaming and avoid cultural-deficit theories. Poor outcomes should not be attributed to poor behaviours of the individual nor should it be blamed on one's cultural norms (Curtis, 2016). Historically the wider society remains unblamed while victim blaming, and cultural deficit framing continues to effect Māori (Harris, 2008).

Being inclusive of *te ao Māori* is a crucial aspect for a piece of work to be considered kaupapa Māori. Research should be informed by mātauranga Māori. Curtis (2016) speaks about mātauranga Māori and its creation through the Māori world view. Applying a Māori worldview to the organization and interpretation of the research can lead to more appropriate processes and outcomes for Māori compared to non-Māori worldviews (Jones, Crengle & McCreanor, 2006). Research should further be accepting of diverse Māori realities. Despite the emphasis on using a Māori worldview, it should be acknowledged that Māori live a variety of different lives. Researchers should be wary not to group all Māori together as one homogeneous entity and be mindful not to isolate some as not being 'Māori enough' if their knowledge or actions are not as advanced as expected (Webber, 2009).

Kaupapa Māori research involves Māori in its design, delivery and participation (Tipa, 2019). It should be acknowledged that whakapapa Māori alone does not equate to good kaupapa Māori research. As mentioned this study was conducted by a group of all *Māori researchers*, delivered by the group, with fellow Māori students as the target participants.

To conduct this research as a wāhine Māori alongside other Māori researchers has been a great opportunity- one I am very appreciative for. Curtis (2016) emphasizes the idea of Kaupapa Māori research being ‘under Māori control.’ This referring to research being conducted by Māori with careful consideration of the role of non-Māori researchers involved at varying levels. It is also noted that Māori control can be exercised in various times including recruitment, data collection, analysis and interpretation. Overall, this being important as Smith (2012) reports a history of damage to our Māori community through non-Māori-controlled research.

Kaupapa Māori research is *flexible*, generally not adhering to the strict guidelines in which Western science follows. Flexibility means not adhering to formal guidelines or checklists, rather it aims to create an environment that is responsive to Māori (Tipa, 2019). Walter & Anderson (2013) believe that there should be no limits on using quantitative or qualitative methods, rather it should be whatever is most suitable. They add that research should be excellent and an excellent piece of research is one that committed to using the appropriate tools for the research question in mind.

Kaupapa Māori research must be *transformative*. The research should be focused on changing lives or making a difference for Māori (Smith, 2012). Research approaches should be able to critique issues of power, privilege, racism and promote social justice should be used. Taking such an approach acknowledges the relationship between power distribution, white privilege and the impacts of racism with Māori health inequalities (Borell et al., 2009; Parades et al., 2008). Research should support emancipation and decolonisation. Everyday colonisation has impacted Māori for many years. Kaupapa Māori research should work in opposition to this, by supporting Māori representation, self-worth, freedom and values (Moewaka Barnes et al., 2014).

Māori research should be *aspirational*. Engagement in kaupapa Māori research should ensure that all those involved (participants, whānau, researchers, community) are left empowered, enlightened and enriched and ultimately left in a better place (Mead, 2003). Research should have a future goal, and that pathway to that should be unrestrained from limitations and restrictions (Curtis, 2016).

Finally, like all methodologies, kaupapa Māori research comes with its *challenges* too. Smith (2021) outline three key challenges Māori researchers can face, first, convincing Māori of the value that research can have for Māori, second, the important need for Māori involvement within the powerful research communities and third, the development and use of relevant, appropriate research approaches that encompass both the new and the old. Being a team of all Māori researchers, it is hoped that we as group eased some of the concerns stated above. Although this research is perhaps at a smaller level, it is a stepping stone towards challenging some of the issues raised by Smith.

Summary

In summary, this research aims to be safe and supportive of its Māori participants. With an all Māori research team, it came natural to adhere to kaupapa Māori research guidelines. Further it has been a personally excited and eye opening experience to understand key kaupapa Māori research ideas and how to implement them.

4.2: Pūrākau

A particular approach to kaupapa Māori research is Pūrākau analysis, a form of research closely linked to Narrative analysis (Lee, 2009). The following will explore pūrākau as a tool for valid knowledge attainment. Key points will cover the *traditional use of pūrākau*, *pūrākau as a pedagogical tool* and *its comparisons to Western research*.

Traditional pūrākau are often misunderstood simply as ‘Myths and Legends’ but the term far extends this description. The Western tendency to refer to Pūrākau as Myths and

legends is an inappropriate and invalidating outlook on such a crucial part of Māori ways of knowing (Lee, 2008). Pūrākau rather are sacred stories, inspired by the spiritual, natural and social realms of te ao Māori (Levy & Waitoki, 2015). Traditionally narrative were utilised to share important cultural information such as whakapapa, values and iwi history (Ware et al., 2018). Traditional pūrākau held important information that was not only crucial for survival but also played a part in the ontological process of creating cultural norms (Mikahere-Hall, 2017). Pūrākau, has oral origins and was a way of sharing, organizing, constructing and expressing Māori knowledge prior to the arrival of Pākehā in Aotearoa (Mikahere-Hall, 2017). Ware et al., (2018) share that traditionally Pūrākau were told in variety of different forms. Oral narration not only included pūrākau (stories), but also waiata (songs), mōteatea (chants), oriori (lullaby), whakatauki (proverbs) and kōrero (narrative). Narration also came in the form of rituals, including karakia (prayer), pōwhiri (welcome ceremony) or karanga (welcome calls). Finally Pūrākau were seen in creative realms, including tāmoko (tattoo), kapa haka (performing arts), whakairo (carving), tāniko (embroidery) and rāranga (weaving).

Pūrākau teach us something, they have longed been used a form of *pedagogy*. The process of sharing, learning and teaching pūrākau is greatly valued by Māori (Lipsham, 2020). Pūrākau help Māori make meaning of the world around them through knowledge, culture, philosophical thoughts and worldview's (Lee, 2009). Pūrākau inform cultural practice, generate knowledge, articulate expectations, promote resilience, instil hope, and inform responsibility, all crucial to Māori health, sustainability and identity (Levy & Waitoki, 2015). Pūrākau Māori have been used throughout generations helping shape our communities and ultimately leaving lessons and guidance for generations (Cliffe-Tautari, 2020). The sharing of pūrākau is a validating and legitimate experience that that live life by and make sense of the world (Levy & Waitoki, 2015). Pūrākau not only tells our historical or traditional stories but is also inclusive of our contemporary stories and realities (Lee, 2005). Pūrākau

play a central role in creating and sharing mātauranga Māori. Pūrākau share knowledge, worldviews, relationships and realities in an easy to understand format (Marsden 2003; as cited in Hikuroa 2017). Pūrākau are connected and become stronger when alongside other pūrākau. The connectedness between stories shares knowledge, experience understanding and empathy. (Lee-Morgan, 2019).

Finally, some key *differences between pūrākau analysis and Western research*.

Kovach (2010) describes indigenous narrative has having some distinct characteristics that are not common in Western Narrative inquiry. Indigenous narrative inquiry is often linked to tribal epistemology, is relational, has purpose (usually including decolonisation intentions), involves protocol and is often flexible and informal (Kovach, 2010). Inappropriate western interpretations of Māori lived experience and reality have left Māori with a sense of mistrust and wariness when participating in research (Mikahere-Hall, 2017). Western research methods often emphasize the need to find one ‘real truth’ ignoring the opportunity to learn from multiple truths (Lee-Morgan, 2019). The pūrākau shared by the tauira are similar yet diverse as they each have their truth. The combination of these stories now reflecting a broader, deeper and richer experience of what it is like to be a tauira Māori.

Summary

Pūrākau are powerful and valid tool in the creation and sharing of Māori knowledge. Historically, pūrākau have been a key part of the Māori culture and worldview. In more contemporary times, pūrākau is still considered a valid way of knowing something, and therefore can be utilised in research. The use of pūrākau as a analytical tool will be explored in greater depth in the following chapter, as I explain the way in which I have chosen to use utilise it to tell the stories of our participants.

4.3: Philosophical Stance

Klakegg and Tvedt (2024) speak about the reckless researcher, one who is unaware of their position and philosophical views. Therefore, to avoid being a reckless researcher the following will speak about my personal understanding of the philosophical underpinnings within this research.

Ontology

Ontology is interested in reality, and the ways in which we investigate and observe it (Hathcoat et al., 2019). Two key ontological assumptions underpin this research. First, that multiple realities can exist and second the centrality of relationships.

This research takes an Indigenous ontology. An Indigenous ontology is founded upon a worldview that multiple truths can exist at once. Within a Māori context, we can draw on whakapapa kōrero to highlight this ontology. Different iwi (tribes) or hapū (sub-tribes) may have different interpretations of whakapapa, for example, whether Muriwai or Wairaka saved Mātaatua waka. While each collective may hold strongly to their whakapapa kōrero, this is not the same as proclaiming it is the single truth, instead honouring other collective narratives, especially when on another collective's land. The idea that multiple realities can exist aligns with qualitative work, such as the thesis. In this study we did not seek to find one truth about what it means to be a Māori psychology student, rather we wanted to embrace the subjective experience had by each individual.

Further, indigenous ontology places great importance on relationships, claiming that reality is a process of relationships (Wilson, 2008). For Māori, whakapapa informs our reality. Whakapapa are genealogical ties that not only connects humans to other humans, but also connects us with our environment and universe (Cram, 2017). Māori worldview often see one's self and nature as inseparable (Henare, 2001; as cited in Eustace et al., 2024). Further, Māori relationships do not just relate to the here and now, but through whakapapa these

relationships extend to the both past and future generations. While whakapapa may be more commonly referred to as genealogy, its meaning actually refers to the layering of one thing upon another, as in generations continually layering upon one another (Barlow, 1991; as cited in Cram, 2017). Therefore, in research, whanaungatanga is important as we aim to create relationships with those in front us, but also the intergenerational relationships and connections they bring with them (Moko-Painting et al., 2023). This understanding of relationality is foundational to the ontology that shapes this project, and the relationships between myself and the taura, as well as to the broader world.

Epistemology

Epistemology shapes our understanding of knowledge and how we come to know something to be true or not true (Klakegg & Tvedt, 2024). Similar to the ontological assumptions, the epistemological assumptions of this research highlight the importance of relationships in creating knowledge.

Kaupapa Māori epistemology challenges the dominance and power of Western individualistic approaches to research (Bishop, 1996). Indigenous epistemology places relationships at the forefront of knowing (Wilson, 2008). This rings true for Māori, as relationships are one of the most important parts of Māori culture.

In Māori culture, whānau are a highly valued knowledge source. Pohatu (2015) points out that it is often our whānau we turn to first when seeking mātauranga. For Māori it is obvious and natural to seek knowledge from the experience's and applied knowledge that our whānau hold. This highlighting the importance of kaumatua expertise. Kaumatua who are pūkenga (knowledge repositories), kaitiaki (custodians) and tohunga (spiritual experts) play a huge role in storing and sharing the mātauranga of our people and environment (Ruru & Nikora, 2021).

Māori believe that Mātauranga Māori, knowledge that is shaped by and shapes Māori epistemology, has no beginning or end, instead it is continually refined and enhanced as each generation contributes to the knowledge as it passes down through generations (Winiata, 2020). This idea emphasizes the responsibility of each generation to contribute to the growth of mātauranga Māori (Lipsham, 2020).

For Māori, kinship-like relationships bring together the ‘knower’ and ‘knowable’ together (Greenshill, 1999; as cited in Cram et al., 2018). Epistemological underpinnings of qualitative research see interactions between researchers and participants as vital to ensure an in-depth understanding is gained (Moroi, 2021).

It is thus through this Māori approach to epistemology that I have conducted this work, recognising the intergenerational legacy of mātauranga that I learn from, and also contribute to.

Axiology

Axiology is a philosophical notion related to the way in which the researcher's values influence their research (Klakegg & Tvedt, 2024). Reflecting on this, there are two areas I found important. First the Māori values that underpin this piece of kaupapa Māori research and second the value of the outcomes.

First, Henry and Pene (2001) argue that kaupapa Māori is a set of philosophical beliefs as well as a set of social customs (tikanga). Underpinning these beliefs and customs are some foundational Māori values. These include, whanaungatanga (relationships), kotahitanga (unity), wairuatanga (spirituality) and kaitiakitanga (guardianship). Additional to these foundational values provided by Henry and Pene, I would add manaakitanga (hospitality and generosity) and tino rangatiratanga (self-determination). These values are important and underpin our interactions throughout this research.

Second, the outcome of this research holds great importance to me, in the hope that it may create change for our taura Māori. Not only do I see benefit in change within the School of Psychology, but I hope it may create a ripple effect that flows out to our wider community and bigger systems.

Summary

In summary, my philosophical stance is one that embraces a Māori worldview. It believes in the interconnectedness between everything and the importance of relationships. Underpinned by a strong desire to transform psychology education, I hope this work adds to the understanding of Māori experiences of psychology education.

4.4: Positionality

When considering my positionality within this research, I can't help but feel as though I have been constantly torn. First, emotionally torn between frustration and empowerment, second torn between te ao Māori and te ao Pākehā, third torn between being both a researcher and a participant and last torn between being both a masters student and a clinical psychology student.

Waves of frustration and empowerment were common throughout this process. Feeling frustrated knowing the experiences I had encountered were happening also to others, and then empowered knowing there were others out there also hoping for the same change I desire. Changing emotions made this work challenging at times. When frustrated, it felt pointless. When empowered it was exciting.

My whānau, like many Māori whānau, have suffered from loss of knowledge and language through colonisation. Also like many others we are a whānau working towards the reclamation of our Maoridom. Further we are a whānau educated in the Western system. At times this upbringing leaving me to feel as though I am an outsider to both. This causing

internal conflict as to whether I was equipped to part take kaupapa Māori research. And further feeling guilty for critiquing the education system that I actively choose to be a part of.

As I was not only a researcher, but also a participant of this work I find myself reflecting on my pull towards self-disclosure during interviews. My university journey prior to this research had been isolated. But as I found myself sitting across from other taura experiencing many of the things I had too, I felt drawn to share my story too. My experience, more often than not, felt relatable, similar and shared with others. When it came to analysing the data, I had to actively ensure I was being inclusive of all the voices, not just one the ones that were relatable to my journey.

Being a masters student involved in kaupapa Māori research, with the support of a both culturally and academically knowledgeable supervisor has been an exciting and inspiring opportunity. Alongside this work I also am a Clinical Psychology student, a dream I have yearned of for many years. Despite being so grateful for both opportunities, it has often caused internal conflict within my thinking and writing. As an undergraduate student of Western (USA/Canada) universities, I was ill-prepared for kaupapa Māori research. Unsure of what it meant to be a kaupapa Māori researcher, the journey has been eye opening. Opening up to a world where you have room to be Māori is empowering. So on the one side, I have been constantly learning what it means to be a part of kaupapa Māori psychology. On the other side, that being my role as a Clinical Psychology student, the learning has been entrenched in Western Psychology. While I have learnt lots of valuable skills and knowledge in the Clinical programme, the obvious presence of Western psychology was confronting when also trying to do research focused very closely to those experiences. Having to both write about the challenges taura Māori have shared as well as directly experiencing them has been mentally and emotionally challenging at times. Being involved in this research caused a heightened awareness of both issues and efforts made towards bicultural practice.

Chapter 5: Methods

Research aim

As mentioned earlier, this thesis is a part of a wider research project named '*Poipoia te kākano hei puāwai: nurturing Māori pathways through Psychology.*' The Poipoia project aimed to explore the experience of taura Māori enrolled in psychology programmes offered at The University of Waikato. Semi-structured interviews and focus groups were used to explore Māori students' experience entering psychology, challenges navigating psychology, transitions from 100 level classes and beyond, the reality of being a Māori in psychology and taura Māori aspirations.

Looking more specifically this thesis aims to understand the taura Māori experience for those enrolled in the Hamilton campus only. This research aims to tell the story of commonly experienced barriers, supports and experiences had by taura Māori in Psychology. The use of pūrākau analysis has been used share the findings in a story like fashion.

5.1: Recruitment and Participants

Recruitment and data collection for this project was shared amongst the group members of the wider Poipoia project. As a group spread physically throughout the centre of Te Ika-a-Māui (The North Island of New Zealand) keeping connected both virtually and in person was important in this project. Each of us taking on appropriate tasks, sharing the load and supporting one another.

Recruitment

A variety of recruitment methods were used to find interested taura, including word of mouth, advertisement in lectures, posters and existing relationships with taura.

Advertisement sought to find any interested taura who were both enrolled in the School of Psychology, had whakapapa Māori, and were further willing to share their whakaaro (thoughts) on their psychology journey thus far.

Prior to interviews, taura were provided with an information sheet outlining the nature and intentions of the study. Taura were also provided with a consent form for participation. Important information from both documents then repeated verbally during interviews. Participation was entirely voluntary with taura able to withdraw themselves (and their kōrero) from the study at any stage.

Willing choice to participate is an important consideration for any research. Māori see research as an opportunity to serve its community, an opportunity to fight for the betterment of their people rather than an opportunity to advance one's own status as a researcher (Cram, 1993). This seen across many indigenous peoples. Indigenous participant's often make a deliberate choice to participate in research for the betterment of their community, often weighing up the researchers honesty, respect, commitment and reciprocity before committing to participation (Guillemin et al., 2016). As a team of all Māori researchers, a somewhat rare occasion, it is hoped that this made participant's felt that inclined to trust us and our intentions with their valuable contributions.

Participants

The project was advertised to both undergraduate and post graduate taura, including those enrolled fulltime and part time. With a total of 12 participants enrolled in the Hamilton campus (6 undergraduate and 6 post-graduate) we were able to collect a balanced perspective of much of the psychology journey.

Eight wāhine and four tāne were involved, this being a favourable outcome considering psychology is generally a women-heavy programme.

Participants represented a variety of different age groups and life stages. From young people experiencing university and adulthood for the first time to older mature students with a wealth of lived experience, work history and previous studies under their belt. This variety

made for interesting kōrero and added valuable insight to what it means to be a student alongside the other roles we hold in our life.

With Māori whakapapa as a requirement for participation it was interesting as well as culturally relevant to collect iwi affiliations. Despite the collection of this initially being through an online registration form, it was more importantly shared naturally in the room through the process of whakawhanaungatanga (process of establishing whanaungatanga).

Whakapapa connections spanned much of Aotearoa:

Ngāti Rangi
Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki
Tainui
Ngāti Maniapoto
Ngā Puhi
Ngāti Tūwharetoa
Ngāti Porou
Kāi Tahu
Ngāi te Rangi
Kāti Māmoe
Waitaha
Ngāti Hine
Ngāti Kahungunu

5.2: Data collection

Kaupapa Māori Guidelines

As a first time Māori researcher, I found kaupapa Māori guidelines to be a helpful tool to ensuring our taurira were treated appropriately. Cram (2001) and Smith (2012) provide

seven key practices for Kaupapa Māori research (Cram 2001; Smith 2012, as cited in Brewer et al., 2014).

1. ‘Aroha ki te tangata’ (respect for the people). Respectfully allowing participants the time and space to meet with you on their own terms.

2. ‘Kanohi kitea’ (meeting face to face). Meeting with participants face to face, so that you are known to the participants and so that a trustworthy relationship can be built.

3. ‘Titiro whakaronga kōrero’ (look and listen before you speak). Allow yourself (as a researcher) to learn through listening and looking, before speaking.

4. ‘Manaaki ki te tangata’ (generosity, collaboration and reciprocity). Learning is reciprocal, knowledge is shared between the researcher and participant.

5. ‘Kia Tupato’ (being cautious, reflexive, and safe). Ensuring participants are culturally and politically safe, all while being a reflective researcher.

6. ‘Kaua e takahia to mana o te tangata’ (do not trample on the mana of the people). Ensure that participants mana (prestige) is not disrespected during research.

7. ‘Kia mahaki’ (not flaunting your knowledge). Be humble when sharing knowledge to participants.

As I discuss the data collection method used in this study, I will weave in the ways in which we followed these guidelines.

Semi-structured interviews and focus groups

A combination of kanohi ki te kanohi (face to face) and online (ZOOM) semi-structured interviews and focus groups were utilized for data collection. One-on-one interviews were utilised for post-graduate taura, while focus groups were employed for undergraduate students. Regardless of being in person or online, the use of interviews and focus groups aligns with Cram (2001) and Smith’s (2012) principle ‘kanohi kitea.’ Meeting

with participants in a conversational manner allowed for participants to see our faces and allow for a trustworthy relationship to be built.

In line with kaupapa Māori research, some important considerations are highlighted. The following will cover the importance of the *conversational nature of semi-structured interviews, tikanga, wā and wāhi, unrestricted time, validation of experiences, and reciprocity*

The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed kōrero to be somewhat *conversational in nature*. Flexible interview guidelines allowed us as researchers to listen openly without firm expectations of taurira responses. The use of conversation as data collection tool aligns with indigenous worldviews that affirms oral conversations as a valid way of sharing knowledge (Kovach, 2010). The qualitative nature of interviews allowed legitimate back and forth conversation, whereby marginalized voices have a space to be heard (Paora Moyle, 2014). For if not in these interviews, then when, where and who was listening to our psychology taurira. Listening openly to participants, only adding kōrero when relevant aligns well with Cram (2001) and Smith (2012 principle of ‘titiro, whakaronga, kōrero’.

Adhering to *tikanga*, of course is an extremely important consideration for any kaupapa Māori setting. Tika (to be true or correct) is the basis of tikanga and should inform the processes, procedures and consultation in research. When tikanga is utilized and processes are correct, everyone who is connected to the research should be empowered, enlightened and enriched (Mead, 2016). Upholding tikanga was therefore an important consideration for our research group. For research to be Kaupapa Māori, tikanga should be considered from the outset to the completion of research process (Lipsham, 2020). Two key practices were utilized in all sessions, that being karakia and whanaungatanga. In line with tikanga, karakia (incantation/prayer) to open and close the session was offered to all participants. In an effort to establish whanaungatanga, taurira were invited to share about where they were from (as did we as researchers). Sharing this information or more

structurally in the form of a pepeha, is an important and common formality utilized in nearly most Māori spaces. The sharing of this information allows people to make connections through whakapapa. Adhering to tikanga ensures that the participants culture is validated and affirmed through making their values and practices important (Lipsham, 2020). The inclusion of tikanga aligns well with Cram (2001) and Smith (2012) principle of ‘kia tupato’ as it creates a culturally safe space for participants.

Lipsham (2020) relates two important concepts- *wā (time)* and *wāhi (location or place)* to conducting research. She explains that the choice of time and place should be discussed with and chosen by the participants for they are giving us their aroha, koha and mātauranga. Meeting taura at time and in a place most convenient and comfortable for them was important consideration. Allowing *unrestricted time* for sessions was important in the data collection process. Interviews naturally ranged from one to three hours but were certainly not confined to any harsh time guidelines. Allowing participants unrestricted time to think about, connect to and respond to questions critically and reflectively is an important consideration (Lipsham, 2020). Although Māori may be stereotypically perceived to be on ‘Māori time’ (misunderstood as lateness) it is rather not being confined to the restrictions of time. Giving each task the time and energy it rightly deserves is important within Māori culture. Take for example the pōwhiri, where time limits cease to exist and rather whatever time is needed is allowed (Ruru & Nikora, 2021). Allowing participants to guide time, place and length of sessions aligns well with Cram (2001) and Smith (2012) principle of ‘aroha ki te tangata’ as participants were able to make choices suitable to them.

Understandably, the sharing of difficult personal experiences was challenging at times therefore *validating the experience* of participants quickly became important. Telling ones story not only is a deep process but also provokes intellectual thought and reflective thinking, that at times can create emotional, spiritual and physical reactions (Ware et al., 2018). Being

responsive to the level of engagement, knowledge and stories shared by our participants was important. Creating a non-judgemental, open and safe space was of utmost importance during the project to ensure we were able to respond to the needs of our taura. Acknowledgement of taura emotions, opinions and perspectives of particularly difficult aspects of the programme was used to validate the importance of their experience. Wirihana (2012) notes that the use of narrative inquiry should honour the participant's voice and empower Māori to tell their story (Wirihana, 2012; as cited in Ware et al., 2018). Validating the experiences of taura Māori as real and challenging hopefully left taura feeling hopeful that sharing their story would result in some helpful changes, knowing they were truly heard and understood. This aligns with Cram (2001) and Smith's (2012) principle of 'kaua e takahia to mana o te tangata' as participants realities and experiences were treated as important and valid.

Traditionally western approaches to research did not consider reciprocity as important, and rather extracted knowledge from communities with no return (Waitoa & Dombroski, 2020). *Reciprocity*, in this research takes on two different forms. First, in an effort to manaaki (show generosity) our taura, kai was provided during sessions. Additionally a koha (Supermarket gift card, petrol gift card or research participation credit for undergraduate students) was given to all participants. Offering koha is culturally appropriate act, although Western research at times concerned that koha can be coercive (de Wet et al., 2023). Second, the use of reciprocal conversation. Self-disclosure is often considered ethically unsafe in the view of Western psychology, but for Māori it is often used as a tool to build trust and respect (Waitoki et al., 2018). As a fellow taura it came naturally to conversate with participants. Knowledge was shared when it was of benefit to the taura; for example, sharing knowledge about degree pathways or existing support systems. As a postgraduate student, I possessed some knowledge about this. I eagerly took this opportunity to share what I knew with others, rather than keeping important information to myself. Self-

disclosure also helped validate the experience of others. Being in the same position as participant's (as in also a Māori psychology student) and experiencing many of the same challenges, self-disclosure was a helpful tool in creating understanding and connection. These ideas aligned well with Cram (2001) and Smith's (2012) final principles. First 'maanaki ki te tangata' as koha, kai and knowledge sharing created a reciprocal relationship between the researcher and participants, as well as acknowledging their contributions. Second, 'kia mahaki' saw researcher humility when offering advice to taurira with genuine interest to help.

Questions

Questions invited taurira to share to about their experience within the School of Psychology as a Māori student. Questions were grouped into seven categories.

First, the questions aimed to explore the students experience when first entering psychology. Taurira discussed motivations for joining, first impressions and were asked to reflect upon things they wish they knew before entering the programme.

The next topic explored the transition across different year levels as taurira progressed through their studies. Taurira discussed a variety of experiences including relatable content, kaupapa Māori support, pathways, challenges and were asked to share advice they would give to future Māori students.

Next, questions were aimed at gauging students sense of belonging. Taurira discussed their sense of belonging in both mainstream and kaupapa Māori spaces and were invited to share about what kind of spaces they would like to see in the future.

The next topic explored barriers to success at a taurira Māori. Taurira were asked broadly to share about what supports would be helpful as a Māori student. Then more specifically taurira were asked to share about racism, whiteness and colonialism within psychology and what work could help address any issues.

The next topic relate to transformation within Psychology. Taura discussed change they would like to see, the existence and inclusion of kaupapa Māori psychology and courses they hope to see in the future.

Finally, participants were given an open mic to share about their aspirations in psychology. Taura discussed both broad and specific goals for their future. An exciting and inspiring conversation to be a part of.

An additional topic was added, this section exploring taura experience of neurodiversity. Questions explored taura management of deadlines, readings, schedule and methods of learning. Providing helpful insights into Māori abilities to exist within a Western framework.

Despite having topics to aim for, questions were asked fluidly and flexibly. Taura were given time and space to talk about whatever felt right in the time.

Transcription

Traditionally, Māori storytelling was a collective activity, where stories were not the belonging of the individual storyteller, but rather the story belonged to the whānau, hapū (sub-tribe) or iwi (tribe). Therefore, storytellers had the responsibility to tell the story accurately or would stand to be corrected by the collective (Ware et al., 2018). The idea of telling the story correctly relates well to the transcription process. While some may consider this a somewhat tedious task, it also plays a vital role in telling the story right.

Video and recording devices were utilized during sessions. Taura were made aware of this and consented to the use prior to the commencement of interviews. In moments during session if taura wanted to share something, but did not want it to be included recordings were paused and resumed when taura were ready.

Recordings were transcribed verbatim ensuring the students stories were shared and analysed as they were intended to be told. Taura were provided copies of their transcripts and

asked to review them for accuracy. This process allowed tairā to be fully aware of the contribution they were making to the project. At this stage tairā were invited to remove any kōrero they did not want shared.

Giving tairā the autonomy and opportunity to correct mistakes and reflect on their contribution is an integral part of the research process (Hutching, 2004). Historically Māori voices have been marginalised through the research process so ensuring transcripts were accurate and true was also considered important as Māori voice is so valuable.

5.3: Ethical considerations

Ethic's approval was received for the wider project '*Poipoia te kākano hei puāwai: nurturing Māori pathways through Psychology*' in February 2023 by the Arts, Law, Psychology and Social Science Division at the UoW (FS2022-59).

Given a low percentage of Māori students enrolled in the School of Psychology, it was imperative to keep tairā privacy and confidentiality occurred throughout the entire process.

This was particularly important considering we were asking tairā to share challenges and difficulties they have experienced in regards to the university, essentially asking them to critique the programme they were still currently active students in.

The use of fictional characters within this story avoids any identification of tairā. Ensuring that any direct quotes used are non-identifying was also an important consideration. Given low numbers of students, the sharing of personal experiences alone could risk their identification.

5.4 Analytic approach

As a first time researcher, finding my flow was challenging at times. Attempting to group ideas into themes with pen and paper, whiteboards or a computer was difficult at times.

Reminders from my supervisor that understanding the data would take time and that ideas would change often was comforting and reassuring. Eventually ideas stuck.

Sessions spent with the Poipoia group helped identify key themes across both the Tauranga and Hamilton campuses. Bouncing around ideas as a group was personally a welcomed experience, as prior to this my work had been in isolation. As key ideas emerged, I couldn't help but see the themes in chronological order. Attempting to push themes into a step by step journey, my supervisor proposed the idea of a pūrākau analysis. I quickly realised this was a perfect idea.

Pūrākau analysis, like other forms of kaupapa Māori research is flexible and fluid. Therefore it took some time to decide how I would tell this story. Questions arose such as; would I base it upon an existing story? Do I create a totally new story? Who is going to be a part of the story? and so forth. What was important to me though was the inclusion of verbatim quotes from taura however the story was to be told.

As mentioned, pūrākau analysis is flexible, meaning it has taken on a variety of different forms. A similar research project by Davis and Came (2022) looked at institutional barriers facing Māori occupational therapy students. The researchers used an adapted version of Pū-Rā-Ka-Ū analysis which split the findings into four categories. Pū focused on the desire to become an occupational therapist (such as whakapaka, wairua, dreams and knowledge), Rā focused on inspirational experiences that related to enlightenment (such as mātauranga Māori and wairua), Kā focused on past experiences that related to future aspirations (Such as moemoeā/dreams and pākari/past learning) and finally Ū focused on sources of sustenance (mātauranga and kaumātua) (Davis and Came, 2022).

Another take on pūrākau analysis can be seen in Black et al., (2023). Black and colleagues again utilize Pūrākau to understand and analysis their mahi in a flexible way. Through their analysis framework named 'Te Pepe Ao Uri', the researchers were able to

understand their research through Te Ao Māori principles. These principles include whakapapa (genealogy), tūkanga (customs), mana (prestige), tapu (sacred), wairua (spirituality), mauri (life force) and te reo Māori (Māori language).

A final example of pūrākau analysis flexibility comes from Mikahere-Hall (2019). Te-āta-tu Pūrākau is a five-step analysis process aimed at identifying key messages within the Pūrākau. The first step, focuses towards the social circumstances of the whanau, the second step focusing on whakapapa and whānau connections, the third step focusing on emotions and interpersonal connections, the fourth step focusing on interpretations by the research team and finally the fifth step focuses on the importance of wairua (Mikahere-Hall, 2019).

After much brainstorming and attempts at what my version of a Pūrākau analysis would be, eventually it was decided that a carefully crafted pūrākau would be written. Despite, pūrākau deriving from oral origins, Lee (2009) asserts that contemporary storytelling can include the writing and creation of Pūrākau in various forms, to gain greater understanding of Māori realities. The findings of this research therefore have been shaped into the story of 'Kimai' a Māori psychology student, navigating the university journey.

Kimai's Pūrākau

This pūrākau will involve a character named 'Kimai' and some of her friends. This story is a combination of shared experiences had by the taurua involved in this research. It will tell the story of Kimai's journey from the beginning to the end of her time within the School of Psychology, stopping to share her challenges and experiences at various time points along the way. While the combination of these stories may be fictional, this pūrākau speaks only to real experiences had by our taurua.

The pūrākau begins at the very first impressions of entering the university, carrying on through undergraduate and postgraduate, finally reflecting on the experience of taurua as they anticipate entering the workforce or 'real world' of psychology. Therefore, there will be some

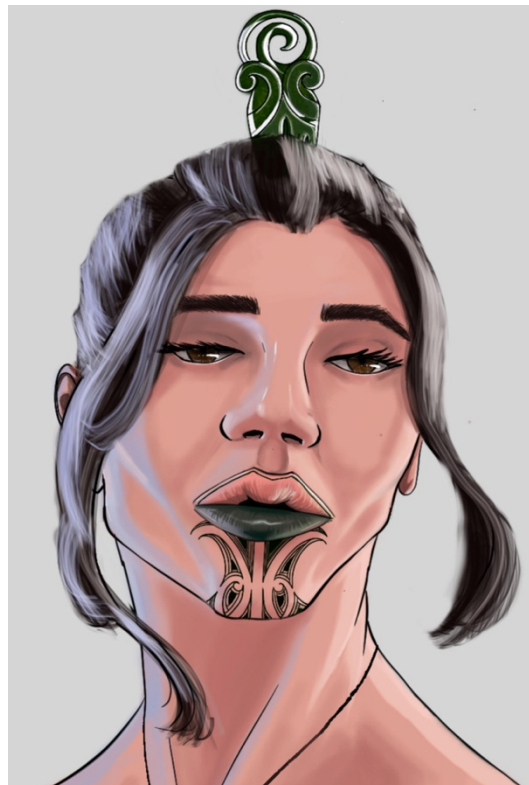
large time jumps throughout the writing. Writings within a black box indicate parts of Kimai's story. Any quotes in italics within the boxes will be verbatim and true of the actual participants. An example below to begin Kimai's story:

My name is Kimai, I'm 32 and over the years I've grown a passion for mental health. I think my interest stems from personal experience...

...I've just seen far too many of my family and friends, just sort of suffering from it [mental health] and having no idea how to get out of the hole...

...so I want to do something to help. I have just enrolled in the psychology programme at The University of Waikato. I've dreamt about being a psychologist now for many years now and I think I'm finally ready. Classes begin next week, I'm nervous and excited...

Discussed over three chapters, through Kimai's voice, this analysis will cover three main areas including *tauirā existing within a Western environment, support system realities for Māori, and the transitional journey to becoming a Māori psychologist.*



Chapter 6: Western Culture within the School of Psychology

The prominence of Western culture has been long upheld within the University of Waikato, with steps towards a bicultural institute made over the past 20+ years (McAllister et al., 2018; MacLennan et al., 2013; Masters & Levy, 1995; Hunt et al., 2001). Previous research reports that taura Māori often feel alienated due to the largely monocultural culture, curriculum and practices within the university (Williams et al., 2011). Despite small steps towards change, the university space continues to be just that, a monocultural (Western) system. The dominance of Western paradigms, frameworks and systems continues to be a barrier for Māori participation in Psychology, therefore is an important consideration still today (Levy & Williams, 2003). This chapter will explore the ways in which the School of Psychology continues to play a role in maintaining the Western dominance, as heard through the Māori voices included in this study.

Two subthemes were heard in relation to what contributes to the dominant Western environment, first a *lack of belonging* and second a *Western focused learning experience*.

6.1: Lack of belonging

Having a sense of belonging within the university is strongly associated with both a good student life and academic success (Ahn & Davis, 2020). Strategic goals of The University of Waikato (2022d) aspire to make their campuses places of belonging, yet many of the taura in this study reported little to no sense of belonging within the university. So, what is contributing a shared lack of belonging for our Māori students within the School of Psychology? Two main emerging issues were voiced including the *low Māori representation* and *the absence of structural whanaungatanga*.

...as I walk into my first class, I look around awkwardly wondering where to sit. People are quietly taking out their books and computers. No one looks up from their bag. I find somewhere to sit near the back. I feel out of place, I subtly scan the room for people I may

know but no luck. As I look around, I can't help but notice that I am only one of a few brown people in the class. I see one of the other brown students look towards me and smile- I feel good for a moment. Then the lecturer speaks, and with a brief introduction the very start of my psychology journey begins...

Low Māori representation

Contributing largely to Māori students' lack of belonging is a low numbers of Māori students and staff within both the classroom, programmes and the wider university.

...a week goes by, and I realise quickly that other Māori students must feel uncomfortable too, the same way I did on my first day...

...Because I noticed sometimes when I'm waiting to go into class or something, and I see some Māori students walk past and they look around, I can see them anxious and nervous walking around campus. And then they see me and I'm a friendly smile, another friendly Māori face...

As described above it is not uncommon for Māori students to be only one of few Māori students in their class. This experience can create negative feelings of isolation and being a minority.

Tauira reported that during first year the presence of other Māori is noticeably better but as they progress through the following years that number appears to diminish. One student reported feeling culturally safer within the large lecture theatres as greater student numbers meant there was increased chances of other Māori being present.

Moving next to the implications of low numbers of Māori staff. Tauira shared disappointment that there are only a few Māori staff members within the school of psychology. Low numbers of Māori staff, role models or culturally competent non-Māori can negatively effective tauira success (Mayeda et al., 2014).

Māori staff visibility positively impacts the success of Māori students (McAllister et al., 2022). Where Māori staff or lecturers are present, taura tend to feel a sense of aspiration, engagement and belonging, whereas in majority of their classes, the presence of non-Māori staff can feel unwelcoming, cold and disconnected. Further, taura find that Māori lecturers are better able to understand the complexities of being Māori within the university system (Curtis et al., 2012). Throughout the course of this research there were only six (at times less) Māori lecturers within the School of Psychology. Many taura reported not knowing the staff members despite there only being only a few Māori staff members. Increased opportunity to engage with Māori staff members would be beneficial for both current and future students.

It is possible that taura were not able to access Māori lecturers as often as they would desire as often Māori staff members experience an increased demand due to additional responsibilities. Māori staff often experience what Harr and Martin (2022) refer to as the cultural double shift. This refers to cultural labour placed on Māori staff such as performing karakia, offering cultural expertise or carrying out culturally safe practices. Smith (2021), concurs, adding that Māori staff often find themselves called upon as cultural advisors or to perform cultural labour for their non-Māori colleagues to ensure cultural safety is upheld.

A particular benefit of the presence of Māori lecturers within the programme is the idea of role modelling. Previous research showed that Māori role models were seen to contribute to Māori student success in undergraduate health programmes (Curtis et al., 2015).

Role modelling allows taura to see the success that they desire. Being able to relate to the role model, knowing they too likely experienced challenges similar to the ones taura are currently experiencing, motivates taura to persevere with their studies.

...fortunately, this semester I have one class with a Māori lecturer, it's inspiring when I hear him speak. I think to myself...

...when you start seeing other Māori achieving, I get a sense of pride from it. Because that's what the way it should be. I'm sure it's been a hard struggle, but it lets you know that some people have gone before you and creating a pathway that makes it a little bit easier for those that follow you, and it continues all the way down to the generations. So, yeah, I have a little sense of pride when I see Māori achieving and out there loud and proud...

During late 1990's- early 2000's kaupapa Māori appeared to be thriving at the UoW, with plentiful opportunities for Māori staff to engage with and care for students (McAllister et al., 2018).

Waitoki et al., (2023) report that psychology programmes are actively seeking more Māori staff members but with low (sometimes zero) job applications from Māori and high requirements (for example a PhD) needed to acquire a desirable salary, this task has proved to be challenging. However, the excerpt above is testimony to the value of Māori staff who can provide the support and inspiration for taurira to continue through the degree.

Perhaps the biggest implication of low numbers of other Māori faces is the impact it can have on Māori identity and what we might consider modern day assimilation. The lack of Māori faces within the university can cause the students to minimise their cultural identity in an effort to fit within the norms of the mainstream system. Seen commonly within universities is the tendency for minority students to forgo parts of their cultural identity in order to be successful (Zepke et al., 2003).

...I don't feel as though I can be myself here. I think to myself...

...well, the dominant culture is Pākehā. So everyone that acts, you know, they act as Pākehā act, which is very different than how we Māori act, right? So, when I'm around other Māori I, I act like I normally do, but when I'm around Pākehā....there is that pull to talk like a Pākehā, to act like a Pākehā, in order to be perceived as intelligent and knowing what I'm talking

about. But if I talk all hori, like I do it around my whānau and my cuzzies and my bros, oh it's like, oh, you're just a dumb Māori...

The large presence of non-Māori students and staff sometimes creates a pull to act differently- act in a way more 'appropriate' in Western settings. Māori university students often feel the need to reproduce the Western norms in order to be successful (Johnson et al., 2024). Therefore, it is not uncommon for tauira Māori to suppress their true cultural selves in order to fit the mould they perceive as more suitable for university, essentially leaving their cultural at the door. This is often done in an effort to avoid judgement or negative stereotyping associated with being Māori.

It is crucial for Māori to feel comfortable enough to express their cultural identity within the university (Wilson et al., 2011b). Some advantages of tauira simply being able to be Māori include an increased chance of achieving academically, coping better with feelings of alienation and have higher educational dreams (Bennett, 2003; Durie 1998; Wilson et al., 2011b).

The inability to be oneself segways into further challenges in making relationships. Tauira report needing to put in a conscious effort to even be considered an equal within the classroom. Often changing or suppressing parts of their identity to better fit the norm. The norm in this case being Western, as that is who our tauira are constantly surrounded by.

...I feel like everybody here is so different to me...

... I don't feel like I belong, and that I had to do extra work to feel like I belong, or to be regarded as equally belonging...

Where cultural identity is validated, students are able to better connect with both social and support networks that align well with one's values and supports the fostering trustworthy relationships (Morunga, 2009). To be discussed in further detail in the next segment is the

importance of relationships. This making cultural identity affirmation a key consideration for Māori success in university.

Absence of structural whanaungatanga

Whanaungatanga, a concept based on whānau, relationships, whakapapa and connection is not simple to define. Mead (2016) offers some insight as to what whanaungatanga encompasses, describing it as connections, both through whakapapa and by choice, with those who share experiences, expectations and meet obligations made to one another. Moorfield (2005) more simply states that whanaungatanga is sense of belonging created by shared experience and working together.

Establishing whanaungatanga is a desirable outcome for taura Māori not only at university but generally in most places they go. Relationships with other students, lecturers and organisational staff is fundamental to Māori student success (Gorinski & Abernethy, 2007). Unfortunately, the absence of such connections and relationships was a standout concern for the taura in this study. This raising awareness of the lack of structural supports for fostering whanaungatanga.

First, we can consider the implications of lectures. Lecture style learning lacks the opportunity to engage with one another therefore making whanaungatanga a challenging task for students. Large room layouts and minimal discussion opportunities reduce the chances for students to connect with one another.

...I know it's only been a couple of weeks, but I had hoped to make a few connections with people by now. I realize...

...I could sit next to the same person for a semester and not even know their name just because I feel like that's the culture of it [lectures]...

Highlighted by this taura, it is often easy to go an entire semester without engaging with other people. As the western university system values individualism over collectivism,

students may assume that self-reliance and independence is the only way to succeed. Placing value on such concepts prohibits tauira Māori from connecting with or being dependant on others, contradicting their usual Māori world view where collectivism is key (Shields et al., 2005). Keeping to oneself then reduces opportunities to become connected with others, therefore stopping to opportunity for whanaungatanga to occur.

Second, we can consider the absence of whakawhanaungatanga.

Whakawhanaungatanga, is the process of establishing such relationships. This is a process often disregarded within the lecture theatre and wider programme. Tauira report that more often than not lecturers do not allow time for whakawhanaungatanga or even the opportunity to learn one another's names. Time restraints set within the lecture theatre are different to the time flexibility generally allowed for whakawhanaungatanga in more Māori centric settings.

...I think back now to my first class, it was a little weird that we just got straight into the content...

...what I think could help is having that whakawhanaungatanga, having time where you're actually in class and actually getting to know your class members...

This tauira is rightly frustrated that no time is allowed for whakawhanaungatanga at the beginning of classes. For some lecturers, time spent getting to know one another is valuable time that could be better utilised explaining class outlines or teaching content. But for Māori, time set aside for making connections is invaluable, setting up connections and relationships that will help them succeed in the long run. For Māori, allowing time for quality outcomes is important. For example, speakers on the paepae at formal Marae occasions are allocated as much time as they need to share their kōrero (Durie, 2017). For Māori, allowing time in a lecture for whakawhanaungatanga is a quality outcome.

Third, we can see how the absence of any formal or structural whanaungatanga leaves tauira responsible for creating relationships or create a university whānau on their own.

...I realize now I'm going to have to make an effort to find my people because...

...you need a village, you need a circle...

As described by the tauira above, creating connection and finding one's village is key. Relationships are a fundamental aspect of indigenous success at university (Theodore et al., 2017). Tauira who are able to seek out relationships with other Māori students and spend time with them either studying or socially tend to see greater success (Williams et al., 2011). As Māori are whānau orientated people- creating a learning environment that reflects similarly to ones whānau life is important for success. Research by McMurchy-Pilkington (2013) identified that optimal learning occurred where there was a sense of belonging and connectedness created by a whānau like environment. Existing within a social group founded upon whanaungatanga allows students to succeed socially, spiritually and academically, all while enhancing chances of degree completion (Macfarlane et al., 2019).

Finally, as a way to foster better connection some tauira expressed desire for Māori spaces. Māori spaces, dedicated to the celebration of Māori voices and knowledge should be created and maintained within academia (Henry and Pene, 2001). Māori should be provided spaces that foster whanaungatanga and allow the expression of Māoritanga (Johnson et al., 2021). Tauira suggested a room, hall, lounge or area where you are simply able to be Māori. Tauira described that the space need not be for Māori only, but needs to be space where Māori is the norm. Tauira want these spaces to be places where Māori (and non-Māori) are able to meet others, have loud conversations, laugh, enjoy music, connect, study and help one another.

...I think it would be nice if there was a space for Māori psychology students to meet up and hang out...

...maybe it'd be good to have a student – a Māori student space...where we can just hang out and chill...you know and we've got some kai...and you can have some music...I think that connectiveness would make people feel more comfortable...

Others shared that a dedicated space was not quite the right answer, and that the responsibility to create a sense of belonging or whanaungatanga was held by the wider institute and should be embraced across the campus rather than confined to one space. This highlighting that the creation of a Māori space is not the entire answer. While it may be beneficial for some, there is still wider institutional change to be made.

McMurphy-Pilkington (2013) offers some insights on what may be considered an appropriate Māori environment. An ideal physical environment for Māori is one that is small and intimate. A space in which Māori have a choice in the way the space is set up and utilised. Emotionally and spiritually the environment ideally is one that has positive relationships, relatedness and interdependence where the individual feels respected, valued, responsible and cared for. And finally a culturally safe environment is one that affirms ones cultural identity through practice that reflects Māori students' lives reality and wholeness as a Māori.

Summary

In summary, taura Māori are lacking a true sense of belonging and connections with others. The lack of structural support and the prominence of Western norms see taura leaving their culture at the door to ensure academic success. While this may be helpful coping mechanism to survive university, it is imperative that the university works towards creating an environment where Māori are able to be themselves and connected with others.

6.2: Western-focused Learning Experience

One of the strongest desires that emerged from participants kōrero, is the want for a more balanced learning experience. The New Zealand university system is embedded in

European practices, philosophies and traditions which are vastly different to the Māori worldview (Wilson et al., 2011a). Participants in this study acknowledge that Western knowledge has its own validity within its own space, but at the same time taurira are hungry to learn more about kaupapa Māori psychology.

Previous research reports that taurira Māori often feel alienating due to the largely monocultural culture, curriculum and practices within the university (Williams et al., 2011). Māori often feel torn between two worlds- te ao Māori and te ao Pākehā and desperately seek teachings that promote knowledge from both cultures. Stewart (2020) confirms that the Māori experience of ‘living in two worlds’ is genuine and not simply a part of Māori imagination.

Four topics emerged in relation to the current Western learning model and what changes may be needed. These topics include the *non-engaging current experience, content relevancy, kaupapa Māori based papers, and a lack of practical elements.*

...my first year is rounding up, I'm more settled now. Those other brown faces I saw, yeah two of them are my friends now- Pania and Tiare. As we sit at lunch, we can't help but share our frustrations, we made it through a whole year, but I don't think this is what we signed up for. Who knew psychology would be so focused on science? Why aren't we learning about Māori worldviews and knowledge? Lots of what we learn seems irrelevant for us as Māori? They told us at the start of the year that Māori are the largest group of mental health service users, yet we haven't learnt anything about how to help them?...

Non-engaging current experience

To best understand what kind of learning style works best for Māori, we will first explore the experience of Māori learning within the current Western education framework.

While we each learn in different ways, what was heard by many of our participants was that the Western style of learning, i.e. lecture style learning is non-engaging and non-

interactive. Taurira feel as though more interactive pedagogies will increase their ability to take in important information.

...we chat about our class earlier in the day. I say to Pania...

...it's very difficult to stay attentive for that entire time. And to stay on your feet and really digest all the information properly...I do feel like I would prefer something that is more interactive, because then I could engage with it more and I think it would stick better in my brain...

...she agrees. Adding...

.... engaging, interactive learning models work best for me. And almost I think every single Māori I've ever know...

Majority of the taurira admitted that they find lecture style learning challenging as it is difficult to remain focused, attentive and properly take in the learning. Large lecture theatres play a role in make students' merely passive listeners to lecturer expertise rather than active contributors to class discussions (Waiari et al., 2021). Walker et al., (2024) describe the impact of lecturers being physically behind a lectern as disengaging and cut off. Taurira struggled particularly when lecturers spoke directly to the PowerPoint slides adding little to no extra information. This caused taurira to be unsure on what value there was in coming to class, if they could have simply read the slides at home.

Taurira enjoy opportunities where they are able to engage in discussion with both the lecturer and other classmates. This opportunity sometimes rare within large lecture halls in the early years of an undergraduate programme.

...Pania tells me about one of her papers she's really enjoying. She's even made a few friends...

...there was a very good sense of belonging but that was because in the tutorials for that paper...you got into groups, you actually talked with people in the paper, you went out and did like fun activities around campus...

As described by the taura above, opportunities to get into groups and work together was an enjoyable and helpful experience. Curtis et al., (2011) found that Māori and Pacific students tend to find non-lecture style learning as helpful. Some desirable features of smaller group learning included better understanding of class material, assignment clarity, challenging work that induces learning and less wasted time (Curtis et al., 2011).

Some taura voiced appreciation for lecturers who used real life examples and stories within their teaching. This method helped students feel connected to the learning and be able to make real life sense of the lesson.

*...we chat more how hard it is to retain the information we get in lectures. We realize one of the best we learn is through stories. Tiare says...
...I learn through stories and relatability...I'm the student that always puts my hand up for an example...*

This student's need to raise a hand in order to get a relatable example shows us that the use of real-life examples is not necessarily a common occurrence in lectures. Greater utilisation of real-life examples would be beneficial to the Māori learning experience.

Indigenous groups have historically relied on storytelling as a key tool in sustaining, sharing and protecting knowledge (Lee, 2009). Therefore, it comes as no surprise that participants were better able to understand and retain teachings when they were told through stories and examples. The benefits of storytelling go further than just knowledge retention. Waiari et al., (2021) share that taura are more likely to feel comfortable in class and contribute more openly to class discussion when lecturers share their own personal stories and vulnerabilities.

Finally, a large portion of student learning at university comes through reading. Taurira are expected to read for majority, if not all of their classes, this was voiced as a challenge by many of our participants. Reading, a solo task, again adds to the non-interactive learning experience. Taurira were less concerned with the time it takes to read or whether the information in the readings was appropriate, but more concerned at the lack of learning that comes from reading copious amounts of book chapters and journal articles. Being able to make sense of and then retain knowledge from books and journal articles was often challenging for our taurira, causing them at times to question the value of even doing the assigned readings.

...I wish it was just easy to retain the information from all our readings. We talk about a book we have to read for one of our classes. Pania says:
...I sit there and read...I've almost read that book. I don't retain any of that...

The issue here doesn't equate to the readings not being valuable, the issue is rather the use of them. This proposing the idea that lecturers could be less reliant on reading as a form of learning. Lecturers may be able to present the findings of readings in a different way (say for example discussions in class). Further, the choice of readings could be better considered. Taking into account the relevance of them, so that taurira are able to better connect with the ideas being shared. Finally, being conscious of the number of assigned readings is recommended (a quality vs quantity approach) and being understanding that students will be required to read for many other classes also.

Content relevancy

Te Rautaki Mātauranga and the UoW Strategy plan outline a clear commitment to embedding mātauranga Māori into teaching and learning (The University of Waikato, 2022b; The University of Waikato, 2022d). Yet a serious problem for participants in this study was the dominance of Western content and a lack of mātauranga Māori. This issue may be

indicative of epistemic racism. The term epistemic racism refers to the dominant presence of Western knowledge, which ultimately marginalizes Māori knowledge and makes Western knowledge superior (Cram et al., 2018).

The incorporation of real life, Aotearoa New Zealand informed, and Māori specific content is wanted by all participants. Heard again and again is the reality that Māori are overrepresented in the mental health service statistics, yet we continue to learn from research and content based in Western countries (Te Hiringa Mahara, 2004; Te Whatu Ora, 2023).

...We think more about why we don't always focus well on our classes. I think it's because it feels so disconnected from real life. I think to myself...

...one of the biggest barriers is the content, not incorporating New Zealand or ao Māori within the psychology papers...most of the people utilizing mental health are, you know, Māori, so [lecturers should] teach you how to treat māori....

As described by the above taura, Western content lacks relevance and applicability for the Aotearoa context. This is frustrating for taura whom have their sight sets on registration as psychologist and intentions to work with Māori clients.

Taura also voiced the desire for more compulsory teachings around Te Tiriti o Waitangi, another important consideration for practice in Aotearoa. In order to produce culturally equipped psychologists, the university needs to play its role in teaching about Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Students should be equipped with knowledge around Te Tiriti so they are able to practice biculturally, this means Te Tiriti content should be incorporated more broadly, rather than reduced to singular class (Johnson et al., 2021). A report by Waitoki et al., (2023) discovered that during staff hiring processes within the psychology programme at The University of Waikato no knowledge (or accountability to pursue such knowledge) in Te Tiriti was compulsory. Having staff unequipped to teach such knowledge further adding to this issue.

Moving on, taurira are concerned about the Western outlook on Māori research and content. As below, Māori students are aware that Western academics often see Māori work as irrelevant, inapplicable and unscientific.

...we wonder further about why we don't see much Māori research in our classes. Pania says...

...another really big barrier is just the kind of institutional disdain that they don't see it [Māori research] as scientific, and they don't see it as relevant to them. And that they don't see that it could be applicable to any sort of other studies...

...I add...

...they make it sound like anything Māori is unscientific, which is a dangerous word for psychology...

As consumers of psychological research, students are taught to critically sift through the ways in which research is conducted, the methods, by and for whom it has been conducted to ensure its validity. Kaupapa Māori research though is flexible in its methodology and analysis, often not following the hard lines set within Western psychology, therefore losing validity to the Western eye (Tipa, 2019). Failure to validate Mātauranga Māori as legitimate leaves student's dependant on Western knowledge as their only source of valid information (Waiari et al., 2021).

One of the biggest issues is that within what is supposed to be a bicultural (equal) learning experience, is that Māori knowledge is often only a small (unequal) part of the picture. Most of the time Māori content is framed as 'cultural content' existing outside of the more 'legitimate' Western content. Māori realities are rarely reflected in course work and are often reduced to being just 'cultural content' and brushed over with little importance. This invalidating Māori lived experience and negatively affecting Māori students' cultural identity (Curtis, 2014; Waiari et al., 2021). Further, the Māori content that is included, is often

inappropriate. Take the misuse of case studies for example. Māori case studies utilised in the class often perpetuate negative stereotypes and leave Māori students feeling stigmatised (Curtis et al., 2012). Deficit framing of Māori in class is inappropriate and excludes wider systemic and colonial issues that cause such stereotypes to exist. Being only represented in a negative light leaves Māori students feeling unsafe and disengaged.

Taura expressed concern that the responsibility to incorporate (or not) New Zealand or Māori content was left as a choice for lecturers. A survey by Masters and Levy (1995) identified that non-Māori staff lacked confidence to engage with Māori and were afraid that use of Māori content and materials was a 'no-go zone.' Many participants voiced concern around tokenistic attempts to include te ao Māori. If Māori content is going to be included, genuine understanding of Mātauranga Māori by lecturers is crucial, as well as the ability to understand its relevancy to students lived experiences (Curtis et al., 2015). Low numbers of Māori staff mean programmes have to rely on recent graduates (Māori) to return as guest lecturers to provide relevant Māori content (Waitoki et al., 2023). It is urged that a wider support network of fellow staff build their knowledge uphold their commitment to biculturalism (Morunga, 2003). Waitoki et al., (2023) report that staff at The University of Waikato see room for improvement and greater inclusion of kaupapa Māori and Indigenous psychology content. But a lack of Māori staff available for consultation, inadequate funding and resourcing, no relationships with Māori organizations, tokenism and existing student demands remain as a barrier for greater inclusion of Māori appropriate content (Waitoki et al., 2023).

Kaupapa Māori based papers

Fortunately, there are small pockets of learning opportunities where Māori feel engaged and connected. Papers such as '*Mauri Ora: Social Psychology of Human Flourishing*' and '*Kaupapa Māori Psychology*' were identified as relevant, important and

exciting. These papers, far more based in te ao Māori are important in creating a balanced learning experience for taura interested in being a well-rounded psychologist within in New Zealand. Fortunately, the way in which kaupapa Māori papers are already reflect some of the desires mentioned earlier. The use of real examples was helpful for taura to connect to the learning, having a Māori lecturer (seeing a Māori face) and the validation of kaupapa Māori research (by using it in within the content) were both appreciated by students.

...then we talk about our Mauri ora paper: Social psychology of Human Flourishing, it's so different in there. Tiare says...

...it's been it's actually been really nice just hearing some positives, you know, about Māori...because one of my big questions has always been how do you weigh up Western psychology, with Māori beliefs, or even Pacific Island beliefs, and indigenous beliefs? How does that balance? Because they almost seem opposing. So, kind of getting a better understanding and listening to the people speaking, it's just been really, really interesting. It's not white bashing and it's not Māori bashing. It's actually a balanced view of a lot of things and I've kind of really enjoyed that...

As mentioned taura Māori are simply seeking a balanced learning experience. Taura are aware that Māori and Western Psychology can be vastly different but enjoy the opportunity to explore both without judgement. Classes like Mauri Ora allow cultural perspectives to be shared without being reduced to a 'add-on' part of a lecture.

The appropriate inclusion (and validation) of Māori content often was more reflective of Māori students' reality which taura found to be a positive experience. Māori need to see their cultural experiences, values and traditions within the content in order to successfully engage with the learning (Bishop, 2002, as cited in Gorinski & Abernethy, 2007).

Tauira were asked specifically if they thought psychology was responsive to te ao Māori. Many responded that the kaupapa Māori based papers were the only space that felt responsive to tauira Māori.

...we realise that...

...the only time that it's [psychology] been responsive [to te ao Māori] has really been in....the kaupapa Māori psychology paper or in Mauri Ora...if there wasn't those papers, we wouldn't be learning about te ao Māori...

Some tauira shared that it is not until taking kaupapa Māori classes that they are able to recognise what has been missing from their learnings.

As mentioned earlier, tauira aren't often able to engage with Māori lecturers. But within kaupapa Māori based papers, there is greater chance to do so as these classes are taught by Māori staff.

...Pania then mentions how cool it is that our lecturer in our Mauri Ora class is Māori. He's really inspiring to learn from. I often catch myself in class thinking...

...this fulla knows what he's talking about...it's like so relevant...

The tauira above spoke highly of their Māori lecturer. Noting that their teaching was a lot more relevant and enjoyable. When taught by Māori lecturers tauira are able to better engage with the learning as they are able to relate to both the content and the lecturer (Curtis et al., 2014).

Not surprisingly, tauira felt some concern that kaupapa Māori papers are optional and not compulsory. Although most Māori are likely to select these papers if possible, the concern laid around non-Māori students being able to miss such valuable information by choosing to opt-out of such papers.

Lack of practical elements

As a cultural norm, Māori tend to value genuine interactions and connection with one another. It is unclear whether the School of Psychology value this also, as within psychology there is emphasis on getting good grades, rather than having the appropriate people skills to provide clients with a good experience.

As Māori tend to value face-to-face interaction and being genuinely connected with others, it came as a surprise to many taura studying psychology that needing or learning how to engage with people would not be a part of the journey until further down the road. For those wanting a career as a psychologist, many assumed learning skills of a practitioner would be a strong aspect of the programme. Waiari et al., (2023) also concur that it is a common experience for taura Māori to be surprised that their psychology education would be so heavily based in western science and less so focus on connection with other humans.

...our conversation shifts. I mention how surprised I've been that we haven't learnt and people skills? We had all assumed it would be an important part of the programme. Pania says to us...

...I don't think that it's valued at all- like being able to be personable or get along with people. Which I guess might lead to some problems down the track when you're saying ... 'we want clinical psychologists' and again, you haven't necessarily kept on board the people that might be a bit more interpersonally skilled...

For some Māori their strength lies within the people skills, and less so within the dominant psychology curriculum. Therefore, many Māori students who could excel as psychologists are lost to the discipline, an issue reflected in the low proportion of Māori psychologists today (Kennedy et al., 2021). Taura were critical of this, and deeply aware that many of their friends and other taura dropped out along their degree, as their interpersonal, and other cultural skills were not acknowledged as important within psychology. Before

proceeding, it should be mentioned that Māori are certainly capable of succeeding academically and receiving the grades necessary for postgraduate studies. What is different is the perceived value of those grades' versus the value of interpersonal skills. By speaking about the want to learn interpersonal skills, as well as concern for the strong emphasis placed on grades only, participants showed that people skills held value.

Currently no undergraduate papers include learning any interpersonal skills, this learning reserved for the final graduate programmes. Therefore, success up until the final years is measured solely upon academic grades. While good grades are valuable and give a good indication that students understand the theoretical underpinnings of psychology, it lacks any indication of practical skills in the field.

...we briefly worry about whether we are going to be good psychologists. We've learnt so much theory, but we have never learnt anything about listening to or talking to people...

...getting some more practical experience would be better...

Ultimately, this concern connects to workforce preparation. Because of the lack of interpersonal skills taught, students are left feeling ill prepared for the workforce. While the postgraduate programmes do offer some learning of skills and practical experience, this does not arrive until people are at year 5 of tertiary education. The inclusion of some practical learning earlier in the journey could allow for students to test their skill levels and give them a better indication as to whether psychology is a suitable career choice.

Summary

In summary, the current Western focused learning experience does not fit the needs of Māori. The provision of a more biculturally balanced learning experience is imperative for Māori success. The current system fails to engage Māori, lacks relevancy and lacks practical learning opportunities. Fortunately there are small pockets of appropriate learning (kaupapa Māori based papers) that role model what successful Māori learning could look like.

Chapter 7: Support System Realities for Māori

Support systems play a crucial role in Māori success. Taurira face a range of different challenges during their studies. Some from within the university and some from their home life. This chapter will explore some of the challenges Māori face and explore what realistically helps and hinders the successfully navigation of the challenges.

7.1: University support

Support systems targeted towards Māori success have been explored and implemented at the university of Waikato for many years. It is not assumed that all Māori experience challenges in the same way or at the same intensity, but support systems can play a crucial role in ensuring Māori retention and success. Current exploration of the available university support systems and their effectiveness have highlighted four key areas. These include *kaupapa Māori tutorials, Māori specific services, mentorship and online learning*. This section will speak to the challenges that arise, what support is available and some barriers that prevent taurira accessing help.

...we're halfway through the second year and I feel as though I only just made it through that semester. Life's been busy, I've had to miss some classes and catch up when I can. I keep thinking that maybe I should take the next semester off to sort my life out. Then I catch up with Pania and she tells me about some of the support systems she knows of...

Kaupapa Māori Tutorials

To preface this section, the work of those who fought for the development and implementation of Kaupapa Māori tutorials (KMT) should be acknowledged. Kaupapa Māori tutorials, now considered a normal part of The University of Waikato, were once a topic of controversy. Māori staff battled though complaints and concerns from all angles, claiming that kaupapa Māori tutorials were unfair and exclusionary and would put Māori in an advantageous position (Nikora, 2013).

Although challenged in beginning, KMT's have proven to be helpful. Previous work described kaupapa Māori tutorials desirably, noting the presence of whanaungatanga, helpful support, academically relevant content, guidance and positive student monitoring (McAllister et al., 2018). Despite this positive outlook, the tone has shifted. This study identifies some room for improvement within the current KMT's being offered. Much gratitude is held for the work done before us, and the importance of keeping Māori support systems such as the KMT is critical.

Kaupapa Māori tutorials exist within the undergraduate psychology programme and are intended to be a balanced (Māori and Western) learning space where Māori students gain academic support in relation to their coinciding lectures. Kaupapa Māori tutorials are spaces where the use of Māori language, tikanga and worldviews should be welcomed. A tendency for Māori students to remain quiet and observant, rather than asking questions during lectures leaves taura Māori at a learning disadvantage, therefore making smaller spaces such as the KMT very important (Curtis et al., 2012).

Unfortunately, these tutorials have more often than not failed to meet their expectations as a 'balanced' space that adequately involves te ao Māori. When compared with mainstream tutorials, taura stated that the benefits were minimal.

...Pania asks if I have tried joining the kaupapa Māori tutorials...I tell her I have and how I feel about them...

...I think they certainly made more of an effort to make me feel like I belong there. Like sharing you know, at the very least we all shared our names and where we're from, which is certainly a big leap of familiarity above the mainstream tutorials and I think they certainly tried to accommodate my worldview and to the way they explained things to me a little better, which was nice beyond that, not much though, but at least some effort was made...

Tauira agreed that there is a slight sense of connection and effort made in kaupapa Māori tutorials but overall, no strong presence of te ao Māori was noticed by any of the participants. Many feel as though a lack of te ao Māori makes these tutorials comparable to mainstream tutorials. Creating a space based on whanaungatanga can be a challenging task for the tutors. Walker et al., (2024) explain that tutors often have to make their own conscious effort to create whanaungatanga, all while feeling undervalued by the university.

Kaupapa Māori tutorials are student-led by tauira hired in teaching assistant roles. Although support being student-to-student is a great opportunity to connect as peers, expectations of the kaupapa Māori teaching assistant's skill set and knowledge base to run culturally and academically strong sessions can be difficult to meet. Participants voiced that although they can notice a conscious effort is made at times to involve Māori knowledge or tikanga, the teaching assistants are unable to meet the expectations due to no fault of their own. Teaching assistants are not provided with appropriate training to be able to deliver tutorials as expected. In order to ensure successful delivery of these KMT, better care should be considered for the tutors. Appropriate acknowledgement of the work they do, good remuneration, sufficient resourcing, and training is needed so that tutors are able to do their job well (Walker et al., 2024). This linking to commitments made in the UoW investment plan (The University of Waikato, 2022c). Goals in this plan seek to enhance teaching capacity through funding allocation, therefore KMT teaching assistants could be better supported through greater funding, training and resourcing.

Further kōrero explored the reality that teaching assistants are bound to a specific set of knowledge and tools to utilize during session, ones that are focused within Western psychology. Teaching assistants feel restricted in what they can share and/or are not adequately supported with more Māori based knowledge and skills to pass on. This places tutors in a different situation; being simultaneously expected to present the same content as

other tutorials (often with very constrained timings) as well as do so in a way that aligns with Māori ways of knowing, being, and doing.

Being an intentionally Māori space, some kōrero arose regarding whether kaupapa Māori tutorials should be for Māori only. Spaces such as the KMT should be reflective of one culture and create opportunities for taura to connect with other brown faces all while being culturally relevant, safe and supportive (Phillips, 2003). A strong consensus was that, no, these spaces should not be for Māori only and taura were happy to embrace non-Māori into the space. Open inclusion of all ethnicities has been a positive of KMT since their implementation and encourages collaborative success (Levy et al., 2008).

Despite an overall agreement that non-Māori would be welcomed, some concerns were raised regarding non-Māori students simply picking kaupapa Māori tutorials for the convenience of time and no other reason. Allowing entrance into this space, based on this type of thinking means students who do not necessarily align with or value things te ao Māori are taking up space and perhaps diminishing the cultural strength these spaces could potentially possess. In addition to non-Māori selecting these tutorials out of convenience, some Māori too admitted to adding these tutorials to their timetable due to the convenient timing. This highlighting that the current kaupapa Māori tutorials that are being delivered may hold less value as a cultural space and more as one of convenience.

Additionally, having the KMT open to all ethnicities means sometimes unwelcomed views are shared.

...Pania tells me she's had mostly good experiences with KMTs. Although sometimes the wrong people are in these spaces. She says...

...the idea of kaupapa Māori tutorials is that like you as Māori are supposed to feel really comfortable there, but there's always that one guy at least who got to say his piece about like, why he doesn't think Te Tiriti is relevant to today...

It is not uncommon for Māori students to have to face comments similar to what is described above. In this instance, the invalidation of Te Tiriti is harmful for Māori. KMT's should be a space where negative mainstream experiences can be avoided, such as feelings of isolation or having to be the 'token Māori' to provide cultural insight (Levy et al., 2008).

Despite concerns that KMT may not be as balanced as hoped, the previous effort made to establish these tutorials is appreciated and acknowledged. Improvement to the kaupapa Māori tutorials could include better training for kaupapa Māori teaching assistants, specific time allocated to fostering whanaungatanga, better information regarding the kaupapa, and entry allocation based upon acceptance and understanding of a te ao Māori foundation within the tutorials.

Māori specific supports

The University of Waikato offers an array of Māori support systems, such as Te Pūoho ki Te Aka Matua- Arts, Law, Psychology and Social Sciences (ALPASS) referred to hereafter as Te Aka Matua. Te Aka Matua is a supportive Māori led initiative with helpful knowledge and resources, yet the lack of awareness and taura hesitation to access the service has meant this service has often not been utilized to its full potential. To access the help, students need to be aware of what is available, unfortunately for many of our taura, they are simply unaware of where they can receive support. Lack of awareness has historically been raised as an issue (McAllister et al., 2018), but the problem appears to persist.

Students felt that communication via generic emails generally wasn't effective, and they usually didn't feel encouraged to seek help after receiving them. Participants also shared that often support systems were merely mentioned once or twice in an early lecture within first year, but any repetition of this information would rarely occur. As a first-year student it may be difficult to understand what supports you may need until further down the line as challenges arise.

Although a lack of awareness showed as a major barrier, there were some taurira that still felt hesitant to access help. A particular challenge in regard to accessing the services available is taurira feeling as though they are too ‘plastic’, or not Māori enough to feel comfortable within these spaces.

...Tiare joins us and we talk about the ‘Te Aka Matua’ service that is available...It looks good, but I have an uncomfortable feeling about it. I say to them...

...I'm coming in here kind of feeling like an outsider both to the university and both to the Māori groups in the university...Because there's this conflict of how Māori enough do I need to be to really engage in te ao Māori, and that's been a real struggle...

As Māori identity varies due to the implications of colonisation (loss of identity, language and knowledge) feeling ‘not Māori enough’ to access services was a common feeling for many participants. For some Māori, a secure cultural identity means being knowledgeable about tikanga, te reo Māori, whakapapa or the marae (Borell, 2005). For example, the ability to speak Te Reo Māori is often used to assess one’s own feeling of belonging within a Māori group. Those who speak Māori may often contribute more, have responsibilities and assume roles of leadership, whereas those who do not may have negative feelings relate to a perceived lack of acceptance and belonging (Rameka, 2018).

Many Māori, particularly young Māori, are embarking on a journey of reclamation of their Māoridom but this coming with uncertainty, discomfort and feelings of unease when unable to participate in kaupapa where (assumed) higher levels of Māori knowledge is expected. Despite spaces like Te Aka Matua being welcoming of anyone at any level of cultural knowledge, without accessing the service these assumptions remain as they are- that you need to be a certain ‘level’ of Māori to join.

Fortunately, those who have had the privilege to be connected with the Te Aka Matua services and staff, sing praises for the connection and support they can have received.

...we decide we should check it out later in the week. It's scary to think about asking for help, but our classmate reassure us by telling us...

...what really helped us more than other students is Te Aka Matua, meeting [Te Aka Matua member] ...because she helped us with a lot of stuff, or gave us access to things that we might not have always had access to...like the career paths and stuff like that...

Clearly, taurira believe Te Aka Matua have valuable supports in place, but barriers to access remain as the key issue.

Some taurira mentioned that their connection to support services was due to prior relationships with those involved in the services. Not surprisingly, being connected through relationship, whether it was a whānau member or friend, proved to be a great step towards accessing the help. Reliance on relationships, and the power of whanaungatanga is once again highlighted as crucial to successfully navigating the university context.

Mentorship

Mentoring is a suitable practice for supporting taurira Māori as it fits well with the Māori worldview. Mentorship is a supportive tool that has been utilized to increase indigenous student retention (Anonson et al., 2008). Mentorship, commonly understood in te ao Māori as a tuakana-teina relationships, is a treasured part of Māori culture. The concept of a tuakana- teina relationship is based upon the tuakana (older sibling) mentoring the teina (younger sibling) but is simultaneously an opportunity for reciprocal learning where both can learn from one another (Smith, 2007). These relationships are ones that foster the sharing of knowledge, skills, resources, time and energy from one person to another. Peer relationships, founded upon mutual sharing without expectation play a considerable role in Māori well-being (Morunga, 2003). Heard within this study was the want for a tuakana, or mentor, that can help those coming through the programme make it through successfully supported.

The absence of mentoring support often leaves taurira feeling isolated and uncomfortable (McAllister et al., 2022). Specific Māori mentorship has been offered historically within the School of Psychology at the UoW but has since dropped off.

Although not always directly spoken about, participants voiced the want for a mentor to help guide them through their journey. The support of a senior student or staff member was wanted for a variety of reasons. Including access to support, degree pathway advice, student retention, a sense of belonging, a safe place to share frustrations, understanding course work and last, but certainly not least, friendship.

...it's so good to have friends to talk about this stuff with. Without Tiare and Pania I truly don't know how I would make through. Tiare says...
'Māori are what keep other Māori at university'
 ...and I couldn't agree more...

It is challenging to pinpoint the biggest advantage of mentorship as its benefits span the entirety of this research. Within the classroom its benefits can be seen in connecting Māori with one another. Māori wellness and identity are enhanced through social connection and collectivism (Curtis et al., 2016). Although Māori often yearn to be connected with each other, a level of confidence is needed to engage with others is needed, which can be challenging when the environment does not prioritise or value relationships. Initial connection with a mentor will foster a sense of whanaungatanga, so that the student feels more comfortable and confident to create a university whānau of their own.

Whanaungatanga also grants people the opportunity to nurture one another. Love (2004) describe whanaungatanga as a process where future generations may be prepared and supported. With whanaungatanga, comes friendship, and friends can be saviours. Many participants voiced pure gratitude for their friendships, knowing that without them the journey would be much harder. Although mentorship and friendship are not guaranteed to

come hand in hand, with small numbers of taura Māori, mentors can open doors to connections that may create friendship for others.

...I remember now to something my cousin who recently graduated from uni told me before I started...

...make those connections, make friends...I wouldn't have gotten through my three years if I didn't have the friends that I did. Yeah. Because they're the ones that will help you carry on...

...she was right, my friends are so important...

Further within the classroom, simple help with coursework and content has been voiced as helpful way of managing one's academics. While the students in this research voiced this positive experience in relation to friends, this also is help that could be provided by a mentor. Mentorship contributes to greater pass rates through reassuring taura that success is possible (Bristowe et al., 2016).

Moving on, opportunity to share frustrations with those who have similar experience is also a helpful and healthy benefit of mentorship. Taura given the opportunity to voice concerns and challenges to a safe person (their mentor) can help one cope better with university stressors, leading to greater success. Frustrations with the Western environment and lack of te ao Māori within the everyday university life can be draining for Māori students, but providing a safe person to talk to can be re-energizing and allow taura to continue chipping away at their studies. On a personal level, the support of my own Tuakana in the Clinical Psychology programme has been invaluable. Having an outlet in someone who is understanding, empathetic and supportive has kept me tracking towards my goal. Sharing similar experience means there is no need for justification or explanation of my challenges, rather it becomes a safe space to off load concerns. It is a relationship I am truly thankful for, and an experience I hope to provide for others.

Finally, to be discussed more in depth in chapter 8, mentors can provide essential support in understanding the pathways to becoming a psychologist. Mentors who have experienced the challenges navigating the degree pathway can be helpful in sharing what the information they now have, as well as being understanding towards the frustration and confusion experienced by those coming through the years.

Currently, different psychology programmes employ differing mentoring systems, one example is in the tuakana-teina system in Clinical Psychology programme where students are matched (online) and required to connect on their own terms. While this system works for some, it shifts the responsibility to the student, rather than the programme taking any accountability in creating a connected environment. Developing a more formalised network of tuakana-teina, whether as an extension of the KMTs or in addition to them, presents one option of supporting and nurturing future generations of taurira in psychology.

Based on the literature, and the voices of taurira, there is an overall benefit of mentorship, that being Māori retention and success. With the combined benefits of Māori taking care of other Māori within the university system, it is more likely that Māori will complete their studies and succeed.

Online learning

Online learning, a somewhat new method of learning, has become a prominent learning tool in our post COVID-19 society. Although it is not specifically targeted towards Māori learners, some taurira highlighted the benefits of online learning, particularly those raising children and caring for family members. With both advantages and disadvantages, online learning has provided the opportunity for those to study who may not have otherwise been able to manage the requirement of face-to-face learning on campus.

...I've always tried my hardest to show up to class, but sometimes it's so hard to balance life and making it to class throughout the week. Pania does some online classes, she tells us:

...the option to study online and watch the lectures around life has made it easier for me to overcome some of that. So if in the middle of the day, I need to take my dad to the doctor's or the hospital or medical appointment, I can do that...It just means you've got to be able to multitask, and do everything and make the commitment that okay, at 10 o'clock at night, when things are kind of settled a bit more I can settle down and do my lectures, I can sit down and do my notes. I can go back and watch and read. I mean, would I rather be on campus doing it at the time than try to juggle everything? Then heck yeah. But I think my life is the way my life is and I kind of accept that, rightly or wrongly. I don't try to complain a great deal. I just deal with what's dealt to you, you know?

Tauira are grateful for online learning options. Discussed in further detail to follow is the reality that Māori often juggle a variety of responsibilities, which require their time and attention. The flexibility of online learning allows the literal time for students to be in a different place when they would otherwise usually be in class. Online learning has been praised for its ability to provide a more achievable academic pathways for those with life demands and caring responsibilities (Stone & O'Shea, 2019).

It was voiced that some lecturers struggle to move forward with the current students' ability to learn online and hold rigidly to the requirement to be in person in class. While this may have its own advantages, online learning is sometimes the only option for Māori attempting to balance their life responsibilities, so flexibility around in person attendance is received with gratitude.

While it there was a general agreeance that study online is advantageous to managing normal life pressures, it also came with its downfalls. The main challenges being a lack of connection and inability to engage in classes.

Tauira discussed the disconnection felt when engaging in online classes, as a culture of not speaking up from behind the screen (even not having your face visible on camera on)

has become the norm, as well as the reality that online learning is often recorded and watched after the lecture rather than participating in real time. As Māori are generally kanohi-ki-te-kanohi or face-to-face people, making connections via the screen is difficult for some.

...Pania reminds me though that not being on campus also has its downfalls...she adds...
...If I'm not there making connections and relationships and friendships...not having one-on-one conversation over coffee...you can feel a little isolated...

This taura identifying the difficult nature of creating relationships when you aren't able to connect physically. Despite this, there is still opportunity for strong relationships to be built online (Waitoa, 2013). Hudson (2020) explains that when whanaungatanga is prioritized within the online realm, students are more likely to create relationships and have positive outcomes, when supported by quality services and resources.

Martin and Bolliger (2018) realised that within the virtual classroom, students tended to value lecturer-student engagement rather than student-student. This emphasizing the role lecturers have in creating a connected space. Some suggestions for fostering online whanaungatanga are offered in the literature. Kahu (2021) utilizes informal videos, helpful tutorials and class management advice, casual forums, personalized emails and positive feedback as tools to increase the student's sense of whanaungatanga within the virtual classroom.

Further, in relation to the previous concern around a lack of support service awareness, those who study online were particularly disconnected from support services as they did not know about them and/or felt as though they could not access the support due to being off campus.

Summary

In summary, there are both highlights and lowlights in relation to support services offered by the university. While efforts are noticed, support services should be revised for

improvement so that taura Māori are able to gain the best outcomes possible. Further, more funding and resource allocation for Māori support services should be considered to help aid improvements and good delivery.

7.2: Home Environment

As briefly discussed in the previous section, balancing the demands of university with the realities of life is no easy task. With a variety of different lifestyles, it can be challenging to truly understand what challenges each student brings to the classroom. Two topics emerged in relation to the challenges felt by our taura, these included *the role of whānau* and *finances*.

...I made up my mind, I'm going to finish out the year. But that doesn't make the stuff at home any easier. What am I going to do? We have so much coming up and there's always important kaupapa popping up that I can never plan for. I don't think my whānau get it, I'm trying my best to be a good whānau member and a good student, but it's hard to be both at the same time. I'll just have to make it work...

The role of Whānau

There is no surprise that whānau play a crucial role in a Māori student's university journey. Research by Theodore et al., (2017) with Māori graduate students found that for some whānau played the most pivotal role in their success, and for others whānau obligations were one of the biggest challenges to completing study. As a collectivist culture, Māori tend to have a variety of responsibilities within their family system. This contrasts strongly with the university norms that tend to imagine a student as a free and independent individual whose main purpose is to study. The ideal student is one that is young, child free, affluent, free of personal and family responsibilities (Waitoki et al., 2024). This idealised university student often clashes with the realities of taura who hold an array of responsibilities outside of the university sphere (Johnson et al., 2021). Not only are we required to give time and energy as a family member, but we may also have social, work and personal needs that

require equal amounts of us. Responsibilities and obligations to one's whānau often leave taurira feeling conflicted on which to prioritize (Patterson et al., 2017)

Schwab (1996) suggests that family commitments for indigenous people are intense and occur at a higher rate than their non-indigenous peers. These commitments often effecting the student's ability to study (time), attendance, concentration and focus. France and colleagues (2019) similarly acknowledge that transitioning to university is demanding for many different ethnicities, but significant family and economic pressures experienced by Māori make it more challenging to prioritize academic demands.

...chasing this dream takes up so much of my time and energy. I wonder if I'm being selfish, I think...

...we have many obligations, whether it be tangi or whānau, or you know, like I'm looking after my parents and all those sorts of things that we do. You can't just drop all of that to go and do something which is sometimes perceived as being selfish. You know, putting myself ahead of all the other things that I'm committed and obligated to. I find it quite hard straddling both worlds, and being in two places, being in a Pākehā Western world and Māori world, sometimes they don't marry up. And so yeah you put one ahead of the other, that side will criticize you, then you go the other way, put that one ahead of that one then you get criticized...

Being a whānau member (and its associated responsibilities) within te ao Māori is not generally confined to the nuclear family. Many Māori exist within intergenerational families; therefore, family care and responsibilities go much further and wider than simply caring for one's own children. Therefore, being a whānau member comes with expectations to contribute to the wider whānau or collective (Durie, 1997). Taurira Māori in this study are parents, siblings, cousins, children and grandchildren, with each relationship deserving of

their time and attention. Balancing the many obligations of being a whānau member and a student a put taura under serious pressure (Theodore et al., 2017).

Further, it is not uncommon that Indigenous students are older, bringing with them more responsibilities than their non-indigenous peers (Devlin, 2009). Mature students voiced more responsibility as they are often the wearer of many hats within their whānau, navigating intergenerational duties. Parenting was discussed as one of the most challenging roles in relation to managing one's study. A large portion of the taura within this research are parents. For parents, needing to organize study time so that family routines are not interrupted, time with children is not lost, and so that home life can continue as usual is crucial (Williams, 2011). However, many were also having to navigate responsibilities to their elders as well as children, such as caring for elderly parents, or helping them attend doctor appointments or other important tasks.

A commonly shared experience by participants was feeling as though the Western university system and its staff were not understanding of the importance of the whānau needs. For example, when requesting leave from classes for the attendance of tangihanga, this was met with formalities and paperwork, something foreign to the Māori worldview. Staff were rarely understanding of taura who were having to navigate loss and grief but also manage whānau responsibilities during the tangihanga that could take up time before and long after the tangihanga.

Many students admitted to just accepting the consequences of missed class or study time (lost grades, no extension, poor work) when whānau needs arise. Feeling uncomfortable in justifying the prioritisation of whānau needs through formal processes was simply not worth it for some. Despite this some taura acknowledged particular staff members who were flexible, helpful and understanding. For example, giving quiz resit opportunities (without the

formalities) when needed. Moments like this make tauira feel heard and understood, allowing them to do the mahi required of them with less pressure.

The university system has the opportunity to support tauira Māori by acknowledging the importance of cultural and whānau obligations by supporting time away from university when necessary (Patterson et al., 2017). Of course, the university system will remain vigilant due to chance of students abusing the use extensions or second opportunities given, but greater awareness of Māori student responsibilities could perhaps allow for increased flexibility when appropriate. The reduction of formal paperwork and increase of understanding, listening and empathy expressed towards students' real-life responsibilities would be beneficial in ensuring Māori success. Further making sure extensions are achievable and non-threatening is an important way of supporting tauira Māori during hard times (Patterson et al., 2017).

Moving on, as many Māori are first generation university students, or one of only few within their whānau to be pursuing a university degree, whānau members may not always be as understanding of the importance of this journey.

...I know at the end of the day my whānau support me. I just wish they understood a bit more about what uni is like...

...if you're a first time Uni student in your whole family, you know, like, that's a big thing, because none of them understand what you kind of go through as a university student and as a Māori person. And sometimes you might not get that full support that you kind of need...

Whānau are not always familiar with the time needed, institutional challenges, resources or mental load necessary for university education (Bristowe et al., 2016; Grainger et al., 2016) meaning at times they have different expectations of what tauira should be prioritising (such as home/life demands).

Further, whānau members at times unintentionally devalue the worth of a university degree, therefore making it challenging for taura to prioritise their work when necessary. For example, comparison to other types of study or work.

...I think back to when I told my whānau I was going to go to uni...

...my whānau-they support me...but because of their comprehension of a degree, they don't really understand...

...I then recall my brother saying...

... *"like I have a certificate too"*...

...as if what I was doing wasn't that important...

The tone used by this taura implied that the value of a university degree was comparable to any old certificate. While this is not a competition of whose study accreditation was more valuable than whose, the comment unintentionally decreased the perceived value on the students goal of attaining the a degree. Pressure by whānau members to uphold family commitments or attend whānau events, regardless of university commitments or not, can negatively impact academic outcomes (Jefferies, 1997). Expecting students to drop university commitments for whānau ones may also unintentionally devalue the worth of the students university degree.

Curtis et al., (2012) suggest that orientation events and ongoing contact with whānau members could help alleviate some of the challenges so that whānau have a better understanding of what is expected of students. Whānau are the epicentre of life for many taura, and so need to also be connected to the university context, as the biggest champions for taura during times of need. Whānau play an important role in upholding the students emotional, physical and cultural wellbeing (Durie, 1994). As such, psychology, and the broader UoW, should consider how the university might be able to connect with whānau, and demonstrate the value of taura coming to the university.

Despite some challenges in regard to whānau needing one's time and attention, they also were acknowledged as a source of motivation. Research on Māori university graduates identified that support from their whānau played a crucial role in their success. Emotional support in the form of motivation, encouragement, inspiration and love were all helpful ways in which whānau helped their loved one succeed at university. Practical support such as childcare and financial support also helping Māori students succeed (Theodore et al., 2017).

Finances

The cost of university can be a challenging barrier for many students and certainly was voiced by the participants of this research. Challenges such as financial hardship, low scholarship opportunities, student debt worries, working while studying and challenges within government supported funding are all serious barriers that's taurira Māori face (Theodore et al., 2017). While the cost of university is a challenge for both Māori and non-Māori it is particularly relevant for Māori when considering the financial stressors Māori students may also be balancing within their home life.

While the financial struggles experienced by students is not bound to any one culture, there is significant social challenges Māori experience at a higher rate than non-Māori, making managing the cost of university a bigger challenge. Cost presents as a particular challenge for Māori as there is an over representation of Māori in lower socio-economic groups (Hunt et al., 2001).

The precariat, a concept related to social class, is populated by those who experience work, housing, income and health insecurities (Standing, 2011). The precariat encapsulates groups of people who have been forced to survive in uncertainty on low incomes and/or welfare supports due to discrimination, exclusion and insecurities (Groot et al., 2017). Within Aotearoa New Zealand, Māori are overrepresented in the precariat in comparison to Pākehā who remain underrepresented in the precariat (Rua et al., 2023). Further, Māori and

Pacific students are more likely to occupy the precariat and face financial hardship (Stubbs et al., 2017).

...now that I've decided to stay, I also need to think about paying for it. I think to myself...
...my biggest obstacle is the financial side...for me to stop work to be able to study that's a huge impact...If I can't continue to pay our bills, I'm not going to be homeless just to study, and I'm not going to put my family in that situation...

Having to make sacrifices in order to pursue education poses a serious risk for student retention. As mentioned in the above excerpt, tauira are not willing to put their personal goals ahead of their family's needs. The decision to put work (earning money) on hold, can feel like a selfish decision for some, especially for those supporting a family. Pursuing an individual goal at the short-term disadvantage of one's family can be a challenging stressor to carry throughout the journey. Taking up university studies is often a substantial burden and risk (Oleksiyenko & Tierney, 2018). At a minimum the journey through an undergraduate degree is three years. However, in reality, the journey to becoming a practicing psychologist is 6+ years, which is a huge financial burden and commitment that tauira must face.

Being a student is often synonymous with having to be in survival mode in regard to finances for a large period of time. Financial hardships can cause stress that negatively impact one's university performance (McAllister et al., 2018). Tauira must balance the demands of their unpaid university work as well as being able to meet their own, and often their whānau's own basic needs (food/shelter etc). Therefore, not succumbing to the appeal of earning money is a pressure experienced by many throughout some, if not all, of their university experience.

Finally, a particular challenge during postgraduate studies, is students being unable to access student allowance support, this being particularly challenging for minority groups such as Māori (Kennedy et al., 2021). Considering that you must complete post-graduate studies to become a psychologist this is a serious barrier for some.

While it is challenging, aspirations and excitement help counterbalance the hard times. Taura know that the financial ‘survival’ is worth the outcome.

...I wonder if it's worth it, all the money I need to do this. I look into some scholarships and think to myself...

... *[Financial support] would allow me to continue studying so that I can do something better coming out the other side...*

Those who have received scholarships throughout their journey were grateful. The relieved pressure meant students could stay involved in their studies with less pressure and stress. This raising awareness of the need for more Māori specific financial support.

Fortunately, some taura have the financial support of their whānau. Williams (2011) expressed that in many cases, financial support from generous whānau members was what made it possible for student's to pursue their university dream.

Providing financial support or scholarship opportunities early in undergraduate degree may be beneficial to ensure Māori retention further along the journey. Universities can support taura by providing scholarships and grants or alleviate financial burden by providing textbooks or computer equipment (Ratima et al., 2007).

Staff have great potential to support Māori facing financial barriers. This support could come in the form of sharing knowledge of scholarships or writing support letters for scholarship applications. Further, staff could advocate for and help implement scholarships such as the Māori Psychology and Research Unit (MPRU) scholarship, which can be seriously helpful for taura conducting research.

Summary

In summary, Māori face some serious barriers within their home life. Perseverance becomes extremely important in navigating whānau obligations and financial hardships in order to stack on track with academic requirements. Māori make big sacrifices to be a part of

psychology education, therefore better understanding and support from the university system is suggested.

Chapter 8: Transitional Journey to becoming a Māori Psychologist

Many Māori dream of making a difference and further seek qualifications from higher education as powerful tool to do so (Nikora, 2013). The dream of becoming a Māori psychologist is shared by many taura in this study, but what is also shared is confusion and concern about how to get there. Full of strong hopes and aspirations, taura stumble through the journey step by step towards their goals.

Not only is it important to support the student's personal goals of becoming a psychologist, but this is also extremely relevant as we consider the low percentage of Māori psychologists. With only 6% of Māori psychologist in Aotearoa, our mental health system is failing to meet the needs of Māori service users who are statistically overrepresented (Kennedy et al., 2021).

This chapter will explore the reality of the transition into postgraduate studies and concerns taura hold as they prepare to enter the workforce. Two subthemes were heard in relation to the transition to becoming a Māori Psychologist, first *the university pathway* and second *the journey to practice*.

...I did it! Here we are at year three, ready to start the last semester of my bachelors. How exciting is that- I feel great that I did it, but I'm only just now wondering what's next? I've always wanted to be a clinical psychologist but I'm not really sure what I'm meant to do? I really should have figured this out earlier... I need some help, and quickly. I heard people are getting their applications ready, but I don't even know where to start? What's next? Help!...

8.1: Pathways

The path to becoming a psychologist is at a minimum six years long. This though is not the reality for most, with added years and gaps in study, this journey can be long and requires much perseverance.

Tauira have dreams of being successful Māori psychologists yet struggle to practically see the steps ahead of them. With aspirations to be clinical, community, forensic, or behavioural psychologists, comes a variety of routes to the different outcomes. What has proven to be difficult is understanding and navigating the steps and logistics to do so. Three topics have emerged regarding the pathway to becoming a psychologist, *pathway confusion*, *access to support* and *equitable pathways for programmes*.

Pathway confusion

Despite interviewing both undergraduate and postgraduate tauira, we captured the same message, that the pathway to becoming a psychologist is confusing and tricky to understand. It may make sense to not have a full grasp on where you are headed at the very beginning of one's university studies, but pathway confusion was still prevalent even for those in postgraduate programmes.

From the beginning, most have a desire to become a registered psychologist of some sort, but many are very naive about the length of the journey, as well as its necessary components. During undergraduate, tauira report that information and guidance regarding postgraduate pathways and registration as a psychologist is scarce.

...so many questions start running through my head. There's so much I don't know...
 ...is there a number for how many psych, clinical psych, masters or post grad students they'll take?...there's no clear laid out hard rules... for registration? We know there's only 10 or 12 spaces, or whatever it is?...what about for master's students? And then there's that grey area around finding your own supervisor for your master's thesis?...

Tauira voiced that information is given late in the undergraduate journey (last semester of the third year). This is often unhelpful as this is also the time that most applications are due for the postgraduate programmes. Undergraduate psychology spans a variety of topics, meaning for those without a plan of where they would like to go next, much time is needed to consider various options. Being informed so late in the undergraduate journey leaves tauira confused about which pathway they wish to pursue and the steps they need to take to achieve that. Additionally, as many programmes require prerequisite papers, information should be offered early so that students who have an idea on their desired pathway can take the papers they require.

Although earlier sharing of information is needed, some participants voiced concern that if given too early (i.e. first semester of first year), it can be considered irrelevant for those who are understandably unsure of what route they wish to take. Therefore, making the timing and the repetition of information super important. More opportunities for tauira to get the information they need would be greatly appreciated by all.

Many postgraduate programmes have limited entry numbers, meaning if not accepted in the current round, students generally have to wait another year before applying again. This creating an issue as student retention as students willingness to pursue psychology can decrease. In particular for tauira living within the precariat or those managing whānau responsibilities, they may have to prioritise other goals (Simpson, 2022; Theodore et al., 2017). As pathways to registration are generally around 6-9 years, the accumulating costs can be a major barrier for those living in lower socio-economic realities (Mayeda et al., 2020). This makes the timing and delivery of pathway information crucial, to ensure tauira are best prepared for competitive programme applications.

Overall, the task of acquiring pathway information is unnecessarily exhausting students time and energy. Understandably, being unsure on your next move can provoke emotional responses. This was common among participants of this study.

...I see Tiare and Pania again. Turns out I'm not the only one confused with my application and...

...now we are incredibly anxiety ridden over not knowing what we actually need to achieve...

Anxiety, confusion and frustration can negatively impact the student's likelihood of continuing into postgraduate studies. These emotional journeys can be off-putting for taura attempting to move into postgraduate studies, therefore potentially impacting student retention. These moments of confusion, frustration and worry can cause taura to pull out of the journey all together or at least push them towards unnecessary gap years within their study, or into alternative pathways that have clearer outcomes aligned with what they want to do.

An additional issue is raised for students pursuing a master's degree (a necessary component of postgraduate programmes) and that is the challenge of finding a supervisor. As mentioned in the very beginning, fostering connection is a challenge, so now when tasked with finding a suitable supervisor, taura often have no connections with supervisors within the university. Active participation in the choice of one's supervisor often equates to students making good progress on work and feeling satisfied (Gray & Costa, 2019).

Additional to this challenge is finding a Māori supervisor. Māori often seek Māori supervisors for their cultural background, expertise in tikanga or te reo, and commitment to kaupapa (Hohepa, 2010). Māori staff numbers are limited within the School of Psychology and finding one who also has the capacity to take you on as a supervisee proves to be challenging. The thought of not being supported by a Māori supervisor can be vastly discouraging, particularly when taura have kaupapa Māori research interests in mind. Māori

students should be provided with a supervisor fit to accommodate their cultural needs.

Students who have a supportive relationship with their supervisor tend to more engaged, satisfied and productive in their work (Bruce et al., 2008). Having a culturally supportive and knowledgeable supervisor either Māori or allied non-Māori is a fortunate opportunity for some.

Access to support

On top of the confusing nature of psychology pathways, came a lack of helpful support. Taura struggled to find a designated person who could help them navigate the path and were only contacted via email. When seeking support, students were continually guided back to seek guidance from unhelpful online documents and handbook information. Poor course advice has been previously raised as hindering challenge taura face (Theodore et al., 2017).

...we decide to ask for some help, we're sent a link to website but...

...it wasn't really clear on the website, on Waikato's website at all. I had multiple emails and conversations with staff, as well as just going over the same material online over and over again...

...I still don't know exactly what I'm meant to do next?...

Each participant that spoke about email communication and online guidelines found the information mostly unhelpful and difficult to understand. Left feeling confused, but not directed to any further help or to specific person who could help was frustrating.

Again, we should consider the benefits of kanohi-ki-te-kanohi options for our taura Māori. With help being solely provided online, this could be mediated with the inclusion of a staff or senior student who could provide the information face-to-face. Although the online information tends to make sense for those already in the programme, this was not the case for those wanting to enter the programme. Many described the information as challenging to

decipher, outdated, rarely updated to reflect current processes, and unclear as to what was really expected for programme entry.

Linking back to the idea of mentorship, a mentor could help fill the gap in helping tairira navigate the pathway. In particular support from those who have done a particular programme i.e. Clinical or Community, could be matched with someone aspiring to do the same, so that the support is tailored well to the need.

...it feels like it's impossible to find someone in person to help me...

...it would have been much better if I could have had the person actually teaching me or you know, someone relevant to the psychology department actually tell me 'this is how it works'....

Tairira are desperate for a designated person to help support them through pathways confusion. This would help alleviate frustrations and ultimately help tairira get closer to their goals.

Equity pathways for programmes

Tertiary education systems have the responsibility to create an equitable health workforce that represents a balanced spread of minority groups to ensure the best outcome for mental health service users within Aotearoa (Barham et al., 2023). Further, Levy (2018b), in her WAI2725 claim, outlines the needs for active recruitment and retention of tairira Māori into psychology programmes. Thus, the proposal of equity pathways for tairira Māori makes sense.

It is not obvious, at least to the student eye, as to whether ethnicity is taken into consideration when selected students into competitive postgraduate programmes.

...as I scramble my way through the application process, I chat with Kaea who's in a postgrad programme already. I say to her...

...psychology needs more Māori...

...Kaea agrees adding...

...Especially considering the low representation in the workforce and the high demand of Māori in the service...it just makes sense...

...she's really hoping I get in, she shares her thoughts with me about Māori allocated spots in the programme...

...we need to have designated number of slots for Māori and Pacific students in competitive placements. You cannot go to pure meritocracy. If you say you support Māori and Pacific students in psychology, you cannot do that. Because if you put Māori and Pacific in the same equal basket as anyone else, then nothing will change...

Allocated spots for Māori in competitive programmes would help increase the number of registered Māori psychologists. Tauira are acutely aware that there are such low numbers of Māori psychologist and want to see serious change to address this issue.

Affirmative action was suggested by a tauira, to address the low numbers of Māori students within postgraduate programmes. Affirmative action is utilized to assist minority group members into positions in both employment and education (Iorns Magallanes, 2004). Barham et al., (2023) identified key benefits of targeted admission schemes in Aotearoa. These included the upholding of Te Tiriti obligations, cultivation of health professionals from minority communities who are suitable to serve their communities, and the creation of a workforce capable of tackling institutional racism and prioritising health equity.

Durie (2005) brings to light some concerns about affirmative action in Aotearoa. First, concern that affirmative action allows Māori students to graduate with lower academic standards. In response Durie reminds us that no exception is made for Māori academic performance once in the programme. Second, the belief that academic merit is the most appropriate way to admit students. In response Durie states that while academic merit is

positive, sometimes Māori with lesser grades can make a greater contribution to psychology than a non-Māori person with higher grades.

Despite these concerns, support for affirmative action exists in the current psychology society. A large majority (88%) of participants in Waitoki et al., (2024) endorse the idea of equitable admission schemes, highlighting the importance of diversity in the field of psychology.

Waitoki et al., (2023a) investigated prerequisites for entry into psychology training programmes in relation to applicants' knowledge around Māori culture. Just over half of the programmes required applicants to possess knowledge around Māori culture and cultural diversity. Directors further ranked (out of five factors) 'commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi' as the most influential characteristic of a potential applicant gaining entry, with 'whakapapa Māori identification' as the third most influential. This information is important to highlight, as it shows some background commitment to prioritizing Māori.

Summary

In summary, better support for pathways is extremely important for Māori student retention. Taurua are unnecessarily unsure of the pathway progression needed to become a psychologist. It is important to also consider equitable pathways for Māori students to address the gap of Māori in the workforce.

8.2: Highlighting the Dream: Practice

While this research is aimed at understanding the university journey, understanding challenges when considering future practice was noticeable within the kōrero shared by students. Taurua voiced concern and challenges for the future that impacted their journey now. Many fighting an internal battle as to whether this field was suitable for them was a commonly heard theme, therefore potentially impacting student retention. As well as sharing the mentally difficult times taurua felt when facing the future, many motivations and

aspirations were shared. Hearing the collective dreams and goals of the taurira is inspiring and exciting and so I have specifically chosen to include these as the final part of our pūrākau, as a reminder of why taurira come into psychology.

Three topics emerged in relation to joining the workforce as Māori, *working within the western system, advocacy for change and aspirations.*

...what a whirlwind that was trying to get into postgrad. But we got there eventually. I'm here now and it's a bit different. I'm being challenged to think critically about ideas, concepts, research and frameworks. I don't always seem to think the same way as my classmates and lecturers. We don't always align. That's okay, it's okay to have different opinions, but somehow, I feel like my voice is minority not an equal? I share about my passion for Māori, yet that isn't viewed as important. Is this what the real world is like? Will it always be this way?...

Working within the Western system

While some may argue that working within the Western mental health system is a future concern that is outside the control of the university, it was a serious worry for many psychology students. Concerns about entering the workforce can impact student retention, as taurira juggle with the idea of what it means to be a Māori psychologist within the Aotearoa New Zealand mental health system.

Similar to existing within the Western environment created within the university, taurira anticipate the work force to be similar. While students are excited to become psychologists, they are also realistic about slow change and the challenges related to the monocultural mental health system that currently exists. Recent research found that 75% of participants (both psychologists and students) had 'somewhat' or 'huge' concern that psychology in Aotearoa is monocultural (Waitoki et al., 2024).

...I've spent a lot of time lately thinking about my future, it's scary wondering what it's going to be like in the field. So...

...sometimes I'm really passionate, like on a being this Māori psychologist who can make a change. And then other times I think of...how colonised the huge structures are. And so that's overwhelming for me, and I'm like- 'what's little old me going to do' ...

Students are well aware of low numbers of registered Māori psychologists. So, they become rightly concerned in anticipation of being only one of few or the only Māori in their future workplaces. As described by the above taura, facing the monocultural reality of the psychology workforce in Aotearoa can be overwhelming, often making students wonder whether the journey is worth it. Much like the university system, taura are likely to be one of few Māori in their workplace, this an isolating and scary reality for some.

Taura further expressed concern that Western psychology workplaces display racism, further making taura questioning whether this is a workforce they wish to be part of. In Waitoki et al., (2024) it was reported that more than half of their psychologist and student (in placements or internships) participants witnessed racism in their workplace within the last 12 months. Adding that just under half of the Māori, Pacific or Asian participants had been direct recipients of racism also in the last 12 months.

Taura also raised concern about workforce preparation; and working alongside colleagues who are not culturally competent or safe. Heffernan et al., (2023) suggest that the heavily Western curriculum in university leaves mental health professionals ill-prepared for bicultural practice. Psychology training fails to prepare students for real life practice. The burden of incorporating cultural knowledge and tools left to the individual (Waitoki et al., 2024). Less than a quarter of participants in Waitoki et al., (2024) reported that their training programme did a good job in preparing them to be a culturally competent psychologist. Many are entering the workforce not equipped with the correct tools, resources and knowledge to

work with Māori. Poor integration of kaupapa Māori content and lack of cultural competence training can negatively affect the practice of both Māori and non-Māori (McAllister et al., 2018).

Tauira raised concern about the workforce preparation of their non-Māori classmates. As cultural competency is often reduced a simple tick box exercise, tauira anticipate the continuation of monocultural norms into their working career. A desktop analysis by Waitoki et al., (2023b) found that only 21.6% of psychology course descriptions stated that tauira would be taught about ‘cultural competency’ or ‘cultural safety’ or be required to develop awareness of their own cultural values and positionality.

Tauira know that their non-Māori classmates are too aspiring psychologists, so will no doubt be working alongside them and similar others in the future. If the prominence of monocultural is allowed within the university, then that is the learning they will take into practice.

Advocacy for change

Being an advocate for change is an exciting opportunity to make a real difference. But can also be intimidating, draining and hard. Within both the university and the workforce there is opportunity to advocate for a more balanced understanding and practice of psychology.

...I catch up with Pania and Tiare again, we are all going our separate ways this year. I want to do clinical, Pania wants to do Community, and Tiare wants to go into Behavioural psych. We chat about our futures, all feeling a bit worried about where we will end up. We speak about standing up for ourselves as we part ways, Pania is really good at that. She says to us...
...think about what you're being taught and staying grounded to who you are, like, the stuff that you're learning isn't necessarily going to align with your reality...But also, I'd stay

hopeful, you know, I don't think that it's good to have an attitude that things will always stay like this...

..Tiare adds...

...do what you're comfortable doing. If you want to be an advocate there's definitely space for change...there are going to be people that support you anyways, because there's still plenty of Māori Staff there's still plenty of staff within psychology that still support like kaupapa Māori aspirations...

...I feel a little better...

Tauira were able to recognise that it is possible to be critical of the Western dominance and take only from it what is relevant. This protecting students from being caught up in frustration with systemic issues outside of their responsibilities. The above student offers advice for future students, noting that while there is space for advocacy in the university be mindful of one's own boundaries and limits.

Being students places tauira in a less powerful position in comparison to the staff members and academics they would need to raise their concerns with. This can make advocating for change an intimidating task. Speaking up puts tauira at a perceived risk of being treated differently (often negatively) or having their grades impacted. Many tauira have already experienced uncomfortable moments where they are required to give a cultural perspective due to being one of the only Māori in the room. Expecting minority students to represent their entire culture is a culturally unsafe option (Curtis et al., 2015). Previous experiences like this can be discouraging for students to want to advocate further for change. It is not uncommon for tauira to prefer to stay quiet rather than oppose the thoughts of the group.

There is argument from Māori academics that meaningful change must be led by Māori, centred on Māori and visible (Smith, 1999; as cited in Waitoki et al., 2023b). This

posing an opportunity for tauira Māori to be meaningful change agents in psychology. Again though it is reiterated that choice to advocacy should fit within what tauira are comfortable in doing.

Aspirations

Knowing the participants aspirations and motivations is not just a ‘nice to know’ segment but holds valuable information for how to support Māori student success and retention. Being able to tap into the important underlying reasons that Māori remain in psychology, despite a range of challenges along the way, could be helpful in adapting the way in which universities teach, support and guide Māori students to success within psychology.

Although all motivated for different reasons, one of the biggest motivators for tauira was to better their own whānau. Seeking knowledge, understanding, tools and resources to help one’s own whānau was voiced by many. As repeated throughout this research, Māori are the biggest service users of mental health within Aotearoa, so there is no surprise that the tauira bring their own experience of mental health to the classroom.

...despite the hard times along the way I remember why I started this journey. I remember that I need..

...to complete my degree, not just for myself but I also had family members who suffer from mental health...

Tauira hold tight to their motivations, knowing that when they come out the other side of training, they will be able to help their own whānau. Individuals involved in research by Williams (2011) believed that attending university could change the lives of the wider whānau. Understanding the education system, knowledge attainment, role modelling, empowerment, economic security and financial gain were positive outcomes from attending university. Further, many participants emphasised the importance in being able to support their tamariki into university and showing them that it was possible to succeed.

Schwab (1996) found that it is not uncommon for indigenous people to pursue education in order to help their own people. Heard loud and clear throughout this research was the desire to help Māori. While helping Māori is not a task confined to psychology, it is the field our taira have chosen, so supporting them all the way to registration is the best way universities can support that dream.

...as reflect more about why I'm here, I know I want to help Māori. I realise I now have..
...an aspiration to make a difference for Māori...I definitely get very passion about it....

Taira in this study were excited at the idea that they would be able to utilise their education to serve their community. As mentioned throughout the entirety of this work by taira, Māori content, knowledge, skills and tools are not sufficiently taught in the degree. Both Māori and non-Māori are being sent out into the workforce ill-prepared. Knowing many Māori intend to work with their own people, and also the statistics outlining Māori need the most help in Aotearoa, it further supports the need for increased Māori specific learning.

Additionally, taira want to bring their psychology skills and knowledge back to their hometowns to serve their own iwi. In particular those raised in, or currently living in lower socioeconomic towns want to be accessible to Māori in need. High fees and long waitlists often stop Māori from receiving the help they need. With low numbers of Māori psychologists in general, that makes accessing support from a Māori psychologist even more inaccessible. Research into Aotearoa New Zealand healthcare highlights that low income whānau often aren't seen until late due to financial issues, transportations challenges or practical issues such as work leave or childcare (Graham & Masters-Awatere, 2020).

Finally, some taira voiced the importance of contributing to the future of Māori psychology. This achievable through registration as a psychologist, the support and development of kaupapa Māori mental health services, advocacy for change, contribution to

research, critical absorption of mainstream research and role modelling success to future tauira.

...not only do I want to help Māori clients, but I just hope to make a meaningful contribution to psychology in general. I want to see more Māori knowledge and tools utilized, I want to be a part of Māori research, I want to work in services that support te ao Māori, I want to see more Māori faces in the field...

...I want to see more Māori psychology students be given the tools and the means to succeed all the way through to the graduate level...I want to see them succeed...

If Māori student success is appropriately supported there is a greater chance of Māori registering as psychologists and moving into spaces where they can make contributions to, and meaningful change within Psychology.

Summary

In summary, it is very important to be aware of the thoughts and concerns that Māori experience in the later years of their education. Tauira have valid concerns, that can affect their retention, risking the loss of potential future Māori psychologists. It would be wise for the university to address these concerns to ensure Māori are seen through to the end. Māori have amazing aspirations, and more support should be applied to ensure their dreams come to fruition.

Chapter 9: Concluding Thoughts

9.1: Discussion

Māori educational success or progress is often measured on how well Māori fit within the Western system. Māori who are able to access, participate in and achieve in the Western system are seen as successful. But Māori want more than that, they want to be a part of education systems that fit their worldview, one where their knowledge, language and cultural aspirations are at the forefront (Smith, 2017).

To achieve this some decolonisation work is needed. Smith (2005) talks about two approaches to decolonisation. First the culturalist approach, whereby space is created for the inclusion and prioritization of Māori language, tikanga, mātauranga and culture. Second, the structuralist approach that explores the ways in which structures institutes and systems invalidate, oppress and exclude the approaches of the culturist. It is acknowledged that the culturist is unable to do work on their own, and rather a combination of both is the answer to seeing real decolonisation work done (Smith, 2005; as cited in Moko-Painting et al., 2023).

The findings of this thesis indicate the decolonising work such as what is being suggested above is important and necessary.

Key ideas

This research sought to explore the experience of Māori students enrolled in the School of Psychology at The Univeristy of Waikato. Much like previous similar pieces of work (McAllister et al., 2018; MacLennan et al., 2013; Masters & Levy, 1995; Hunt et al., 2001), there is much work to be done to improve outcomes for Māori students. Kimai's story highlighted three key areas of interest.

First, discussions related to *existing within a Western environment* revealed a clear lack of belonging for most taura. Low representation of other Māori students and staff implicated students' ability to integrate within the system, often resulting in students leaving their culture at the door in order to be successful. This isolation causes many taura to assimilate to the norms and prohibits them from flourishing within their own cultural identity. This supported by the literature that sees minority students forgoing parts of their identity to fit the Western norm (Zepke et al., 2003). Additionally, taura Māori aren't afforded the opportunity to engage and connect with Māori staff, whom would make excellent role models (Curtis et al., 2015.) Further adding to a lack of belonging was the *absence of structural whanaungatanga*. Whanaungatanga, arguably the most important value in te ao Māori is more often than not

dismissed within the structures of the university. This often meant tauira were forced to create their own sense of whanaungatanga, find their own people, essentially create their own village.

Kōrero further explored the Western focused learning experience. This highlighted the *non-engaging* nature of current teaching methods and how this is generally an unhelpful for Māori academic success. Lecture style learning, limited opportunities to discuss with one another, lack of real life examples and a reliance on reading all showed to be less helpful methods of learning for Māori. Rather Māori find non-lecture style, discussion based learning as helpful (Curtis et al., 2011). Major concerns around *content relevancy* were also raised. The dominance of Western knowledge, accompanied with the absence, invalidation and misuse of Māori content was a serious problem for most participants. Tauira were often unable to connect to the learning as it was unrepresentative of their lived experience and knowledge. This was proposed as a form of epistemic racism as Māori knowledge was marginalized while Western content was made superior (Cram et. al., 2018). In contrast *Kaupapa Māori based papers* were praised for appropriate inclusion of te ao Māori and mātauranga Māori, and overall creating a learning experience better aligned with Māori students. In these spaces tauira were shown a learning style that was far more conducive to their success, something they want more of. Māori need to see their cultural experiences, values and traditions within their learning to succeed (Bishop, 2002, as cited in Gorinski & Abernethy, 2007). Finally, the prioritization of theoretical science-based learning over the teaching and inclusion of practical elements came as a surprise and consequently a concern for tauira Māori, this a common occurrence supported by wider literature (Waiari et al., 2023). As naturally relational people, Māori found the lack of practical elements as a challenge to learning, a risk for student retention and also raised concern around appropriate workforce preparation.

The second key area of interest highlighted the *Support System Realities* as taurira navigate challenges and barriers to their university success. First to be discussed is the realities of *Univeristy Supports*. Reflections on *Kaupapa Māori Tutorials* indicated that there is room for improvement to ensure good outcomes for Māori. Current KMT's lack enough inclusion of te ao Māori, this unfortunately creating risk of further Western dominance. While participants concur that the space should be not bound to one ethnicity (Māori), it should at least be space fit for Māori. Previous research saw KMT's as desirable (Curtis et al., 2012; McAllister et al., 2018) so it is important that efforts are made to improve KMT's and regain that desirability. Shifting next to *Māori specific supports*, such as Te Aka Matua, discussion revealed that despite positive feedback (such as positive relationships, knowledge sharing and pathway support) for those who have utilized the service, many of our taurira face barriers to access. Simple lack of awareness was noted as a prominent barrier to accessing the service, with students adding that online communication and recruitment is often ineffective. Another key barrier to accessing Māori specific supports was fear of not 'being Māori enough.' For many taurira, they have concern that they don't have enough knowledge in te ao Māori to engage with services, often this making taurira feel as though they are an outside to both worlds (te ao Māori and te ao Pākehā). This is a common occurrence also reflected in other literature (Borell, 2005). Next, the benefits of a *mentorship* or a tuakana-teina system was highlighted. Mentorship is a supportive tool that has been utilized to increase indigenous student retention (Anonson et al., 2008). As mentioned, existing within a Western environment can be alienating experience, making connections like crucial for student success. Benefits of mentorship included relationship and friendship building, academic and practical support, reciprocal learning and having a safe person to confide in. Each of these benefits have value on their own, but more importantly they create a supported journey for taurira Māori and can have a positive impact on Māori student retention. Finally, *online*

learning was recognised as a supportive system for taura Māori. Online learning allows students to balance academic requirements with their life and whānau responsibilities (Stone & O'Shea, 2019). For Māori, whānau obligations can consume much of their time and energy, so being able to attend lectures virtually, and at flexible times enables Māori to be able to attend university. Although online was spoken about in a positive light, it was also recognised being quite disconnected. As emphasised throughout the entirety of this thesis, connection and relationships are highly valuable in Māori culture, so disconnection due to online learning can be an issue for Māori students.

Māori students, like all other students, bring with them a variety of life and home obligations. This study found that realistically, *home environment* tends to add more pressure to academic obligations, despite having a supportive whānau (Theodore et. al., 2017). One of the biggest issues raised was how to balance whānau responsibilities with academic work. As Māori often exist within an intergenerational family system, responsibilities like childcare, taking elderly parents to appointments or tangihanga often are prioritized over university work. Culturally, this is appropriate but can hinder on academic success. Additionally, many of our participants were mature, thus only adding to the list of responsibilities that come with later stages of life. Generally, the university and its staff members are inflexible and adhere to rigid guidelines when students are seeking flexibility around coursework (i.e. extensions). This was raised as an issue for many taura, who simply can't step away from their whānau obligations. For many, prioritising the university over whānau can be perceived as selfish, this heaviness weighing on taura as they attempt to balance both worlds. Adding to this pressure, is often a misunderstanding from whānau members, as to what work is required for university success and what value a University degree holds. Unfortunately, this can be an invalidated experience for students, some of whom are already feeling the pressure for pursuing an individual goal at the expense of their whānau. Although it may be a difficult

balancing act, taurira still acknowledge their whānau as a great source of motivation and for many, their whānau is the main reason they are on this journey. Finally, it was important to consider *finances*. Pursuing higher education comes at a cost. Further it is often a substantial burden and risk (Oleksiyenko & Tierney, 2018). For Māori this can be particularly challenging as Māori are often overrepresented in lower socio-economic communities and members of the precariat. Deciding to pursue education therefore can be a challenging decision, that not only effects the individual, but often their wider whānau too. This highlights the need for financial support for Māori students to mitigate some of financial pressures associated with being a university student.

The final key area of interest focused on challenges and aspirations for taurira Māori navigating the *transitional journey to becoming a psychologist*. One of the biggest concerns raised was students unfamiliar of the *pathways* to becoming a psychologist. *Pathway confusion* was identified throughout all year's levels, with majority of students being confused and unsure on the literal steps it takes to register as a psychologist. Limited and unhelpful opportunities to attain such knowledge was an issue for students. A separate but related issue also arose for those nearing postgraduate studies. Finding a suitable supervisor who aligns well taurira Māori, can be challenging due lack of previous relationships and limited access to Māori academic staff. Finding a suitable supervisor though is important as students who have a supportive relationship with their supervisor tend to more engaged, satisfied and productive in their work (Bruce et al., 2008). This combination of challenges segways into emotional strife. Taurira reported feeling anxious and stressed as to how the were meant to pursue their dream. Naturally, *access to support* was then discussed. Many taurira sought guidance around pathways, but this came in the form of unhelpful, unclear online documents. As Māori tend to favour face to face interaction, being provided only online support was an issue for most. Feeling as though they had to knock down doors just to get

simple information, raised awareness of just important it is to have Māori in psychology. Therefore, *equity pathways for programmes* became an important topic. The idea of targeted admission schemes has recently been supported by Waiktoki et al., (2024). Taurira know there is a lack of Māori psychologists in Aotearoa New Zealand and that student retention is an important step towards remedying that. Affirmative action was suggested to ensure Māori opportunities to succeed in university are equitable.

Despite the focus of this research being on the university experience, instinctively conversations drifted into what is to come when taurira enter the workforce. *Highlighting the dreams* and aspirations of taurira, also raised concerns in relational to *practice. Working within Western systems* concerns taurira, as they know they are facing another monocultural system. Many of the challenges they experience in university relate to western dominance are likely to persist into practice. This can be disheartening for taurira and can affect student retention. Facing a monocultural system also raised red flags as to the cultural competency and cultural safety that exists with the mental health system. This concern is shared by Heffernan et al., (2023), who concur that the heavy reliance on Western curriculum leaves mental health professional ill-prepared for practice in Aotearoa. Taurira share concern that not everyone is being equipped with that tools and knowledge to practice biculturally and fear having to work in teams that don't align with own practice. This led some taurira to reflect upon *advocation for change*. It is clear that change needs to occur across the psychology field and some taurira noted that being in university create opportunities to advocate for said change. Taurira warned though that advocation can be draining, and to only give what you can. Many power dynamics exist within the university which can impact a student's ability or willingness to speak up about issues. And expecting taurira Māori to speak up on behalf of their entire culture is unsafe (Smith, 1999; as cited in Waitoki et al., 2023b). Regardless, it should only be

a choice to advocate for change and rather the real responsibility for change should lie with system.

Finally, and on a positive note, the *aspirations* of Māori students were highlighted. As a collective culture, it is not surprising that most of the taurira are pursuing a degree in psychology for the betterment of others. First, taurira hope to understand their own whānau better. Many come with lived experience of whānau members with mental health. Being able to understand and help their whānau has been a key motivator for many participants. Second, taurira want to improve the health of Māori people. Throughout university, we are reminded of the over presentation of Māori in mental health services and that reality that most are met with inadequate (at least culturally) care (Te Hiringa Mahara, 2024; Te Whatu Ora, 2023). Finally, taurira aspire to improve the field of psychology. Whether it be through change advocacy, practice or role modelling, many hope to make a positive contribution to psychology as a whole. It is important to understand the dreams and aspirations of taurira Māori to better shape the university journey to suit these outcomes. Being able to connect the academic work to one's future goals can help student retention, resulting in more Māori becoming psychologists.

...I'm finished now, what a journey that was. The ups and downs were worth it. I've found a few fellow Māori colleagues who just get it, and that feels great. My confidence is growing I have lots of passion and knowledge to share. I'm proud that I did it. Change is slow but being brave enough to advocate for it is important. There are changes I hope for within the School of Psychology. A friend of mine is starting at Waikato next year with similar aspirations to mine. This is what I hope for her...

9.2 Reflection and Recommendations

As intended, it is now time to reflect back on the findings of McAllister et al., (2018) in their evaluation of kaupapa Māori psychology at the University of Waikato in comparison

to the current findings. Not surprisingly, many if not all of the same issues persist. Therefore the recommendations made in this work are very closely related to the previous work. The following will make new recommendations, comparing with and expanding upon the previous recommendations.

Recommendation 1: Create a bicultural learning experience

In 2018, three recommendations were made in relation to bicultural learning, that being a) include more bicultural knowledge in paper content b) incorporate cultural practices into teaching c) include workforce preparation.

In 2025, this recommendation refers to the appropriate implementation of Māori (and indigenous) content, appropriate use of tikanga within the classes, use of real life examples and practical application (in relation to working with Māori).

Recommendation 2: Create a culturally affirming environment

In 2018, three recommendations were made in relation to environment enhancement, that being a) invite a kaumatua on site b) create a whānau space c) incorporate more Māori culture visually on campus.

In 2025, this recommendation refers to the provision of opportunities for Māori to connect with other Māori, creation of Māori spaces, greater reflection of Māori realities in course work and inclusion of Māori practices in classes.

Recommendation 3: Recruit, train and retain staff capable of delivering kaupapa Māori concepts appropriately.

In 2018, three recommendations were made related to staff capability, that being a) recruit more Māori staff, b) Implement Kaupapa Māori training for staff, c) Appoint a cultural supervisor.

In 2025, this recommendation refers to the recruitment and employment of Māori more staff, provision of greater professional development opportunities for non-Māori staff,

appointment of a cultural advisor to support staff in incorporating kaupapa Māori concepts and protection of inappropriate cultural labour placed on usual Māori staff.

Recommendation 4: Provide appropriate resourcing, funding and training for Māori support services

In 2018, four recommendations were made in relation to Māori support services, that being a) Further develop kaupapa Māori tutorials b) re-establish the kaupapa Māori Student Advisor position, c) Increase the marketing of all Māori services within FASS (DALPSS) and the school of Psychology, d) allocate funding to all Māori support services

In 2025, this recommendation refers to providing sufficient resources, funding and training for Māori support services such as Kaupapa Māori tutorials and Te Aka Matua, raising awareness of support systems through alternative methods of recruitment (requiring funding to allow to do so) and the implementation of a tuakana-teina or mentoring systems across all year levels and programmes.

Recommendation 6: Support Māori realities

In 2018, one recommendation was made in relation to support Māori realities, that being a) offer scholarships to alleviate financial barriers.

In 2025, this recommendation refers to the creation of Māori specific scholarships, understanding and academic flexibility for students managing whānau obligations and the continuation of online learning options.

Recommendation 6: Support students in navigating psychology pathways

In 2018, one recommendation was made in relation to psychology pathways, that being a) implement discussion of psychology pathways.

In 2025, This recommendation refers to providing clarity around pathways to registration as a psychologist, providing multiple (across all year levels) opportunities to discuss pathways, revision of unclear pathway information in online documents, providing

face-to-face support from a designated staff member and creation of equitable pathways for Māori students.

9.3 Limitations and Future Directions

As this thesis was a part of the wider ‘Poipoia te kākano hei puāwai: nurturing Māori pathways through Psychology’ some limitations were noted. Despite being semi structured, questions were established for the Poipoia project. If this thesis was constructed outside of the wider project, questions may have been different and more specific to issues and experiences had on the Hamilton campus.

At a simple level, if given the opportunity to expand this research, the inclusions of staff perspective, Pacifica experiences, non-Māori comparisons and greater numbers of participants would provide great additional data.

At a more ambitious level, future research could investigate the experience of Māori psychology students across all universities, and even across different disciplines. Research could also take a longitudinal angle, following and supporting taurira from the entrance of psychology into practice.

9.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, there is ample evidence that psychology education needs to change in order to support the success of Māori students. Many of the same issues have persisted over decades. With so much literature pointing out the same challenges, there is no reason that change shouldn't be actioned right away. The School of Psychology and the wider University of Waikato have a great opportunity to lead the way in supporting Māori psychology students to success by taking into consideration the recommendations made in this thesis and also the many recommendations made the many of us who are interested in seeing Māori students succeed.

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