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**Mai i Te Kore, Ki Te Pō, Ki Te Ao Mārama: He Kohinga Pūrākau
Hauora o Ngā Kaumātua Māori, Māori Elders Health and Wellbeing
Stories in Life Transitions**

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By

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ABSTRACT

Introduction

New Zealand's general population is ageing. Kaumātua (Māori elders) only make up approximately 3.1 percent of the total population and yet, they are disproportionately overrepresented in poor health, wellbeing and ageing statistics. However, this is a one-sided story and the focus of a deficit approach. There is a strong need for a strength-based approach where kaumātua voices of problem-solving and resilience related to ageing and the changes it presents, are heard. The purpose of this study is to identify and share those voices and to respond to the call from Māori academics to apply pūrākau as an alternative to Western narrative approaches. Through a pūrākau approach, this thesis sought to answer three key research questions:

- 1) What are the cultural and communication features of the kaumātua teina narratives?*
- 2) What are the cultural and communication characteristics of the kaumātua tuakana conversational styles? and*
- 3) What is the nature of the kaumātua journeys in how the stories unfold, and relationships develop?*

Methods

This study analyses pūrākau from the Kaumātua Mana Motuhake (KMM) collaboration project between the University of Waikato and the Rauawaawa Kaumātua Charitable Trust in Hamilton, Aotearoa New Zealand. The KMM project sought to enhance kaumātua wellbeing during life changes such as losses of licence, independence or spouse, health changes and retirement through a peer-support tuakana-teina programme. The KMM team implemented a tuakana-teina peer support programme where kaumātua (n= 121) engaged in up to three conversations as kaumātua tuakana-teina pairs. The conversations involved exploring the

life changes the teina chose with the tuakana guiding the conversations and sharing potential services to help with the changes.

This thesis analysed 30 kaumātua conversations in 10 tuakana-teina pairs to tell a strengths-based story of health and wellbeing. Taking a Kaupapa Māori approach, the research prioritised, privileged and foregrounded Māori and Indigenous epistemology, ontology, and axiology. A pūrākau-grounded analysis approach was developed and applied to the conversations.

Findings

Related to the first research question, the analysis revealed kaumātua narratives that spoke to stories about adversity, turning points, independence and resilience. Regarding the second research question, the study identified key cultural and communicational characteristics kaumātua tuakana used, speaking with words of kinship and reciprocation, words of ignition and guidance, and words of empathy and affirmation. Pertaining to the third research question, the analysis illustrated conversational and relational journey types kaumātua pairs travelled, consisting of conversations that went direct to topics, detours that became defining moments, small tiki tours that came back to the topic, stories that were revisited, and hospitality becoming defining moments.

Conclusions

The findings compiled weave a collective tapestry of kaumātua teina pūrākau, kaumātua tuakana communication styles, and kaumātua conversational and relational journeys. Kaumātua teina have voiced a pūrākau for us to understand inter-generational trauma and how cultural connection liberated their wellbeing. Kaumātua tuakana have composed a script of communication protocols emphasising connection and relationship development essential to upholding tikanga (practices, principles, communications). The paired kaumātua journeys have drawn a signposted road map that highlighted journey types, emphasising

reciprocity in conversing, learning, guiding, connecting, developing, strengthening and enhancing communications, relationships, and wellbeing

Implications

Via kaumātua conversations, invaluable understandings into Māori and Indigenous wellbeing, ageing and development scholarship are offered, strengthening transformation, leadership and resilience theories. Pūrākau and whanaungatanga (relationships) methodologies are advocated for and culturally responsive research is promoted. Health, wellbeing and ageing programme development, policy and service delivery can be practically informed, accentuating mentorship, intergenerational initiatives, and culturally appropriate kaumātua support. Together, the findings can cultivate community wellbeing and nurture cultural continuity.

MIHI

“Kia hora te marino, kia whakapapa pounamu te moana, kia tere te kārohirohi i mua i tō tātou huarahi.”

“Tihei mauri ora mai i te Wheiao, ki Te Ao Mārama.”

Ngā mihi māhaki ki te Kāhui Āriki, tō mātou Kuini, a Ngā Wai Hono i te Pō me tōna whānau.

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Nō reira, mā te aroha noa o tō tātou kaihanga, tātou katoa e manaaki, e tiaki i ngā wā katoa.

Mauri Ora.

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CHAPTER ONE

Poipoia Te Kākano, Kia Puāwai - Introduction

I begin this thesis with the first verse of a poem that I wrote throughout my doctoral journey, which symbolises life and its transitions and reflects this study. This poem is titled: *Pito is the Thread to First Feed Us Life*. In the Māori language, pito refers to our belly button and the umbilical cord that connects us to our mother, and the cord that provides the feeding highway that nourishes and sustains us as we develop in the womb.

Pito is the thread to first feed us life.

A small seed that sits dormant in the hold of Te Po (the world of darkness or becoming)

A tiny traveller in search of a haven to grow.

The small seed in sight, the tiny traveller ignites.

The two collide, cause an explosion

Where the murmurs of our tūpuna (ancestors) echoed afar

Are heard through the chambers of heart and aroha (love)

Aroha and explosion illuminate the path to new life

We embrace and grow in the warmth of creation.....

The title of this first chapter, “*poipoia te kākano kia puāwai*” (Toki et al., 2022), which is a whakataukī Māori (Māori proverb) that translates to “*nurture the seed and it will blossom.*” This whakataukī represents the introduction and thesis in three ways. First, this research is reflected in this proverb in that it started as an idea (“te kākano – the seed”) and developed into a project outcome (“te puāwai – the blossom”). Second, the kaumātua (older Māori) participants of this study are echoed in this whakataukī in that human life begins as an egg (seed) and develops via multiple life transitions to become a knowledgeable kaumātua (“te puāwai – the blossom”). Third, this chapter reverberates in this proverb in that the chapter (seed) is the starting point for this written work, which is followed

by multiple chapters that produce and complete this thesis (“te puāwai – the blossom”). This whakataukī Māori emphasises that all human seeds have the potential to grow and develop to become knowledgeable and wise. The chapter introduces this doctoral thesis with a story theme that is framed to reflect the Māori world view and attempts to present and (re)tell this chapter and thesis like a pūrākau (story). This chapter introduces the research topic, research rationale, and research significance, followed by the background which includes the Māori cultural view of health and colonial stories. Next is the story about my personal connection to and within this research, followed by the preface in which this thesis is culturally premised, and the ageing contextual story of the research. The chapter ends with the thesis story, which provides a description of each thesis chapter.

The Project Story

There are calls for uniquely Māori research that steers away from Western paradigms and foregrounds Māori and Indigenous concepts (Lee, 2005; Woodhouse, 2019). There is a directive for research that not only includes Māori and Indigenous researchers but also allows them to lead (Williams & Marlin, 2022). There is a summons for research that not only hears kaumātua, but prioritises and privileges kaumātua voices (Dawes et al., 2022). My thesis follows that call and this section details the following: 1) the research topic story; 2) the research rationale story; and 3) the research significance story.

The Research Topic Story

This doctoral research is connected to an Ageing Well National Science Challenge funded project: Kaumātua Mana Motuhake (KMM): Kaumātua managing life-transitions through tuakana-teina/peer education. The project sought to address the mana motuhake (identity, autonomy) of kaumātua (older Māori aged 55 or older) within an urban,

kaumātua governed and led, community-based organisation. The KMM project was a collaboration between the University of Waikato's Management School and Faculty of Māori and Indigenous Studies, and the Rauawaawa Kaumātua Charitable Trust (Rauawaawa). The Rauawaawa is an organisation that aims to enhance the quality of life and physical, mental, social and spiritual health and wellbeing of kaumātua in Kirikiriroa (Hamilton) Aotearoa New Zealand. They provide a range of health, social and cultural services consistent with their mission of being a korowai (cloak) for holistic kaumātua wellbeing. They are recognised as a leader in kaumātua services across Aotearoa. The funded research investigated the health outcomes of a tuakana-teina/peer-education model in relation to wellness, social connectedness, life enhancement, independence, in response to significant life transitions. Such transitions included: retirement, change in health conditions, loss of driver license, loss of spouse, and loss of independence.

My research aimed to retell the stories of selected kaumātua who participated in the wider KMM project. By reclaiming and reconnecting to the traditional Māori story practice of pūrākau or storytelling. I aimed to not only tell the experiences, perspectives, and knowledge of kaumātua going through life transitions, but also to honour their stories and their realities via our own (Māori) pūrākau way of traditional storytelling. Further to this, I aimed to examine how the kaumātua stories unfolded and relationships developed as they journeyed through the conversations within the KMM project. Moreover, I hoped to identify any key communication and cultural features that may provide valuable insight as to how a programme like KMM works.

But first, it is important to provide some context by way of understanding the story that is the poor Māori statistical health story from the perspective of Māori as Indigenous colonised peoples. The first part of the statistical health story is the social determinants story. Social determinants can be viewed as negative contributors to current health and ageing inequities for Māori which can include unemployment, poor housing, poor education, and or socioeconomic status (World Health Organisation,

2024). Many significant external and environmental factors influence social determinants of Māori and Indigenous health and ageing. Such factors can shape a person's health and wellbeing, and include, colonisation, policy, political structures, and or social norms.

Aotearoa New Zealand's Māori population is growing. Statistics New Zealand's (2024a) estimate the overall Māori population to be 19.6 percent of the total national population (Statistics NZ., 2023). Kaumātua (older Māori) aged 65-years-plus make up approximately 7.8 percent of the total Māori population (Statistics NZ, 2023). This is significantly lower than for the total population aged 65-years-plus which is 17 percent (Statistics New Zealand, 2024b). However, Māori are still over-represented in the nation's negative health and ageing statistics compared with the general population.

Current statistics of poor ageing, health and wellbeing, among Māori, are alarming. The life expectancy with disability and without disability for Māori is lower than for non-Māori aged 65-years- plus. The life expectancy of Māori males without disability is 80.4 years and with disability is 70.5 years, compared to 84.1 years and 75.6 years respectively for non-Māori males (Ministry of Health, 2024). These statistics show that tāne Māori (Māori men) live approximately five years shorter in old age than non-Māori men. The life expectancy of Māori females without disability is 82.5 years and with disability is 74.4 years, compared to 86.6 years and 75.7 years respectively for non-Māori females (Ministry of Health, 2013). These statistics show that Māori women live approximately four years shorter in old age than non-Māori women.

Moreover, according to Te Whatu Ora (2024), many health conditions among Māori 50 years are higher than that of non-Māori. For example, the rates among Māori 50 years and over are 1.3 times higher for cancer, 1.6 times higher for heart disease, 1.7 times higher for obesity, and 1.2 times higher for chronic pain and arthritis than non-Māori; and the rate for unmet needs for General Practitioner visits, due to cost, is 1.8 times higher than non-Māori (Te Whatu Ora). Thus, there is agreement that such statistics present clear and significant health disparities between Māori and

non-Māori (Crengle et al., 2022; Ministry of Health, 2024; Morunga et al., 2024; Rahiri et al., 2024).

Determinants of health are the multiple factors that influence one's health and wellbeing both negatively and positively. Such determinants include environmental, social, political and economic factors that can significantly contribute to health inequities (World Health Organisation, 2024). Health disparities between Māori and non-Māori populations, where Māori experience sheer inequities in health outcomes, from deeply rooted social health determinants which negatively impact Māori wellbeing. In Aotearoa New Zealand, Woodhouse and Blakely (2014) pointed out that poor education, unemployment, unhealthy housing, and low-income were key determinants affecting Māori more severely compared to non-Māori. Recent studies note that these factors are interrelated and notably result in poorer physical and mental health outcomes for Māori spanning generations (Brown & Bryder, 2023; Ministry of Health, 2024).

Poor education is one associated determinant with poorer health outcomes among Māori. Māori experience educational disadvantage more so than non-Māori. The rate of Māori leaving high school without a National Certificate in Education Achievement (NCEA) qualification is approximately 42 percent, which is double that of non-Māori at 22 percent (Hogarth & Rapata-Hanning, 2018). Similarly, the rate of Māori (aged 25–64) with no formal qualifications is approximately 27 percent, which is almost twice the rate as non-Māori at 15 percent (Ministry of Education, 2020). For Māori, education disadvantage can inhibit employment opportunity and lessen effective healthcare system navigation capability, which can lead to poorer health literacy and limited health access for Māori.

Unemployment is another contributing factor to health disparities for Māori. Marriott and Alinaghi (2021) claim that differences in unemployment rates between Māori and non-Māori, over the last 30 years plus, continue. Of particular concern is the unemployment rate of Māori 15 – 24-year-olds, which was 8.1 percent, twice that of non-Māori at 4.1 percent (Stats NZ, 2020). Unemployment contributes to Māori with serious health and wellbeing implications that negatively impact household

income, increase risks of mental-related illnesses, and escalate substance addiction (Te Pou, 2023). In short, low income contributes to poorer health for Māori because low income often puts people into poverty, and for Māori, rates of poverty are double that of non-Māori (van Meijl, 2020). Harris et al. (2019) argue that rates of unmet healthcare needs were higher for Māori adults than non-Māori at 39 percent and 28 percent for Māori children, with cost related factors being the most significant barrier to accessing health care and services.

Unhealthy housing is another critical determinant that impacts Māori health and wellbeing. Kukutai et al. (2018) claimed that the most significant and closely related factor to house deprivation is income inadequacy. Kukutai et al. reported that households with 'not enough' income were 14 percent most likely to suffer two plus housing issues than those with 'enough income.' Rates of poor housing incidences, low access to safe and secure quality housing, inadequate home heating, and house overcrowding are higher for Māori than non-Māori and contribute to Māori health disparities that see higher rates of respiratory issues, mental health problems, and injuries (Te Whatu Ora, 2024).

The poor health statistics of Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand are underpinned by socioeconomic determinants of health. What is evident is that the health inequities between Māori and non-Māori is clear. These disparities are influenced by higher rates of poorer education, unemployment, unhealthy housing, and lower income, which directly and indirectly impacts the health and wellbeing of Māori cumulatively effecting their life span. This poor health story of Māori paints a bleak picture of the Māori health status. This story validates Māori health research. A strengths-based research approach rejects a logic of inequity. However, we cannot ignore the disparities, diminish the impacts, but rather, acknowledge the struggle endured by Māori and focus on the strengths of kaumātua and the non-deficit model of kaumātua wellbeing.

As Axelsson et al. (2016) point out, literature concerning colonisation (particularly the Anglo-settler colonialism in Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and the United States) and its connection to

inequitable health outcomes for Māori and other Indigenous peoples is plenty. Although Indigenous health experiences vary across the globe, time, and place, health inequities and their pathways to poorer health outcomes are consistent stories. This aspect of the background is discussed later in The Māori View of Colonisation Story section.

The Research Rationale Story

Our kaumātua may be “elderly” (a commonly used, pejorative term for older people) but they are enthusiastic, vulnerable but valuable, lonely but loved, frail but fun, inaudible but intelligent, dependent but determined. Much of the focus on kaumātua research concentrates alarmingly on ill-health and poor ageing data (Crengle et al., 2022; Ministry of Health, 2024; Morunga et al., 2024; Rahiri et al., 2024), and the significant implications for individual, economic, social and cultural costs (Brown & Bryder, 2023; Cram et al., 2019). Health inequities between kaumātua and non-Māori older people in terms of poor ageing and health outcomes is concerning (Blakely et al., 2004; Dawes, 2022; Davis et al., 2006; Ministry of Health & University of Otago, 2006; Oetzel, Zhang, Nock, Meha, et al., 2023). However, there are calls to steer the notion of ageing away from the deficit model, and public discourse that assumes older people are vulnerable, dependent, limited (physically), and isolated (Edwards, 2010; Hokowhitu et al., 2020).

The needs and care of kaumātua disproportionately falls on whānau Māori (Māori extended family) and their communities. Whānau can struggle or fail to navigate the health system, exposing numerous damaging factors including social isolation, poor health outcomes, and poor quality of life (Dawes et al., 2022; Dyall et al., 2014; Reweti, 2023; Wham et al., 2015). In addition to these factors, significant life changes occur where kaumātua and other older people are faced with the loss of a spouse, driver’s licence, independence, or a change in health condition/s, or retirement (Hayman et al., 2012; Kenig et al., 2014; Ministry of Health, 2025; Oetzel et al., 2024). Successful navigation of later life challenges and changes depends on being able to manage health service systems and socio-economic and emotional

factors, through often heavily relying on family (Breheny, Stevenson, & Ning, 2025; Fowler et al., 2015; Laumatia-Paki, 2021; Oetzel et al., 2015a; Oetzel et al., 2015b). However, reliance on whānau, community organisations, and health service systems can lead kaumātua to feel like a burden on others. There is a strong need for kaumātua supports by and for kaumātua as they do not want to impinge on their whānau (Oetzel et al., 2020).

To understand the support and wellbeing needs of kaumātua in the context of ageing and life transitions in later life, it is critical to explore innovative, original, unique, and Māori approaches. There is a paucity of Indigenous evidence and strengths-based health-promotion interventions (Walters et al., 2020) that are led, designed, developed, and implemented by kaumātua, for kaumātua, and with kaumātua. For example, tuakana-teina or the Māori practice of experienced—in-the-experience (Winitana, 2012) or peer-education or support is one such approach. In the context of kaumātua, ageing and wellbeing, the KMM project helped to address this need. It also offered kaumātua a solution to be their own solutions. The current story of Māori health, older people, and ageing “ill health stats” and “poor ageing” emphasises a negative reality that is located within dominant medical models of health (Hikaka & Kerse, 2021; Hokowhitu, 2003; Scott, 2014). There is a huge focus on numbers; for example, how many Māori have diabetes; (e.g., Rush, et al., 2002) and how many Māori are dying from cardiovascular diseases (e.g., Riddell et al., 2007). However, numbers are only one story of health and ageing. There is solid need for another story that is kaumātua Māori driven, led and focused; a story that uses kaumātua voices to tell their own health and ageing stories (Dawes et al., 2022).

It is imperative that kaumātua become central to research to understand kaumātua perspectives of health and wellbeing in the context of ageing and life-transitions in later years. Until recently, the voice of kaumātua in research has been used conceptually (e.g. to inform health frameworks) for their knowledge of health, wellbeing, and culture (Dawes et al., 2022). There is a scarcity of personal perspectives, experiences, and accounts of kaumātua health, wellbeing and ageing in research (Dawes et

al.). Thus, returning to the tradition of pūrākau, which include cultural descriptions, accounts, and narratives, is helpful to generate understanding, knowledge and inspiration about our social, spiritual and natural worlds (Williams, 1985). The return to pūrākau supports calls to reclaim and re-indigenise the story-narrative space (Cliffe-Tautari, 2020; Lee, 2009; Stansfield, 2020; Woodhouse, 2019). My doctoral study responded to this call to extend and supplements the original KMM project.

The Research Significance Story

As Aotearoa New Zealand's birth rates decline, the ageing population increases (Health and Disability Commission, 2024). Globally, the population is also ageing, which has led to an increased interest in this ageing, vulnerable, and valuable population group of society. In Aotearoa New Zealand, the percentage of peoples aged 65-years-plus will increase from approximately 16 per cent in 2022, to 25 per cent of Aotearoa New Zealand's total population in 2048 (Statistics NZ, 2022). According to Te Whatu Ora (2024), research in Aotearoa New Zealand should focus on the health needs and experiences of older peoples; in particular, a focus to ensure better health outcomes for older people with an emphasis on ageing well (Health and Disability Commission, 2024). The significant ageing of the population only emphasises the need for research that focuses on how to better support older people as they navigate life transitions; these can include loss of spouse, loss of independence, loss of driver licence, change in health conditions, and retirement (Hayman et al. 2012; Keniget al., 2014). Such transitions maybe complex and challenging, and can contribute to physical, mental, emotional, and social changes (Hutchinson & Nimmo, 2017) that may lead older people to feel isolated and disconnected (Cohen et al., 2015).

This strengths-based, and kaumātua-led and kaumātua-focused research will help tell another side of the story to the ill health and ageing statistics of kaumātua, by showcasing and emphasising kaumātua as valuable, independent, connected, and limitless (Oetzel et al., 2019). The

broader impacts and benefits of this doctoral study include extending and strengthening the academic scholarship and communities. The impacts of this research have the potential to reach decision makers and leaders from all levels: policy-makers, social support services, health care providers, residential aged care services, Māori and kaumātua-led community organisations, and local health programme/intervention development. The possible insights and knowledges gained from the research have the potential to help better inform culturally and aged appropriate supports, services, programmes, and interventions; fairly distribute and allocate funds and recourses within aged care; improve and build the aged healthcare workforce, and more. However, most importantly, this study has the potential to offer kaumātua themselves the tools to help and support each other in later life as they experience life-changes.

The Historical Background Story

The historical cultural, social, and political-colonial background of Māori has over time presented Māori with significant and detrimental changes and challenges. Whilst the story of Māori is one of struggle, it is important to acknowledge that the story is also one of survival, strength, and resilience (Durie, 2003; Groot et al., 2011; Hodgetts, et al., 2011). Thus, this section provides 1) the cultural story; 2) the Māori view of health and wellbeing story; and 3) the colonial story.

The Cultural Story

Māori, Aotearoa New Zealand's Indigenous peoples, have a deeply grounded, longstanding, and rich culture. Māori culture stems from the creation of time and existence, which offers a fundamental understanding to Te Ao Māori (Māori worldview). Māori cosmology helps explain how Māori view existence and comprises three elemental phases. Te Korekore, the first elemental phase, signifies the big void or nothingness (Marsden, 2003); this is the starting of the Māori creation story – a state of potentiality.

Te Pō, the second elemental phase, reflects the darkness (Marsden,); this is the place in which Papatūānuku (Earth Mother) and Ranginui (Sky Father) emerge and form, birthing their many children who would become the gods of the natural world– a state of becoming. Te Ao Mārama, the third elemental phase, explodes the world of light (Marsden); this is the phase where the children of Papatūānuku (Earth Mother) and Ranginui (Sky Father) separate their parents to bring and welcome light into their world (also see Reilly, 2004). This part of the creation story is the beginning of the natural world today – a state of being. Māori cosmology and its creation story of existence suggests that life is an endless, inter-connected sequence and offers a foundational understanding to Te Ao Māori.

It is well documented that tikanga (Māori belief system) underpins Māori as a people. Thus, tikanga lays the foundation that acts as a regulatory guiding tool for Māori social structures, ethical and correct behaviours, environmental protection and sustainability (both physical and spiritual); culture, language, and history; developing the individual and collective identity; ensuring traditional customs, practices, rituals and values are upheld; and communication (Durie, 2001; Ka'ai & Higgins, 2004; Mead, 2003; Pere, 1998; Te Aho, 2007).

Using the understandings from Ka'ai and Higgins (2004) and Te Aho (2007), I categorize the key philosophies underpinning tikanga, as three spheres, to further illustrate the Māori worldview. *Te Ao whakawhanaungatanga* is the first, and relational sphere. This sphere focuses on the importance of reciprocal relationships with all living things and the environment including the spirit world; the value of tribal identity via whakapapa (genealogy); the land and its resources through gratefulness and respect; and the significance of tapu (sacredness) and noa (secularity). *Te Ao Tāngata* is the second, and peoples sphere. The peoples sphere concentrates on the acknowledgement of culture and living as Māori people; recognition of the right to live as Māori peoples; significance of living as a collective people; celebration of diversity; and importance of mana (authority over who might exercise certain rights). *Te Ao Orooro* is the third and communication sphere. The communication sphere attentions the

value of language; respect of the highest level for kaumātua as carriers of, connectors to, and communicators of knowledge, culture, histories, and language; use of time as a practice that uses the past to guide the present and future; and importance of stewardship.

In summary, the relational, people, and communication spheres jointly offer another insight and understanding of tikanga Māori. The three spheres help illustrate the grounding principles of tikanga Māori that guide, inform, shape, and develop individuals and communities, relationships with people and environments, and ethical and moral communication practices (Mead, 2003). In the context of this doctoral research, tikanga guides this study in that it enables the privileging, prioritising, and foregrounding of Māori values, concepts, and practices within the research and writing process, and moreover, centres kaumātua and their voices as the knowledge communicators.

The Māori View of Health Story

The Māori perspective on health and wellbeing is holistic in nature and interconnected in relationship. Durie (1985) argues that health is largely defined by health professionals with expertise in treating people in a state of ill health or social dysfunction. He further argues that health philosophies should not be assumed equally pertinent to all health settings and that health requires an understanding of culture. In relation to kaumātua and ageing research, Durie (2003) acknowledges that kaumātua play a crucial role in Te Ao Māori. Durie states that kaumātua also have significant roles as the holders and transmitters of cultural knowledge and histories. Kaumātua help to sustain and maintain a balance and thereby contribute to the overall health and wellbeing of the Māori collective.

Hauora (health and wellbeing) is viewed holistically by Māori in that the tinana (body), hinengaro (mind), wairua (spirit), whānau (extended family), and taiao (natural environment) are all intertwined (Cram, et al., 2003; Durie, 2003; Mark & Lyons, 2010; Pere, 1984). This holistic view encompasses an individual's physical, mental, emotional, social, cultural

and environmental wellbeing. Today, there are multiple models that help conceptualise and illustrate the Māori health and wellbeing viewpoint. Three main hauora Māori models have been conceptualised and developed in the post-colonial period. Each model is based within Kaupapa Māori (Māori cultural knowledge), reflects tikanga Māori (Ka'ai & Higgins, 2004; Te Aho, 2007), and offers a Māori perspective of hauora. Namely these models are Te Wheke which embodies an octopus (Pere, 1984); Te Whare Tapa Whā which symbolises a wharenuī (meeting house; Durie, 1985); and Te Pae Mahutonga which represents the Southern Cross Star Constellation (Durie, 2003). Each model provides several tenets that are represented by either the four pou or pillars (Te Whare Tapa Whā), the eight tentacles (Te Wheke), or the six stars (Te Pae Mahutonga). Each metaphor depicts common and different components of hauora Māori, but do not claim to be exclusive.

Whilst the models assert a Māori perspective of hauora, researchers, academics, and health practitioners, have highlighted the largely conceptual nature of hauora Māori models (Kingi, 2005). These conceptual models have been used to offer healthcare providers frameworks to understand hauora Māori and provide guidance for a culturally sensitive and ethical health service in disability (Hickey, 2006); to enhance mental health (Pitama et al. 2007); and to help with injury recovery (O'Hagan, 2012; Wyeth et al., 2013) and medical education/training (Pitama et al., 2014).

Whilst the models identify similar values related to aspects of hauora Māori, each offers a slightly different focus. Te Wheke's (Pere, 1984) eight dimensions of hauora Māori have a strong focus on whānau wellbeing; Te Whare Tapa Whā's (Durie, 1985) four dimensions of hauora offer a balanced focus on a holistic approach to healthcare; and Te Pae Mahutonga's (Durie, 2003) seven dimensions of hauora Māori primarily focus on health promotion. Whilst the models illustrate many similarities, I focus on five common elements to Māori health and wellbeing that is largely reflective of Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie, 1985) but the discussions incorporate all models. These five health and wellbeing dimensions are discussed below.

Hauora Wairuatanga, the first dimension, concerns spiritual wellbeing. The conceptualisation of wairuatanga (spiritual wellbeing), is broad and concerns relationships with self, whānau, and tangata (people), tūpuna (ancestors), religious beliefs and practices, and our external environment (Durie, 1985; 2003; Pere, 1984). All of these connect us to our past, present and future, and therefore locate wairua as a central dimension of hauora for Māori and essential to good hauora (Durie, 1985). The importance of these dimensions has been highlighted in several studies. For example, one study explored the hauora views of urban Māori (Cram et al., 2003) and another the views of healing and practices of Māori healers (Mark & Lyons, 2010). Both studies identified the high importance of wairua to good hauora, with one identifying wairua as also being connected to our environment (Mark & Lyons, 2010). These studies emphasise the significance and prevalence of wairuatanga among Māori and reflect views of wairua views from Māori perspectives (Durie, 1985; 2003; Pere, 1984).

Hauora Whanaunga, the second dimension, concerns family health and wellbeing. Like wairua, whānau is not exclusive to immediate whānau but includes extended whānau and broader social support systems (Durie, 1985; 2003; Pere, 1984). Thus, in this view whānau is kinship among immediate and extended whānau within the wider social system whereby individual and whānau hauora is indivisible. Therefore, like wairuatanga, the models propose that whānau is a vital element of hauora Māori both individually and collectively. The importance of whānau is also highlighted in several studies. For example, one study explored the views of whānau ora (family wellbeing) of 46 Māori families (Boulton & Gifford, 2014). This study identified wellbeing, happiness, a sense of belonging, identity, active participation, and support as essential elements for good family health. Findings from other studies (Cram et al., 2003; Mark & Lyons, 2010) echoed the Boulton and Gifford's findings. These studies highlight the importance of whānau in hauora Māori and are consistent with hauora Māori models.

Hauora Tinana, the third dimension, concerns physical health which is a very familiar dimension among Western health professionals (Durie, 1985). Physical health and health disparities seem to be at the forefront of

health promotion and health research in Aotearoa New Zealand (Durie, 2003) with a high concentration on Māori morbidity and mortality (Hammerton et al., 2012). Many health studies in Aotearoa New Zealand, for example, focus on obesity (Norman et al., 2021), diabetes (Mullane et al., 2022), and cardiovascular disease (Liang et al. 2024). Signal et al., (2020) argue that quantitative methodologies dominate health research overall and contend that there is a paucity of cultural and qualitative methodologies in research related to physical health. However, there is a growing interest in qualitative research relating to physical health in Aotearoa New Zealand (Sheehy et al., 2023; Te Karu et al., 2013; Walker et al., 2017). Two Aotearoa New Zealand studies that explored the views of physical health and activity of Māori found that participants understood the importance of physical activity and had a desire to be more active (Lanumata et al. 2008; Warbrick et al. 2016). The studies also reported significant barriers to physical activity that included time, family, motivation, and money.

Hauora Hinengaro, the fourth dimension, concerns mental and emotional wellbeing. In contrast with Western views of the mind as cognition, hinengaro addresses the communication of thoughts, feelings, and emotions holistically (Durie, 1985). Te Pae Mahutonga implicitly discusses the mind as mental wellbeing in terms of it being inner strength and vitality related to mauriora (life-force). However, there is debate when hinengaro is seen as a mental problem. Durie (2011) points out that Aotearoa New Zealand's mental health services have evolved significantly to incorporate Māori language, hauora views, and psychological frameworks to assess, treat, and care for Māori. This shift may be linked to an increase in the adoption of hauora Māori models. Research into the mental health of Māori has tended to focus on healthcare delivery (Durie, 1995, 1997; Johnstone & Read, 2000; Kent & Read, 2016); the prevalence of mental illness (Baxter, 2008; Johnson et al., 2012; Oakley-Browne, et al., 2006; Tapsell & Mellso, 2007); and Māori patients' (including whānau) views of mental health, services, and recovery (Gibbs et al., 2004; Johnson, et al., 2012; Lothian & Read, 2002; Tse et al., 2005). Research includes

organisational perspectives (Durie, 1995, 1997; Johnstone & Read, 2000; Kent & Read, 1998) as well as patient and whānau views, but lacks views, perspectives, and stories of kaumātua.

Hauora Whenua, which literally translates to land wellbeing, has in recent years, been added as the fifth dimension to Durie's Te Whare Tapa Wha model (Durie, 1984). *Whenua* is now evident in health research (Durie, 2006; Harris et al., 2023; Healthy Navigator, 2020; Mental Health Foundation, 2025) and is also emerging in education (Moeke-Maxwell et al., 2020; Stevenson & Zagala, 2022). In a report that measured Māori wellbeing, Durie (2006) provided and explained some indicators that contribute to the overall wellbeing of the Māori population. One of these health measures was land. Durie (2006) talked about the Māori estate (which includes land, environment and resources) as an outcome measure "that can be applied with greater specificity to interventions and policies" (p. 8). The goal here is for the regeneration of Māori land and its criticality as a Māori health and wellbeing indicator, which can assess the direct cultural, social, physical, spiritual, and economic wellbeing impacts on Māori via the considerations of land value, condition, and accessibility. An attainable and strengthened connection to *whenua tūpuna* (ancestral lands) roots and grounds Māori wellbeing and also ensures a healthier and prosperous future for the next generation.

Hauora Whenua also provides a much deeper and more culturally complex meaning as a health concept. *Whenua* is the place in which we stand. This is our connection to land that provides us with life, sustenance, and overall wellbeing. *Whenua* is made up of the soil, flora, fauna, rocks, and the people who walk and live on the *whenua*. The land connects us physically and spiritually. The earth is what links us to our *tūpuna*, or ancestors, and the future generations that will come after us as we are laid to rest in the soils of Papatūānuku (Mother Earth).

Hauora Whenua also refers to the Māori word for placenta-- *whenua*. Moeke-Maxwell et al (2020) explained that in Te Ao Māori, we believe we are children of Papatūānuku, and the placenta is part of the mother in which we and it comes from. So, when mothers birth the placenta, it's only right

that it should be returned to Papatūānuku and buried in her soils. By doing so, we nourish the whenua (land), and this nourishment provides the nutrients needed for our kai (food) that we grow and eat from the land.

Moreover, these dimensions of health and wellbeing can be strongly linked to the spheres of tikanga. Tikanga could be used as a tool that could help us navigate good health, wellbeing and balance. *Te Ao Whanaungatanga* concerns how we connect in this world, which includes relationships with all living things and the environment, and ties into *Hauora Whanaunga* and *Hauora Whenua*, as we develop and cement multiple relationships, at different levels, in our lifetime and within different social circles. These relationships are created within and on the environment in which we live – Earth. Tikanga guides us in how to care for ourselves, our whānau and community, and our environment. *Te Ao Tangata* emphasises how we are humanity, which includes people, culture, collectivism, diversity, and mana. It links to *Hauora Hinengaro* and *Hauora Wairua*, as our hinengaro (mind) is like the machine that drives who we are as individuals and how we fit into collectives, communities, and culture. Knowing who we are can bring wellbeing mentally, emotionally and spiritually. *Te Ao Orooro* accentuates the way we communicate, and includes language, kaumātua knowledge and transmission, and time past, present and future to inform communication. This also connects to *Hauora Hinengaro* and *Hauora Wairua*, as our mind and spirit guides and directs how and who we are, and tikanga helps us communicate effectively. Therefore, tikanga offers us a guide to inform, navigate and track our overall health and wellbeing.

To summarise, the holistic and inter-connected viewpoint of Māori health and wellbeing is evident. Although the models of hauora (health and wellbeing) offer extensive and varying perspectives, concepts, and frameworks, they are similar in nature. The Māori view of health and wellbeing, and hauora models, emphasises looking after all areas of our health and wellbeing equally, and moreover, that good health and wellbeing is about balance. Finally, kaumātua are pivotal to sustaining and

maintaining hauora balance, and are the intermediary and connection to tikanga to ensure all tikanga spheres are upheld.

The Māori View of Colonisation Story

Colonisation, political systems, laws, and views of Western European powers significantly impacted Indigenous peoples globally (Barnes & McCreanor, 2019; Durie, 2011; Walker, 2004). In the context of Aotearoa New Zealand, British colonisation began in the late 1700s, and continues today via lingering imperial ideologies, systemic racism, and health and educational inequities (Came & McCreanor, 2015; G. Smith, 1997). The arrival of the British to Aotearoa New Zealand came with a new and different worldview that can be described as blunt, rigid, and engrossed (Myer, 2009; Terruhn, 2019). The British colonists brought with them intentions and plans to seize these lands for territorial gains, economic wealth, and political power (Brigid, 2003; Mutu, 2019). At first, Māori were curious and fearful when the British colonists arrived. To some degree, their arrival was also a novelty. Māori and British encounters, interactions, engagements, and communications had increased by the late 1800s, which gave way to a potential threat of a new order on the horizon (Durie, 2003). The settler residential population grew dramatically, and so too did Māori concern, anger of and tensions with the new arrivals. These feelings only intensified when differing views, values, customs, and culture came to light. As the settlers' population increased, particularly after the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 (Smith, J., 2001), the new colonial settlers eventually gained political and cultural superiority by way of acquiring, establishing, expanding, exploiting, and maintaining Māori lands and peoples—and a new British colony emerged (Brigid, 2003; Engerman & Sokoloff, 2012; Orange, 2021).

Consequentially, colonisation resulted in assimilated, alienated, and marginalised Māori communities throughout the country as largely foreign settler communities developed, grew, and outnumbered Māori. This developing cultural and political take-over saw significant and detrimental

effects as Māori became exposed to foreign settler diseases and illness (which they were not immune to) such as measles, influenza, and tuberculosis that in turn, rapidly decimated Māori communities – almost to extinction (Durie, 2003). Furthermore, once political structures of power were established, Māori customs, practices and language declined dramatically, as well as did the vast Māori-owned lands (Durie, 2003). Māori were forced into unknown territories and experienced a “lawfully” forced disconnection from their culture, language, peoples, and lands. By 1900 Māori were alienated from most of their lands with many no longer having enough land to sustain themselves (Durie, 2003; Hill, 2009; Orange, 1987; Walker, 2004).

Today, the impact of colonisation continues as urbanisation and globalisation come into play, which together, placed Māori into foreign contexts and circumstances (Durie, 2011; Morrow, 2014; Ryks et al., 2014; Walker, 2004). There is general consensus that the effects of colonial beliefs, systems and structures significantly and negatively impacted Māori—and continue to do so (Hutchings, & Lee-Morgan, 2016; Jackson, 1998; Mayeda et al., 2021; Mikaere, 2003; Pihama, 2001; Smith, 1999; Walker, 1996). Such impacts include health deficits and inequities, poor housing, poverty, and education inequities (Durie, 1985; 2001; 2003; Jackson, 1998; McKee, 2023; Mikaere, 2003; Pihama, 2001; Sheridan et al., 2024; Smith, 1999; Walker, 1996).

The detrimental impact of social determinants of health and ageing for Māori are vast, and upsetting. Colonisation is a significant and major influencer of social determinants for Māori health and ageing. The loss of lands, culture, and autonomy, the introduction of foreign diseases, marginalisation and assimilation, one-sided policies, dominating power and political structures have overwhelmingly caused historical social and economic disadvantages and contributed to poorer health and ageing for Māori (Axelsson et al., 2016; Came et al., 2019; Whitehead & Dahlgren, 2006). As a result, Māori experience poverty, lower life expectancies, over representation in health statistics, under representation in government, politics and leadership, racism and discrimination, stress and depression,

violence, and intergenerational trauma—all of which continues to impact today (Griffiths et al., 2016; Haami et al., 2024; Isobel et al., 2019; Robson & Harris, 2007).

In conclusion, it is well documented that tikanga (Māori belief system) underpins Māori as a people and culture, and therefore lays the foundation for Māori social structure, behaviours, and communication (Durie, 2001; Ka'ai & Higgins, 2004; Mead, 2003; Pere, 1998; Te Aho, 2007). The arrival of Pākehā (European settlers) to Aotearoa New Zealand and colonisation compromised tikanga Māori, and therefore the health and wellbeing of Māori. The harmful disconnection from language, culture, people, and lands suggests and highlights that spiritual and cultural wellbeing were negatively impacted in addition to the new foreign physical health issues that faced Māori at the time. The cultural Māori view of health, and colonial storytelling moved Māori away from holism, collectivism, balance, and our culture. This situation affirms the need for strength-based, Māori-centred research approaches in health and wellbeing.

My Personal Story

To think, I was just one click away from withdrawing, in September 2023, from my doctoral programme. I've taken a narrative approach to this thesis, and I begin autobiographically with my story, a story about my life, my experiences with and within this doctoral research and journey. This doctoral study has privileged me to enter the worlds and lives of many kaumātua. I've had cups of tea with them. I've eaten food with them. I've had great talks with them. I've sung with them. I've prayed with them. I've laughed with them. I've felt happy and sad with them. I've heard and listened to them. I've enjoyed engaging with them. I've enjoyed forming relationships with them; because I grew up without grandparents; a part of the family structure that I've craved for all my life. So, I feel it is important that I open up to my world and tell a bit of my story, before I enter others' worlds and tell their stories. I guess one could say that this is an approach to the research that is both relational and cultural, and the right thing to do.

Furthermore, one could argue that this approach is about sustaining versus just retaining relationships, communications, and knowledges.

My initial doctoral research was going to explore the adaptability of the wider project's tuakana-teina/peer-education model to a rural/marae setting and focused on life transitions of koroheke Māori (Māori men aged 55-plus). The doctoral study's aim was to identify and examine the local facilitators and barriers (cultural, social and tribal factors) to adapting such a model in a rural/marae community. This doctoral study was also going to look at hauora tāne Māori (Māori men's health) in terms of life transitions, and to explore the views of ageing among koroheke Māori within rural, marae, and whānau (family) environments.

However, during the research process the study took a new direction. Firstly, in 2018 I had conducted an initial wānanga (focus group) with my marae (a branch of a sub-tribe) and whānau to introduce the rangahau (research). After months of trying to organise a date, time, structure and recourses with the Marae and whānau, I finally managed to get up to Mitimiti (in the Hokianga, Northland). The process and journey to get to this initial wānanga proved challenging given that I live in Hamilton and that my marae is 6-7 hours' drive North of Hamilton. The time, work, travel, resources and costs to get to this wānanga was intensive and consuming; therefore, I started to doubt the PhD and started to rethink the rangahau (research). Secondly, having run the wānanga in Mitimiti, it confirmed that whānau just wanted to talk about kaumātuatanga (ageing) and share their pūrākau (stories). What also emerged from this wānanga was that the KMM kaupapa offers kōrero (conversation) as a way forward to ageing well for our kaumātua. However, more importantly, the wānanga validated that a kaupapa such as KMM would be something that would be a gradual development that may even take a couple of generations to be well and sustainably implemented – steps one, two, three – to have a KMM like kaupapa well and truly up and running in a rural Marae community. From this point, I became stuck and blinded to figuring out a way forward to find a solution to what next. This “storm” in the journey was the first “storm”.

After time and hui (meetings) with my supervisor, a solution emerged. The KMM research found that the tuakana-teina peer-education relationship involving three conversations had positive cultural and health impacts for kaumātua who took part. The data, or stories that emerged from the conversations was so rich that there was a need and calling to honour the conversations, stories and relationships; however, the KMM project did not have the capacity to do so. Therefore, this provided both the KMM and me with an opportunity that would benefit all. Thus, my PhD took a slightly different route, and instead I decided to analyse a selection of those conversations. Particularly, I looked at specific communication, cultural and relational dynamics that contributed to a successful tuakana-teina peer-education programme that explored life transitions in later life among kaumātua. What followed this first storm were many other storms that would both challenge and hinder me and my ability and capacity to do the PhD.

In March 2020, the second “storm” to hit my doctoral journey was the COVID-19 pandemic. As the world shut down and hunkered down, human society had to find ways to adapt to a world of lockdowns, working and learning from home, living, working and socialising from home. The rest of 2020 was a new way of adjusting, living, working and socialising.

In April 2021, the third “storm” to hit my journey was a knock to the back of my head that caused a head injury. I was unable to hold a conversation for longer than five minutes. I was unable to drive for nearly nine months. I was unable to see properly due to doubled and blurred vision. I was unable to concentrate properly. I suffered continuous headaches. I suffered from major fatigue. I suffered major dizziness. The rest of 2021 would have me in recovery and major rehabilitation mode. In January 2022, the fourth “storm” to hit my journey was urgent surgery to my spinal cord. The surgery entailed a shunt being inserted to the cord just below my neckline to one, drain the fluid, and two redirect any further incoming fluid back up to my brain. A cyst inside my spinal cord was identified that went from my neckline down to my belt line. This cyst was putting pressure on my spinal cord that my upper limbs had become tingly, numb. This also allowed for

major shock of nerve pain to travel up and down my arms that it got to the point I was dropping things. For me, surgery was the only option; I walked into the surgery and when I awoke from surgery I couldn't walk. I had suffered from what I now know to be a surgical injury; I had no feeling or power in my left leg from hip to toe. So, the surgical injury disabled me to walk on my own two feet, and I was aided with a walking frame and crutches.

Over the first several months following my initial surgery, I was in recovery, rehabilitation and adjustment modes with constant GP checkups and physiotherapy. I gained a little power back in my leg but not enough to walk on it. I gained some feeling, but it came back numb 24/7 with multiple electrical nerve shocks up and down my leg. I sustained circulatory issues that had my leg swell, go cold to the touch, and go purple, which meant I was having to elevate my leg with compression stocking every two hours every day. From this time on, I found myself in a continuous and battle over several years, which continues, with the hospital to acknowledge, apologise and be accountable for what became a traumatic post-operative journey that caused so much unnecessary stress, hardship and illness.

In October 2022, the novel and complex neurosurgical deficit caused by surgery was finally acknowledged and investigated. I had another surgery to one, replace the shunt with a smaller shunt as I was able to feel the initial shunt; and two secure the shunt in place as the previous shunt had tethered to the left of my spine that caused a mechanical disruption to my cord that was affecting my left leg function. I underwent this surgery to no avail. However, the risks for this surgery were 50 per cent higher than the initial surgery, so to come out the same with no changes to my left leg was just as good as if I was to come out with a functioning leg. So, I wheeled out of hospital happy that I was not in a worse condition, and I continued life with walking aids (crutches and wheelchair) to help me get around.

In January 2023, the fifth "storm" to hit this journey, particularly my body, was an out of the blue uncontrollable full body shaking, like an epileptic seizure but my brain was still conscious. This first shake went on for hours and landed me back in hospital where I was eventually diagnosed with

Functional Neurological Disorder, which was explained like a software problem in my brain that had occurred; like a glitch in or a natural re-wiring of my brain, which could not be fixed. So, I had been shaking every day, multiple times a day since 25 January 2023, and this condition disabled me from driving.

In March 2023, the sixth “storm” to hit this journey was that I suffered a major decline in my mental health. This major mental turn would have me admitted to the mental health unit, medicated and monitored. This turn did not just happen overnight, but rather a build up from the stress and trauma during the post-operative experience following the first surgery in January 2022. For the next few months, I was once again in recovery and rehabilitation modes with a good balance of daily medications, psychological therapy, and Rongoā Māori (traditional Māori healing). I spent the next few months solely focused and worked on healing my ill mental health and wellbeing.

In September 2023, although no storm, this month entailed a significant turning point after all the adversity and no PhD. I do have to note that this month I had decided to withdraw from my PhD as life was just too much to deal with, and that I needed to heal. However, I had an informal catchup with my supervisors who checked in with me, to see how I am, and to asked if I wanted to come back to finish my PhD. Returning to the doctoral journey was a mere suggestion to refocus my energy and to distract me from my disability, and fight with the health system. And of course, they wanted to see me finish this doctorate. They believed in me. I pondered for a week or so and decided to return. They (my supervisors) supported and guided me through the transition and the journey ahead.

In April 2024, the seventh “storm” to hit this journey was more surgery, this time leg amputation. My leg swelling had reached capacity and became swollen, cold and purple 24/7 (I must note, despite these symptoms, my leg wasn't dying as there was still one third of the blood flow). So, the way forward was amputation; a decision that wasn't reached lightly, but was both medically, psychologically, and personally informed and decided. I underwent the amputation and was in hospital for three

weeks. After leaving hospital and returning home, my mental health slowly declines. Again. Despite all the organisation and preparation, I had prior to the surgery, when the reality of that initial post-operative/amputation hits you, it hits you. I eventually became mentally paralysed for a few months. I found that my initial post-amputation life was more challenging, and went much longer (the healing, recovery, and rehabilitation), than I anticipated. I eventually find out why my initial post-amputation experience differed to most other amputees and that is because I had already suffered trauma to my nervous system prior to the amputation, and I carried around a non-functioning left leg for nearly 2.5 years. Most amputees have a fully functioning limb before their amputation, whereas I did not which impacted my recovery and rehabilitation significantly. Furthermore, most amputees unfortunately either have little to no time before waking up from a surgery with an amputated limb, whereas I more fortunate and had months of planning, preparing and organising life post-amputation surgery. But again, I found myself in recovery and rehabilitation modes, whilst also dealing with and managing my ongoing health complaint.

After experiencing those abundant adversities, complex challenges, significant setbacks, I returned to complete and submit this doctoral thesis. However, when I returned, and reengaged with this research's data, I was able to reconnect with the data on a deeper, personal, and an emotional level. I was able to empathise with the kaumātua of this study as I realised too that I experienced a loss of independence, a loss of driver licence, a loss of a limb/changes in health conditions. But further to this, as I analysed the data and learned about kaumātua strength and resilience, I realised my own strength and resilience as I found myself finishing and finished with this important doctoral research and thesis. And most importantly, I had a privilege and duty to honour our kaumātua and their kōrero (conversations).

The Preface Story

I preface this thesis by declaring my position as an emerging Māori researcher living on the lands and with the peoples of Aotearoa, New Zealand. As such, I prioritise, foreground and privilege Māori ways of research in this thesis, and particularly, the literature first and foremost. My position is a by Māori, for Māori and with Māori approach to research (Pihama et al., 2002; Smith, 1999; Tate, 2010; Walker et al., 2006). Practices and pedagogies, people and place are critical contributions to Māori educational success (Alkema, 2014), as are Māori understandings of space, stewardship, and spirit (Matapo, 2018). My approach responds to Māori researchers challenge to reclaim Māori ways of knowing and being (Brewer et al., 2014; Lee, 2009; Smith, 1999; Spiller, 2024; Walker et al., 2006; Winitana, 2012; Woodhouse, 2019). In all aspects of my thesis, I position Māori concepts to the forefront. By foregrounding Māori research approaches, I align with tikanga (Māori ethics), mātauranga (Māori knowledge), hauora (Māori health and wellbeing), and Te Ao Māori (Māori world view). I privilege Māori epistemologies, ontologies, methodologies, methods and paradigms as authentic, equal and legitimate alternatives to Western positions, and thus can stand alone.

In aligning with the premise above, I declare my stance regarding English approximations throughout this thesis. Where I use a Māori word, term, or concept, I've decided to provide a translation in brackets, as opposed to the standard provision of a glossary. The reasons for this are twofold. First, by doing so, this makes it much easier for the reader to follow and understand the meaning and context as they make their way through the thesis. Second, in Māori, many single words have multiple meanings (depending on contexts), whereas in English, one meaning has many words. Hence, I will use certain words throughout the thesis and supply its meaning within that context of which I apply it. However, in the instance where I use certain words in specific contexts more than once, I will only provide the translation at first use within that context, paragraph, or section.

Furthermore, I must make clear some wording reservations I have regarding peoples of a mature age. First and foremost, the term “kaumātua” will be used only for Māori of a mature age. Second, “elders” is the term I reserve for Indigenous peoples of a mature age. Third, the term “older peoples” I use for general reference of mature aged people.

The Thesis Preview

This doctoral study acknowledged kaumātua and their poor health and wellbeing reality, and their perceptions of frailty, vulnerability, dependency, and loneliness. However, the study acknowledged that “poor health stats” and “poor ageing” were just one side of kaumātua health and wellbeing. Flipping the health story and perceptions of our older people away from the deficit model was one of the aims of this doctoral research and the wider KMM project. This study captured and re-told the wisdoms of kaumātua in Aotearoa New Zealand via Māori traditions and principles of pūrākau, and using tuakana-teina as the vehicle, within a hauora (health and wellbeing) context. Through the application of these traditional Māori practices, this study demonstrated and emphasised how kaumātua wellbeing and the ageing experience can significantly be enhanced. This study highlighted a sense of community and relationships in older age; a cultural approach to communication in older age; and a holistic journey to wellbeing in older age. The research took a strengths-based approach to turn the deficit model of ageing upside-down and reframe ageing in a healthy light. The thesis also prioritised, foregrounded and privileged Māori ways of research, concepts and values, resulting in its contribution to Māori health knowledge and production. Specifically, this study extended literature pertaining to ageing, tuakana-teina, and pūrākau. This thesis aimed to answer the overarching question *If we know that the KMM project worked, then how did it work?* This study proposed three research questions to explore how the KMM project worked:

- 1) *What are the cultural and communication features of the kaumātua teina narratives?*
- 2) *What are the cultural and communication characteristics of the kaumātua tuakana conversational styles? and*
- 3) *What is the nature of the kaumātua journeys in how the stories unfold and relationships develop?*

Chapter Two reviews and discusses the research literature for this study. First, a theoretical framework is offered that includes Kaupapa Māori theory and Indigenous standpoint theory. Second, literature regarding tuakana-teina is reviewed that also examines Indigenous peer-mentoring, and Western peer-education/support. Third, literature pertaining to pūrākau is explored that also investigates Indigenous story-narrative, and Western narrative inquiry. Fourth, literature relating to older people and ageing that analyses kaumātuatanga (Māori kaumātua and ageing), Indigenous and Western older people and ageing is surveyed. Finally, literature concerning the Kaumātua Mana Motuhake project is then reviewed.

Chapter Three discusses the methodology that grounded this research. The chapter begins with my research positionality, followed by the research philosophies that made ground for the research methodology. Then, a method framework is described, it focuses on and emphasises the pūrākau of kaumātua in this study, and details the data collection, the KMM methods, sample selection, data analysis, and ethics.

Chapter Four presents the findings related to the first research question. *What are the communication and cultural features of the kaumātua teina narratives?* The data analysis revealed three key themes with sub-themes. The first key theme told teina stories about adversity and turning points. The second key theme told teina stories about later life, and included stories of resilience, and independence. The third key theme told stories of teina connections and included connection stories to community, to Māori culture and identity, and to the KMM project.

Chapter Five presents the key findings regarding the second research question. *What are the cultural and communicational features of the kaumātua tuakana conversational styles?* The chapter reports on tuakana conversational styles and how they used words to converse with their teina. Three key themes with sub-themes are discussed. The first key theme feature was about conversing to connect that used words of kinship and words of reciprocation. The second key theme feature was about conversing with responsibility and used words of ignition and words of guidance. The third key theme feature was about conversing with kindness that used words of empathy and words of affirmation.

Chapter Six presented the key findings concerning the third research question. *What is the nature of the kaumātua journeys in how the stories unfold, and relationships develop?* The chapter examined and told the story of the conversational journey had by the kaumātua pairs. Unfolded from the data, five distinct conversational journeys emerged. The key themes concerned journeys that included conversations that were straight to the point, tangent laden, revisited, relationship focused and tangent process valued.

Chapter Seven provides an in-depth discussion of the findings in relation to each research question, and the theoretical, methodological, and practical implications of this study. It also offers potential working framework suggestions, reports the limitations of this research, and a conclusion with some personal reflections about this research and the journey.

CHAPTER TWO

Whaowhina Te Kete Mātauranga - Literature Review

I begin this chapter with the first and second verses of my poem that started this thesis titled: *Pito is the Thread to First Feed Us Life*. In the Māori language, pito refers to our belly button, and the umbilical cord that connects us to our mother, and the cord that provides the feeding highway that nourishes and sustains us as we develop in the womb. I wrote this poem throughout my doctoral journey. The poem is a symbolism for life, life's transitions, and this thesis.

*Pito is the thread to first feed us life.
A small seed that sits dormant in the hold of Te Po.
A tiny traveller in search of a haven to grow.
The small seed in sight, the tiny traveller ignites.
The two collide, cause an explosion
Where the murmurs of our tupuna echoed afar
Are heard through the chambers of heart and aroha
Aroha and explosion illuminate the path to new life
We embrace and grow in the warmth of creation*

*Pito is the thread to first feed us life
As once the tiny traveller navigated these chambers
That small seed of life journeys the chambers once more
As they hear the sweet soft sound of the tūtūisinging
Haere mai, haere mai ki Te Ao Mārama
The seed of life emerges through the chamber gates
Exhaling tihei wā mauri ora the breath of life.....*

Based on this premise of *The Preface Story* in the previous chapter, this literature review brings to the forefront Māori ways of research to explore the Māori concepts and applications of tuakana-teina (peer-

mentoring) and pūrākau (story inquiry). However, my position does not mean that I dismiss other ways of research within existing literature. I acknowledge mainstream literature by referencing and respecting what already exists and recognising the breadth of the body of work. I use Western or “mainstream” literature as a broad way to compare to, emphasise, support and illuminate Māori and Indigenous works. I do not detail, explain, describe or analyse mainstream literature and studies in-depth; this privilege I reserve for Māori, and Indigenous writings. For example, I briefly acknowledge how narrative inquiry follows, supports, and illuminates an in-depth piece about pūrākau (stories and process for understanding stories).

This literature review may well appear to be unconventional, but it is specific, unique and intentional. I argue that if this study was a non-Indigenous project, I would not have to include, reference, examine, or compare with Māori and Indigenous literature. Therefore, I use this work to extend and strengthen the literature concerning tuakana-teina and pūrākau, rather than peer-education and narrative inquiry, and in doing so, may offer another perspective to Western literature, theory and methodology.

The title of this chapter “*Whaowhina Te Kete Mātauranga*” (Bloomfield et al., 2024) is a whakataukī or proverb from Te Ao Māori, which can be translated to “*fill the basket of knowledge*”, or “*fill your mind with knowledge and keep learning*”. The ngako, or central idea, of this whakataukī is the continuous pursuit for new learning and knowledge (Mead & Grove, 2003, p. 424). In this literature review, I examine the various fields of research, and I take from the readings the valuable learnings and wisdom to add to that basket of knowledge. Further, this whakataukī not only allows a review of the current knowledge in the literature but also offers opportunities for new learning and knowledge to emerge to add to that kete of knowledge; that is, extending the literature concerning tuakana-teina and pūrākau, and in the context of ageing and health in Aotearoa New Zealand. This literature review focuses on four areas of research: 1) theoretical framework for this study, 2) tuakana-teina

relationships and settings; 3) pūrākau as stories of personal experiences and accounts; and 4) older people and ageing.

Kete Mātauranga - Theoretical Framework

The purpose of this section is to detail the theoretical framework that supports my argument to foreground the Māori concepts of tuakana-teina and pūrākau as equal and legitimate parallels to their Western counterparts of peer-education and narrative inquiry. Kaupapa Māori and Indigenous standpoint theories are components of my theoretical framework to strengthen my argument by providing the philosophical foundation for this doctoral study. These theories underpin this study to explore kaumātua experiences as they journeyed through the KMM project, keep the study culturally relevant, and enable an unfolding of kaumātua stories to be presented and grounded in Te Ao Māori. Kaupapa Māori and Indigenous standpoint theories are discussed below.

Kaupapa Māori Theory

The grounding and generation of Kaupapa Māori has some origins from critical theory (Eketone, 2008). Critical theory is more than just an explanation to help understand phenomena; rather it aids researchers to critique and change society through focussing on who is privileged and advantaged within society (Antonio, 1983; Weber, 2005). Critical theory focuses on power dynamics within society to unpack and illustrate different ways of knowing that can better reflect different worldviews and serve groups disadvantaged by power relations. Critical theory within a dominant society helps illustrate how and why dominant world views disadvantage of Indigenous communities. In contrast, Kaupapa Māori theory stands within a Māori worldview, which is grounded in Māori epistemologies that centre Māori language, culture, knowledge, customs and values as the core focus of Māori research without compromise. Graham Smith (1997) contends that Kaupapa Māori provides the philosophical foundations that

frames theory, methodology, and research grounded in Māori epistemologies and worldviews.

Kaupapa Māori recognises the detrimental and continual effects of colonisation on Māori. Kaupapa Māori demands a critical lens to identify, unpack, analyse and understand the societal structures and tensions that cause issues, problems, and inequities for Māori. As such, Kaupapa Māori calls for intentional, purposeful, and transformative research that ensures positive, proactive, and practical outcomes and solutions that make a difference for Māori. Kaupapa Māori takes for granted the legitimacy and validity of acting, being, and participating as Māori (G. Smith, 1997). Furthermore, Kaupapa Māori emphasises the importance of acknowledging that Māori continue to live in a colonised existence that is political, structural, and systematically foreign to them. It highlights the need to recognise and understand the forces, barriers, and challenges that Māori face today (G. Smith, 2020). Moreover, Graham Smith (1997) states that Kaupapa Māori “... is not a rejection of [Western] knowledge and or culture. Kaupapa Māori advocates excellence within Māori culture as well as [Western] culture. It is not an either/or choice – [Māori] want full access to both cultural frameworks” (p. 388). Aligned as equal counterparts, research within and from both worlds can benefit Māori to co-exist in their two worlds. The following section introduces the principles of Kaupapa Māori and provides examples of application in research.

Kaupapa Māori Theory Principles

Several principles together underpin, construct, and support the Kaupapa Māori framework (G. Smith, 1997). The first principle is “*tinorangatanga*” which is understood as “self-determination” and asserts the freedom of Māori to control their own destiny and aspirations. The second principle is “*kia piki ake i ngā raruraru o te kainga*” which refers to “socio-economic mediation” and concerns the mitigation of negative pressures and experiences that disadvantage Māori communities by addressing socio-economic issues such as health. The third principle is “*whānau*”, which refers to the “extended family structure” and when

applied, acknowledges, nurtures, and cares for the relationships within the research. The “*whānau*” principle ensures that relationships between the researcher, the “researched” and the research are maintained and healthy.

The fourth principle is “*kaupapa*”, which refers to “collective philosophy”. This concerns much more than the research because research becomes part of the Māori community’s wider vision that is, the research contributes to a collective vision or overall “*kaupapa*” of a community. The fifth principle is “*ako Māori*”, which is described as “culturally-preferred pedagogy” and pertains to learning and teaching methods that allows for traditional and uniquely Māori practices of teaching and learning to take place. The sixth principle is “*taonga tuku iho*” which refers to “cultural aspiration” affirms the criticality and legitimacy of tikanga Māori (Māori customary system, principles, and guidelines), Te Reo Māori (Māori language), and mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge system). This principle also acknowledges the validity and significance of Māori ways of knowing, understanding and doing—including specific spiritual and cultural considerations (G. Smith, 1997). Since the inception of theorising kaupapa Māori, many researchers have taken the theory and its principles and applied it in research practice that is Māori, transformative, purposeful, and inclusive, and has helped strengthen Māori knowledge production (see Cram & Adcock, 2022; Cram, et al., 2003; Jenkins & Pihama, 2001; Lawton et al., 2013).

Kaupapa Māori Theory in Research

Many Māori scholars in Aotearoa New Zealand have contributed to the development and body of Kaupapa Māori research. Pihama (2010) argues that the foundations of ‘theory’ itself as once being exclusive, prescriptive and elitist (see Ward, 1974), have shifted to definitions that are now more “...related explicably to practice and therefore is informed by the politics and social realities within which the practice is located, makes theory worthwhile for Māori. Without the unity of theory with practice, theory has little to offer” (p. 9). Eketone (2008) supports this view in arguing that whilst Kaupapa Māori theory was first underpinned by critical

theory, a second thread of underpinnings has emerged. Eketone claims that meaning, and what we know, is constructed through language, interaction, and, therefore, practice. From this position, Kaupapa Māori theory has developed and advanced to put the theory into practice.

Kaupapa Māori theory has been applied within many disciplines including education (Berryman et al., 2016; Bishop, 2012; Smith et al., 2017; Stewart, 2017), health (Curtis, 2016; Gillon & Pause, 2022; Hayward et al., 2017), and political and social sciences (Barnes, 2019; Eketone & Walker, 2016; Hoskins & Jones, 2017; Wilson et al., 2022). Collectively, Kaupapa Māori research emphasises cultural revitalisation, social justice, and self-determination within the academy and research that ensures pathways to positive and transformative outcomes for Māori and their communities. For instance, health and education are two areas where research has focused on the inequities between Māori and non-Māori.

Within health, many researchers have incorporated Kaupapa Māori theory within an overarching theoretical framework to demonstrate its importance in addressing incessant health inequities faced by Māori. For example, Brewer, et al. (2014) brought together Māori patients experiencing aphasia, and their whānau (family) to examine the collective experience of living with this nuanced condition. This research recognised the importance of the voice of the whānau Māori collective in health research and development and emphasised the critical need for healthcare interventions to be culturally tailored and informed by whānau. This study directly reflects Kaupapa Māori principles of 'whānau' as the whānau collective were also part of the lived experience of those with aphasia; and 'kaupapa' as the need for culturally appropriate health interventions is about the wider Māori community.

Another study by Wepa and Wilson (2020) investigated how whānau Māori engaged with healthcare services. The study revealed that cultural and spiritual needs were barely met along with Māori facing discrimination. However, the collective of whānau played a critical part in navigating the health system and experiences. Again, this research highlighted the importance of the whānau Māori collective and the need for

healthcare services' engagement with whānau Māori to be culturally responsive and supportive. The study directly relates to at least two Kaupapa Māori principles: 'whānau' as whānau played a critical role in navigating the system; and 'taonga tuku iho' in highlighting the need for services to incorporate and cater for cultural needs of whānau and incorporate Māori ways of knowing, understanding.

Finally, Curtis (2016) reinforces and reflects on, her various research projects as a health researcher, a medical practitioner, and Māori community member. Curtis explored and contextualised Kaupapa Māori theory in terms of what it is and means, and how it emerged within and informed her own research practice. In sharing personal experience, reflection, exploration, and contextualising Kaupapa Māori in health research, Curtis aimed to encourage, inspire, and support new and emerging health researchers in their own research journeys. In summary, these studies all share the centrality of whānau (family and extended family), kaupapa (collective vision and goals), and hauora (overall health and wellbeing), and reflect and reinforce Kaupapa Māori theory.

Many Māori education scholars have used Kaupapa Māori theory to demonstrate its value in addressing persistent educational disparities that Māori students face in mainstream education. For example, Rona and McLachlan (2018) studied the transition of kōhanga reo (Māori language preschools) children to mainstream education (in addition to other Māori educational settings) and explored their biliteracy experiences. The study revealed the need for adapting teacher pedagogies to cater for Māori children and their literacy learning needs as they transition to mainstream from kōhanga reo. The study found that culturally responsive teachers played a crucial role in expediting student transition and literacy outcome success. This study reflects Kaupapa Māori theory principles 'ako Māori' and 'taonga tuku iho' showing how responsive teachers, through their adapted practice, can support the transitions and literacy needs of kohanga reo children to ensure successful transitions that keep cultural aspirations.

Another study by Berryman et al., (2016) examined professional development and leadership reform for English-medium secondary school

teachers and leaders from a critical and Kaupapa Māori lens. The study identified several constant challenges: cultural misunderstandings, culturally responsive pedagogical inconsistency, and deficit theorising. Responsively, the study identified and underlined the needs for iterative training, relational professional development, and leadership that is culturally conscious and critically harmonised with Māori aspirations. This study pressed for pedagogies rooted in ako Māori, whanaungatanga and mana motuhake, which provide a grounded pathway to educational transformation that placed Māori student success as Māori at its heart. The study reinforces the need for continuous professional development, teaching, learning and leadership practices within a Kaupapa Māori paradigm. Closely connected to the Kaupapa Māori principle of ako Māori, this study offers professional development tools and methods that are culturally grounded for best teaching, learning and leading practices for Māori students to succeed in their educational journey.

Amundsen (2019) examined the lived experiences and transition of high school students to tertiary education. The study revealed two key findings: students' transitions were experienced as journeys of agency and identity, and critically, universities needed to provide culturally responsive and supportive practices and environments for students to transition and succeed. This research echoes Kaupapa Māori theory principles 'ako Māori'—as it highlights the critical need for universities to adapt their teaching practices and environments to be culturally safe, and appropriate—and 'taonga tuku iho' to ensure the teaching and environment is familiar for students and that it reflects te Ao Māori.

Kaupapa Māori Theory Summary

Kaupapa Māori theory informs Māori research to contest assumptions of Western approaches and calls for change within colonised systems such as health and education. It is clear from the literature that purpose, culture, equitable success and excellence are at the centre of kaupapa Māori-informed Māori health and education research. In health studies, the incorporation of Kaupapa Māori theory emphasises the

importance of culturally tailored health interventions. It highlights the significance of whānau voice in informing these interventions, reveals the critical role of whānau in helping each other navigate the health system, and underscores the necessity for health workers to be culturally responsive and attentive. Additionally, it encourages emerging Māori health researchers. Such work can contribute to better health outcomes for Māori and their whānau. Incorporating Kaupapa Māori theory in Māori education research highlights the critical role of culturally responsive teachers in contributing to the success of student transitions and outcomes. It emphasises the need for ongoing professional and cultural development for teachers and stresses the importance of creating a culturally supportive student environment, beyond just implementing culturally responsive teaching practices. As such, Kaupapa Māori theory provides a solid theoretical foundation based on several principles, for researchers to build on. It emphasises, enables, and legitimises Māori epistemologies, ontologies, methodologies, methods and paradigms. Therefore, Kaupapa Māori theory is appropriate for guiding the current thesis.

Indigenous Standpoint Theory

The foundations and formation of Indigenous standpoint theory (IST) have origins in feminist standpoint theory. Feminist standpoint theory is an epistemological perspective that challenges traditional ideas of objectivity. It focuses on the knowledge production of marginalised groups and emphasises the significance of their social locations and experiences (Hekman, 1997; Swigonski, 1994). Feminist epistemologies inspired Indigenous scholars to develop their own standpoints. Indigenous standpoint theory provides a cultural framework that theorises Indigenous knowledges instead of dominant Western colonising knowledges (Nakata, 2007). Like kaupapa Māori, Indigenous standpoint theory is rooted in Indigenous communities, histories, and culture, their own political and social contexts (Foley, 2003). Indigenous standpoint theory acknowledges Indigenous peoples' unique experiences, worldviews and perspectives that

are often disenfranchised within dominant Western academic discourses (Foley, 2003). Like kaupapa Māori, Indigenous standpoint theory foregrounds Indigenous viewpoints and experiences when researching and creating knowledge. Indigenous voices are privileged and amplified to articulate and include unique Indigenous experiences and perspectives in the wider academic discourse. Colonial narratives are challenged by centring Indigenous stories and deconstructing the dominant, historical and Western narratives within mainstream research and academia. The commitment to highlighting and challenging colonising structures and systems promotes social justice to address and remedy injustices and inequities continually facing Indigenous communities world-wide (Foley, 2003; Kovach, 2021; Nakata, 2007).

Indigenous Standpoint Principles

Like kaupapa Māori, Nakata (2007) provides several explicit ideas that lay a foundation to construct and support Indigenous standpoint theory. The first is the notion of generating accounts of Indigenous communities, within conflicting dominant colonial knowledge systems and spaces. This idea speaks to the importance of producing and presenting Indigenous-community-specific understandings and narratives. This notion relates to the Kaupapa Māori principle of taonga tuku iho, in that it affirms cultural ways of knowing, understanding and doing. The second idea is affording agency to Indigenous peoples, which focuses on decision making within contested dominant colonial knowledge spaces to empower Indigenous peoples to act and decide on their own with their own. This idea relates to the Kaupapa Māori principle of tino rangatiratanga, in that it reflects self-determination and freedom of Indigenous peoples to control their own destiny and aspirations. Finally, acknowledging everyday tensions recognises daily ambiguities, complexities, conflicts, barriers, and challenges faced by Indigenous peoples viewing them as potential opportunities within this conflicted dominant colonial knowledge space. This thought somewhat relates to Kaupapa Māori principle, kaupapa, as it

concerns multiple issues and allows for broader and deeper thinking. These principles are illustrated in several research studies using the theory.

Indigenous Standpoint Theory in Research

Many Indigenous education academics have employed Indigenous standpoint theory to demonstrate its importance in addressing the persistent disparities Indigenous peoples worldwide face when engaging with Western education systems (e.g., Cox et al., 2021; Hickey, 2020; Prehn, 2024). For example, Briese and Menzel (2020) aimed to integrate Indigenous pedagogies and perspectives specifically into social work education and practice of in an Australian tertiary education context. The purpose was to challenge the Western institutional education system whilst promoting equity for Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islanders in social work education and practice. The study identified a strong need for academics and practitioners to confront discrimination within the social work sector directly and to address inequities by reclaiming and reaffirming their own cultural and traditional ways of being, doing and knowing. It is essential to build confidence in decolonising the social work curriculum. This work aligns with Indigenous standpoint theory as it advocates for the centrality of Indigenous knowledge production and practice.

A study conducted by Iddy (2021) explored the application of Indigenous standpoint theory within the context of Indigenous Tanzanian communities. The researcher collaborated with the Sukuma people to co-develop nine ethical research protocols that were culturally safe and respectful. These protocols aimed to address the significant disparities faced by Sukuma girls in the education system. The study resulted in several key outcomes:

1. The creation of a pioneering Indigenous standpoint theory framework intended to encourage future Indigenous research in Tanzania and across Africa.

2. An advancement and contribution to the broader scholarship on Indigenous standpoint theory.

3. A platform enabling Indigenous African peoples to exercise self-determination in their research efforts.

Overall, this work highlights the importance of Indigenous standpoint theory in providing a foundation for collaboration between Indigenous African communities and researchers. The work shows how to promote equity and equality in all areas through traditional cultural ways of being, learning, and knowing.

One study by Higgins (2014) examined the cultural interface between Indigenous and Western theories, with the notion of working with, in, and against Eurocentric ideologies in Canada. The study explored photovoice as a method within an Indigenous context including at the cultural interface between Indigenous and Western practices. The study resulted in two reconfigured methodological practices. First, it reworked the concept of (photo) voice through Indigenous practices, emphasising that voice is a collective expression that reflects interconnected relationships between humans and the environment rather than merely as an individual expression. Second, it reconsidered the interpretations of (photo) voice at the cultural interface by incorporating Indigenous community readers' voice as knowers. This approach uses representational juxtaposition to avoid colonial and simplistic interpretations of Indigenous voices. This study emphasises the Indigenous standpoint theory principle of Indigenous perspectives and voices as it reconfigured (photo) voice as an interconnection between people, community and environment, and reconsidered the interpretations of (photo) voice by including Indigenous community voices.

Within health, many Indigenous scholars have used Indigenous standpoint theory to demonstrate its importance in addressing inequities Indigenous peoples experience when dealing with a colonial health system. For example, Williams and Marlin (2022) critically examined the intersections of health sociology and Indigenous knowledges of Aboriginal Australians. The critique revealed that intersections, or the points of Western and Indigenous knowledge crossover, are not sufficient. The authors argued that a more integrated approach is considered where

Indigenous perspectives lead rather than only participate in the discourse. In privileging and prioritising Indigenous voices and perspectives to shape health sociology research and methodologies, the study work demonstrates Indigenous standpoint theory in action. Another study by Quinless (2017) engaged with urban-based First Nations communities in Canada to understand health and wellbeing determinants. The study focused on traditional cultural practices, land-based activities, and intergenerational trauma. The study found that the health and wellbeing of urban First Nations improved when they engaged with traditional land-based activities and cultural practice and discussed and addressed their impacts of intergenerational trauma via a strengths-based approach. This research relates to Indigenous standpoint theory as it privileged and prioritised Indigenous voices, perspectives, and practices to understand health and wellbeing determinants of urbanised First Nations communities.

Furthermore, a study by Dawson et al. (2024) examined COVID-19 pandemic challenges and experiences of Native American communities in rural eastern Regions of America. Researchers found that their communities developed a pandemic distrust, due to inconsistent and conflicting health messaging, grounded in trauma and voiced concerns regarding conflicting health information. The outcome was self-advocacy and determination in developing and implementing COVID-19 community protection methods informed by traditional cultural practices. This research reinforces Indigenous standpoint theory as it emphasises, centres, and demonstrates Indigenous practice, voice and perspectives highlighting Indigenous self-determination and Indigenous experiences shaped by their social and historical contexts.

Indigenous Standpoint Theory Summary

Indigenous standpoint theory, like Kaupapa Māori theory, provides a platform for Indigenous peoples to pushback and challenge Western colonial systems in areas such as education and health. What is evident within the Indigenous literature is the desire and need to further develop Indigenous standpoint theory, and to contribute to and grow its body of

work. In Indigenous education, Indigenous standpoint theory has been used to help promote education equity and instil confidence in Indigenous educators to aid in indigenising the education system. Indigenous standpoint theory also provides a platform for self-determined research and for generating Indigenous voices, perspectives, and interpretations in education. In Indigenous health, Indigenous standpoint theory has been applied to ensure facilitate Indigenous-led research and to provide a platform for Indigenous people to re-engage and re-connect with their traditional practices and culture. Finally, Indigenous standpoint theory provides a crucial space that allows Indigenous peoples to address and discuss historical and contemporary traumas as pathways to healing and wellbeing.

Overall, the literature reinforces and highlights the need for Kaupapa Māori and Indigenous standpoint theories. Studies have demonstrated the power and purpose of these theories to engage and empower Indigenous peoples to push-back, voice, and act to create positive change by reclaiming their traditional ways of learning, understanding, knowing, and being. Both theories share values that emphasise family and wider community, institutional decolonisation, cultural practices, pedagogies, and aspirations, and positive and healthy changes and outcomes. Essentially, employing these notions, ideas, thoughts, and principles, Kaupapa Māori and Indigenous standpoint theory aid and guide Māori and Indigenous peoples to understand, navigate and respond to colonial constraints. Kaupapa Māori and Indigenous standpoint theory can support Māori and Indigenous communities to disentangle and undo the colonial injustices and inequities that impact their communities. Kaupapa Māori and Indigenous standpoint theory can empower Māori and Indigenous peoples to take back control of who they are, what they do, and how they act.

This doctoral study is informed in several ways by the current uses and applications of kaupapa Māori, which is further supported by the integration of Indigenous standpoint theory. Firstly, the emphasis on Māori and Indigenous concepts, methodologies, and methods in the literature enriches my research by incorporating Māori and Indigenous ways of

understanding, practicing, being, and knowing. Secondly, the focus on Māori and Indigenous concepts within the literature highlights their significance in learning and knowledge creation when discussing and reporting research. Lastly, the literature illustrates the importance and strength of Māori and Indigenous approaches to analysing, presenting, understanding, and disseminating research. Therefore, my research prioritises Māori and Indigenous concepts and values, and their methodologies in analysing, presenting, understanding, and disseminating research.

Mā Te Tuakana e Tōtika Te Teina, Mā Te Teina e Tōtika Te Tuakana - Peer Mentoring and Education Research

This section is titled with the whakataukī “*Mā te tuakana e tōtika te teina, mā te teina e tōtika te tuakana*” (Fremaux, & Liley, 2014) which can be translated as “*the older will lead the younger and the younger will lead the older.*” The ngako (essence) of this whakataukī a reciprocal natured relationship that accentuates the value of mutual peer learning, support, growth and respect between tuakana and teina – the older and younger referred to in the whakataukī. This section examines three areas of research concerning peer relationships of mutual learning 1) Tuakana-teina Māori research; 2) Indigenous peer-mentoring research; and 3) Western peer-education research.

Tuakana-teina Māori

There is an increasing need for tuakana-teina support in most contemporary contexts (Herangi et al., 2023; Johnson et al., 2021; Maihāroa et al., 2021; Spiller et al., 2020). The research within such contexts is a central focus of this section, followed by other Indigenous and Western approaches to peer-education. I begin with defining the Māori concepts of tuakana and teina.

Tuakana-teina Foundation and Definition

Tuakana-teina, a Māori concept based on relationships, is grounded in genealogy, reciprocity and intergenerational transmission. Today, tuakana-teina has become more than just a kinship concept, and has also evolved to become epistemological (Thornton, 1998) and pedagogical underpinnings of Kaupapa Māori research (Winitana, 2012). Importantly, this thesis acknowledges and theorises tuakana-teina that is surrounded and supported by foundational works covering cultural (Winitana, 2012), linguistic (Biggs, 1969; Moorfield, 1998), narrative (Thornton, 1998), and political (Came & McCreanor, 2021) spheres. Collectively, these scholars create a scholarship whakapapa and framework legitimising tuakana-teina that is culturally embedded and academically rigorous.

Biggs (1969), linguistically, lays the foundation for tuakana-teina in academia within grammatical and semantic frameworks giving tuakana-teina linguistic integrity for future scholars to expand. Building on Biggs' (1969) linguistic foundation, Moorfield's (1988) work embeds tuakana-teina within daily conversations applying it as a language resource. Moorfield's work further theorises and affirms tuakana-teina as a living relational practice as well as a lexical term. Thornton (1998) extends the tuakana-teina scholarship offering a relative perspective that acknowledges the relational dynamics within Māori oral storytelling, arguing that it affords epistemological deepness to tuakana-teina. Thornton's work validates Māori oral literature and highlights the importance of the relational roles within, and essential to, this tuakana-teina and pūrākau-based thesis. In recent times, Winitana (2012) shifted tuakana-teina theorisation fundamentally from a strictly relational practice to both a relational and pedagogical practice. Framed as an epistemological foundation within Māori education, Winitana delves deep into tuakana-teina fundamentals: relationships, reciprocity, education, and mana-enhancement. Positioned as culturally grounded, Winitana's work offers an alternative to Western pedogeological models, and informs this doctoral research that is conversational and relational with storytelling at its heart.

Collectively, a tuakana-teina theoretical foundation creates a layering of underpinnings that are communicative, epistemological, and importantly, relational. Over time, tuakana-teina has been legitimised culturally and linguistically (Biggs, 1969; Moorfield, 1988), upheld as a narrative intricacy (Thornton, 1998), and theorised as a pedogeological power (Winitana, 2012). These works theorise tuakana-teina as fluid, not a static binary, that enhances mana, supports and strengthens whanaungatanga, tends to hauora, and upholds tikanga. Tuakana-teina has evolved to become a living framework that transmits knowledges, nurtures relationships, and cultivates resilience to apply in research today. Drawn from these foundations is one part of the analysis methods for examining kaumātua tuakana-teina kōrero as living enactments of guiding, reciprocating, and preserving culture.

In Te Ao Māori, tuakana-teina is a customary relationship concept (Mead, 2003) rooted in the principles of manaakitanga (hospitality), whakautu (reciprocity), whanaungatanga (relationships; Nepe, 1991), and whakapapa (genealogy; Hook et al., 2007). Traditionally, tuakana-teina is a mentoring relationship and denotes the significance of a relationship between an elder (tuakana) and younger (teina) sibling and or cousin of the same sex. This relationship can also refer to an experienced and knowledgeable person (tuakana) and less experienced and knowledgeable person (teina; Hook et al., 2007). Contemporarily, the application of the tuakana-teina relationship is evident in educational settings (Rameka & Glasgow, 2017; Rawlings & Wilson, 2013), and becoming increasingly evident in organisational (Spiller et al., 2020) and health and social settings (Callaghan et al., 2018; Oetzel et al., 2020). Such research recognises the value in this traditional Māori relationship in fostering connectedness, reciprocity, support, and learning.

Tuakana-teina Research Contexts

In Aotearoa New Zealand, the literature covering research relating to tuakana-teina Māori is growing. Some research has examined the application and practice of tuakana-teina in educational and health

contexts. Research conducted in educational contexts ranges from pre-schools through to high schools and focuses on student-student and teacher-student relationships and how to implement tuakana-teina within teaching practice (Kensington-Miller & Ratima, 2015; Rewi et al., 2022; Tomsett et al., 2023; van Der Meer & Scott, 2013; Winitana, 2012). Research has also occurred in tertiary education, largely focusing on Māori student success, and integrating mātauranga Māori in teaching practices (Barnett & Te Wiata, 2021; Chittick, 2017; Davis & Came, 2022; Rawlings & Wilson, 2013; Waiari et al., 2021).

Tuakana-teina research within health contexts focuses on the health workforce (Komene et al., 2023; Oetzel et al., 2021; Pihema et al., 2023; Pipi et al., 2021) and health promotion and intervention (Bush et al., 2019; Hunt et al., 2021; Severinsen & Reweti, 2017; Simmonds & Potter, 2020). The following section reviews contexts in which tuakana-teina has been studied and discusses three themes in the literature: Utu (reciprocity), Whenu (connections), and Whakamana (empowerment)

Utu/Reciprocity within the tuakana-teina relationship supports a high level of mutual learning, care, and respect and several studies have shown its importance in the relationship. For instance, Glassey et al. (2023) interviewed five Māori primary school principals in Hawke's Bay region to find out how they integrated traditional Māori knowledge in their practice. Their application of tuakana-teina created "Mātauranga Māori as learning and education experiences" (p. 684) where the principals acknowledged that they were not carriers of all knowledge and that children also carried knowledge. This acknowledgement emphasised the reciprocal relationship and ongoing journey between teaching staff and students. Another study by Callaghan et al. (2018) demonstrated the power of reciprocation by bringing two charter schools (a living village school, and an urban community college) together to integrate Western science and mātauranga Māori (traditional knowledge) to inform their care plans and methods for urban waterways. This resulted in village students (less experienced teina) being mentored by community college students (more experienced tuakana) who taught them Western science. When it came to the

mātauranga Māori, a beautiful reciprocation took place where the older, less-experienced community college students (teina) were mentored by the younger, more-experienced village students (tuakana).

Whenu/connection within the tuakana-teina relationship affords people the opportunity to connect with their culture and community. Multiple studies identify building and developing such connections as invaluable to both parties in the relationship. For example, Waiari et al., (2021) conducted a thematic analysis of six focus groups of 3-8 university students involved in a tuakana tutorial programme. For example, one student shared he withdrew from his degree, but returned the following semester: “Tuakana has changed everything. I have a support system now” (p. 122). In essence the students resisted individualising pressures and instead embraced the Māori concept of whakawhanaungatanga or building connections and relationships through the tuakana tutorial programme. Additionally, Rewi, et al., (2022) examined a tuakana programme at the University of Auckland and found that the programme’s physical space provided students with a strong connection to their Māori culture and a wider support community for their university journey. Another study by Pihema et al. (2023) explored experiences and perspectives of midwifery Māori mentors via kanohi-ki-te-kanohi (in person interviews). They found that being a midwifery Māori mentor connects one to many. Participants talked about their Māori midwifery mentoring community as a ‘midwifery hapū’ or subtribe that provides the mentors with sustenance to help mentees become practicing Māori midwives.

Whakamana/empowerment within the tuakana-teina relationship enabled relational and personal growth and development. Various studies found that being a part of the tuakana-teina relationship provides that sense of personal and relational empowerment. A study by Komene et al. (2023) revealed that a nursing group called Whakarōpū (making a group) empowered nurses to navigate both their cultural and clinical identities with confidence. The study suggests that maintaining an ongoing dialogue is essential for the collective professional development and cultural growth of these nurses. Another study by Rameka, and Glasgow (2017) employed

wānanga (extended symposia) and pūrākau (storytelling) with three Māori bilingual/immersion early childcare education (ECE) services and their wider communities to find out how Māori cultural knowledge can aid the building of culturally responsive care practice for infants and toddlers. The traditional sense and experiences of the tuakana-teina relationship was shared by community members as they recalled their own tuakana-teina relationships growing up. This shared experience highlighted for the participating early childhood educators (ECEs) the importance of teachers taking a step back in their role as the perceived tuakana. In stepping back ECEs facilitated the children's learning to develop, understand, and practice tuakana-teina relationships on their own, trusting in their capabilities to teach, support, and care for each other.

Another study examined a tuakana-teina programme at Massey University's College of Business focusing on mentors supporting Māori distance learning students (Barnett & Te Wiata, 2021). Using a Kaupapa Māori approach, researchers sought to hear the voices, experiences and perceptions of seven Māori mentors through kanohi ki te kanohi (face-to-face) interviews and discussions. The mentors conveyed how being a mentor contributed to their mentor leadership development. International Indigenous research also evidences these themes, and the next section examines that literature.

Indigenous Peer-mentoring

Indigenous peer-education, globally, shares multiple commonalities with tuakana-teina in focusing on relationships, learning, mentorship, reciprocity, and cultural-relevance (Millerick et al., 2021; Sanchez et al., 2023). Research about Indigenous cultural mentoring has prevailed in recent years within academia, especially within Australia, Canada, and the United States. This literature sits mainly within the education discipline and concentrates on youth.

Different Indigenous communities have focuses and populations unique to them. In Australia, most Aboriginal youth mentoring focuses on student achievement and transitions within the education sector (Burgess

et al. 2020; Ferguson et al., 2021; Fredericks et al., 2021; McMahon et al., 2023). Increasingly, there is also an emerging body of Indigenous mentoring programmes within Australian workplaces (Burgess et al., 2020; Burgess & Dyer, 2009; Coff & Lampert, 2019; Hickey et al. 2018; Povey et al., 2023). In Canada, research emphasises First Nations, Inuit and Métis student education success, but also leadership in various sectors (Lopresti et al., 2021; Murry et al., 2022; Pratt et al., 2021). In the United States, there are many Native American and Alaskan Native mentoring frameworks and programmes for at risk youth, and higher education students that aim to address mental wellbeing and academic performance (Pedersen et al., 2024; Reano, 2020; Windchie et al., 2018).

A plethora of Indigenous peer-support/education works around the world also connect with the themes in the tuakana-teina literature. For example, research by Fredericks et al. (2021) investigated the impacts of the National Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) programme on its volunteer mentors in Central Queensland. Using yarning style interviews, researchers explored the perspectives and experiences of the volunteer mentors. The study found that the volunteer mentors viewed being part of the programme as, engaging, empowering, developmental, and reciprocal. The mentors also provided feedback from their mentees, which aligned with their own perspectives. Another study by Murry et al. (2022) in Canada, employed focus groups with Indigenous students in health sciences. The researchers sought to identify the unique mentorship behaviours between Indigenous and non-Indigenous mentors to inform an Indigenous mentorship model. The study identified the importance of Indigenous mentors serving as holistically minded, culturally relevant, role models, connectors to community, and advocates. Further research by Windchief et al. (2018) in the United States, engaged in conversational interviews with native Alaskan and native American students in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics STEM subjects, and sought perspectives and experiences of students to inform a culturally grounded mentorship programme. The resulting themes—cultural humility, relationality, Indigenous worldviews, and resources and supports —

formed the framework for the mentorship programme. As illustrated in the tuakana-teina Māori literature, these Indigenous focused studies, shared concepts of reciprocity, connections, and empowerment, and highlighted the importance of cultural relevance. The next section provides an overview of Western peer-education literature.

Western Peer-education

Peer-education today builds on the foundational works of Topping (1998) who offered a peer-assisted learning framework concentrated on goals and outcomes. In essence, peer-education concerns lay individuals (non-professionals) assisting others (either of the same age, ethnicity, culture, health or other cohort) who share a common health, education or social need (Dennis, 2003). Peer-education is an umbrella term for Western peer-to-peer-education, mentoring, and support (Cooper, et al., 2024; Khong et al., 2015; Le et al, 2024; Philis-Tsimikas et al., 2011; Seymour et al., 2013; Stevens et al., 2015). and includes peer-mentoring (Morris et al., 2017; van der Merwe et al., 2025), peer-support (Yin et al., 2017), peer-leadership (Bailey et al., 2017; Friesen, & Martinez, 2025), and peer-tutoring (Barnard, 2008; Zhang et al 2025).

Within health, peer-education can be defined as the “provision of assistance by a created social network member who possesses experiential knowledge of a specific behaviour or stressor and similar characteristics as the target population, to address a health-related issue of a potentially or actually stressed focal person” (Dennis, 2003, p. 329). These support systems are usually formed by health care professionals and social service agencies (Dennis,) and can include self-help groups.

Internationally, studies have found peer-education to be an effective method for improving various health and social conditions, and economic circumstances (Braun et al., 2012; Cerf, 2023; Dodd et al., 2022; Gottfredson & Wilson, 2003; Haataja et al., 2025; Karwalajtys et al., 2009; Oman et al., 2004). Such studies are informed by social learning theory (Ministry of Health, 2016), theory of reasoned action (Hefford et al., 2005), and diffusion of innovation theory (Rogers, 2003). Peer-education has been studied in

many contexts and particularly within education and health (Klein et al., 2014). Peer-education within education primarily focuses on tertiary student learning (Cui et al., 2015; Peykari et al., 2011; Porteous et al., 2014; Williams et al., 2015). Peer-education spans health broadly and can concern sexual health research and suicide prevention primarily in developing countries, (e.g., Africa and Asia) reproduction (Newman et al., 2022; Peters et al., 2014), and HIV education and support (Campbell et al., 2014; Cornish & Campbell, 2009; Ezelote et al., 2024). Other areas of health research include mental health and wellbeing (Cooper et al., 2024), substance (ab)use (Verbos et al., 2025), and healthy lifestyle behaviours (Bandeira et al., 2022).

Topping (2022) identified a need for valuation of the peer education literature and examined 58 systematic and narrative reviews of peer-education and peer-counselling regarding health and wellbeing. The objective was to determine the overall effectiveness among various peer-led interventions for health and wellbeing outcomes, and specifically in relation to attitudes, behaviours and knowledge. Topping identified an overall change in peoples' attitudes and behaviours because of peer education, and a substantial knowledge gain in terms of scholarship. The review identified significant impacts of peer education within mental health, breastfeeding, HIV/AIDS interventions, and sexual health. These areas had the most substantial gains in terms of knowledge improvement for mentees, and positive changes in behaviours and attitudes related to health and wellbeing. The research also found that context mattered significantly in peer-education and counselling. Topping claimed that effectiveness was positively impactful when organisational factors were managed well (e.g. leadership, support, training, resources, evaluations), and cultural contexts were respected and considered.

In the context of ageing, peer-education has been applied to raise health awareness (Layne et al., 2008; Oetzel et al., 2021; Uitewaal et al., 2004), self-manage chronic conditions (Latkin et al., 2004; Morunga et al., 2024; Philis-Tsimikas, et al., 2011), address social issues (Kocken & Voorham, 1998; Simpson et al., 2021), and enhance physical activity and

fall-prevention in older age (Alfaro et al., 2023; Robinson et al., 1998; Schwartz & Sendor, 1999; Uitewaal et al., 2004).

Qualitative (descriptive-interpretive) research by Coll-Planas et al. (2021) in Spain evaluated the programme “Paths: from loneliness to participation”. The programme’s purpose was to encourage social participation and assuage loneliness of older people who were referred by primary health nurses and social care sector social workers. The programme entailed weekly face-to-face sessions over 15-weeks led by volunteers (socially active and connected older people within the community), nurses, and social worker trained to be peer-mentors for the programme. The study included interviews with 28 programme participants (peer-mentees) and focus groups with peer-mentors. The findings revealed most older participants experienced some decrease in loneliness. The program led to increases in community and social participation, friendship and companionship, along with other changes included improvements to their outlook on life, “new lease on life” with new purpose, and meaning. Even so, the study identified a small group of older participants, primarily widows and widowers, who did not reap these gains. The programme benefits were blocked by their state of loneliness and vulnerabilities. This study links with the empowerment and connection themes of the tuakana-teina studies. However, the value or principle of reciprocity, was missing which is pivotal to tuakana-teina Māori peer relationships.

Tuakana-Teina Summary

Tuakana-teina/Indigenous and peer-education both entail learning from and supporting peers. However, they both have unique features and cultural contexts. Tuakana-teina is culturally and deeply rooted and implemented in Te Ao Māori, whereas peer-education is an umbrella approach that can be adapted to and implemented within various settings such as education and health. Furthermore, tuakana-teina is a fluid practice that can be organic in nature or structured within an organisation and can

be facilitated by formal or informal mentors, whereas peer-education is often implemented within an organisational setting that is structured and run by formal facilitators. Moreover, the relationship within tuakana-teina and peer-education both provide a clear mentor-mentee interaction. However, tuakana-teina accentuates reciprocity and respect and focuses on a mutual care and deep cultural connectedness, whilst peer-education is characteristically mentee and goal focused with an emphasis on equality.

As noted by Winitana (2012), important reminder to researchers wanting to apply tuakana-teina relationships are as follows: (a) remember the origins of tuakana-teina; (b) create a place to enact and talk about tuakana-teina freely; (c) acknowledge blended forms of the tuakana-teina pedagogy which concerns balancing, managing, navigating and negotiating power within the relationship; and (d) acknowledge the differences between tuakana-teina in Te Ao Māori and peer-mentoring from a Pākehā (European) world view.

The literature revealed a significant gap in the tuakana-teina peer - education fields; little research exists within the nexus of older people, ageing, and wellbeing—the Kaumātua Mana Motuhake tuakana-teina peer-support project notwithstanding (see later this chapter). Most of the tuakana-teina peer-to-peer education and support scholarship focuses on youth both at risk and in the education schooling system, and on adults in the workforce or in higher education. Research involving older people as peer-to-peer supporters and educators is largely Western oriented and tends to concern specific health conditions. Therefore, this doctoral study, builds on the Kaumātua Mana Motuhake (KMM) tuakana-teina peer-support project, to address this gap by employing the Indigenous cultural concept of tuakana-teina within the contexts of ageing and wellbeing and Indigenous story-narrative or pūrākau—the topic of the following section.

Ko Te Kai a Te Rangatira He Kōrero - Pūrākau and Narrative Research

This section is titled with the whakataukī “*Ko Te Kai a Te Rangatira he Kōrero*” (Derby & McFarlane, 2018) can be translated as “*the sustenance of a leader is communication.*” The ngako of this whakataukī radiates the leadership qualities of storytelling, communication and knowledge. It highlights the nourishment of communities as stories are shared, wisdom is passed down, and dialogue is exchanged. In the context of this whakatauki, the literature review focused on works that illustrate the art of communication, knowledge exchange, and at the heart, storytelling. Therefore, this section reviews areas of research that include: (1) Pūrākau research; (2) Indigenous storytelling; and (3) Western narrative inquiry.

I begin this pūrākau section with a pūrākau as a means to illustrate, connect and position Te Ao Māori and the academic world in this thesis. This pūrākau tells the beginning of our creation; how our world came to be and how humankind came to exist (e.g., Marsden, 2003; Reilly, 2004; Royal, 2003).

Let me take you back to the very, very beginning of time. To a time when there was nothing. And in Te Ao Māori, this is known as Te Korekore; the world of nothingness or void. There was just nothing..... until there was sign of movement and noise. And then emerged a new world. This world was called Te Pō; the world of darkness or night. But within this world of darkness life emerged. There was a couple, Ranginui (Rangi) our sky father, and Papatūānuku (Papa) our earth mother. Now Rangi and Papa lived tightly together in this world of darkness and embraced each other. And between them, they created several children. From eldest to youngest: Tāwhirimātea (God of wind), Tangaroa (God of sea), Rongā-mā-Tāne (God of cultivated food), Haumia-tiketike (God of uncultivated food), Tūmataunga (God of war), Tāne-mahuta (God of forests), and Rūaumoko (God of earthquakes and volcanoes).

Now Rangi and Papa’s kids lived between their embrace in the world of darkness for quite some time. Then one day, some of the children had had enough of living in such a confined space; living in such darkness. And you can only imagine how it could have been for them to live in such a space. So, they

decided to hold a hui (meeting) to discuss a plan to separate their parents. They wanted space to freely walk around; they wanted light and the ability to see their world. At this hui, the majority decided that their parents must be separated.

There were much debate and squabble of course. Tūmatauenga said firmly “I’ll raise my patu (weapon) and the blow of it will loosen mum and dad’s grip and we’ll be free and able to see Tamanui te Rā (the sun)”. But Tāwhiri-mātea disagreed. He didn’t want to separate his parents and said “how could you even think about hurting our parents like this? They have nurtured and raised us. And you want to reward them like this?” Tūmatauenga responded, “We have asked and pleaded with them to let us see the light, but they won’t listen. This is the only way” So Tūmatauenga raised his patu and as he was about to strike, Tāwhiri-mātea was onto him like a flash. They grappled for a bit until....

Tāne-mahuta stepped in and said “Quiet! Stop! Fighting won’t get us anywhere. Majority have agreed that we can’t keep living like this. I’m sorry Tāwhiri, but we have agreed. With a gentle push of my arms, and without hurting mum and dad, I’ll push them apart.”

The sibling squabble continued for a bit. Tāwhiri-mātea didn’t budge on his position, and Tāne-mahuta stood his ground and gently pushed, and pushed, and pushed. But nothing. He tried again with all his might, releasing his breath just one more time until there was movement. Rangi and Papa started to separate.

And as the separation was happening, light started to seep in and fill the world of darkness. Tāwhiri-mātea’s siblings were in shock and blinded by the rays of Tamanui te Rā. But at last, they were free and able to see. So, from Te Pō, the world of darkness, came Te Ao Mārama, the world of light or enlightenment. And this is the story of how our world was created. How we became to exist. And in Te Ao Māori, we have a saying that goes: Mai I te wheiao, ki Te Ao Mārama. From darkness to the world of light. Tehei wā mauri ora.

This ancient Māori mythical narrative about how our world and humankind was created, encapsulates the essence of this thesis that is pūrākau and tuakana-teina. This story lays a foundation for pūrākau and tuakana-teina in research. The pūrākau itself illustrates movements, relationships, tensions, and empathy with and between worlds, parents and siblings. Importantly, this pūrākau, on one hand, exhibits tuakana-teina

sibling relationships that showcase a tension between Tāwhirimātea – the eldest – and Tāne Mahuta – the youngest – about separating their parents. On the other hand, this pūrākau also displays aroha (love) and affection between siblings, between parents, and between the siblings and parents. Therefore, it is only fitting that our Māori creation story be crafted into this thesis.

Pūrākau Māori

Pūrākau have significantly influenced, moulded and created the historical landscape of Te Ao Māori for generations. Yet, since colonisation, our pūrākau have been misrepresented, misused, and misconstrued as “fables”, “anecdotes” (Lee, 2008), “folklore” (Dewes, 1975), and “legends” (Williams, 1985). There is now a significant call to reclaim pūrākau as a vital and culturally resonant practice, methodology, method, theory and learning tool in Te Ao Māori (Cliffe-Tautari, 2020). Pūrākau preserve historical and cultural repositories of past generations (Cliffe-Tautari) and offer Māori substantial potential to transcend time and space in a multitude of contexts (Cavino, 2019; Cliffe-Tautari; Lee). The following section begins with defining the Māori practice of pūrākau and then discusses contexts in which pūrākau has been applied in research.

Pūrākau Foundation and Definition

Pūrākau, or storytelling, comprises two words: pū refers to root or base and rākau refers to the tree. The image of a tree forms the meaning of pūrākau that reflects a Māori worldview. It symbolises how pūrākau are deeply rooted in Te Ao Māori and our tribe, sub-tribe, community and family, The tree signifies our inter-connectedness with the natural environment, as well as each other, and can be linked to the holistic view of hauora Māori (Durie, 1985; Pere, 1984). Much like water and soil are nutrients for trees to grow, pūrākau are the sustenance for people and communities to grow and develop (Archibald et al,2019).

Pūrākau are more than incredible stories; pūrākau are cultural descriptions, accounts, and narratives that generate understanding, knowledge and inspiration about our social, spiritual and natural worlds (Williams, 1985). One such group of pūrākau is our creation stories about Māori navigation to Aotearoa New Zealand. These pūrākau are grounded in whānau (family), hapu (sub-tribe) and iwi (tribe) to communicate knowledge, lessons, values, that most importantly, weave a uniquely Māori tapestry of culture, past, present, future and entertainment (Lee, 2009). As such, pūrākau were passed down through the generations in the form of tauparapara (incantation to begin a speech), whaikōrero (speeches), whakataukī (proverbs), waiata (songs), pepeha (introductions of self, grounded in relationships with others and places), and karakia (prayers) (Black et al., 2023). In this way, pūrākau as a narrative, or storytelling process connects, nurtures, protects and sustains mātauranga Māori (Lee, 2005).

In recent times, Ihimaera and Hereaka (2019) have connected and inter-woven whakapapa pūrākau (story-telling genealogy) and traditional pūrākau (i.e., the Māori creation story) to and into contemporary times. This work forms a powerful anthology of traditional Māori myths that reclaim, retell and reimagine pūrākau through the minds and voices of contemporary Māori writers. This anthology fuses together a tapestry of traditional Māori myths, modern day contexts, and award-winning Māori writers, such as David Geary, who blend pop-culture and myth, placing Maui in today's Hollywood, as stories reclaimed, retold and reimaged (Geary, 2019). Ihimaera (2020) adds to the anthology with his own journey through Māori mythological space and time reclaiming and retelling traditional Māori creation myths for today's audiences. He weaves modern commentary and Māori story-telling, personal reflection and historical research, and literary flair with tohunga knowledge together to create a layered cloak that honours Māori oral traditions, which is accessible for and relevant to readers today.

Academically, the concept of pūrākau has been reconceptualised by academics (Cliffe-Tautari, 2020; Lee, 2009; Stansfield, 2020; Woodhouse,

2019). Lee (2009) proclaims and reclaims pūrākau as a legitimate way of knowing and being for use in research. Moreover, Lee (2009) argues that pūrākau is a tool to decolonise Māori approaches to research. Lee challenges researchers to move away from narrative inquiry (e.g., Archibald et al., 2019; Pouwhare, 2023) and towards pūrākau; that is, move from a Western to an Indigenous approach. Stansfield (2020) argues that academic disciplines have rediscovered the significance of using pūrākau to create meaning. The meanings of the stories are deeply rooted in Māori culture, and Māori lived experiences echo epistemologies, worldviews, and values. Woodhouse (2019) expands on this perspective:

...I realise that in order to communicate to the reader how my pūrākau has informed my practice, I have sought to explain its wisdom by being overtly explicit. Therefore, I present a wero (challenge) to myself and the wider academy: that we must consciously abandon the dominant belief that academic knowledge needs to be explicit to be legitimate and to have value within the communities we serve. Instead, I suggest we learn to embrace the implicit beauty of knowledge and wisdom that only a carefully crafted pūrākau can encapsulate. (p.15)

Woodhouse's perspective on pūrākau critically and carefully encapsulates the ngako (essence) of what pūrākau is, how pūrākau looks in practice, and why we, the researchers, should foreground pūrākau. Woodhouse's perspective also supports Lee's (2009) wero (challenge) to move away from the Western theory of narrative inquiry, and Stansfield (2020) who emphasises the deeply rooted meanings within pūrākau.

Pūrākau Research Contexts

Māori have explored and applied pūrākau in various evolving contexts, endlessly adjusting, adding, reinventing and fitting narratives to

suit contemporary times whilst holding on to the traditions and origins of pūrākau (Lee, 2009). Pūrākau related research is an integral piece in this ongoing evolution. Even so, pūrākau as a means of communication within the education and health research literature is limited. One significant study explored Māori teachers' work in secondary schools using pūrākau to collect and represent their stories of ako (Māori pedagogy; Lee, 2008). The focus on Māori teacher's communication in teaching, began the reconceptualisation of pūrākau as a cultural Māori response to Western narrative methodologies. Furthermore, the study challenged "early New Zealand 'research' ... that recorded pūrākau as myths and legends" (Lee, 2009, p. 1) and the persistence of these ideas in wider social, political and research contexts.

Despite the limited literature in education and health, studies of pūrākau used in other settings, and broadly connected with wellbeing were reviewed. My review of this literature identified three clear themes. The first theme was *pūrākau as a means to address a problem*. Within the literature, pūrākau in various research disciplines were shared by participants to address health, educational or political issues affecting Māori. For example, Davis and Came (2022) intentionally replaced narrative inquiry method with a pūrākau method to re-indigenise their research methods. The researcher examined a cohort of seven practicing Māori occupational therapists' recollections of their experiences with institutional barriers and the impact these had on their learning. The study identified institutional barriers experienced by the occupational therapy students that included the lack of culturally appropriate pastoral care and support, and cultural disconnections between the Māori students' own knowledge and worldview and institutional approaches to teaching, learning, and assessing work. The students also experienced a lack of culturally competent staff which leads to an unsafe cultural environment.

In another study, Cavino (2019) used a cross-colonial time and space approach engaged with the pūrākau shared by her tūpuna kuia (great-great-grandmother). This pūrākau addressed the relational changes occurring between tāne (Māori men) and wāhine (Māori women) during

the Māori land confiscations that began in 1863, a period when the status and authority of wāhine Māori diminished. Cavino utilised this pūrākau engagement to illustrate how historical pūrākau can serve as a gendered counter-narrative to construct a contemporary pūrākau. Through this cross-colonial exploration of time and space, Cavino aimed to investigate how “what we can claim to know” transforms into “what we can do.” This approach examines how knowledge is shaped and altered across different times and spaces, drawing on the insights of women from the past as well as her own perspectives in the present.

The second theme was *pūrākau as a means to (re)connect* featured participants sharing pūrākau that (re)connected them to their culture, community, and identity. For example, research by Hapeta et al., (2019) examined the correlations between pūrākau and wellbeing of a New Zealand provisional rugby team with a lens on culture, wellbeing, and leadership. The study found that pūrākau strengthened the rugby team’s collective identity and cultivated individuals’ sense of pride, and most of all, belonging. This study demonstrated the power and value of using pūrākau to incorporate Indigenous values in team culture and thereby enhance Māori team members cultural and team connections. Another study by Cliffe-Tautari (2020) explored a pedagogical strategy to engage Māori high school students in learning and particularly about their cultural identities. The study found that pūrākau provided connections in two ways. First, pūrākau offered students connections with their culture and heritage, allowed them to understand what it means to be Māori, and enabled them to engage with their learning and environment. Second, using pūrākau in learning platforms enabled teachers to connect with their students at a deeper and cultural level. The study demonstrated inter-generational cultural knowledge exchange in the teachers sharing traditional and ancient pūrākau with students.

The third theme, *pūrākau as a means to inform*, was another theme that developed from the literature. Participants used pūrākau to inform practices, frameworks and programmes, and policies to improve Māori outcomes within education, health, and society. For example, Standing and

Kahu (2021) explored pūrākau practice in psychological therapies in Aotearoa New Zealand in addition to other therapeutic modalities. The study found that pūrākau held value and benefit for clients from all backgrounds but worked particularly well for Māori clients. Moreover, van Sitter and Hopewell (n.d.) explored how pūrākau can be incorporated into the architectural design process to contribute to the resilience of marae (a sub-tribal hub) in a changing climate. The architectural design method was grounded in place, people, landscapes and water and included multiple drawing and layering processes of specific situations and space sites. The researchers used the Rangi-nui (Sky-father) and Papatūānuku (Earth-mother) creation story to connect land and taniwha (protectors or monsters) stories with mana whenua (people of the lands) from Mitimiti on the West Coast of Northland, Tauranga Moana and Heretaunga on the East Coast of Bay of Plenty, and Hawkes Bay, shared local pūrākau to develop Indigenous architecture. The three themes show the versatility and value of using pūrākau Māori in different research settings. They also reconceptualise pūrākau as a cultural communication tool. The next section discusses storytelling from an Indigenous worldview.

Indigenous Storytelling

As with the Indigenous response to peer-education, Indigenous storytelling prevails in contemporary times within the context of research. In Australia, the Aboriginal peoples refer to Indigenous storytelling as 'Yarning' (Bessarab & Ng'Andu, 2010; Shay, 2021; Stoneham et al., 2021), whilst in the United States and Canada, it can be referred to as 'Story-work' (Archibald, 2008; Davidson, 2019; MacMath & Hall, 2018; Wyld & Fredericks, 2015). Narratives aid in transforming trauma into resilience and hope (Johnson-Jennings et al., 2020).

The decolonising story-work approach among Indigenous communities embodies traditional creation stories (Cidro, 2012; Datta, 2018) and historical accounts (Archibald, 2008; Smith, 2019), which are used to help Indigenous peoples to re-connect to their culture and to heal from the historical trauma that occurred through colonisation (Osmond &

Phillips, 2019; Warin et al., 2022). In Canada, First Nations, Inuit and Metis communities emphasise elders and their role as knowledge keepers (Archibald & Parent, 2019; Iseke, 2013;). In Australia, Aboriginal communities emphasise Dreamtime narratives that connect to people and land (Anderson et al., 2018; Barlo et al., 2020). In the United States, Native Americans and Alaskan Natives emphasise narratives that include moral lessons (Marin et al., 2020; Roy, 2016; Russell, 2019). Like their counterparts in Aotearoa New Zealand, Indigenous peoples around the globe are having to adjust, reinvent, and change as the environmental, social, political and cultural landscapes evolve (Ham, 2021; Jernigan & Roach, 2021). Indigenous communities have had to integrate oral traditions (e.g., oral stories, dance, art, and song;) with contemporary methods (e.g. literature and multimedia). Stories of leadership and knowledge transmission (Lozano, 2024), spiritual connection to our environment (Cloud & Redvers, 2023), and lessons of cultural survival and resilience (Gregory, 2019) are evident throughout the literature.

The decolonising story response in research, is important to international Indigenous communities globally. Decolonising stories contribute to cultural preservation, transmission, practice, knowledge, values, histories, and health and wellbeing (Archibald, 2008; Smith, 2019). Archibald provides several key principles to guide and map Indigenous story-work in research. These principles are respect, responsibility, reverence, reciprocity, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy. These principles are reflected in several Indigenous studies of story-work (e.g. Atalay, 2019; Sawyer et al., 2024; Shay, 2019) that also align with the themes in the pūrākau literature.

For example, Sawyer et al., (2024) employed Indigenous storywork to understand the experiences of six First Nations Indigenous mentees in health sciences in Canada's Mentorship Network Program. Focusing on Indigenous mentees' voices, the study identified three themes of traditional ways of learning, struggling, and overcoming that provided others with stories of Indigenous experiences in health science. This study reflects the pūrākau literature theme of "pūrākau to inform" as it contributes to

informing how health sciences can better support up and coming students and workforce, inform Indigenous mentorship programs.

An Australian study (Shay, 2019) developed a Collaborative Yarning Methodology (CYM). The paper claims CYM to be a culturally responsive and appropriate theoretical framework that offers aboriginal peoples a platform to voice, collaborate, engage, and represent in working with non-Indigenous researchers to collect and analyse data. This research echoes the pūrākau literature theme of “pūrākau to address” as it addressed important Indigenous ethical considerations and issues regarding data collection and data analysis in research.

Another study (Atalay, 2019) drew on the Anishinabe (United States) concepts of health and wellbeing to examine how the repatriation of ancestral remains and cultural artifacts contributes to Anishinabe wellbeing and healing. The research found healing occurred via repatriation, embodied practice, and storywork. This study resonates with the pūrākau literature theme of “pūrākau to (re)connect” as it highlighted that healing and wellbeing of Anishinabe was achieved by being re-connected to their ancestors’ remains and cultural artifact.

The three studies emphasise the critical role of Indigenous storytelling and how it contributes to preserving Indigenous knowledge and fosters healing and wellbeing. The studies also showcase how Indigenous storywork may transform research methodologies to include, respect, and support Indigenous communities more intently, to offer better insights for wellness, educational and cultural practices. The next section offers a brief summary of the Western world’s narrative inquiry.

Western Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry is a qualitative research term that concerns the study of human experiences via stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 1991). Narrative inquiry entails examining and presenting of human narratives by gathering a person’s and or peoples’ real-life stories to explore their understandings and sense of their lived reality (Pino et al., 2022). Methods include oral histories, chronicles, interviews, discussions, focus groups,

journals and diaries, biographies and autobiographies, field notes, and artifacts and photos (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994). Such methods enable researchers to investigate the complexities that create human realities and stories that reflect and provide meaning and messages behind the human experience (Fraser, 2004). Several principles underpin narrative inquiry to maintain a story focus within the research process (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). These principles are place, temporality and sociality. Place focuses on and examines how specific locations and environments shape human experience. Temporality, focuses and examines how times of the past, present, and future contribute to the human experience. Finally, sociality, focuses and examines and how social and personal situations influence culture, relationships and interactions that add to the human experience (Hutchinson, 2015). The following section briefly outlines narrative inquiry and its principles.

The origins of narrative inquiry in research were the human sciences in the later part of the 20th century (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2019). Since then, the narrative inquiry approach to research has been employed in many contexts and countries world-wide. In the social sciences for example, narrative inquiry has examined the lived experiences of refugees, women as second-class citizens, and prisoners (Abkhezr et al., 2020; Felix, 2024; Marvasti et al., 2019; O'Grady et al., 2018; Sonday et al., 2020; Zucchini et al., 2022). Narrative inquiry has also examined lived experiences within education, including higher education, high school, music, and people studying or working in linguistics, (Barkhuizen, 2022; Benson, 2014; Brestler, 2020; Chan, 2017; Clandinin, 2019; Ghanbar et al., 2024; Mertova & Webster, 2019; Stauffer, 2020; Trahar & Ming, 2015). Within health, narrative inquiry has explored narratives shared and told by patients or users of health services including intensive care and mental health services, individuals living with illnesses, healthcare professionals (e.g., nurses family physicians), and those within food nutrition (Foxall, et al., 2021; Haydon & van der Riet, 2017; O'Kane & Pamphilon, 2016; Wang & Geale, 2015).

One illustrative study is research by Molinaro et al., (2024) who conducted two narrative interviews with 20 Canadian family physicians to explore their feelings, and emotions, about caring for patients who have experienced ill health needs associated to social inequities. The results showed that the family physicians experienced moral distress in these situations. The moral distresses concerned patients access to health and social welfare programmes, policies governing physician remuneration, and the scope of their practice. These systemic and structural barriers inhibited physicians in providing quality of care for patients with high and complex social needs for timely and accessing quality resources and supports. These findings are underpinned by principles of place, temporality and sociality as past and present inequitable political structures and systems have negatively contributed to the lived realities and experiences of family physicians, and their patients who are the ones suffering from social inequities.

Although narrative inquiry is commonly applied in qualitative research, it is increasingly applied within quantitative research where narratives complement quantitative data (Hira & Hynes, 2021; Kelly & Bailey, 2021; Ritter, et al., 2023). One such example of narrative inquiry being used alongside quantitative data is a study by Kelly and Bailey (2021) who examined narrative story stem methodologies (NSSM; a technique employed to prompt responses which help to expose sensitive information and internal mental process via storytelling), spanning three decades. The study aimed to underline NSSM's versatility and value when researching human development and behaviours. The research reviewed the application of NSSM across various disciplines and ages, reporting on the qualitative and quantitative methods. The study highlighted NSSM effectiveness in that it offers insights to individuals' own understandings of their lived experiences and provides an understanding of developmental milestones. However, a major weakness of this study was that it lacked cultural considerations that would offer a deeper examination of cross-cultural factors. These two studies showcase the value in narrative inquiry in that it provides an additional and more in-depth layer of understanding

of and insight to a phenomenon that quantitative methods cannot offer research.

Pūrākau Conclusion

Pūrākau, Indigenous storywork and Western narrative inquiry have storytelling at the heart of its existence. Although these approaches value people and communities with the art of storytelling at the core, they each have their own unique features and cultural origins and contexts.

Pūrākau is deeply grounded and implemented within Te Ao Māori and traditionally encompasses narratives of historical accounts and creation stories. Pūrākau was, and is, traditionally purposed to transmit Māori knowledge that encompasses values, histories, traditions, and stories, and contemporarily purposed to resist the colonial narrative, reclaim and legitimise Māori ways of knowing and being. Furthermore, pūrākau, methodologically, is applied within a Kaupapa Māori research approach that is rooted in family, communities, sub-tribal and tribal knowledges and practices to examine and present the viewpoints and experiences of Māori to decolonise research practices. In sum, pūrākau is rooted in Te Ao Māori and a tool for cultural revitalisation, political push-back, and educational purposes in addition to storytelling.

Indigenous story work, like pūrākau, is grounded in Indigenous epistemology, ontology and axiology that also includes narratives of historical accounts and creation stories. Furthermore, storywork also provides the means to transmit Indigenous knowledge that is used contemporarily to reclaim and legitimise Indigenous ways of knowing, and to also pushback on old colonial narratives.

Narrative inquiry is employed to co-create and tell the stories of peoples lived experiences, which are informed by their environments, relationships, and times (past, present and future). In sum, narrative inquiry is a Western research tool used in by non-Indigenous researchers, in a wide range of settings to investigate social phenomena by collecting and telling stories of the lived human experience.

My literature review of story-narrative research identified two clear opportunities within the pūrākau scholarship. The first opportunity is the critical need for further research that contributes to, develops, extends, and strengthens the pūrākau scholarship. Research that foregrounds, prioritises, and privileges pūrākau is limited, and therefore, more research is needed in this space. The second opportunity is that the literature fails to capture pūrākau (voices, perspectives, and experiences) of kaumātua in the contexts of ageing, wellbeing, and tuakana-teina. Finally, the pūrākau literature focuses more on what pūrākau do and provide rather than how pūrākau unfold within the research. Therefore, this doctoral study aimed to explore the stories of kaumātua who were part of the KMM tuakana-teina project. The final section of this literature review looks more closely at older people and ageing research. It begins with the contexts of kaumātua and Indigenous elders and ageing and ends with an overview of Western older people and ageing.

Mā Te Huruhuru Ka Rere Te Manu - Kaumātua and Ageing Research

This section is titled with the whakataukī “*Mā Te Huruhuru ka Rere Te Manu*” (Ellery et al., 2020) and can be translated to “*adorn the bird with feathers so it may soar.*” The ngako (essence) of this whakataukī concerns the beauty of the ageing process and highlights the ongoing learning humans experience as they go through life. The feathers mentioned in the whakataukī, reflect a person’s experiences, skills, knowledge, and recourses needed to keep learning, growing, developing and thriving—much like a bird needs its feathers to fly. The message is that with fostering, educating, and preparing, people can live full, thorough and independent lives, into older age. The literature concerning health, wellbeing, and ageing is categorised in two sections: (1) Kaumātutanga health and wellbeing research; and (2) Kaumātua Mana Motuhake research.

The identified opportunities, gaps and needs within the scholarships of tuakana-teina and pūrākau have led to this doctoral research, and Kaumātua Mana Motuhake project (KMM) in two ways. First, as presented

in Chapter One, the original, innovative, and novel project collaboration that included kaumātua, university academics, community organisations and researchers, doctoral students, and Te Ao Māori (Māori World View) employed the tuakana-teina concept within the contexts of peer-education and elders. Second, I was part of the design and implementation (team and process) of the tuakana-teina peer-education and support programme that offered the tools and skills for kaumātua to become the tuakana in this context and study. My doctoral work also included analysing stories shared by kaumātua, from the KMM project, to specifically look at how their stories unfolded, what cultural and communication features were employed to get there, and how relationships developed.

Kaumātuatanga – Older People and Ageing

Kaumātuatanga concerns older people and ageing. Health and wellbeing research within the context of ageing sits high on the health and social agendas of many nations including Aotearoa New Zealand (Ageing Well National Science Challenge, 2015; Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing, 2002; Human Department of Health and Human Services, 2010; World Health Organisation WHO, 2002). Researchers and governments alike are now responding to significant demographic and social changes (Peel et al., 2004; WHO, 2024) as industrialised populations age. An extensive body of literature concerning ageing focuses on two key areas. The first area examines the effects of ageing on physical (e.g. Liu & Yan, 2007; Perkin et al., 2016; Phillips, 2003), mental (e.g. Fox et al., 2007; Patel & Prince, 2001; Whitehead, 1990), and social (e.g. Adams et al., 2011; Pinguart & Sorensen, 2000) health and wellbeing, as well as healthcare providers and services for older people (Oetzel et al., 2015; Simpson et al., 2015; WHO, 2008). The second area explores older people's views and experiences of retirement and positive ageing (Chong et al., 2006; Börsch-Supan et al., 2009). Moreover, there is increasing research about Māori kaumātua and ageing (e.g., Bourke et al., 2023; Butcher & Breheny, 2016;

Edwards, 2010; Dyall et al., 2013; Hayman et al., 2012; McGruer et al., 2019; Wiles & Jayasinha, 2013; Wright-St Clair, 2008).

There is also a growing focus of the “quality of ageing”, and how the ambiguous nature of the concept causes confusion due to inconsistent definitions and interpretations (Peel et. al, 2004). The quality of life of older people has been viewed as positive (Bowling, 1993; Kendig & Browning, 1997), productive (Kerchner & Pegues, 1998), successful (Rowe & Kahn, 1997), and active (WHO, 2002). Such positively framed ideas of ageing contrast with common negative perceptions of life in older age (e.g., Simpson & Cheney, 2014) that are often informed by the notion that health and wellbeing are a primary dimension of quality of life. This brings into play the notion of healthy ageing. and challenges and transitions in later life that impact wellbeing. More broadly, the health philosophies, cultural understandings of older people, aging, and wellbeing, and models of health services need to be considered (Durie, 1985; Health New Zealand, 2023; Lotoala et al., 2023; Morunga et al., 2024).

The following sections focus on challenges and transitions within the contexts of older people and ageing. First, I review definitions and explore ageing from a Māori perspective. Second, I offer an overview of older people and ageing from Indigenous perspectives from Indigenous peoples of Australia, Canada, and America. Third, I briefly summarise ageing from and within a Western context. Finally, I describe the research context of the KMM project and the relationship with this doctoral study,

Kaumātua Defined

Kaumātuatanga translates as older age, later life, or latter years. Kaumātua on its own and as a noun means elder, older man, and/or woman. Some may take the view that grey hair and wrinkles indicate great wisdom, knowledge and skills acquired over life’s course, and therefore age qualifies someone for kaumātua status (Katene, 2010; Winiata, 1967). In this respect, ageing for Māori comes with “...status, tradition and integrity of their people” (Durie, 1999, p. 102), where older age involved certain roles, responsibilities and relationships. For example, roles include kaikōrero

(speaker for whānau (the wider family), hapū (subtribe), and [iwi]), guardians of tikanga (customs, values, behaviours), whānau, whenua (lands), sea and rivers), decision maker, teacher, advisor and mentor (pertaining to the wellbeing of whānau and whenua; Barlow, 1991; Durie, 2003; Edwards, 2010; Katene, 2010; Mead, 2003; Walker, 1996). Responsibilities often include upholding, carrying out and passing on tikanga (Barlow, 1991; Mead, 2003). However, becoming or being a kaumātua is not limited to age, and there are other factors involved.

Kaumātua are often encouraged, by their whānau, hapū and iwi, to take up responsibilities for the interests of the people (Durie, 2007). Durie et al. (1997 as cited in Edwards, 2010) asserts “...kaumātua is more about the role and function than about the age” (p. 20). Therefore, some would argue that age is only a small part of kaumātutanga and that younger people (those in their 40s and 50s) can fulfil the role as kaumātua given their incomparable knowledge and skills and lack of aged kaumātua in their whānau, hapū and/or iwi (Durie, 2003; Edwards, 2010; Tauroa & Tauroa, n.d.). The expectation of kaumātua (older Māori in general) is that they have the knowledge of tikanga, but this is not always the case (Mead, 2003).

One qualitative study looked at the changing role of kaumātua within a hapū of Aotearoa New Zealand over time (Davies, 2008) with most of the findings being consistent with the descriptions of kaumātua roles described above (Barlow, 1991; Durie, 2003; Edwards, 2010; Katene, 2010; Mead, 2003; Walker, 1996). However, the study found the first language of kaumātua of the past was te reo Māori, whilst kaumātua of the present spoke English as their first language seen as resulting from colonisation and urbanisation (Davies, 2008). Even so, being limited to English language did not entirely inhibit the process of carrying out kaumātua roles and duties, with marae (a communal/sub-tribal hub) for Māori culture. Other roles such as, social and spiritual activities (e.g., funerals), and formal duties such as whaikorero (formal speech) were the exception.

Stephens (2002) used mixed methods to examine intergenerational tensions associated with the roles of kaumātua as cultural leaders and younger adults as professionals/experts within the settlement process of

Treaty of Waitangi claims. The study identified two concerns. The first was whether kaumātua felt confident and knowledgeable to contribute to the process of dealing with Treaty of Waitangi settlement claims. The second was the tension caused by excluding younger Māori from the process due to the concern that including them would have sidelined kaumātua from the political processes of treaty claims.

Together these studies highlight the importance of the skills required within a traditional cultural context (marae environment) and a modern-day Western context (the settlement process). This situation raises the issue of age and experience as contributors to kaumātua status in a modern-day context. Current political, societal, cultural and intergenerational tensions mean that some kaumātua need to navigate the new and old roles and expectations. This is in addition to managing life transitions and the challenges of ageing, which the next section discusses.

Kaumātua Contexts

Research on kaumātua and health and wellbeing is growing (Dawes et al., 2022). Research concerning kaumātua in the context of ageing and health and wellbeing has spanned multiple decades (Allport et al., 2008; Dawes et al. 2022; Waldon, 1994). Recent research has examined kaumātua receiving end-of-life care (Gott et al., 2015; Nelson-Becker & Moeke-Maxwell, 2020; Moeke-Maxwell et al., 2018; Simpson et al., 2022); transitioning to residential care (Hikaka & Kerse, 2021; Holdaway et al., 2021; Keelan et al., 2023; McDonald et al., 2023); contributing to wellbeing framework developments (Dawes et al., 2021; Edwards, 2010; Kara et al., 2011; Marques et al., 2021; Wen, 2006); and conceptualising their own perspectives, understandings, learnings, and knowledges on ageing and wellbeing (Cram, 2022; Findsen, 2018; Gibson et al., 2024; Herbert et al., 2017).

A few studies examine challenges and life transitions in older age that face kaumātua (Davies, 2023). For example, research by Morunga et al., (2024) used interviews and focus groups with 15 kaumātua to understand their views of pain in relation to the effects on self, and pain

management in the form of traditional practices and mātauranga (Māori knowledge). The study identified three components of pain management. First, the aspects of pain were multidimensional and went beyond physical to include mental, emotional and historic trauma, grief and loss, and tikanga breaches. Second, whakawhanaungatanga/relationships were a means to healing through strengthening connections with people, family, ancestral land, environment, and the spiritual realm. Third, tino rangatiratanga/self-determination empowered self-pain management and self-determination in making health decisions. This study brings to light the significance of cultural approaches for older people to manage pain and thereby can inform culturally relevant pain services and support for kaumātua. The study also illustrates aspect of transitions in later life such as managing change in health conditions.

Another study (Butcher & Breheny, 2016) interviewed eight kaumātua to explore how connection to place and perceptions of ageing influenced experiences of ageing. Researchers found that a fundamental element to ageing for kaumātua was their relationship to land that enabled identity and cultural connection and maintenance and contributed to overall wellbeing. Although balancing of life's demands and their attachment to place, land and community was a struggle, these were a critical element to healthy ageing. Finally, a healthy and comfortable dependence on whānau (family) and whenua (land) was crucial in allowing kaumātua to live by Māori values, and especially whakawhanaungatanga (relationship building). This research highlights how important place, identity, and culture are as kaumātua age and address life-transitions. This study touches on loss of independence but also “flipped the script” to focus on healthy and comfortable dependence instead of ill-health. The study results can encourage other kaumātua to be comfortable with their dependence for better wellbeing in later life for them.

Dawes et al. (2022) undertook a systematic review to gain a better understanding of the current state of knowledge, development and progression of scholarship in the health and wellbeing of kaumātua. Dawes et al. found that research contributed to framework developments and

approaches to advance Māori aspirations and kaumātua. Although kaumātua contributed to these developments and approaches, they largely contributed their knowledge of Te Ao Māori (the worldview), culture and language, to inform and conceptualise frameworks and approaches. Dawes et al. argue that there is a significant lack of perspectives from kaumātua about how they understand, view, and experience health, wellbeing, and ageing, and that kaumātua voice must be central to further research. Prioritising kaumātua voice will result in better understandings their needs and helping to direct resources and design appropriate services that cater for kaumātua and their whānau. This study further demonstrates that kaumātua voices can be prioritised, privileged and honoured in my study. The next section prioritises and discusses older people and ageing from and within the international Indigenous scholarship.

Indigenous Elders and Ageing

Research within kaumātua and ageing scholarship, can also be positioned within international Indigenous settings where Indigenous elders' views, experiences and understandings of ageing are comparable. Within Indigenous communities, elders are seen as leaders, mentors, cultural historians, and are involved and engaged community/tribal members (Eades et al., 2021; Red Horse, 1980; Stiegelbauer, 1996; Warburton & McLaughlin, 2007). In addition, the meaning of ageing among other Indigenous groups around the world has been examined through research. For example, Indigenous elders from Southwest Alaska define ageing not by age but by one's enactment of spiritual, emotional and physical health and wellbeing, engagement with community, and experiential knowledge gained overtime (Lewis, 2011). Aboriginal elders from Sydney Australia view ageing as being engaged in roles that are culturally meaningful and strengthen an individual's identity and the health and wellbeing of their family and community (Waugh & Mackenzie, 2011). Anishnawbe elders from Canada see ageing as having knowledge of traditions that are lived, communicated and shared with family and community (Stiegelbauer, 1996). These definitions of ageing all highlight

the importance of community engagement, and knowledge sharing and transmitting. Such definitions support the status of elders as leaders, mentors, cultural historians and integral community members.

International Indigenous research of Indigenous elders experiencing challenges and life-transitions in ageing is scant. However, there is some literature from Canada, Australia, and America that examines life-transitions. For example, in research by Tonkin et al. (2018), a collaboration of researchers used interviews and surveys to investigate how Dakelh elders (First Nations from Central Interior, British Columbia, Canada) perceived healthy social engagement via surveys and interviews. Focusing on tackling elder loneliness and isolation, researchers wanted to identify elder desires and barriers to inform improvements in existing elder programmes that address their social wellbeing and needs. The analysis found that elder desires for tackling isolation and loneliness included knowledge (values, histories, stories, skills) sharing, social community programme development and implementation, intergenerational interactions, and health and wellbeing focused activities. The barriers to participating in such programmes included lack of available programme information, struggle for reliable transportation, conflicting calendar schedules, and personal health conditions and concerns. The study highlights the importance of collaboration and co-creation between community and elders, and researchers and health organisations, and offering culturally relevant elder programmes.

Another study by McCausland et al. (2023) aimed to identify the meanings of ageing well with 22 Aboriginal elders from Walgett, Northern New South Wales, Australia. The study involved a long-term partnership between the University of New South Wales and the community-controlled Dharriwaa Elders Group (DEG). Using Aboriginal methodology informed by elders, findings from interviews and focus groups revealed the continuing contemporary impacts of colonial past, structures and value on ageing well. The findings also included the importance and fulfilment of elder roles as “wellspring’ for younger generations, the value and constraint of independence and choice, the support of the DEG in the ongoing

conceptualising of Aboriginal elder health and wellbeing, and the creation of culturally safe and relevant aged care without parity with other non-Indigenous elders. This study emphasised the culturally co-created and collaborated Aboriginal elder health and wellbeing research and programming. The study reinforces the need for Indigenous elder voice, knowledge and worldviews in research and Indigenous development in aged care. This study illustrates the value and constraints of independence and choice for Aboriginal elder experiencing life-transitions and of loss of independence.

Another study (Goins et al., 2023) investigated the challenges, barriers to, and experiences of elder engagement with evidence-based programmes (EBP) of American Indian (AI), Alaskan Native (AN), and Native Hawaiian (NH) elders. An AI, AN, and NH EBP Advisory Council was formed to work in collaboration with researchers and produced an online survey for Indigenous elders. The team also conducted 20 listening sessions with Indigenous elders (AI, AN, and NH) and then with programme services employees. Information arising from the Indigenous elders' listening sessions were definitions of Indigenous ageing-well, motivators for and barriers to participation, preferred activities, and unmet health and wellbeing needs. The survey identified socialisation and engagement, cultural activities, nutrition and diabetes, and caregiving, as key considerations for programmes to include/address. Furthermore, of survey respondents, 76% had heard of EBPs, whilst 24% said no EBPs were running in their communities. The study stressed the crucial role of collaboration between academics/researchers, programme developers, federal agencies, local organisations, and prioritising Indigenous elders' voices, world views, knowledges, and experiences for ensuring easily accessible and culturally relevant EBPs for AI, AN, and NH elders. Research within Māori kaumātua and ageing scholarship, and Indigenous settings can also be considered with regard to Western research. An overview of elders and ageing research within a Western paradigm is presented in the following section.

Western Older People and Ageing

In a Western context, New Zealand views ageing well as being more than preventing ill-health and disability and focuses on “acute and restorative care”, “living well with long-term conditions”, “supporting people with high and complex needs”, and “respectful end of life” (Healthy Ageing Strategy, 2016, p. 19). Therefore, ageing well is defined as “...maximising physical and mental health and wellbeing, independence and social connectedness as people age” (Healthy Ageing Strategy, 2016, p. 19). Similarly, Health Canada defines healthy ageing as “...a lifelong process optimising opportunities for improving and preserving health and physical, social and mental wellness, independence, quality of life and enhancing successful life-course transitions” (Health Canada, 2001, as cited in Peel et al., 2004, p. 115). Healthy ageing is also viewed as “the process of developing and maintaining the functional ability that enables well-being in older age” (World Health Organisation, 2024). All three views talk about ageing as a process and acknowledge social, physical and psychological dimensions of healthy ageing. Māori and Indigenous views of ageing, however, add a culturally spiritual element to the meaning of healthy ageing.

In the context of life transitions and challenges in ageing, a breadth of research can be identified from United States of America (Lee, et al., 2023; Little & Morley, 2023), Australia (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2023; O’Loughlin et al., 2017), United Kingdom (Newman et al., 2022; Tanner et al., 2022) and Sweden (Walsh et al., 2022). For example, international studies have been conducted to provide services and interventions to support older people through life’s changes (Kim et al., 2022; Wilhelm et al., 2014) and explore older people’s views and experiences of ageing (Lee et al., 2013; Urbaniak et al., 2023). Studies have also examined the mental wellbeing and physical health of older people as they navigate ageing challenges and transitions (Evans et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2020; Zaidi, 2014). International studies specifically relating to life transitions also exist. These studies include topics such as the loss of independence (Mueller et al., 2023), loss of driver licence (Nyberg et al., 2021; Waite, 2022), loss of spouse (Spahni et al., 2015; Standridge et al.,

2024; Vos den Ouden et al., 2023), retirement (Heaven et al., 2016; Lindwall et al., 2017; Sohler et al., 2021), and changes in health conditions (Greenwood, 2022; Hünteler & Hank, 2023). The studies provide views and perspectives about the transitions to inform and implement policy and or services, supports, or programme interventions. They also, offer ways to evaluate and improve existing programmes, interventions and or support and care services that cater for a specific life transition.

Kaumātuatanga Summary

Research in the scholarship of older people, ageing, and health and wellbeing has grown and developed over recent years and is still limited given the growing number of aged peoples. There are clear differences significant between Māori and Western research that explores the challenges and life-transitions older people experience. Research about kaumātua within the context of ageing and how they experience life-transitions and challenges was particularly challenging to identify. Nonetheless, a few studies explored some transitions, specifically related to change in health conditions (e.g., pain management) and loss of independence. Some studies flipped the “deficit” story to focus on a comfortable dependency on family, highlighting significant and healthy connections and relationships with land. Indigenous elders and ageing could position comparably to kaumātuatanga, and their common views of ageing. This includes the importance and need for more collaborative and co-created cultural and Indigenous elder informed research and programming. Whereas the Western counterparts covered research in various life transitions, they emphasised more the need to explore and address life-transitions and challenges among kaumātua as they age.

Therefore, there is a significant gap in research on older people and ageing that 1) examined kaumātua within a formal tuakana-teina setting that was evidenced and strength based, and kaumātua led; and 2), captured and presented stories of kaumātua during life transitions that looked at how their shared stories unfolded with and between kaumātua tuakana-teina pairings.

The next section examines the KMM programme on which my thesis is drawn from. The programme took a strengths-based approach to address the challenges and life transitions of ageing, specifically relating to loss of driver licence, loss of spouse, loss of independence, change in health conditions, and retirement of kaumātua.

Kaumātua Mana Motuhake Tuakana-teina Project (KMM)

As evident in the literature, Indigenous and Māori researchers have highlighted several key needs for future research. The first is the need for collaborative approaches to research of and with Indigenous peoples. The second is the need for more research into kaumātua as they experience life-transitions and challenges in later age. Third is the need to prioritise and privilege kaumātua and their voices in research. The Kaumātua Mana Motuhake (KMM) project was therefore carried out, and in a response to addressing health and ageing inequities among kaumātua (Oetzel et al., 2019; Oetzel et al., 2020). The section describes the programme and why it was important, the research design, and the core findings.

Research Overview and Rationale. This research was a culturally-centred and strengths-based study intervention that designed, developed, piloted, implemented and evaluated a peer-support programme for kaumātua (aged 55-years-plus) experiencing and managing life-transitions in later life. The focus was to create the opportunity and environment to enable and foster communicative relationships between kaumātua underpinned by a relational tuakana and teina model (Oetzel et al., 2019; Simpson et al., 2020). The project was a collaboration bringing together community kaumātua, organisations and researchers, and university academics and doctoral students. The research was part of the Ageing Well National Science Challenges programme funded by New Zealand's Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE. 2015).

The KMM project was a response to research and statistics that highlighted the significant health and ageing outcome disparities and inequities between older Māori and non-Māori people. New Zealand's

population is ageing, and health and social outcomes, related to life-transitions (loss of spouse, loss of driver licence, loss of independence, change in health conditions, and retirement) are changes and challenges facing older peoples. Foundational to the KMM project, was a strengths-based approach to the research that enabled kaumātua “to be solutions to their own challenges” (Oetzel et al., 2020, p. 2), which aligns with MBIE’s aim to enable all New Zealanders in later life to reach their full potential.

Furthermore, the research team identified the significant research opportunity within the ageing, health and wellbeing, and peer-education scholarships. The KMM team sought to “flip the script” of older people and ageing from being social and economic burdens to being highly valued members of our communities (Simpson et al., 2020). The aim was to conduct a novel, unique and innovative research project in two ways. First, the project was grounded in Te Ao Māori (Māori worldview) and the Māori cultural concept of tuakana-teina was employed within the context of Western peer-education and support, and older people and ageing. Second, the project comprised a multidisciplinary, co-creation, and collaboration between kaumātua, a community organisation, health providers, community and university researchers.

Research Process. The KMM was a co-led project that involved a multidisciplinary collaboration between the Rauawaawa Kaumātua Charitable Trust (Rauawaawa) and its research team and community of kāumātua, University of Waikato and its research team and doctoral students (which I was a part of). The KMM project sought to address the mana motuhake (identity, autonomy) of kaumātua (older Māori aged 55 or older) within an urban, kaumātua governed and lead, community-based organisation. The funded research investigated the health outcomes of a tuakana-teina/peer-education model in relation to wellness, social connectedness, life enhancement, independence and significant life transitions (Oetzel, et al., 2019).

Bonded and underpinned by community-based participatory and Kaupapa Māori research, methods, and values, the research team established the Board and Expert Advisory Groups (BAG and EAG). The BAG

involved ten Rauawaawa trustees (nine aged 70 plus) who guided and advised the KMM project applying a for-*kaumātua*-by-*kaumātua* approach. The EAG included 12 members (aged 55-70) and involved government departments, specialist services for older people (that focused on health, social and Māori), who advised and gave feedback about the development, piloting and implementation of the wider KMM project. Such integration and approach ensured that *kaumātua* were central to and led the research. Essentially, a by *kaumātua*, for *kaumātua*, and with *kaumātua* approach bestowed both value and responsibility upon the *kaumātua* involved (Simpson, et al., 2020).

Before the KMM project was formally implemented, Simpson et al. (2020) developed a tuakana training programme titled the Tuakana Orientation Programme (TOP). The aim of the TOP was to help, guide and provide tuakana (the peer-educators) with the information and skills to becoming tuakana in the project. The TOP was developed with guidance from hui (meetings) with the BAG and EAG; and with valuable insights from and wānanga (focus groups) with *kaumātua* themselves. The TOP development, first, included a review of literature pertaining to tuakana-teina, peer-education, health, older people and ageing whilst consulting with community *kaumātua* and health workers. Second, the production of a TOP manual, a Culture, Health and Safety plan, and a resource booklet for *kaumātua* in the programme were then produced. The TOP manual provided the programme's rationale, structure and overview of the programme, and detailed sections with instructions for each wānanga (session) for the tuakana. The resource kete (booklet) entailed vital information and services as per the *kaumātua* insights for the teina. Once the orientation programme was developed, it was then approved by both boards and produced by the team to then pilot.

The pilot of the programme was held in another town and with another community led organisation (like the Rauawaawa) and was delivered by the KMM's TOP team. The pilot consisted of a four-hour wānanga (meeting session with information) each day over a three-day period. Day one included recruitment of 21 *kaumātua* (tuakana and teina

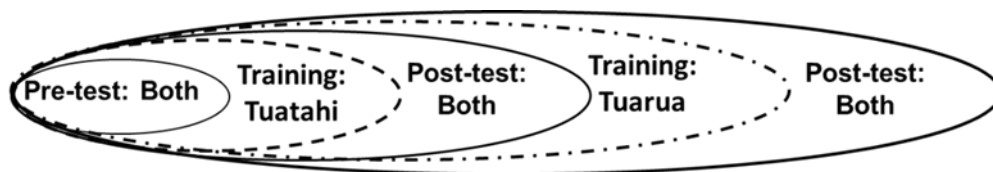
aged 57-81 years), whakawhanaungatanga (a meet and greet), presentation of the KMM project and TOP pilot, and completion of a drafted pre-test questionnaire. The second and third day entailed wānanga about becoming a tuakana and teina kaumātua, and a practical element that included building and establishing a tuakana-teina relationship to discuss the life-transitions in older age. Each ended with kaumātua reflecting on the day's wānanga, with the third day having also ended with kaumātua completing an evaluation form. The TOP team met to analyse and discuss the data from the pilot; they derived a tuakana-teina/peer-support conceptual model and revised TOP to apply in the implementation phase of the KMM project with the Rauawaawa and kaumātua in Hamilton.

The tuakana-teina conceptual model was a kaumātua focused and culture centred illustration of the links between Māori values and concepts, and kaumātua tuakana-teina communication skills. The model included five components. First, wairua (spirit) was the heart of encompassing all health and relational dimensions that support and protect the tuakana-teina relationship. Second, mātāpono (values) were the guiding pou (pillars) of the tuakana-teina relationship that included wairuatanga (spiritual wellbeing), manaakitanga (hospitable kindness to others), whanaungatanga (valued relationships) mana (autonomy enhancement), aroha (love and compassion), rangatiratanga (self-determination), kotahitanga (inclusiveness), and tautokotanga (support). Third, tuakana-teina/peer-support depicts the relationship and the informational, emotional, affirmational, and cultural supports. Fourth, ngā huarahi whitiwhiti kōrero (communication skills) included kōrerorero (the conversation), āta whakarongo (intentional listening), and pūrākau (storytelling). The fifth, ngā pūkenga tuakana (specific conversation skills of enhancement) that entails checking in to understand, asking permission, and asking inviting questions. This framework offers kaumātua ways to enact peer-support, with an offering of communication tools to apply as tuakana (Simpson et al., 2020).

The KMM project was then implemented at the Rauawaawa. The team confirmed 26 kaumātua as tuakana who were then paired up with 5-

6 kaumātua teina each. Each pair held up to three conversations over a 12-week period. The research design was randomised staggered design with pre- and post-tests. There were two intervention groups with the first serving as intervention and the second as a comparison group, which also received the programme after the first group. All participants completed baseline measures with the first group of tuakana taking part in the TOP before starting the conversations with teina. Then all participants completed measures again. After these measures, the second group of tuakana completed the TOP and conversations with teina. Finally, all participants completed the measures for a third time (Oetzel et al., 2020). See Figure 1 for a visual of the design.

Figure 1. Tuakana-Teina Pre-and Post-Testing Staggered Research Design



Source: Oetzel et al., 2019

In all, 180 kaumātua were recruited to take part in the KMM intervention, with 121 completing the programme. A qualitative evaluation was conducted in addition to support the pre and post testing. Five wānanga (focus groups involving 22 teina and one with five tuakana) were held with kaumātua where they were asked open-ended questions about their perceptions and experiences of being part of the programme. Specifically, questions were based on experience during conversations with tuakana, impact of the intervention on teina and their family, and future recommendations (Oetzel, et al., 2020). Following, all data sets were analysed and provided both significant quantitative and qualitative results.

Research Results. This mixed methods study provided data and findings from both quantitative and qualitative methods. For this review, the findings will be presented as three sets of data: 1) communication skills of kaumātua as tuakana results; 2) impacts of the tuakana role on tuakana

themselves results; and 3) impacts of the KMM intervention on teina results.

Communication skills of kaumātua as tuakana findings were based on several key communication elements used by tuakana. A fidelity check was conducted to evaluate tuakana capacity and if the programme was followed and included eight communication features: 1) listening; 2) reflecting feelings; 3) offering support and encouragement; 4) asking permission; 5) checking understanding; 6) offering resources 7) sharing experiences/stories; and 8) asking inviting, open-ended questions (Simpson et al., 2020). The analysis revealed that tuakana conversation and communication skills developed during the KMM project. Satisfaction and perceived impact were reported at high levels by teina. Tuakana communication and conversation skills were rated as high to very high by investigator coders (Simpson et al., 2020).

Moreover, qualitative data from the teina focus groups revealed findings that also supported the statistical data, and the notion that tuakana were highly rated communicators. The findings showed that tuakana demonstrated quality communication in their role in three ways: 1) via centred connecting, building, maintaining and enhancing relationships with their teina; 2) by providing support and safety engendered within the tuakana-teina relationship; and 3) by maintaining balance in the relationship, and reciprocating communication with own personal stories and experiences. The findings demonstrated that tuakana have a high level of communication skills as perceived and experienced by their teina.

Impacts of the tuakana role on tuakana themselves derived from a survey and focus group completed by tuakana. For tuakana, there were five central outcome measures tested: 1) sense of purpose; 2) self-rated health; 3) perceived autonomy; 4) health related quality of life; and 5) life satisfaction. The survey analysis revealed that a high satisfaction with and high impact from the intervention was experienced by tuakana. Further measures of self-rated health, health related quality of life, and sense of purpose also saw a significant increase from Time 1 to Time 3 of testing (Simpson et al., 2020).

Furthermore, qualitative data from the tuakana focus groups presented findings that supported the statistical data that tuakana gained plenty from their role as tuakana in the programme. The findings show that tuakana experienced and felt a significant sense of standing in two ways: 1) realising a strengthened self-knowledge, identity and wellbeing; and 2) experiencing enhanced relationships and increased social connectedness by being part of the intervention programme (Simpson et al., 2020). The results highlighted the strong communication enacted by tuakana in their role as tuakana and emphasised the positive impacts it provided them. Impacts of the intervention on teina findings resulted from quantitative surveys and qualitative focus groups. Pre- and post-tests data analysis was based on two constructs of hauora outcomes (tinana/body, hinengaro/mind, wairua/spirit, whanaungatanga/social/family) and mana motuhake outcomes (autonomy and independence). The analysis showed that most variables over time improved (Oetzel et al., 2020). However, just three emerged with intervention statistical significance from baseline to final tests: social support, tribal identity, and improvement in being able to pay bills.

In addition, qualitative data from teina focus groups also provided details regarding social and health outcomes. First, teina strengthened their autonomy and independence as they realized self-potential, and enhanced their health, wellbeing, and self-efficacy. Second, teina strengthened family and social connectedness as they built new relationships with kaumātua of the programme, and extended, maintained and enhanced existing relationships. Third, teina strengthened their support knowledge as they learned about the varied supports available that could make a difference to themselves and other kaumātua in their circles. The findings demonstrated the importance of self-realisation, learnings, and supports by being socially connected to others at similar stages of life (Oetzel et al., 2020).

In summary, the Kaumātua Mana Motuhake project was a novel programme and grounded in Te Ao Māori. The KMM project was premised on the notion that crucial to improving wellbeing outcomes for kaumātua is that positive outcomes “are symbiotically related to transformative

outcomes for the broader Māori communities” (Hokowhitu 2020, p. 12). The KMM project offered a fresh and fundamental approach to how health and wellbeing, kaumātua, and ageing is addressed at a community and organisational level. The study provides statistical and qualitative evidence of the many positive impacts this study has had on kaumātua tuakana and teina. The project identified multiple reasons as to why the KMM intervention worked and emphasizes the mixed method research approach, culturally centred research, strengths/evidenced based research, collaborative research approach, and most importantly, a kaumātua led and co-led research design has contributed to the programme’s success.

This review has established and examined what the KMM project was, why it was done, what was done, what the results were, and why it worked. Furthermore, the KMM project has presented this doctoral study an opportunity: an opportunity to investigate how the KMM project worked. The kaumātua conversations from the KMM project had such depth and the stories from these needed to be honoured and told; hence this gap is addressed in this thesis. Further, not only did the kaumātua stories have to be told and honoured, but the way in which the stories unfolded within the tuakana-teina relationship was also important. Identifying and describing how these stories unfolded would only add sustenance to and compliment the KMM project, which was unable to analyse the rich data from the kaumātua conversations.

Kete Mātauranga Conclusion

This literature review has identified significant gaps and opportunities for further investigation. Further research can only strengthen and develop scholarship concerning older people, ageing and wellbeing. More importantly, further research could contribute to addressing the life-transitions and challenges kaumātua face in older age. This review offered a theoretical framework, which consists of Kaupapa Māori theory and Indigenous standpoint theory, to not only inform this study, but to prioritise and privilege Indigenous and Māori epistemologies,

methodologies, and ontologies. Second, an evaluation of the tuakana-teina, Indigenous peer-mentoring and Western peer-education/support literature has identified a significant gap in that tuakana-teina research does not exist within the combined context of older people, ageing, and wellbeing. Third, an examination of the pūrākau, Indigenous storytelling, and Western narrative inquiry scholarship has revealed two opportunities. The first emphasised the need for more research to help extend, develop, and strengthen the pūrākau scholarship. The second identified a failing within the pūrākau literature that does not capture the voices, stories, perspectives, and experiences of kaumātua in the contexts of ageing, wellbeing and tuakana-teina. Fourth, an investigation of the older people and ageing scholarship pertaining to kaumātuatanga, Indigenous elders and ageing, and Western older people and ageing highlighted the lack of qualitative, Indigenous and Māori focused, kaumātua centred, and pūrākau-narrative research about older people, life transitions and challenges in later life. Finally, an evaluation of the Kaumātua Mana Motuhake literature has identified that whilst the KMM project worked (applying novel, original and Māori approaches and application; and presenting positive participation outcomes for kaumātua), an opportunity appeared to investigate how the KMM project worked and the stories unfolded.

This study aimed to further examine the kaumātua conversations from the KMM project and identify the cultural and communication features and characteristics that may have contributed to KMM's success. Furthermore, the rich pūrākau told by the kaumātua, offered the opportunity to examine how their stories unfolded. Therefore, this thesis sought to answer the overarching research question If we know that the KMM project worked, then how did it work? It focuses on three specific research questions to address this overarching question: 1) *What are the communicational and cultural features of the kaumātua teina narratives?* 2) *What are the communicational and cultural features of the kaumātua tuakana conversational styles?* and 3) *What is the nature of the kaumātua journeys in how the stories unfold, and relationships develop?* The next chapter discusses the methodology and methods of this doctoral research.

CHAPTER THREE

Nāu Te Rourou, Nāku Te Rourou, Ka Ora ai Te Iwi – Methodology and Methods

I begin this chapter with the first, second and third verses of my poem that started this thesis titled: *Pito is the Thread to First Feed Us Life*. In the Māori language, pito refers to our belly button, and the umbilical cord that connects us to our mother, and the cord that provides the feeding highway that nourishes and sustains us as we develop in the womb. I wrote this poem throughout my doctoral journey. The poem is a symbolism for life, life's transitions, and this thesis.

*Pito is the thread to first feed us life.
A small seed that sits dormant in the hold of Te Po.
A tiny traveller in search of a haven to grow.
The small seed in sight, the tiny traveller ignites.
The two collide, cause an explosion
Where the murmurs of our tūpuna echoed afar
Are heard through the chambers of heart and aroha
Aroha and explosion illuminate the path to new life
We embrace and grow in the warmth of creation*

*Pito is the thread to first feed us life
As once the tiny traveller navigated these chambers
That small seed of life journeys the chambers once more
As they hear the sweet soft sound of the tūi singing
Haere mai, haere mai ki Te Ao Mārama
The seed of life emerges through the chamber gates
Exhaling tihei wā mauri ora the breath of life.*

*Pito is the thread to first feed us life
That small seed of life is now out in the open*

*It grounds itself in Papatūānuku
As the light of dawn becomes the dawn of life
That new seedling is just beginning
As it brings fresh hope, joy, potential, and future
As the seed grows a barky trunk appears
Their curiosity grows within its branches*

The name of this chapter takes its name from the whakataukī Māori (Māori proverb) “*Nāu te rourou, nāku te rourou, ka ora ai te iwi*” (Tesar, 2015), which literally translates to “*with your food basket, and my food basket, the people will thrive*” (Mead & Grove, 2003, p. 319). This whakataukī speaks to the notions of unification, collectivism, cooperation, collaboration, and sharing. It denotes working together as a people and community in a multitude of ways to achieve an outcome or goal collectively.

The KMM project methodology emulates this whakataukī in the way the study was carried out with the community of kaumātua in collaboration with organisations that serve the kaumātua. The project was kaumātua-centred to empower and help kaumātua to help other kaumātua through life transitions via a series of conversations. My doctoral study echoes this whakataukī and methodology. As a doctoral candidate, I was part of the KMM research team of community and academic researchers, kaumātua, community experts and doctoral candidates. The contracted scope of the wider KMM project resulted in a doctoral opportunity to utilise and analyse the conversation data to extend the research. My doctoral study added to the knowledge basket by honouring kaumātua participants and their shared taonga – their pūrākau (stories). This process demonstrates the whakataukī in action with the coming together of peoples from multiple parts of a community to collectively share their knowledge and expertise to empower and enable kaumātua to find their own solutions as they experience significant life transitions in later life.

This chapter explains the methodology for this doctoral research. First, I present and discuss my own positionality and reflexivity within the

research. Second, I define, discuss and apply the underpinning philosophies and assumptions of this research. Third, I describe the methods employed to carry out this doctoral study, ending the chapter with a summary of conclusion.

Research Positionality

I begin this chapter by defining my research positionality and reflexivity. I then present my positionality and reflexivity in relation to this project and how it guided my choices.

Definitions

Vital to qualitative research is the component that indicates a person's positionality within their research (Jamieson et al., 2023; Ramshorst, 2024; Soedirgo & Glas, 2020;). Ramshorst (2024) defines positionality as a notion that recognises, references, and reflects the background of a researcher who discusses their own identities, social contexts, affiliations and connections to people and place, and questions how these categories affect their research process, and impact their research findings. Such effects of the research process can include appropriate methodologies, question construction, participant selection, data collection, data analysis, ethical considerations, and ultimately how these impact their overall research outcomes (Flemming, 2018; Ramshorst, 2024; Wilson & Williams, 2022). Savin-Baden and Major (2013) claim positionality is an element that qualitative researchers choose and embrace to include in their study. By including and embracing their own positionality in their research, researchers offer audiences an understanding of who they are as researchers in terms of their overall background, and how they influence their research (Holmes, 2020; Ramshorst, 2024). By acknowledging their positionality within their study, researchers become aware of their biases, which in turn ensures their research reliability and

validity (Smith, 1999; Wilson et al., 2022). Therefore, positionality discusses what we believe and what we know.

Reflexivity is a critical element of positionality (Barrett et al., 2020; Kobayashi, 2003; Mackintosh, 2024). Olmos-Vega et al., (2023) defines reflexivity as a constant, collective, and multi-layered set of processes and practices whereby researchers intentionally assess, appraise, and measure how their personal backgrounds, experiences and subjectivity may influence their research process and outcome. Likewise, Gentles et al. (2014) describe the multiple purposes of reflexivity comprising neutralising the researcher's subjectivity influence and recognising, discussing, and capitalising on that subjectivity. Essentially, reflexivity aims to improve researchers' credibility and rigor as it propels them to be transparent and self-aware about their personal influence on their work. This enables them to either minimise the personal impacts on their research, or to enrich their research journey and outcomes. Whilst there are many different definitions and standpoints of reflexivity, from quantitative and post-positive perspectives, it is often misunderstood or countered due to its subjective nature (Varpio et al., 2017). Qualitative researchers, however, accept the subjective nature of reflexivity and argue that reflexivity acknowledges that a researcher's biases, assumptions, experiences, and beliefs can influence their research (Holmes, 2020; Jamieson et al., 2023; Olmos-Vega et al., 2023;). Therefore, reflexivity is taking what we know from our positionality and thinking about what we do with that knowledge in research.

My Positionality

I am a Māori male living in the city of Hamilton, within the iwi (tribe) of Waikato, and have lived there for 12 years now. However, I hail from a Northern iwi called Te Rarawa but was raised within the iwi boundaries of Ngāpuhi. Growing up, I never had grandparents and always yearned for them. I was brought up hearing the Māori language around me as it was my father's first language growing up, but I did not grow up speaking Māori

fluently. Māori was spoken in our home daily growing up, such as karakia (prayer), and simple instructions and phrases. However, whenever we had visitors and they were a reo Māori speaker, we would always hear my dad and visitors speaking Māori. And with this, we were raised to always manaaki tangata (look after and be hospitable to guests) in any situation. There was always Māori spoken at family functions on my father's side, and always tikanga (Māori customary practices) such as karakira, mihimihi (speeches), and kai (food). My upbringing also included yearly visits and stays on our whenua (ancestral lands) in Mitimiti in Te Rarawa. Here we were able to connect with whānau, whenua, tikanga, and taiao (the environment) camping, collecting kūtai (mussels) from the rock pools, riding horses, eeling, forest hikes, and learning more about our dad's upbringing in Mitimiti. Therefore, my identity as a tāne Māori (Māori male) was heavily influenced by my upbringing on my dad's side, which has significantly contributed to my cultural identity and understanding.

My personal experiences have been plentiful and significant and contribute to my identities. Such experiences include being married and a father of two sons, and recently, as detailed in Chapter One, becoming a person with a disability—an amputee. I have now experienced some of the KMM listed life-transitions such as loss of independence, loss of driver license, and significant change in health conditions.

My connection to KMM and the community in which the project was located is strong and longstanding. I began my university journey in 2012 as a student in undergraduate studies to master's and doctoral levels. In addition, I have also held various positions including tutoring roles, research assisting roles, and supporting and developing Māori and Indigenous post-graduate student roles. In my first year (2012) I was a volunteer for a day at a charity as part of an assignment for a communications paper. One of these organisations was the Rauawaawa Kaumātua Charitable Trust. For this assignment I opted to be a roopu (group) support for the kaumātua Olympics run by the Trust. This kaupapa (event, thought, topic) would see kaumātua teams travel from all over the North Island to participate/compete. Since then, my voluntary involvement

with the Trust and the Olympics grew significantly as I, and other classmates, created and became part of the communications and volunteer organisation team. Through this history and relationship, I was offered the opportunity to be part of the KMM team, and a doctoral candidacy in tandem with the KMM project.

In reflecting my positionality within this research, I have faced opportunities, challenges, and growth. As an emerging Māori researcher, it was crucial for me to acknowledge and understand my positionality, because it ensured that I was transparent, reflexive, and culturally authentic. This doctoral study has given me multiple opportunities for professional and personal enrichment. My part in the KMM project and this doctoral research has enabled me to deeply connect with kaumātua, which helped fill a void of my yearning for grandparents and enabled intergenerational interactions, communications, and companionships. The KMM project, and doctoral study has pre-connected me with Te Ao Māori (the Māori world). I re-engaged with my culture, language, and customs albeit away from my own tribe six hours drive away. All of this reminded me of and re-grounded me with who I am as an emerging Māori researcher from the North. In addition, I've been privileged to work with a community I hold close, the Rauawaawa Kaumātua Charitable Trust. I am part of a team that is creating meaningful change for a community of kaumātua to better enhance their mana motuhake (autonomy) and oranga (wellbeing) in older age. This research journey, with its opportunities of connection, has made me aware of my responsibilities throughout the research process to hear kaumātua voices, honour kaumātua stories, and respect kaumātua wisdom.

This research journey has given me significant challenges to navigate. The first challenge is the navigation of the generational dynamics and relational context within this study. This dynamic concerned me as an emerging Māori researcher who was one generation younger than the team I was working with and two generations younger than with the kaumātua. I realised that I had to engage both groups with the academic and cultural respect as I viewed them as knowledge holders and leaders in their own right. At the same time, I had to approach my kaumātua engagement, and

their voices of wisdom, reality, and experience with a heightened sensitivity as they shared willingly and openly about their personal lives. Second, I had to navigate the challenges of my own health and medical decline. I realised that my health and medical journey was similar to the life-transitions, and life experiences of the kaumātua taking part in research. My personal medical and health experiences gave me another level of appreciation, and unique connection, outlook, and empathy for our kaumātua and their journeys. I learned I had to manage and balance the challenges of my doctoral study and my medical health decline journeys. I learned that the challenges required resilience, strength, self-care, support, and support to get through this research, and complete it with culture, care, integrity, and honour.

This doctoral journey has fostered momentous growth and development for me academically and personally. I strengthened and deepened my cultural commitment to practice, communications, values, and connections as I embraced all that has been this doctoral journey – pros and cons. The challenge of engaging with rangatira (leaders) as a younger emerging Māori researcher in this space has enriched my perspective of values and knowledge transmission intergenerationally and been central to my telling of the kaumātua narratives. I now have a deeper respect for our kaumātua in what they have been through, and how their experiences offer us lessons, knowledge, and wisdom. This doctoral journey has reinforced my commitments to learning new knowledges, engaging with older generations, upholding our cultural practices and principles, and therefore my commitment to honour and tell our kaumātua stories with respect and integrity. This journey has also confirmed my commitment to growing and developing our practice of pūrākau in academia. By taking this reflexive approach, I have ensured that a culturally-responsive research process has been maintained that is culturally, ethically, morally, and respectfully grounded in Te Ao Māori (world view), tikanga Māori (customary practices and principles), and hauora Māori (health and wellbeing).

This positionality encouraged me to select a methodology that is grounded in Te Ao Māori and to work in ways that privilege kaumātua

voices. Given that the larger KMM process was grounded in Te Ao Māori located methodology, I engaged with the Rauawaawa and kaumātua to ensure that my approach was culturally resonant for their community and that what I was doing was respectful. Finally, my analysis approach was grounded in respect for pūrākau and the voices reflected in them.

Research Philosophies

This section explains the philosophical foundations, or underpinnings of this research. Kaupapa Māori research (KMR) is described and discussed, followed by community-based participatory research (CBPR) as a KMR Western counterpart used in the KMM project. Next, epistemological, ontological, and axiological assumptions in research are defined and discussed in relation to KMR and my study.

Kaupapa Māori Research

Kaupapa Māori is research by Māori, for Māori (Tate, 2010). This approach uses mātauranga (knowledge) and tikanga (practices) Māori to inform the research process and its practices (Pihama et al., 2002; Smith, 1999; Walker et al., 2006). The fundamental ideas behind this methodology challenge Western research, culture and knowledge (Walker et al., 2006) to reclaim traditional Māori ways of knowing (Brewer et al., 2014; Smith, 1999). It also provides strategies that can help improve the equality of Indigenous communities in the research process (Durie, 2012; Pihama et al., 2002; Smith, 1999; Walker et al., 2006). In this framework, Māori researchers and participants are positioned as experts (Pihama et al., 2002).

Kaupapa Māori methodology shares philosophical foundations with Kaupapa Māori theory (Smith, 1997), including the same six core underpinning principles. I discuss how these six principles apply in the context of practical research methods that are Kaupapa Māori methodology. Linda Smith (1999) discusses the six principles in the context of Kaupapa

Māori methodology. The first principle *tino Rangatiratanga (Self-determination)*, ensures the research has the community needs and aspirations at the core and that research about Māori is carried out by, with and for Māori. The KMM project was developed in partnership with the Rauawaawa to ensure kaumātua needs were addressed and was led by Māori researchers with collaborating Pākehā researchers. The doctoral thesis is carried out by a Māori researcher under the umbrella of KMM.

The second principle, *kia piki ake i ngā raruraru o te kainga (socio-economic mediation)*, emphasises the need to discover solutions that will positively address issues that Māori communities face. In this case, life transitions were important in the KMM project because they have consequences for kaumātua health and wellbeing. Addressing these issues has the potential to enhance quality of life for kaumātua, including reducing the costs and burden of these transitions. My thesis contributes to the wider KMM project in that the kaumātua conversations enabled social engagement and interaction between kaumātua addressing loneliness and isolation.

The third principle, *whānau (extended family structure)*, positions whānau at the heart of Māori research, and acknowledges whānau input, perspectives, and knowledge. During the KMMs research process, the co-design was central, and involved kaumātua service users, the Board of Trustees (also kaumātua), and staff in designing the research project, developing the tuakana orientation programme and identifying the transitions in later life. My thesis puts the voices of the kaumātua at the forefront, centering their voices and experiences, and telling their stories of change, opportunity, strength, resilience and more.

The fourth principle, *kaupapa (collective philosophy)*, prioritises the collective goals and vision of a community, and it is these that drive the research process rather than be directed by research individuals. The KMM project was driven by the Rauawaawa on behalf of kaumātua. For my thesis, I was driven by the benefit that understanding the pūrākau has for kaumātua, and hence for Māori communities.

The fifth principle, *ako Māori (Māori culturally-preferred pedagogy)*, applies Māori culturally appropriate and relevant methods in research, such as pūrākau, and whakawhanaungatanga (building relationships), to ensure Māori practices of learning and teaching are conducted. Following the approaches used in the KMM project, this thesis uses culturally-appropriate methods and data analysis approaches.

The final principle, *taonga tuku iho (cultural inspiration)*, emphasises and ensures that Māori cultural practices and values are promoted. It utilised and upheld these values in the research methods and design. As with the KMM project, this thesis is inspired by cultural practices that kaumātua use and practice in everyday life. It also used analysis techniques to capture the voices expressed in their stories.

Together, the six principles of Kaupapa Māori provide a foundation for Māori researchers to take an approach that challenges Western research norms, assumptions, and knowledge, by and enables understanding Māori human experience from within a Māori worldview (Bishop, 1996). Many studies in Aotearoa New Zealand illustrate how Kaupapa Māori works within research and many stress the need for research by-Māori-for-Māori to improve the equality of communities within research by using a uniquely Māori framework (Cram, et al., 2003; Jenkins & Pihama, 2001; Lawton et al., 2013). Kaupapa Māori provides a culturally appropriate and safe research experience for our kaumātua because it allows the reclamation and practice of tikanga Māori and mātauranga Māori, and grounds the KMM project and this doctoral study in Te Ao Māori and tikanga (values, protocols and customs). Most importantly, the research is grounded in the wisdom of our kaumātua.

Community-Based Participatory Research

In the context of a Western research approach, community-based participatory research (CBPR) is a methodology with a central goal to create social change in a community through the power of collective knowledge sets (Israel et al., 2005) that offer value for the community being studied as

well as the researchers (Viswanathan et al., 2004). CBPR aligns strongly with KMR and was one of the integral approaches in the KMM project. CBPR is a collaborative approach involving multiple parties working together in equitable partnerships between a community and its members, researchers, and organisational representatives (Wallerstein & Duran, 2010). CBPR enables community participation and community voices to be heard. Community and research partners use and value each other's respective skills, knowledge, experiences, expertise, and decision making in the research process.

The KMM project used CPBR in conjunction with KMR (Kaupapa Māori research) to guide the development of the tuakana-teina project and the team relationships. The value for the kaumātua lay in their involvement in all stages of the research. In this respect, CBPR has some similarities with Kaupapa Māori approaches to research and aligns closely with the Kaupapa Māori principle, whānau and kaupapa. Both KMR and CBPR have collaboration, community, and change at the core of their work. A significant difference is that Kaupapa Māori research is by Māori and for Māori research.

Philosophical Assumptions

The epistemological, ontological, and axiological assumptions of qualitative research are explained in three sections. Each assumption is discussed in relation to KMR and my doctoral project.

Epistemology Within Kaupapa Māori Research

Epistemology is a philosophical assumption that concerns the study, power, and value of knowledge (Littlejohn et al., 2017). Understanding how societies value knowledge differently helps to explore how humans come to know what they think and claim to know something as knowledge. Theories are inevitably epistemologically based. Exploring epistemological assumption helps us to question whether what we know exists before experience, what knowledge can be certain, and how knowledge is

processed, for example. Other questions generated by exploring epistemological assumptions include asking, are people the constructors of knowledge and if so, how so? Is knowledge better received as whole or in components? And does knowledge have to be explicit to become knowledge?

In a Kaupapa Māori methodological context, epistemology is rooted in Te Ao Māori, the Māori worldview of knowing and understanding as a subjective experience. Epistemologically, Kaupapa Māori methodology acknowledges and validates the depth of Māori knowledge systems. Such knowledge is often conveyed through and comes from pūrākau (Hoskins, 2012; Roberts et al., 2010; Smith L., 1999). Epistemologically, in the context of this study, the knowledge and understanding drawn from the kaumātua narratives is valued. Moreover, kaumātua, as the source of this knowledge source are valued. This research sought to understand the narratives of kaumātua in later life as they navigated life transitions, and as they reflected on their lives. Epistemologically, mātauranga Māori is held by kaumātua, the carriers of the culture (Durie, 2003) are. Thus, as a Māori researcher, my duty of care was to acknowledge and respect the deeply grounded epistemic underpinnings of Te Ao Māori, and of kaumātua and their lived experiences and wisdoms.

Ontology Within Kaupapa Māori Research

Ontology is a philosophical assumption that relates to the nature of reality and being – what is real or existent (Littlejohn et al., 2017). It focuses on and examines the interactions and relationships between various fundamental categories, such as the physical object, and situation or condition. Ontology questions what is in existence, or said to exist; what makes human decision-making real; what is the best way to understand human behaviour in terms of traits or states; do humans experience their realities individually or socially; and is and how communication contextual? An ontology approach helps us to explore what exists in the world, the nature of existence, and the relationship between the entities that exist. Essentially, ontology concerns how nature of being, and the structures of

reality, are understood, and provides humanity with frameworks for how to categorise and conceptualise the world we live in.

In the context of Kaupapa Māori methodology, ontology concerns the nature of reality within a Māori view the world. In Te Ao Māori, the inherent interconnectedness of all things spiritual, human, physical, and environmental is acknowledged and embraced (Nikora & Te Awekotuku, 2017; Marsden, 2003). The ontological standpoint within this research, acknowledged and recognised the woven world in the holistic, intricate, and interconnected nature of kaumātua stories, realities, and experiences (Apiti et al., 2023; Butcher & Breheny, 2016) as this study centralised the voices of the kaumātua bringing their realities to the forefront of this thesis. Specifically, the deeply rooted narratives of pūrākau collected are reflected the ontological standpoint of connectivity within Te Ao Māori. Kaumātua stories, realities, and experiences were crucial components of kaumātua existence, being, and identities, and not merely recounting events. This research emphasises the value of relationality, and the significance of later life and kaumātua within the cultural context of whānaungatanga (relationships) and mana Motuhake (autonomy).

Axiology Within Kaupapa Māori Research

Axiology is a philosophical assumption of the values that help guide research and how the impacts of these values affect the research outcome process (Littlejohn et al., 2017). Examining axiological philosophy requires researchers to examine the nature of such values from moral and ethical standpoints. Axiology questions whether research can be value-free, can impact what is being studied, and whether or not it should be designed and conducted to create and achieve positive change.

Axiology within Kaupapa Māori methodology concerns the deeply rooted values, principles, and ethics of Te Ao Māori, and KMR, that guide research. For example, KMR and Te Ao Māori place significant value on rangatiratanga (self-determination; Mikaere, 2018; Cram, 2001; Walker, 2013), manaakitanga (respect/care; Mead, 2003; Simmonds, 2019), and utu (reciprocity/balance; Henry & Tuari, 2020). In the context of this study,

such values provide the blueprint to carry out this research both ethically and morally to collating, understanding, and interpreting kaumātua narratives. The larger KMM project emphasised research that benefitted the kaumātua and their community, as did my doctoral study.

A priority for my doctoral research was oranga, or the wellbeing and dignity of our kaumātua participants. I was obliged and privileged to analyse and present kaumātua stories in a way that honoured their stories and their mana (authority/prestige). Within the KMR approach, this study employed a pūrākau method to collect, analyse, and interpret the kaumātua narratives. Such methods reflected care and commitment to keep culture and kaumātua at the centre of this study in all research practices and processes. Pūrākau highlighted and emphasised the value of kaumātua narratives, experiences, and realities by valuing their contributions, and upholding ethical standards of KMR principles.

Research Philosophies Summary

These core principles help inform methodology to help shape research practices, processes, and methods. Māori methodology is about upholding Māori values and practices, centering Māori voices, and acknowledging and accepting Māori knowledge. Kaupapa Māori methodology ensures the research process is appropriate, respectful, relevant, and beneficial to positively impact Māori and their communities. It reflects a philosophy that is grounded in the social and subjective experiences of participants, focuses on collective and connected views of the world with a desire to address the needs and aspirations of the participants.

Pūrākau-a-Kaumātua – Research Methods

The KMM project engaged in methods that followed KMM and its underlying philosophies. I called this section *Pūrākau-a-Kaumātua* to reflect the pūrākau and kaumātua centered approach to the collection and

analysis of the data. The processes of creating the project and the methods are detailed elsewhere (Oetzel et al., 2019; Simpson et al., 2019) and included in Chapter 2. The methods described below relate specifically to this thesis.

Data Collection

The development process and research methods for the KMM project have been published elsewhere (Oetzel et al., 2019; Simpson et al., 2019). I focus here on the methods of the project that apply to this thesis relating to data collection. These details were generally not covered in the previous chapter and are needed to understand this thesis. I will present the KMM methods that apply to data collection and then the specific sample for this thesis.

Kaumātua Mana Motuhake Methods

Within the KMM project, the kaumātua narratives of this doctoral research came out of the tuakana-teina relationships whereby the kaumātua pairs had three conversations about life transitions. The research design for the project was grounded in Te Ao Māori, words, phrases, values, and principles. In addition, the programme was also a staggered two group comparative design. This enabled a comparative process where the effectiveness of the programme could be ascertained without withholding it from any participants. This follows best practice ethical procedures when working with Māori communities (Hokowhitu et al., 2020). It also helped facilitate the workload as the two groups were implemented at different time periods (first group—tuatahi; second group—tuarua).

Tuakana from both groups attended an orientation programme specifically co-designed for tuakana taking part in KMM research. The orientation programme was co-facilitated by academic and community researchers as well as doctoral candidates. The orientation programme helped guide tuakana on communication skills and strategies for facilitating the conversations with teina about the life transitions although they were

directed to discuss any topic the teina preferred. The conversational style promoted by the programme facilitators was based on the concept of whakawhitikōrero, a Māori method of ideas exchange and back and forth discussion (Elder & Kersten, 2015) using whakataukī to initiate and provoke thought and dialogue and asking open-ended questions to further develop specific thoughts and ideas. The orientation session entailed four sessions of two hours each that included didactic instruction, discussion, and role-play scenarios, with each other and facilitators, to help the tuakana prepare for the real-life conversations with their assigned teina.

At the completion of the orientation sessions, each tuakana was matched with six teina based on gender and a qualitative assessment from the recruitment coordinator who had a long history with the kaumātua. Factors for matching included language, personal experience, and prior history. These conversations were conducted in ways that were culturally appropriate and comfortable for the kaumātua themselves. Common throughout the conversations were tuakana-led practices of karakia (prayer) and whakawhanaungatanga (relationship building). Tuakana offered karakia to the teina to bless and help set their conversational journey ahead, and then at the end of a conversation to safeguard and close their sacred time, work, and conversation together. Whakawhanaungatanga enabled both tuakana and teina to get to know each other and where each other was from, to make each other comfortable, and to most importantly cement the pair's relationship.

For further detail about what information both kaumātua tuakana and teina were informed about, please see [Appendix A: Kaumātua Tuakana Information Sheet](#) and [Appendix B: Kaumātua Teina Information Sheet](#).

The conversations took place either at the Rauawaawa Kaumātua Charitable Trust, or in the homes of the kaumātua for comfort, ease, and respect of kaumātua. They were organised by the recruiting coordinator initially and then by the tuakana-teina pair after the first conversation. They could ask the coordinator for help in organising the next conversation. Once a connection was made, and kaumātua teina were comfortable, in-depth life experiences from childhood to current unfolded over the course of the three

conversations. The experiences shared by both kaumātua teina and kaumātua tuakana created and crafted a personal pūrākau of their lived realities. The duration of each conversation varied, with most of them lasting approximately 40 minutes and some ranging over two hours. The kaumātua conversations were recorded with permission and selected conversations were transcribed.

There was a total of 32 tuakana (13 for tuatahi and 19 for tuarua) although six from tuarua withdrew prior to the start of the project; thus, there were 13 in each group for the project. In tuatahi, there were 71 teina with most having three conversations (n=61) and fewer with two (n=5), one (n=3), or no (n=2) conversations. In tuarua, there were 65 teina with three (n=28), two (n=12), one (n=12), and no (n=13) conversations. There was a total of 309 conversations with 17 not being recorded or lost, resulting in 292 final recordings.

After the conversations were completed, three members (two Māori and one Pākehā) of the research team reviewed the conversations and coded them based on the communication skills and conversation skills (listening, reflection, offering support and resources, encouragement, asking permission and open-ended questions, and sharing experiences) covered in the orientation session (see Simpson et al., 2021). Conversations were rated, and this coding demonstrated that tuakana had high to very high levels of communication (2.36 on 3-point scale) and conversation skills (2.73 on 3-point scale).

Sample Selection

The KMM sample size was based on testing the impact of the tuakana-teina/peer education programme on participants. In contrast, my thesis was a qualitative analysis of the pūrākau. Given the total number of pairs and recorded conversations, I determined that I would reach theoretical saturation with the stories well before completing the analysis. Thus, I devised a strategy for selecting the number of tuakana-teina pairs to analyse. I used the following sampling criteria:

- Choose tuakana-teina pairs with three recorded conversations
- Choose the top 15 kuia and koroheke pairs for highest quality communication rating; and
- Total sample comprised 10 Tuakana-teina pairs and a total of 30 conversations with expected theoretical saturation reached at this point.

Based on these criteria, 14 tuakana were identified: seven kuia and seven koroheke. There were 30 teina and 90 conversations initially included. For three of the top scoring koroheke pairs, one conversation recording was missing. Therefore, the three next best pairs were selected.

Of the 15 kuia pairs, 10 were from the tuatahi programme and five from tuarua programme. The average-score range for the *communication* component for the top 15 kuia pairs was 2.74 out of 3.00, which was above the average of 2.36. The average score of the *conversation* component was for the top 15 kuia pairs was above the average of 2.73, with a range of 2.83 to 3.00.

Of the 15 koroheke pairs, 13 were from the tuatahi programme and two from tuarua programme. The average-score range for the *communication* component for the originally chosen top 15 tāne pairs ranged from 2.00 to 2.57. Six tāne pairs scored above the *communication* average of 2.36 and nine tāne pairs below. The range for the *conversation* component for the top 15 koroheke pairs was 2.25 – 3.00. Seven koroheke scored below the average of 2.73 (range 2.25 to 2.67) with the remaining 8 scoring 2.75 to 3.00. Of the top 15 tāne conversations, only 13 were included in the sample to two pairings missing one of the three conversations.

After identifying the top 15 tuakana-teina pairs, the conversations of the top five pairs for koroheke and kuia (30 conversations) were selected as part of the data set for this doctoral study. Variables for the tuakana included demographics such as age, gender, relational status, and looking after grandchildren; and health characteristics included sense of purpose, self-rated health, health related quality of life, autonomy and life satisfaction.

Table 1 displays a pseudonym of the participants with final selections in bold.

Table 1. *Sampling Frame with Final Participants*

Kuia		Koroheke	
<i>Tuakana</i>	<i>Teina</i>	<i>Tuakana</i>	<i>Teina</i>
Erana (Rua)	Rangi	Apa (Rua)	Kurei
Hina (Rua)	Reitu	Hikairo (Tahi)	Maia Waata
Mako (Tahi)	Amiria Kiri Tata Tapi	Hotu (Tahi)	Heke Kapo Maui
Pounamu (Tahi)	Kapua	Maia (Rua)	Hakopa Piri Hiwi Pere
Tūini (Tahi)	Hine Iwikau Mana Mei Peti	Ngata (Tahi)	Anaru Pra
Una (Tahi)	Oriwa Tinia	Puhi (Tahi)	Tawhao No C3 Rewi
Waima (Tahi)	Moe	Rei (Tahi)	Amio Toroa

Note: Psuedonyms are used and included participants are in bold.

The 30 conversations were professionally transcribed. Where there were gaps (due to Māori being spoken) in the transcription, I filled out those voids by listening to the recorded audios and transcribing those parts of the conversations. This process ensured accuracy and cultural sensitivity and allowed for collating rich and comprehensive pūrākau provided the base of this analysis.

After listening to the recorded conversations in tandem while reading the transcripts, it became clear that I had reached data saturation when I completed this analysis. My process was to start with the highest quality scoring conversations first and work my way down the list. As mentioned previously, 30 conversations provided great depth and quality that was needed for this study.

Data Analysis

This research takes a pūrākau approach, drawing on the KMM's data set of kaumātua conversations. The pūrākau from kaumātua in this research have the potential to address current issues facing our kaumātua today; to connect and reconnect kaumātua to their culture, identities, and community; and to inform research, policy and practice. Pūrākau was one strategy during the tuakana training programme, it became a prominent communication style that was inherent in the normal practices of the tuakana involved. These conversations were framed and communicated to kaumātua as part of the intervention in which further examination of the conversations may take place. The analysis process for this research was informed by Western models of narrative analysis to guide and direct the creation of my own pūrākau analysis for kaumātua voices. This study's pūrākau analysis also drew from the pūrākau analytics elements used by Māori scholars.

I used narrative analysis (Josselson & Hammack, 2021) to inform a pūrākau-narrative analysis (Lee, 2009) approach to align with KMR. Josselson and Hammock (2021) assert that narrative analysis is a method that enables researchers to understand, interpret, and analyse data to

uncover story narratives and to identify themes, patterns, and meanings. Like pūrākau, the art of narrating or storytelling is used by participants to develop understanding of their own lived experiences and realities, to construct meaning and to produce a carefully crafted story (Woodhouse, 2019). Data sources for narratives can originate from written texts, interviews, focus groups, discussions, personal anecdotes, or media visuals (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994). Narrative analysis focuses on examining the content and structure of the data sources to identify the narrative contexts and uncover insights into individual, social, and cultural dimensions of participants lived realities and experiences. There are multiple approaches to narrative analysis such as performance (Bauman, 1986), interactional (Mandelbaum, 2013) and structural (Labov, 1972), and thematic narrative analysis (Riessman, 2008).

This study sought to understand kaumātua perceptions and experiences of life-transitions in the context of a tuakana-teina relationship. I focused on and employed thematic narrative analysis (Josselson & Hammack, 2021; Lee, 2009) because it provided flexibility to analysing the data. The aim was to recognise and acknowledge the recurring patterns and themes coming through the kaumātua pūrākau.

Adopting a pūrākau analytic approach rooted in Kapapa Māori theory, I also drew from various Māori scholars who applied their own distinctive elements of pūrākau analysis in their own studies. This study's pūrākau analysis approach draws on Lee's (2009) foundational work of pūrākau as method of inquiry in research that privileges Māori ways of being, relating, and knowing. This approach is further enriched by Black et al. (2023) work that saw the development of a pūrākau analysis framework that not only honoured but also elevated Māori narrative in research. Their framework incorporated a layered meaning tapestry that wove in personal, whānau (family), hapū (sub tribal) and iwi (tribal) pūrākau with observational data, centralising cultural accountability, ethical responsibility, reflexivity, and whakapapa to the analytic process. These works weave together theory story and experience that privilege kaumātua participant voices and position kaumātua as co-theorists whose pūrākau

help create the conceptual topography of this doctoral research. By adopting such a pūrākau analysis approach, only then would I be able to honour the relational and epistemological depths of the kaumātua stories shared in this thesis.

Three themes from the literature were identified: 1) *pūrākau as a means to address a problem*, 2) *pūrākau as a means to (re)connect*, 3) *pūrākau as a means to inform and* are demonstrated this research. Via the KMM project, this doctoral research highlights and addresses the issues facing kaumātua in older age, and the scarcity of pūrākau in research. Further, kaumātua in this study have had the opportunity to reconnect with their culture, community and self as they share their own pūrākau. Finally, this study has provided kaumātua a platform to inform and be informed about the services and supports available to them.

Once I selected the final 30 conversations for analysis, I printed the transcriptions to read and listen to the audio recordings. This was an important step in gaining a deep understanding of what was going on within the data. The process also enabled me to identify “standout” pieces of data that stretched beyond just statistical and novel data of significance. Standout data, from Te Ao Māori and Kaupapa Māori perspectives was about mana motuhake, mātauranga (knowledge), whenua (lands), whanaungatanga (relationships), whakapapa (genealogy), wairuatanga (spirituality), kotahitanga (collectivism), hauora (wellbeing), meaning, potentiality, transformation, agency, metaphors, impact, reflections, realisations, and tensions. As such, I was able to identify commonalities and differences between data sets relating to the three research questions. My preliminary analysis assigned codes to initial theme groups by identifying and highlighting crucial words, phrases, and sentences. Lastly, once all data was coded, I carried out a detailed examination of story components including plots, characters, lessons, and more. I identified patterns and created overarching themes from the story data.

I approached the highlighted data in two ways. The first was to apply an inductive approach (Hanson et al., 2011) to examine the kaumātua conversations by concentrating on the stories, experiences, and realities the

kaumātua shared. This allowed themes to emerge from the conversations. The second was to examine the conversations from a perspective of prior knowledge from my cultural upbringing in Te Ao Māori, and as an emerging Māori researcher. This enabled me to view the kaumātua conversations as seen through the kaumātua perspectives and tikanga Māori (customary practices and principles). This cultural lens approach was critical in the process as it enabled me to consider broader historical, social, and cultural contexts of the kaumātua stories. Further, it allowed me to thematise, interpret, and present the story data from a Te Ao Māori view that centred the kaumātua voices with respect and integrity and honoured kaumātua as the knowledge holders of our communities. Once completed, themes were created based on repetition of ideas, thoughts, words, phrases, and experiences.

After reviewing, collapsing and combining the themed groups, three main themes were identified as relating to the three research questions. The next step of this analysis was to allocate illustrative quotes to support each theme and sub themes. I then wrote the findings into three separate chapters using whakataukī Māori (Māori proverbs) and metaphors, e.g. a traveler on a journey, to help illustrate the results. The final part in the analysis was to organise a hui (gathering) to feedback and present the findings to the Rauawaawa Kaumātua Charitable Trust and kaumātua for them to share their reflections of the findings. In this way, we are not only giving back to the kaumātua for allowing me to be part of the project, but also to validate the findings. This is important and aligns with KMR. The pūrākau-narrative approach ensured my analysis was methodologically rigorous, and culturally resonant, and contributed to the wider pūrākau scholarship, especially in terms of the analysis for pūrākau in research.

Research Ethics

I had received ethical approval for my original doctoral research that involved adapting the KMM project to a small, rural, and marae community. My research sat within the Management School, whilst my ethics sat within

the Faculty of Māori and Indigenous Studies at the University of Waikato, because it was associated to the wider KMM project. This approval became redundant when my research took a different direction and became a component to the KMM project.

As an emerging Māori researcher within the KMM research team, I analysed the qualitative conversation data, and my thesis was covered by the KMM ethical approval (ref. 28/03/17; see [Appendix C: Ethics Approval](#)). The KMM proposal and ethics application documents include the statements most relevant to my thesis:

Only the research team can get to see project information
(Participant Information Sheet)

The qualitative aspect for both tuakana and teina will be open-ended to enable kaumātua knowledge to frame the outcomes, including reflections on their experiences during training, reflections of actual or potential life transitions, and the strengths and weaknesses of the programme itself.

In my capacity as a doctoral student, I was a member of the KMM research team. My qualitative data analysis was focused on kaumātua reflections of actual or potential life transitions as told through pūrākau in the tuakana-teina conversations.

After careful consultation, planning, and adherence, the ethical considerations and approvals were carried out with respect and integrity for kaumātua participants. The KMM proposal and ethics application provided me with the necessary guidelines to conduct this study in culturally safe and ethical ways. Furthermore, the guidelines enabled me to sustain my commitments to the ethical principles, cultural sensitivity, and most of all, the commitment to the hauora, or wellbeing, of our kaumātua who participated in the project.

Ngā Rourou Conclusion

In this chapter, I detailed the Kaupapa Māori informed methodology I employed for this doctoral study which examined kaumātua conversations from the KMM project. Specifically, this doctoral study explored the kaumātua teina narratives, identifying key features, and aspects of kaumātua tuakana conversational styles, and examining how the kaumātua stories unfolded. The study was underpinned with Māori values, principles and practices, and therefore, Kaupapa Māori research and theory grounded and informed this study. Culturally resonant and ethical approaches were cultivated to explore kaumātua narratives in the context of tuakana-teina conversational relationships, ageing, and wellbeing.

Research positionality emphasised the importance of acknowledging my own background, experiences, and identities to better engage in the research process. The process of examining and reflecting my own positionality and reflexivity enabled me to communicate the role I played as an emerging Māori researcher in the study, and to reflect on how my personal journey influenced the research. Transparency through this reflective process ensured my cultural and ethical engagements with kaumātua were respectful and mana-motuhake enhancing.

Exploring research philosophies strengthened my understanding of Kaupapa Māori research. Considering the epistemological, ontological, and axiological assumptions in relation to Kaupapa Māori research, I integrated and emphasised Māori worldviews, kaumātua self-determination and empowerment. These methodological foundations and philosophies guided my research process.

Pūrākau was employed as the primary method for data collection and analysis. In reconnecting to this traditional way of Māori storytelling, I honoured ancient and ancestral practices in tandem with kaumātua voices. Moreover, I was able to authentically share and re-present kaumātua stories in a carefully crafted manner. In creating a pūrākau-narrative analysis, I extracted kaumātua narratives from the conversations from a culturally pūrākau and kaumātua standpoint that provided meaningful insights, understandings, knowledges, and wisdoms about kaumātua

ageing, life-transitions, and wellbeing within the tuakana-teina relationship. Pūrākau allowed for the preservation of kaumātua narratives in this research and provided a culturally relevant and resonant framework to better understand the complex and implicit but powerful and beautiful narratives that kaumātua shared.

Commitments to tikanga Māori and ethical integrity have been important considerations throughout this research. This research has been designed in ways that it is responsive and reflective of commitments to kaumātua empowerment and well-being. These cultural commitments, ethical considerations of kaumātua confidentiality, informed consent, and reciprocity on my part are critical. This stance assures that this study not only is beneficial for the kaumātua of this study but is positively impactful for the wider community.

CHAPTER FOUR

Ngā Raranga o Ngā Kaumātua Teina – Teina Narrative Features

I begin this chapter with the first, second, third and fourth verses of my poem that started this thesis titled: *Pito is the Thread to First Feed Us Life*. In the Māori language, pito refers to our belly button, and the umbilical cord that connects us to our mother, and the cord that provides the feeding highway that nourishes and sustains us as we develop in the womb. I wrote this poem throughout my doctoral journey. The poem is a symbolism for life, life's transitions, and this thesis.

*Pito is the thread to first feed us life.
A small seed that sits dormant in the hold of Te Po.
A tiny traveller in search of a haven to grow.
The small seed in sight, the tiny traveller ignites.
The two collide, cause an explosion
Where the murmurs of our tūpuna echoed afar
Are heard through the chambers of heart and aroha
Aroha and explosion illuminate the path to new life
We embrace and grow in the warmth of creation*

*Pito is the thread to first feed us life
As once the tiny traveller navigated these chambers
That small seed of life journeys the chambers once more
As they hear the sweet soft sound of the tūi singing
Haere mai, haere mai ki Te Ao Mārama
The seed of life emerges through the chamber gates
Exhaling tihei wā mauri ora the breath of life.*

*Pito is the thread to first feed us life
That small seed of life is now out in the open
It grounds itself in Papatūānuku*

*As the light of dawn becomes the dawn of life
That new seedling is just beginning
As it brings fresh hope, joy, potential, and future
As the seed grows a barky trunk appears
Their curiosity grows within its branches*

*Pito is the thread to first feed us life
As the seedling grows into a youthful Kauri
Branches and leaves open up to the world
Their energy evokes a dance of sunlight on water
Now fully open to hopes, dreams, and aspirations
Their energy spreads like a gentle breeze
Uplifting and bracing all in its path
Until they find that one that one for life.....*

This chapter presents the key findings related to the first research question: *What are the cultural and communicational features of the kaumātua teina narratives?* This chapter presents the cultural and communication features by honouring and (re)telling the stories shared by the kaumātua teina of the research project. The framework used, to present the results, is raranga or the traditional Māori practice of weaving. Raranga in this context symbolises and reflects the practice of pūrākau, storytelling. The concepts of kupenga (flax net), kete (flax basket/kit), and whenu (flax strand) are three raranga applications I've used to frame the findings metaphorically. Kupenga illustrates kaumātua adversity and change, whilst Kete explains kaumātua resilience and independence, and Whenu represents kaumātua connections. The analysis identified three key themes: 1) *Ngā Raranga o Ngā Kupenga Kaumātua*; 2) *Ngā Raranga o Ngā Kete Kaumātua*; and 3) *Ngā Raranga o Ngā Whenu Kaumātua*. Each of these themes offer subthemes which are presented below with exemplar quotes. Pseudonyms are used for the teina participants following those in Table 1.

Ngā Raranga o Ngā Kupenga Kaumātua – Stories from the Past to Life-changing Moments

The first theme is *Ngā Raranga o Ngā Kupenga kaumātua* and tells of kaumātua stories from the past through to life changing moments. A kupenga is a type of net woven from flax for food gathering . Kupenga are used for catching fish, harvesting kūmara, gathering kaimoana (seafood), and more. The weave is open so that sand or dirt can be shaken out through the connecting whenu (strands). Unlike other types of raranga, the whenu of the kupenga can be mended and replaced if it is worn out or damaged. In the context of this research, the durability, flexibility and mendability of the kupenga, are metaphors representing teina stories of adversity and turning points and symbolise how time, love, support, and experience can heal kaumātua, much like that of the kupenga. Within this theme, two subthemes were identified: 1) *Te Kupenga o Te Pō – Adversity*; and 2) *Te Kupenga o Te Ao Mārama – Turning Points*.

Te Kupenga o Te Pō – Adversity

This discusses pūrākau (stories) relating to this first subtheme: *Te Kupenga o Te Pō* or adversity experienced by the kaumātua teina. Within this subtheme, kaumātua talked about adversity they faced in their past, which included stories of physical abuse and significant loss.

Some of the kaumātua shared stories of physical abuse they experienced in earlier life, whilst some alluded or referred to physical abuse. Heke (tHeke,C3), spoke of his upbringing and some of the physical abuse he suffered from his parents. However, this abuse was framed from the point of view that his parents were awesome parents, and that he was really naughty and therefore deserved the “kicks” and “clips.” Heke also stated that “*it was normal back then*” and it “*happened quite a bit.*” Heke seemed to validate his parents’ physical actions. As Heke reflects on his experience of physical abuse as a child, he normalises his abuse and justifies his parents’ actions because of his bad behaviour. Heke paints himself as the ‘villain’ who deserved the abuse from his parents (not the victim).

Kapo's story was a bit different, and he shared his experience as a young nine-year-old in the state ward system. Kapo's story revealed experiences of physical abuse by foster families who appeared to be welcoming in the beginning. His story also revealed the transient nature of his state ward experience as he is moved from one home to another, and another.

...even looking about the abuse of my age group when we went through the boys' homes and all that sort of thing, because when I was young, I went through that as well and I was put into – only because I don't listen to mum, I'll put you in social welfare, they'll take care of you. Because she couldn't control me. I wouldn't listen. Always go to school and the next minute I'm in town. Is that where school is? Oh, well, go to – the Pākehā [system] will look after you. Put me in a home, a foster home, abuse. Can't help it. I put myself there because I didn't listen to mum. As I said, can't blame mum. Can't blame mum, can't blame dad. If you're not going to listen to your mum, then you've got to put it into places to try and go, and then they put me in the system. But the system, you see, which was the State Ward, put you in places where they think you're supposed – with your own people, because I was in with Māori people in Opunake. They were nice to begin with, but then the kids around us were abusive, physically abusive. I didn't realise that, because I was only young. I would have been around nine, nine years old when I first went into a foster home. So, I ran away and then put into another home. Got caught, put – next I went into boys' homes, next into... Places like that and just started learning how to get up to more mischief, really. (tKapo,C1).

Like Heke, Kapo also paints himself as the 'villain child' who deserved to be put into foster care because of his bad behavior. Kapo recollects the situation as if he deserved to be in foster care and therefore deserved the abuse he received. But Kapo's story is part of a much bigger problem. His experience also reflects a much wider societal issue of New Zealand's state

care system (Abuse in Care Royal Commission of Inquiry, 2024); a system that is meant to protect vulnerable children who are in state care. Kapo's story clearly exemplifies that the system is the villain here, as Kapo has lost a lot of his childhood in that system.

Although kuia experiences of physical abuse differed to those of the koroheke, some hesitantly referred or alluded to domestic partner violence. Kiri (tKiri,C1;C2;C3) seemed to reluctantly share a little bit about her abusive husband over the course of her three conversations with her Tuakana. She shared that *"he used to hit me"* and *"I was a punching bag to my ex. So, I told him to get out or I'd ring the cops. Because I was too scared to ring the cops. Too scared."* Kiri describes herself as a partner victim abused by her spouse and identified her struggle to get away in being "too scared". Kiri's story reflects the fear that is common among women in domestic partner violence relationships.

Stories of loss were the second kind of adversity stories to come through the teina conversations. Some kaumātua shared stories of a significant loss in their lives including a loss of employment, loss of relationships, and loss of a family member.

Heke (tHeke,C3) alluded to the almost loss of a relationship due to his alcohol use at a young age, *"Although... I was drinking quite a bit from about 14, 15, 16, 17, up until about 26 and then decided with my kids I'm going to give them a good life, so stopped drinking."* Heke's relationship to alcohol stemmed from his peer relationships growing up, including older cousins. Hakopa, explicitly revealed that his issue with alcohol was detrimental to his employment, causing him to lose his job, even though he was very good in whatever role he was in. Hakopa's alcohol abuse was impacting on his marriage as it was on the verge of breaking up. Hakopa married twice and spoke of his first marriage breaking up due to his alcohol abuse and not being able to have children. In addition to his story, Hakopa spoke about being born and bred in Auckland, away from his iwi in the North.

My problem in life is always around alcohol consumption. It's brought a lot of [changed in] my mahi, I was a good truck driver, truck and

trailers and all that kind of thing and I was a great Storeman but every time I got a good job, I lost it because of an alcohol problem. In 1981 my marriage was on the rocks and I had six children to my second wife, and we were just ready to break up and I said... I met a girl from Bay of Islands and married her. Our relationship broke up because of alcohol and the fact that we couldn't have children. (tHakopa,C1)

As Heke and Hakopa reflected on their adversity stories, they both recognised and acknowledged the consequences of their alcohol consumption. Heke's and Hakopa's stories of loss links to alcohol abuse stemming from a drinking culture prominent during their younger years. Hakopa mentioned or alluded the impact of alcohol in the loss of his relationship with his whānau and being the black sheep; being raised away from his iwi in the North; not being able to conceive a child with his first wife; and nearly breaking up with his second wife. Hakopa's story demonstrates the layers and complexities of factors that can lead an individual to alcohol abuse which then the significant implications for all facets of one's life, health and wellbeing.

Kiri's significant loss came much later in life. Kiri shared her story about losing her job with the thought that it was due to her age. She was left at a crossroads about what to do, but most importantly, where she might live. She talked with her son who suggested she move in with him and his whānau, but Kiri was reluctant because she knew that she would become the live in babysitter. She decided to move in with her son and his whānau for approximately two years

Fifty-nine was when I finished my job as they say out with the old, in with the new. I was a teacher aide, and I was living in Auckland in Manurewa and then I thought what am I going to do then with no job and I have to pay rent, power. Oh man I just got into a state, I was crying all the time. My son who stays in [town] he said, "Well Mum come and stay with me." I thought, "Oh dear". He said, "Mum at the moment you've got no money, you can't pay for your whare, can you?",

and I went "No I can't. I don't know what I'm going to do." He said, "Come and stay with me or go and stay with your son who lives [city]." I said, "Oh, that's too far away!... So, I had decided myself I'll go and live with my son... I was the live-in nanny; I was looking after the mokos all the time. Well, for two years, I think. (tKiri,C1)

Kiri's story of job loss highlights the impacts on her mental and emotional wellbeing as she points out how much of "a state" she was in stating that she was "crying all the time. It illustrates how much her job meant to her in terms of independence, financial stability, peace of mind, and purpose. Kiri's loss put her in a stressful predicament that she did not choose nor want and left her with few choices other than to move in with her son and his whānau. This resulted in her becoming the live-in baby-sitter as she had anticipated and was not very happy about this. Kiri wasn't prepared for losing her job nor was she ready to stop working so soon.

Another story of adversity was the significant loss of a close family member or partner. Oriwa (tOriwa,C1) shared her journey about looking after her sick and dying husband and her struggles of the emotional toll for her and her husband. She shared that she had "*...been through such a lot these last few years...especially when my husband had cancer again*" Oriwa spoke about having to care for him, no matter what "*[when] I was looking after him, I ended up with unstable angina. I didn't think about myself, I thought about him because I had to look after him...But then he started to get sour*" Despite caring for a "sour" husband, Oriwa must think about her husband as "*I didn't blame him because he had a lot to deal with, going through cancer on the brain.*" Oriwa's story demonstrates the notion of "in sickness and in health" and highlights a change in her identity and relationship with her husband as she became his care partner during his dying days.

Rangi's significant loss story is about the death of her daughter at a young age. This was incredibly hard for Rangi and her husband.

We lost a daughter when she was 19. That was horrific. I wanted to die. [My husband] wanted to die. We just sat and looked at one another for weeks... she was coming home with her boyfriend in September, ... She was 19 and they'd been to, and she had an accident. She was on the back of the motorbike with [named boyfriend]; she went over the top. They came around this corner and she broke her neck. And so, we had to deal with that; that was hard. She'd be 47 now if she was still alive. (tRangi,C2)

The heartbreak in Rangi's story demonstrates how devastating a loss of a child can be on an individual and a couple. The loss for Rangi and her husband left them prepared to give up life and die with their daughter because the grief and pain was unbearable. Despite such intense pain, emotions, feelings and thoughts, Rangi knew that her and her husband just had to get through this loss despite how hard it was for them commenting that "...so we had to deal with that" – this is resilience in the making and is a story theme that is presented later on in this chapter.

In summary, the adversities experienced by the kaumātua teina centred on stories of abuse and loss. Stories of abuse related to child abuse, alcohol abuse, and domestic partner abuse. Such abuse experiences may be interpreted as a sign of the times, accepted norms, and victims being played out as villains. Some teina kaumātua had labelled themselves as the villain in their own story, when the villains were the abusive parents, the broken system, abusive partners, and alcohol. This process seemed to be a coping strategy for the abuse they experience. Stories of physical abuse by parents, the system and alcohol were shared only by the koroheke; whereas stories of physical abuse by a domestic partner were shared only by the kuia.

Kaumātua also shared adversity stories of loss related to loss of employment, relationships, and family members. Such losses exacerbated trauma on top of existing trauma as kaumātua had to learn to manage and navigate such loss adversity. Some losses were heavily influenced by alcohol abuse causing unemployment and broken relationships. Other losses were beyond the control of the kaumātua and presented no other

choice but to grieve the death of a close family member. Furthermore, stories of alcohol abuse, unemployment and broken relationships were shared by koroheke only. Conversely, stories of the death of a close family member were mainly shared by kuia. Despite the significant adversities experienced by the teina, they were often followed by turning points.

Te Kupenga o Te Ao Mārama – Turning Points

This section presents the pūrākau concerning the second subtheme: *Te Kupenga Te Ao Mārama* or Turning Points. This subtheme concerns those turning points kaumātua experienced in their lives that brought about a significant and positive change. This sub-theme includes, stories concerning a turn in health and relationship problems, and were primarily told by koroheke.

Some of the kaumātua shared stories about a significant turn in health that provided a moment of change in their lives. Their health turn often concerned considerable weight gain. Heke (tHeke,C1) shared his story about his weight gain after committing to quit smoking and drinking. Heke *“Didn’t worry about the weight... As long as my youngest, {name}, who’s 34, has been alive, [I havn’t] had a drink. I wanted them to have a good life.”* However, Heke is now on medications for health issues resulting from his weight gain, and he alludes to not liking the fact he must take multiple medications. One of Heke’s medications is *“to reduce my weight so that I can have my operation.”* Heke has the incentive that if he loses weight and has the operation, he will no longer need to take his medications. Heke asserts his determination and commitment to quit smoking and drinking at all costs to provide his children a better life. Although Heke improved one aspect of life by cutting out smoking and drinking, the subsequent weight-gain has impacted his overall health and wellbeing. However, Heke, has the same determination and commitment to losing the weight for the surgery, and this highlights his desire for change, good health and wellbeing, and longevity.

Piri's turning moment came when his weight hit 155 kg. Piri reflects on how he was such an "athletic person" in his younger days and even played rugby up to the age of 68-years. He identified the need to make some changes because the extra weight was impacting his physical health and mobility significantly. Piri decided to get "off the grader" and thought "bugger this" and started going to the gym.

...Well, I went from 86 kg to 155....That's huge. 155 kgs and then I thought, "No, that's enough" and that's when I got off the grader... I was still that weight, and so I started – when I came home here, I thought, oh well, at least I'll be able to rest all this weight up, and it just got worse. Not sick, but just got lazy and then I think, "Oh gee, I wouldn't mind going there, going here, going there," and then I think to myself, "oh no, just a bit exhausting for me," so I thought, "no, bugger this", so I got and went out to the gym, started down there and the fella said, "Where would you like to start," and I said, "I've always been an athletic person, played a lot of rugby," and in fact I stopped playing my last rugby game when I turned 68. (tPiri,C2)

Piri's story of change highlights his realisation that his weight was so great that it was exhausting to move, and he had become "lazy". Piri also reflected on a part of his life when he was athletic, which also gave him some drive to lose weight to become more mobile again and less tired. Piri's realisation and reflection enabled him to decide to improve his overall health and wellbeing and give him back his mobility.

Another story of turning points kaumātua shared was about unstable relationships. Hakopa's earlier story about separating from his first wife influence his turning point came when he was on the brink of separating from his second wife, with whom he had six children. With his marriage on the rocks, Hakopa realised he needed help, and needed to change if he was to save his marriage. So, he reached out for help and support.

In 1981 my marriage was on the rocks and I had six children to my second wife, and we were just ready to break up and I said, "well, I'm going to do a big change in my life. I'm going to ask for the Salvation Army to help me." From that day on I became involved with them. I became a local Officer at [place name]. I went into [Māori education institute] to train as a Māori Minister and all that came back that I took control of my life. (tHakopa,C1)

Hakopa's alcohol abuse and his marriage on the brink of breaking-point was a significant turning moment in his and his whānau's life. Hakopa identified and sought help through the Salvation army which resulted in much better life control and a new direction with new roles and responsibilities. Hakopa's experience of with his first marriage separation was a key learning moment for him during his turning point. When he identified that his second marriage was heading down the same track, he took control of and began the journey towards recovery with the help of a charitable organisation.

Kaumātua stories reported of turning points as bringing positive change in their lives as the kaumātua navigated and overcame their adversity. Significantly, turning point stories from koroheke, showed how they avoided (e.g., marriage breakup) or managed (e.g., gave up alcohol, sought help with weight gain) a problem. These were the moments of turning points. The kaumātua demonstrated the desire and need for change at a point within a set of circumstances. Their commitment and determination established resilience.

Te Kupenga Summary

Ngā Raranga o Ngā Kupenga Kaumātua examined the conversations the kaumātua teina had with their kaumātua tuakana. The kaumātua teina shared past personal experiences and perspectives about their lives, reflecting on their lived realities of adversity and turning points that were life changing. The subtheme *Te Kupenga o Te Pō* concerned pūrākau

(stories) of kaumātua adversities. Adversity pūrākau discussed the many hardships kaumātua faced in their past that included stories of childhood and domestic physical abuse, alcohol abuse, and momentous losses. Adversity stories demonstrated how for some kaumātua they internalised their hardships labelling themselves as the “villain” in their own story and blaming themselves for their misfortunes. Heke for example, normalised his parents physically abusive behaviours toward him because of his bad behaviours. Likewise, Kapo shared his reality of being a kid in the physically and emotionally abusive foster care system. On the other hand, Kiri shared her story of being in a domestically abusive relationship. Other stories shared touched on loss of family members, loss of jobs, and broken-down relationships. Whilst these adversity stories may have scarred the kaumātua teina both physically and emotionally, they laid a solid foundation for the subsequent turning moments that changed lives.

The subtheme *Te Kupenga o Te Ao Mārama* regarded pūrākau of kaumātua turning points. Turning point pūrākau discussed transformative moments that related to physical health changes and improvement, personal and whānau relationship reconciliations, and personal growth. Heke and Piri for example, realised they needed to make prompt and significant behavioural changes, due to substantial weight gain, to improve their overall health. As for Hakopa, he realised how detrimental his alcohol use impacted him and the people around him, so sought refuge and help in the Salvation Army, and eventually found a new purpose in life with a stable career and relationship. These turning point stories symbolised the mana (power and determination) kaumātua possessed to take life’s controls and turn their lives around for the better both for themselves and their loved ones. To conclude, the pūrākau shared in *Ngā Raranga o Ngā Kupenga Kaumātua* highlighted the scale of strength and resilience kaumātua had when they found themselves faced with significant adversities. They were able to heal themselves, their whānau by reaching their own potential to start the process that would transform their lives in a healthy and positive way. The pūrākau within *Ngā Raranga o Ngā Kupenga Kaumātua* serve as a metaphor for the kupenga and its strong characteristics of durability,

flexibility and mendability, demonstrating how with love, support and time, adversity can be endured and conquered.

Ngā Raranga o Ngā Kete Kaumātua – Stories in Later Life

The second key theme is *Ngā Raranga o Ngā Kete Kaumātua* - or kaumātua stories in later life. Kete are kit-like bags or baskets made from flax and used in the same way a tote bag is – a traditional “handbag” if you like. Traditionally, kete were made by wāhine (women) and the art of weaving (specific to whānau, hapu, iwi) was handed down from generation to generation. Kete appears throughout Te Ao Māori, and Māori folklore. For example, Tānemahuta, the god of the forest (or Tāwhaki for some iwi) retrieved Ngā Kete Mātauranga, or the Three Baskets of Knowledge from the heavens to bring to Earth for humankind. In the context of this rangahau, the kete represent the stories of independence and resilience in later life shared by the teina kaumātua. The kete are also symbolic of knowledge holders, much like the three baskets of knowledge. Within this theme, two subthemes were identified: 1) *Te Kete Manawaroa – Resilience*; and 2) *Te Kete Mana Motuhake - independence*.

Te Kete Manawaroa – Resilience

This first subtheme of the theme *Ngā Pūrākau o Ngā Kete Kaumātua Te Kete Manawaroa* or A Basket of Resilience. Defined, resilience essentially is about being able to positively adapt, maintain, or regain mental and emotional wellness despite hardships, struggles, or challenges experienced (Herman et al., 2011; Ross et al., 2023; Skedsmo & Huber, 2023). This sub-theme centres on kaumātua stories of how they overcame adversities in their lives. The stories of resilience showcase the growth that kaumātua experienced in how they overcome their adversity.

Hakopa, whose alcohol problem is discussed above, also shared his experience of overcoming challenges with family relationships. He talked

about where he is in his life now and the growth that came with his journey of recovery and sobriety:

I must say in my family relationship I was the black sheep of the family. So, I had to start from the bottom of the ladder, and I had to work my way up. Today I'm the kaumātua of my family. I look after all my family as well, even my sisters – whoever's alive now, they come to me for tangis or things like that. I was a marriage celebrant, but I gave my licence away because I wasn't doing enough marriages but it's on the verge if I wanted it back I...I really became a good worker. I became a factory manager in [placename] and all those kinds of things was related to the fact that I gave up alcohol and I became who I am. ... As a Minister one of my responsibilities, they seem to call me all the time onto maraes and they expect me to korero Māori and I'm just sort of dumped in that situation. I just can't help it, but my sister and brothers ..., don't know. In my Māori Ministry I've learnt a bit of the basics in the kaupapa marae protocol, so I just make it, so to speak. so that's where I am in my life now. (tHakopa,C1)

Hakopa talked about his resilience as a journey from “rock bottom”. His journey showcases his commitment to creating a positive change for the betterment of his own hauora and the haora of his whānau, wider whānau, and community. Hakopa’s growth has taken him to new heights. His outlook and identity have evolved to a place of standing, where he has been a marriage celebrant, works as a Minister, and is now the kaumātua for his whānau. Hakopa’s new roles have not only provided him with new a new sense of purpose and responsibility but have also created a newfound sense of respect by those around him, and respect for himself. Hakopa puts who he is today down to his own decision to give up alcohol and the action needed to build a new life. Hakopa’s resilience story is demonstrated in that he was able to regain back control of his life by seeking help for his alcohol abuse, and in turn, overcame adversity by mending and maintaining

relationships, and acquiring new roles of purpose and responsibility within his whānau and community.

Piri's turning point shared earlier, brought about a positive and healthy change. He committed to going to the gym:

Oh, I go every day if I can. Like, today I would have – if only for our meeting I probably would have waited until after our meeting, going to the gym. Yeah, so every day. Every day I'm going, every morning. I spend an hour-and-a-half, two, three hours. Two or three hours.
(tPiri,C2)

The gym, for Piri, has become a big part of his life that he even said that if it wasn't for this kaupapa rangahau, he'd be at the gym. Piri's resilience is demonstrated via his daily commitment to and the hours spent at the gym. The gym has brought new purpose, focus, outlook, and meaning to Piri's life, and most of all, an improved state of health and wellbeing.

Rangi talked about having to be a carer for her sick mother during her school years, and because of this responsibility, she never got the opportunity for good school education nor had formal employment. In her later years, however, she saw an opportunity:

We came to Hamilton in 2002 to live and I wondered what I was going to do, so I saw a job advertised at a wananga so I did a three-year diploma in Māori flax weaving, harakeke, and then I decided I'd have to continue my learning, so I came to this place because it had these things for Māori people to do. Anybody's allowed to come to these places, but I came here for that reason, and I get a job. I never ever thought that I would ever get a job because I finished school very young because my mother never sent me to school. My mother was a very sick lady, and she never sent me to school, so I didn't have a great education. But my learning from 60 to where I am today at 76 has been a real gift for me and I am grateful. I am grateful for what I do

and for the people I see, like yourselves, Māori faces when I know what you're going through. (tRangi,C1)

Rangi's move to Hamilton from Auckland was a move of opportunity and growth for her. Rangi has gone most of her adult life without education and employment, and knowing this in conjunction with moving to a new city came with worry; how might she fit in, what might she do? But Rangi's move enabled her to learn about the traditional Māori practice of raranga, which in turn offered her employment teaching others. In adjusting to a new city and following an opportunity to learn Rangi demonstrates the resilience she had built over the years, she was proud of her learning from the age of 60 and saw it as an achievement.

Kiri reluctantly shared a little about her abusive husband. As the four quotes below illustrate, it took Kiri's tuakana the three conversations to extract pieces of Kiri's story bit by bit and conversation by conversation.

Well, no, because we had been separated for a few years because he used to hit me, and I thought I don't want to be a punching bag. (tKiri,C1)...

So, you've got one more session with me, you might want to talk about what happened here with your mate. Or anything else to that matter but it sounds as though you're already on to it. (TMako,tKiri,C2)

Yeah, even too well. When I separated – man, I was a punching bag to my ex. So, I told him to get out or I'd ring the cops. Because I was too scared to ring the cops. Too scared. (tKiri,C2)

Alright, I'll divorce. And I've been so happy, eh, me and my kids. And everybody always said to me, "Kiri, you've done a good job with your kids." I said "Thank you." It was hard but I did it... I never talk about my past. Never. But I mean, look what I told you. I've never told anybody. (tKiri,C3)

This series of quotes highlights how this conversational journey has developed and strengthened the relationship between Mako and Kiri. The quotes over the three conversations demonstrate a building of trust that Kiri got a point of feeling comfortable with her tuakana that she was able to share her story about being a “punching bag to my ex.” Kiri’s story demonstrates the strength it took to build the courage to leave her abusive husband. Although Kiri only shared small snippets of her story incrementally, the above illustrates a storyline that portrays Kiri’s resilience development. Kiri’s resilience is reflected in the feedback she received from “everybody” who tells her she has done a great job raising her Tamariki on her own.

Oriwa talked about the emotional element in her role as a partner and her new role as carer and the impact on herself and her husband.

As time was going on he was getting really snappy and he wasn't thinking of my feelings at the time. I didn't blame him because he had a lot to deal with, going through cancer on the brain. I sort of brushed that aside and just kept going...you learn to cope...all that we have to put up with. (tOriwa,C1)

Oriwa demonstrates manawaroa here as she takes on the role as partner carer for her sick and dying husband. She shows such strength when she puts herself in her husband’s shoes and imagines and remembers what he is going through. Oriwa enacts her love and commitment to her husband until the end and put aside her own needs as she just learns to cope. Oriwa’s resilience comes across in her stoic approach.

The teina kaumātua demonstrated manawaroa, and their stories highlight their mana in finding ways to get themselves and their whānau through life no matter what adversities come their way. Some kaumātua, they were able to identify an urgent need for help, whilst drawing on the learnings from past adversities. Other kaumātua got through their adversities reaching new heights that came with roles and responsibilities.

Other kaumātua showed their resilience in learning new things in later life- that you are never too old to learn. Another's weight gain generated a whole new outlook on life with a new gym schedule and a kuia, who was able to build the strength to leave an abusive partner showed resilience, but even more so, it was her strength to share this story. *Te Kete Manawaroa* or stories of resilience illustrates the sheer strength kaumātua must manage, navigate, face and overcome adversity, highlighting kaumātua development and growth. For some kaumātua, their adversity led them to independence.

Te Kete Mana Motuhake- Independence

This second subtheme, *Te Kete Mana Motuhake* concerns mana motuhake kaumātua stories of independence. The sub-theme includes kaumātua stories of how they hold on to their independent selves, especially in older age.

Kaumātua shared different stories of their unique mana motuhake journey. Koroheke referenced or implied the notion of independence in later life, whereas the kuia explicitly shared their stories of mana motuhake taking their tuakana on a journey. Kuia shared stories about the loss of spouse or split from their husband, others, the loss of employment, and a change in circumstance. Mana shared a snippet of her married life during the 1960s. Specifically, Mana spoke about the struggles she endured during a time when married women were stay-at-home housewives and mothers and divorce was uncommon and socially unaccepted. Mana shared the story of her decision to split from her husband and father to her children despite the societal views at the time and her journey to independence to live her own life.

Oh, gosh, on my own, I've been... Shoot, I got married in the 60s and we separated in 75, so I've been since 75 on my own. It's a long time... I think I probably accomplished more than I would have if I was still with [ex-husband]. He was born of that time where I should just stay home or I could go out to work – that was probably what he'd like, go

to work, earn money but just come home. I was to have his life, really; I was to live his life and it didn't suit me because I've always usually made up my own mind. So that was that. I was free. I could do it. I didn't have him holding me back. When I went to varsity, he wouldn't help with our son. He would say, "Yes, I'll be home" but he never did come home, and I was always late for varsity because I was always looking for someone to watch [son]... It was really stressful, but I managed it and I had a full-time job... And I was a first in a couple of jobs. I was the first person to be a registrar at the Waikato Hospital and doing research for oncology, so that was the first time anyone had done that position. And when I left there, when my mum got sick and I didn't know what I was going to do, I ended up in the court and I ended up as a first advocate on behalf of women and children of abuse and I worked through the courts with the judges and the police and the community system. They were both firsts. (tMana,C1)

Mana's story of and journey to independence is a one of possibilities. Mana's marriage story describes her as the housewife and stay-at-home mother, but particularly as living her husband's life and meeting social expectations of women at the time. Mana talked about the impact of those expectations with few options to support her after she left her husband with his lack of support with their son's care during her studies at university as she juggled fulltime work, studies and children. For Mana, her marriage had held her back; it was only when she decided to leave her husband and assert her own mana motuhake that she was able to study and become first in two significant roles. Mana was the first registrar in oncology at Waikato Hospital, and amongst the first wāhine to advocate for women and children of abuse who were going through the court system. Mana's mana motuhake was key to her creating a life beyond the socially prescribed roles for women of the time.

Kapua illustrated her mana motuhake in her story about her dreams, aspirations, and goals. Kapua talked about not being able to paint the walls of her Housing Corporation house, so instead she pinned dream panels to

the walls, which could be taken down without “*much mess*”. Kapua described the dream panels as reminders and a form of guide in her life; “*It just shows me where I’m heading, what I want and what I’m asking for, and I’m not sitting back.*” Kapua has spent most of her life looking out for, looking after, and tending to the needs of others in her roles as a mother, grandmother, and wife. Kapua exclaimed now is her time to prioritise her needs, wants and desires. Kapua talked about how she now makes korowai and dreamcatchers because she has prioritised this for herself and enjoys it.

Everything is changed to doing stuff I actually want to do not what people want me to do... Like Helen Clark wanted to be Prime Minister, she had her five-year dream panels. I thought well blow it, if she can do it, I can do it and look where she is....Everything is changed to doing stuff I actually want to do not what people want me to do.... That’s an exciting part of what I am doing at the moment...a lot of people don’t ask for their dreams. They don’t think they’re good enough. I thought well darn it, I’m good enough. I work hard, I’m different from everybody else but I’m still working. I may not get paid for it but it’s a job. I’ve been taken care of, since the operation I’ve got this Housing Corp house and that’s a lot of stress off straight away if you’ve got somewhere to live...the grandchildren have grown up or they’ve decided they’ve grown up so my job’s finished for now. Now it’s my time. I’ve just turned 60, it’s about time I had my time instead of kids all the time... If you’re not going to look after yourself, no one else is. You’ve got to come first and if you’re happy then everyone else will be happy... It’s time for me to concentrate on me...This is my new journey. (tKapua,C2)

Kapua uses several strategies in her independence story that took her on a journey of transformation. She employed the activity of creating dream panels to physically visualise her dreams, hopes and aspirations. The dream panels supported Kapua’s mindset and attitude so that her dreams would

become a reality. She used Helen Clarke (former New Zealand Prime Minister) as a role model of what she could do to become the person of her dreams. Kapua also employed the strategy of self-prioritisation to allowed her “my time” to do what she wants, when she wants, and where she wants. Finally, Kapua applied the notion that if she looks after and focuses on herself and wellbeing, the wellbeing of her whānau will be taken care of. Kapua’s story of mana motuhake demonstrates actions to transform and provides hope for future wellbeing for her and her whānau.

Kiri’s earlier story about losing her job and move in with her son and his whānau for approximately two years as a “live in babysitter” impacted her mana motuhake. However, her situation changed when she connected with the Rauawaawa and asked, “*Do they do housing for kaumātuas?*” They did, and “*that’s how I got this whare (house).*” Kiri not only got a house, but she also found renewed independence, social connectedness and better wellbeing. Kiri shared:

... “Do they [Rauawaawa] do housing for kaumātuas? “Because that’s when I had decided I am a kaumātua. They said, “Yes Kiri, go and see [coordinator].” So, I did, I went to see her. She said “Well, where do you stay?” I said, “I stay in TA.” “Oh, you go back on the van?”, “No. I’ve got to catch a bus here. I’ve got to get up early and get the bus so I can come and then I’ve got to go back and catch a bus to go home.” She goes, “Oh, is that why you won’t come to classes?” I said, “No, because I’ve got no money.” I told her the truth. She said “Well, how do you come down?” I said, “My son gives me money.” So, she said “Yeah, we might be able to get you a whare.” I said, “Oh, but I haven’t got any furniture.” She said “That’s alright. We’ll be able to get it for you.” So that’s how I got this whare. I like it here. See, I know everybody here all we do know Rauawaawa, eh. So, it was good. I moved in and I knew everybody... Yeah, because you see mostly everybody from here down there. You’d be surprised. Yeah, [name] always go there every Friday night, Friday after Rauawaawa, after our social club. Well, she used to when she was living at home but now,

she's in a home, she can't. But I used to see her all the time, I used to go and sit with her. Used to laugh. Yeah, it's good. Yeah, I go out. We go out to things. I love it though, because I've got my own wheels so I can just hop in the car and off. (tKiri,C1)

Kiri's story about her journey to renewed independence, came out of adversity and finding herself dependent on the manaakitanga of her son. Kiri's journey took her on the path of self-discovery and acceptance as she found herself identifying as a kaumātua. Even more, her journey to kaumātuatanga, led her to the Rauawaawa and in turn to independence again. Kiri describes the happiness, gratitude and independence gained in living in her own and how it has brought to her life again. Later, in her second conversation, Kiri stated, *"Well, I'm still driving but when they say I can't drive I'm going to get me a scooter"* (tKiri,C2). Kiri's story demonstrates that her mana motuhake cannot be taken away, and when it is, she'll find an alternative, and in this case, she will get a scooter when she is told she can no longer drive. Kiri's journey to re-independence illustrates a story of hope and new-found identity.

Oriwa shared an independence story whereby her doctor was unintentionally trying to take her independence away from her during a time of her life where she was not well.

Yeah, it's like the doctor saying to me you need a home help. I said, "Why?" He said, "Haven't you got one?" I said, "No, I'm independent. I like doing things myself." He said, "But whilst you're not feeling too bright." I said, "No. If I take my time I get there." (tOriwa,C2)

Oriwa asserted her mana motuhake to her doctor during a routine check-up. Oriwa assured him that she can manage if she takes her time. Oriwa's need and want to hold onto her independence demonstrates her willingness to do things differently; if she takes her time, she will manage and achieve. Oriwa's desire to be independent was supported by the tuakana who followed up with *"And that's independence, that's very precious to us."*

Stories of mana motuhake were explicitly shared, in detail, by the kuia. The unique stories of the kuia demonstrated immense mana motuhake as they navigated various adversities, setbacks, and barriers to maintaining and reclaiming self-independence. For some kuia, mana motuhake presented stories of possibilities and agency that provided opportunity to challenge societal expectations of women's role, and to help others in need. For others, mana motuhake enabled stories of self-prioritisation and transformative action that gave kuia opportunities to get creative in changing their realities. *Te Kete Mana Motuhake* has provided stories of independence that illustrate inner kaumātua determination and drive to assert their mana motuhake. Mana motuhake was crucial for these kaumātua.

Te Kete Summary

Ngā Raranga o Ngā Kete Kaumātua examined the conversations the kaumātua teina had with their kaumātua tuakana about later life. The pūrākau the kaumātua shared concerned stories of their resilience and independence in later life. The first subtheme *Te Kete Manawaroa* described pūrākau of kaumātua resilience. Resilience stories discussed significant life changes such as addiction recovery, partner care giving, health and wellbeing improvements. For example, Hakopa showed resilience via his journey to sobriety and whānau healing and reconciliation. Piri demonstrated his resilience to improve his physical health by committing himself to the gym making it a permanent part of his almost daily routine. Rangi displayed her resilience by obtaining an education in later life resulting in a career shift. Kiri exhibited her resilience by building up the courage to leave her abusive partner for a better life for her and her children and was reflected in her and her family's newfound happiness. Oriwa illustrated her resilience as an optimistic and selfless partner carer who put herself last during her husband's dying days. Kaumātua resilience stories showcased and emphasised the sheer mental and emotional strength of the kaumātua teina to overcome adversities. This highlighted positively how

kaumātua adapted, developed, and transformed their lives, and with new purpose.

The second subtheme *Te Kete Mana Motuhake* presented pūrākau of kaumātua independence. Independence stories discussed how kaumātua either maintained or regained their independence in later life, despite individual choices that defied societal expectations. For instance, Mana reclaimed her independence when she decided to part with her husband and pursue an education that saw her become an established professional in a pioneering role. Kapua found her independence when she decided to prioritise her own dreams and desires and shifted to self-care from caregiving. Kiri regained her independence when she built the courage to connect socially in the community and seek housing support. Oriwa asserted her independence and affirmed, with her doctor who advised she needed home support, that she would just have to do things differently and take her time to achieve her daily house chores. Independence stories highlighted kaumātua asserting their mana motuhake as they abolished barriers, redefined roles, and prioritised personal wellbeing.

The pūrākau shared in *Ngā Raranga o Ngā Kete Kaumātua* demonstrated kaumātua resilience and independence in action. These stories highlighted that resilience and independence in later life is about thriving, reclaiming, agency, and adapting, and is not just about surviving. This research showcased kaumātua exemplification of determination, strength, and wisdom to navigate their later years' challenges, whether that be via self-transformation, new roles and careers, or the pursuit of hopes, dreams, aspirations, and wellbeing. The pūrākau within *Ngā Raranga o Ngā Kete Kaumātua* are representative of a kete (woven basket) as they symbolise knowledge from the pūrākau about the three kits of knowledge in Te Ao Māori. The two kete in this research provide knowledge regarding resilience and independence as critical components to ageing well with both purpose and dignity.

Ngā Raranga o Ngā Whenu Kaumātua – Stories of Connection

The third key theme is *Ngā Raranga o Ngā Whenu Kaumātua* and tells the stories of the connections kaumātua have created for themselves in later life. A whenu is a strand of a woven flax garment, and many whenu come together to create a kete or a kupenga. In this analysis whenu represent the created connections that teina kaumātua have made for themselves and or have let form organically. The three subthemes woven together to create the third theme are: 1) *Te Whenu Hapori*; 2) *Te Whenu Māoritanga*; and 3) *Te Whenu Kaupapa*; and together, these subthemes or strands.

Te Whenu Hapori – Connection to Community

This first subtheme is *Te Whenu Hapori – Connection to Community*. This subtheme tells the stories of community connections kaumātua created via community organisations and or from loneliness. All kaumātua either referred to a community connection or shared their stories of connection to community.

All kaumātua spoke of connections they had to community organisations. Some kaumātua belonged to bowling clubs, whilst others were involved with their local community house, like Peti. Rauawaawa was one community organisation that all kaumātua spoke highly of.

Kiri shared her story of how she became part of the Rauawaawa whānau. She was hesitant at first to check out Rauawaawa because she did not know anyone and did not see herself as a kaumātua. However, Kiri was encouraged to check it out by a friend and was pleasantly surprised when she made the move.

“Kiri, you need to come to Rauawaawa” and I thought what’s that? And she said “For kaumātuas.” Well to me, I’m not old. And she said, “You will be surprised who you will meet here.” I thought okay then. Well, I mean, isn’t it amazing. I went in there for lunch and who was in the kitchen doing the kitchen? [name] Her and I went to school

together, college together. I said, "Oh [name] what are you doing here?" She says, "I've been living here because of my husband" and I didn't even know, you know, because we moved from – well I'm from a small town in [iwi name]... Yeah, so I was glad that I had come here because I was amazed. I said to [her], "[Name], you're the only one I know." She says, "No [name], there's another of our school mates here." I went "Really?" It was amazing when we come here and you ask "where are you from?" I've got heaps of friends and it was through them that I got little whare. It's in the complex but all of us come here to Rauawaawa, and I really like it... but if it wasn't for here [Rauawaawa], I reckon I would still be staying with my son. (tKiri,C1)

Kiri is surprised with who she reconnects when she visits Rauawaawa for the first time. Furthermore, Kiri, she connects with the community of Rauawaawa whānau, and new friends living in housing complex.

Rangi's story also echoed the same sentiment as Kiri when she talked about the value of a community organisation like the Rauawaawa. She described it as a place that provides kaumātua with "their time", nurture and support.

That's why I really like this place for us, as Māori people that have more issues in their health than anywhere else and I think we're very, very lucky and there's not many organisations like this that would look after us... This has been the best part of my life when I came from Auckland. I've been here 13 years at Rauawaawa... For people that haven't had that opportunity because they had to go to work to get a home, to feed their children, to educate their children, now this is the place for their time to come and do these things, but also to get nurtured and to support one another like the caregivers are going to do and the nurses and that do. (tRangi,C1)

Rangi's story spoke to a wider issue of ill health of Māori compared non-Māori, and particularly the health of kaumātua. Rangi's story identifies the

need for community organisations like the Rauawaawa who work to serve ageing communities. Kiri's and Rangi's stories highlight the sense of community and friendships made possible through the Rauawaawa. Their stories also acknowledge the purposeful, meaningful and valued work of community organisations like the Rauawaawa for kaumātua.

Other kaumātua spoke about a sense of loneliness due to losing a spouse and ways they made community connections. Heke shared his story of being single for many years. He continues to work and regularly visits a deceased friend's wife to fill the void of loneliness, and at the same time, help fill the void for his friend's wife.

I've been single for a number of years. About 10, maybe 12 years. At first, I wasn't happy about it, being single, but I am today. I've got friends and I've got relatives that I go visit... If I wasn't working, then I think I'd be even more lonely, but because I'm working, I interact with a lot of people too at work... I worked with his wife at the Māori service, and she just retired just before he passed away. I go around and visit her most days to see how she is, and she says she's lonely and misses him and she wishes she'd had a part-time job or a casual job so that she wasn't at home most of the time by herself... I even talked [name] into coming along to here too as well just for company. I don't know if she started coming yet. (tHeke,C1).

Heke's story emphasised the need for purpose in later life, as demonstrated in his need to keep working. Heke's story also highlights manaakitanga (care and support) by visiting a widow, experiencing loneliness, who he has befriended. Again, the role of community organisations like the Rauawaawa in providing opportunities for social connection comes through in Heke's story

Oriwa also shared her story of a new-found loneliness since she was widowed. Her story highlighted the need for conversation when she spoke about going to her bowling club, not to play bowls but to catchup with friends.

Yeah, it's more now being by myself. All of a sudden, you've got nobody to have a conversation with. Yesterday I spent all day at the bowling club. I didn't play bowls, but I went over to watch and catch up with everybody there. That was good, I enjoyed that. You need that communication... One thing I must say, my bowling friends ..., right through when my husband was alive and he was sick, they've been so supportive. (tOriwa,C1)

Oriwa's desire for community and companionship is filled via the bowling club. Oriwa's visits were about connecting and catching up for that communication she so yearned for.

Both kuia and koroheke mentioned feelings of loneliness to some degree, and how it created the need for connection, communication, companionship, and community. The kaumātua shared that being part of a community organisation like the Rauawaawa helped to fill the void and contributed to their overall wellbeing as they were no longer isolated or lonely. The pūrākau from *Te Whenu Hapori* tells stories of loneliness, and that out of loneliness comes stories of friendship and community building. These stories of connection with community illustrate the role of, and need for community organisations like the Rauawaawa, in addressing loneliness. Also, through the Rauawaawa, kaumātua have been able to make cultural connections.

Te Whenu Māoritanga – Connection to The Māori World

This second subtheme is *Te Whenu Māoritanga*. This sub-theme draws on stories of how they connected and or re-connected to their Māoritanga in later life.

Kapo shared that “I'm really grateful to the Tainui people because whilst I've been here [Rauawaawa] I've learnt quite a bit which has been a real blessing in my life.” (tKapo,C2). Kapo's comment illustrates the importance

of learning about the mana whenua when living in the region of another iwi that you do not whakapapa to (relate to).

Anaru shared his story of connection as he implied, he was raised with connection to his Māoritanga, having been raised with the knowledge of hunting and gathering passed down from his father. However, Anaru left home for boarding school, he never returned home. Anaru's journey of re-connection began once he started getting involved with the Rauawaawa.

So, he said you need a formal education now and you know how to compete with the Pakeha. I was sent off to boarding school, so I never went back to the farm. Coming here at Rauawaawa I'm retired, I came here to basically sort of connect with my Māori side. (tAnaru,C1)

Rangi shared a similar sentiment, talked about not being brought up in Te Ao Māori, but her diploma in weaving (completed in her 60s) and involvement with the Rauawaawa has enabled her to connect with her Māoritanga.

I wasn't brought up totally in the culture but I've certainly embraced it since I've done my diploma [raranga-weaving], and at Rauawaawa and also with me being part of it because I value what I've learnt so I guess I'm lucky. (tRangi,C2)

Kapua also shared a story about her participation in the Rauawaawa's korowai making class and a connection to a particular korowai she had made during the classes. Kapua shared why this particular korowai could not be sold but rather it be gifted.

The other thing about the korowai which I think a few members in the class will tell you as well, the last one which I modelled the other day, that one I think I was asked to sell it, but I couldn't sell it because it's got my ta moko on it. So, it didn't feel right to sell it. I had it for six months because I didn't try to sell it...it just didn't feel right. I was

doing the housework one day and then this name came to me, and I thought right now I know who it belongs to. So, I wrote the story of the korowai, put it in an envelope and then tacked it onto it and put it in a suit cover. Just popped it up on the door so that when that person comes to visit over Christmas or New Year. I can just give it to them. Because once it's said a name, you just know. It doesn't belong to you anymore and that person's journey continues into it. So, it becomes a family tie. (tKapua,C2)

Anaru's connection story is about journey of re-connection. Rangi's connection story emphasised the value in the learning she has gained since connecting to her Māoritanga. Kapua described the spiritual connection she had to her mahi korowai (cloak making work) and tells of how the name of this particular korowai she had made came to her; the person she was to gift the korowai to. This illustrates an even deeper connection at a spiritual level. Anaru's, Rangi's and Kapua's stories of connection highlight how community organisations like the Rauawaawa can enable and enhance connection and reconnection for kaumātua.

Heke shared a memory about when he was a kid and how some family friends would pick him up and take him to (named place) where he would join in with the kapa haka group. And for Heke, going to the Rauawaawa on Fridays reminded him of that memory as they sang Māori songs.

Yeah, I like it on the Friday when I can make it. I like it. Even I remember years ago when I was a kid, this friend of my father's, who was a little bit older than dad, and his wife used to come and pick me up because Dad and them didn't know what to do with me, I was so mischievous, and they would get him and his wife to come and take me and try and teach me something. I don't know what they were expecting them to do, but they would take me up to [named place] and join the kapa haka group and that. I got into that for a little while, only a little while, and then they stopped doing it. I don't know why. I

missed them, but that's why this coming here on a Friday reminds me of those days years ago. All those Māori songs. (tHeke,C1)

Heke's story of connection to the Rauawaawa ignited memories and reflection from when he was a child growing up in rural New Zealand. But his story of connection as a child also demonstrates how being grounded and connected to your culture as a young child, is important in that it can help balance one's overall wellbeing when an individual goes off track.

Kaumātua shared stories of connection and re-connection, and for many, that re-connection was enabled and enhanced because of a community organisation like the Rauawaawa. Kamātua, through their stories, all emphasised the significant value and learning they have gained from this connection and reconnection as they learn or relearn about their culture, language and practices, and provides a second whenu to add to their kete or kupenga.

Te Whenu Kaupapa – Connection to Kaupapa

The third subtheme is *Te Whenu Kaupapa – Connections to Kaupapa*. Within this sub-theme, the kaumātua referred to or commented specifically about the tuakana-teina project kaupapa.

Maui talked about the tuakana-teina programme as a two-way learning opportunity for both tuakana and the teina.

That's the good thing about this type of program. You're learning from the teacher, and the teacher's learning – you know, both ways. And then the knowledge comes up, for those researchers, how they go about working out things, whatever they do with it, with the program. (tMaui,C2)

Maui highlights the reciprocal learning in the tuakana-teina kaupapa and his hope that the researchers will “go about working out things” from “the knowledge that comes up”. In this last comment Maui notes another level of

learning from the programme which acknowledges and values the kaumātua knowledge and stories. This view is also shared by Rangi who said, *“Just hope somebody’s going to take all we’ve said today and really make a good thing of it. Amen.”* (tRangi,C1)

Oriwa shared a similar view of the programme. Oriwa stated early that she does not like to commit to things such as church because she is a person that just wants to be able to “up and off” on her own terms. However, with the tuakana-teina kaupapa, she distinguished being “committed to do it” from “I want to do it”. and thought of the kaupapa as “a project”. Like today, I don’t think this is a commitment; I think of it as a project. Tuakana responds “Yes, it is. An important project.” Absolutely, so I don’t feel like I’m committed to do it because I know I want to do it. Oriwa views the tuakana-teina programme as important kaupapa, that she wants to be a part of.

Anaru talked about his children and moko who encouraged him to write down his knowledge, experiences and stories. He says he is “too lazy” and that “you take your history with you.” However, he goes on to talk about the value of the conversations, making *“you think about things you never thought about for years”*. These comments highlight the programme as a platform for reflection.

There’s times when sometimes I say things to my kids about what I would call adventures and they’d say, “Oh Dad, why don’t you write that down?” I’d say, “Oh I’m too lazy.” Grandchildren, they say the same thing. But when you’re too lazy, you’re too lazy. You take your history with you. This is a good thing these interviews, because you think about things you never thought about for years. What you’re thinking is, well my way of thinking is if this is part of your history, who’s going to be interested? Who are you to give a story and who’s going to be interested in listening? (tAnaru,C2).

Aanaru comments that the tuakana-teina kaupapa could be a tool for capturing and recording his pūrākau--the ones he does not want to record

himself. Anaru's children's comment about why he will not write his stories down for his children highlights the next generation's need for some kind of intergenerational knowledge transmission because they allude to the value in doing so. This project and its conversations could potentially be the connector between kaumātua and mokopuna (next generation) to hand down knowledge. In summary, kaumātua spoke highly of the KMM project and emphasised its value. It has become clear that the programme has become an enabler. An enabler of connections and a platform to connect to help address the issue of kaumātua in isolation by allowing them to be part of a kaupapa that has meaning and purpose for them and their communities.

Te Whenu Summary

The theme *Ngā Raranga o Ngā Whenu Kaumātua* explored the conversations kaumātua teina had with their kaumātua tuakana about connections in later life. The connections that emerged from the conversations specifically came out of kaumātua community engagement and cultural practices. This theme revealed that kaumātua created meaningful connections within their community, by reconnecting with their culture and identity as Māori, and through engaging with programmes with a purpose. The first subtheme *Te Whenu Hapori* presented pūrākau concerning kaumātua connections to community. Majority of kaumātua emphasised the value of community organisations such as the Rauawaawa as it provided them all with multiple and great social connections that helped them address their loneliness as kaumātua were able to build friendships. Kaumātua teina shared stories of friend reunions, personal friendships, or community group support systems. For instance, Heke and Oriwa shared their experiences of loneliness after they lost their spouses and how their engagement with their community aided in lightening their feeling of loneliness. Stories within *Te Whenu Hapori* highlighted that community connections enhanced kaumātua wellbeing and fostered a sense of kaumātua belonging.

The second subtheme *Te Whenu Māoritanga* presented pūrākau regarding kaumātua connections to their culture and identity. Kaumātua shared personal experiences and feelings about being either disconnected from their culture or being raised within it but did not learn about it. Many kaumātua shared haerenga (journeys) of their reconnections to and with their Māori culture and identity in later life. Such connections were identified as being made via their involvement and engagement with cultural learning and practices that presented to them in later life. Anaru and Rangi for example, shared their experiences of attending activities, such as Reo Māori language classes and raranga (weaving) classes at the Rauawaawa and how these classes provided the opportunity to reconnect to their culture and language. Re-connection to their Māoritanga enabled many kaumātua to appreciate their cultural identity as kaumātua Māori (Māori elders) as they gained a deeper understanding of who they are and where they were from.

The third subtheme *Te Whenu Kaupapa* presented pūrākau about kaumātua connections to kaupapa, or purposeful programmes. In particular, the KMM project was emphasised by many kaumātua as being a great kaupapa to be connected to and a part of. Kaumātua teina shared their personal experiences and thoughts of the project having highlighted its significance as a platform for reciprocal and mutual learning and support. For example, Maui and Rangi shared that they valued KMM as an avenue for reciprocal learning, with the hope that the learning from this project could be used to pass on knowledge to help other kaumātua and next generations. Other kaumātua also expressed their views of the project as a place to reflect. The KMM project provided the platform for kaumātua to share personal stories with one another and to build relationships. To conclude, the three connection types revealed via the kaumātua stories enabled kaumātua to combat loneliness, reconnect with Te Ao Māori, and contribute to new knowledge and knowledge preservation. Not only did these connections play a fundamental role in sustaining tikanga (cultural practices) and the sharing of knowledge, kaumātua wellbeing was also enhanced as they journeyed through their connections. Via their connection

stories, kaumātua illustrated how important cultural and social support systems are in later life. The connection pūrākau within *Ngā Raranga of Ngā Whenu Kaumātua* are a symbolism of the many whenu, or flax strands, that combine to weave a more connected and interconnected complete garment, mat or cloak.

Ngā Rāranga Conclusion

This chapter presented the personal narratives that were shared by the kaumātua teina of the KMM project during their conversation with their kaumātua tuakana. Within the theme *Ngā Raranga o Ngā Kaumātua Teina* are the lived experiences and realities of kaumātua teina that has weaved together personal pūrākau. The kaumātua teina narratives have revealed profound pūrākau of adversity, turning points, resilience, independence, and connectedness that defined their lived experiences in the past and in later life. Via the metaphoric raranga strands – *Ngā Raranga o Ngā Kupenga Kaumātua*, *Ngā Raranga o Ngā Kete Kaumātua*, and *Ngā Raranga o Ngā Whenu Kaumātua* – the depth and richness of kaumātua teina lived realities, transformative moments, and significant connections have been brought to light.

The pūrākau of the past in *Ngā Raranga o Ngā Kupenga Kaumātua* demonstrated how kaumātua possessed the power to endure such adversities and then realise their pull potential during certain turning points in their lives. These stories illustrated extraordinary kaumātua determination and strength to overcome life's hurdles and start the process to transform their lives to good wellbeing. Moreover, the kaumātua teina pūrākau are emblematic of the durable and flexible characteristics of the kupenga, that echo the capability to restore and flourish despite adversities faced.

The pūrākau of the present in *Ngā Raranga o Ngā Kete Kaumātua* accentuated how kaumātua adapted to their challenging situations with purpose and dignity, whilst having regained agency as they exude resilience and reclaim independence. The kaumātua teina story journeys to sobriety,

restored health and wellbeing, and newfound opportunities only exemplified their steadfast wairua (spirit) and capacity for self-determination and self-transformation, mirrored the figurative role of the kete (flax woven kit) as a waka (vessel) of understanding, knowledge, and wisdom.

The pūrākau of connectedness in *Ngā Raranga o Ngā Whenu Kaumātua* emphasised how critical the role of community and culture was in connecting kaumātua in later life. The kaumātua teina connections to their community organisations, cultural identity and purposeful programmes revealed how these social and cultural bonds combated isolation, sustained tikanga (cultural practices), and improved wellbeing. These connections pūrākau symbolised the weaving of many whenu (flax strands) coming together to make a cohesive and complete whole that illustrated kaumātua interconnectedness in this story journey.

Together, the kaumātua teina pūrākau-narratives acknowledged and celebrated the individual and shared kaumātua resilience and underscored the significance of social and cultural support systems in older age. The powerful pūrākau of kaumātua teina act as testaments to the enduring nature and enlightening wisdom of kaumātua that offered valuable insights to ageing well with purpose and dignity.

CHAPTER FIVE

Ngā Paeoro o Ngā Kaumātua Tuakana – Tuakana Conversational Characteristics

I begin this chapter with the first, second, third, fourth and fifth verses of my poem that started this thesis titled: *Pito is the Thread to First Feed Us Life*. In the Māori language, pito refers to our belly button, and the umbilical cord that connects us to our mother, and the cord that provides the feeding highway that nourishes and sustains us as we develop in the womb. I wrote this poem throughout my doctoral journey. The poem is a symbolism for life, life's transitions, and this thesis.

*Pito is the thread to first feed us life.
A small seed that sits dormant in the hold of Te Po.
A tiny traveller in search of a haven to grow.
The small seed in sight, the tiny traveller ignites.
The two collide, cause an explosion
Where the murmurs of our tūpuna echoed afar
Are heard through the chambers of heart and aroha
Aroha and explosion illuminate the path to new life
We embrace and grow in the warmth of creation*

*Pito is the thread to first feed us life
As once the tiny traveller navigated these chambers
That small seed of life journeys the chambers once more
As they hear the sweet soft sound of the tūi singing
Haere mai, haere mai ki Te Ao Mārama
The seed of life emerges through the chamber gates
Exhaling tihei wā mauri ora the breath of life.*

*Pito is the thread to first feed us life
That small seed of life is now out in the open*

*It grounds itself in Papatūānuku
As the light of dawn becomes the dawn of life
That new seedling is just beginning
As it brings fresh hope, joy, potential, and future
As the seed grows a barky trunk appears
Their curiosity grows within its branches*

*Pito is the thread to first feed us life
As the seedling grows into a youthful Kauri
Branches and leaves open up to the world
Their energy evokes a dance of sunlight on water
Now fully open to hopes, dreams, and aspirations
Their energy spreads like a gentle breeze
Uplifting and bracing all in its path
Until they find that one that one for life*

*Pito is the thread to first feed us life
That one has been found, that seed's mate for life
They settle to ground to propagate more life
The wind carries their seeds throughout the lands
Travelling within the embrace of Tāwhirimātea
Until they find the chambers of heart and aroha
They settle and grow in the warmth of creation and Papatūānuku.....*

This chapter presents the findings related to the second research question: *What are the cultural and communicational characteristics of the tuakana conversational styles?* Paeoro (voice box) is the overarching theme of the three findings discussed in this chapter because it is the starting point of human sound. Leading on from the paeoro, is reo, or language. The word reo represents the subthemes in this pūrākau thematic framework and reflects the second level up of creating language. Following on from reo, comes kōrero, or voice and conversation. The word kōrero represents the sub-sub-themes, and reflects the third level of creating conversation, or

words. The findings showcase how the tuakana: related to their teina, managed the kōrero with their teina, and treated their teina and their kōrero. This chapter honours and examines the roles and mahi (work) of the kaumātua tuakana. The analysis identified three themes: 1) *Ngā Reo Whenu* – Conversing to Connect; 2) *Ngā Reo Tuakana* – Conversing with Responsibility; and 3) *Ngā Reo Tūi* – Conversing with Kindness. These themes and their respective subthemes and are detailed below with exemplar quotes; pseudonyms are used for participants.

Ngā Reo Whenu – Conversing to Connect

The first key theme is *Ngā Reo Whenu* or conversing to connect. As with the previous themes, whenu is used to symbolise connection. Within the current theme themes, whenu captures the ways the tuakana connected with their teina and their kōrero throughout the conversations. Two subthemes were identified within the themes *Ngā Reo Whenu*: 1) *Ngā Kōrero Whakawhanaungatanga* or Words of Kinship; and 2) *Ngā Kōrero Whakautuutu* or Words of Reciprocation. Each of these subthemes are presented below.

Ngā Kōrero Whakawhanaungatanga – Words of Kinship

The first subtheme, *Kōrero Whakawhanaungatanga*, is the process of relating to others and concerns the ways in which tuakana connected to their teina. Connecting with teina included tuakana sharing their own whakapapa or genealogy and their connection to the same lands, tribe, family, or ancestors as their teina.

The kaumātua tuakana connected to their teina by way of whakawhānaungatanga and specifically through whakapapa, or genealogy. Hotu started his first kōrero with Kapo by sharing the name of the marae he belongs to. This ignited a back-and-forth kōrero between tuakana and teina to find their connections. After Hotu and Kapo identify whakapapa connections, Hotu wraps up the kōrero with the following:

Wow, [we are] distant relations eh? We're all related anyway in a way, aren't we? We're from this area, so yeah. My tūpuna, his name was [tūpuna named] he used to be called [tūpuna nick-name], and he married [tūpuna maiden-name named] and her name was [tūpuna named]. Sister to [sister named, and the other sister was [sister named] and that's my great-grandmother, [tūpuna named] and my great-grandfather was [named]. One of the first ones to ever play [tūpuna named], the tin whistle with the band. (THotu,tKapō,C1)

Similarly, Maia started his first kōrero with Hakopa with a karakia or prayer. Once the formalities are done, Maia then proceeded with “a bit about me...” and which began a flow of whakapapa connections:

I noticed you are from the [named region]. My Dad's family are also. [named Iwi], we're from up there as well. My grandmother is from [named settlement]; she's a [named family name]. [named Hapū]... Oh, we might be whānau. On my mother's side, from the [named region]. From over that side. (TMaia,tHakōpa,C1)

Both Hotu's and Maia's opening kōrero enabled connection with their teina via whakapapa links. What stands out is that both Hotu and Maia actively seek to find that connection with their teina in stating “I noticed” and “distant relations eh?” Although not in a formal setting, they are following formal Māori communication protocol beginning with karakia, making and making connections through whakapapa. The familiar process enabled responsive communication by both tuakana and teina.

In contrast to the koroheke however, the kuia tuakana followed the protocol of whakakwhanaungatanga to their kōrereio much later in the conversations. The kuia seemed to talk to the kaupapa first, then by about halfway through the second kōrero with their teina, they wove in making connections through whakapapa, as Mako does here:

Part of me is from [named tribe], that's [tūpuna/Iwi named] grandfather. But it is going down towards [named region] ... It's up that way there that I belong too. Then part of me is [named Iwi] and then coming back on the adopted side of me, [named Iwi]. Then going down to [named Iwi], to [named settlement], part of me is from there too. I think whakapapa is a beautiful kaupapa when you get to know yourself, eh? Especially when you get to know yourself, who you are.
(TMako,tKiri,C2)

Kaumātua tuakana instinctively took their teina through Māori process of whakawhanaungatanga to build relationships and relate well to each other. For the koroheke, whakawhanaungatanga took place at the beginning of the first conversations; usually following the karakia and or formal introductions. The koroheke would actively seek connections with their teina, making it a communication goal to make and find a connection upfront. This could be reflective of the taumata (orators' bench) setting and the role of kaikōrero (speaker), which is a role often reserved for tāne (men). The taumata is generally, and widely a platform throughout Māoridom for speakers in formal settings whose role is to make connections with their guests or audiences. In contrast, for kuia tuakana, whakawhanaungatanga often took place later in the conversations; either toward the end of conversation one or during conversation two or three. The kuia appeared to not have actively looked for connections via whakapapa, and instead their initial goal was the kaupapa. Despite the differences in priorities and goals between the koroheke and kuia tuakana, whakawhanaungatanga was a vital and an important piece of the kōrero journey. Equally, exchanging shared experiences with their teina was another important means to connect,

Ngā Kōrero Whakautuutu – Words of Reciprocation

The second subtheme is *Ngā Kōrero Whakautuutu*, the process of reciprocal conversations. This subtheme centres on the concept of utu

which is about maintaining balance and harmony in relationships and concerns how tuakana shared their own experiences in connection with the kōrero of their teina. As teina shared their pūrākau, and particularly stories of adversity, the kaumātua tuakana responded with similar shared experiences. This happened at many points during the conversation journey and helped the tuakana further connect with teina. Una's teina Oriwa, shared her experience about looking after her dying husband who had cancer. Una responded by sharing not only the loss of her husband to cancer, but also how her brother in-law was diagnosed with cancer, and beat the disease:

I lost my husband 30 years ago to cancer. Lymphoma cancer, in the lymph nodes. He was gone within three months from diagnosis. They can cure it today. His brother had the same thing about 10 years ago. I couldn't believe him. He said, "I have lymphoma and it's all gone now." That was about six years ago. That's medical science.
(TUna,tOriwa,C1)

Una's shared experience story was reciprocal and thereby connected her with Oriwa, However, her story may have provided her teina with a sense of hope when she reported that lymphoma cancer, which took her husband. can now be cured and that her brother in-law had beaten the same cancer just six years earlier.

Kapua (teina) shared with Pounamau (tuakana) a personal story concerning her struggle with her 17-year-old granddaughter who was in her care. Kapua shared that her granddaughter was underweight, aggressive, suicidal and headed down a self-destructive path. Pounamu mirrored the teina's experience with the story of her own granddaughter, who, also a significant problem with alcohol:

We have a granddaughter...She was stick thin as well but what happened is that when like with your granddaughter, when they grow up in this tumultuous world because they're accessible to assault, to

abuse they're just so accessible to becoming abused. We actually hooked our granddaughter off her mother. She was eight. We said, "You either give her to us nicely or go through Family Court and we'll take her from you. But I cannot go to sleep at night wondering if you are so drunk that you've got drunkards in your house and they're going to sexually abuse her." I was counselling sexual abuse at the time. It haunted me. Listening to your story it's very similar to ours with our moko (grandchild) because they grow up and even to this day, she's 33 this moko and she believes that I'm her mother and [husband] is her father because that's how long she lived with us to preserve her life from her mother. (TPounamu,tKapua,C3)

Pounamu's shared experience story highlights the role and responsibility of grandparents. Pounamu's story offered her teina deep understanding, a reminder for the teina that her experience is not a lone one, and a connection with their roles as grandparents caring for grandchildren. Pounamu's story highlights the importance of care that grandparents carry for their moko, especially when their own children's parenting is not going well. These stories also demonstrate how grandparents often can find themselves as grandparents raising grandchildren where they become "parents" of their moko.

Hakopa (teina) and Maia (tuakana) were talking about golf, when Hakopa was asked if Maia played golf. Maia responded that he cannot play due to his eye and vision issues. Hakopa shared that he had an up-and-coming hospital appointment for cataracts. The pair continued to talk about their eye issues, and although it is not clear if they both are experiencing the same issues, what is clear is that they have both been advised by practitioners that they have experienced a significant change in their eye health that is impacting their vision. Whilst Hakopa awaits his appointment, Maia shared:

I've got an appointment on Wednesday for the eye clinic up there. They put those drops in your eyes. Makes your eyes big so they can have a

look at the back... Last time I went I didn't know that that's what they were going to do, and they said, "Have you got somebody to drive you home?" I said, "No." They said, "Well, you can't drive for four hours so we might have to put your appointment back another month." I thought gee I'm up here for nothing then. So, I've got another appointment on Wednesday; I've got to take my son up and he can drive me home. (TMaia,tHakopa,C3)

Maia's shared story provides Hakopa with potential learnings to better prepare him for his up-and-coming hospital appointment to organise a driver to take him home afterward. By sharing his experience with Hakopa, Maia's story also provides Hakopa an insight to how the procedure will go. Maia's story also highlights the lack of clear communication by the hospital, and therefore, emphasises a much wider health system problem.

Connection via reciprocation theme illustrated that the korero shared by the tuakana was critical to the conversation and was just as important as the korero shared by the teina. This connection clearly demonstrated and highlighted the role of the tuakana as being experienced in these situations. In having been through similar situations, tuakana shared their own learnings with their teina going through or about to go through similar experiences, learning from the tuakana enabled the teina to better-prepare, strategise, and understand their situation and what is to come. Exchanging shared experiences was a clear tuakana communication response to the stories shared by their teina.

Ngā Whenu Summary

Māori communication protocols of whaka-whanaungatanga, or establishing relationships, and the Māori concept of utu were strongly at play in the conversations to connect. The kaumātua tuakana at some point in the conversations, took their teina through the whakawhanaungatanga process to establish the relationship and to connect with their teina. Once whakapapa connections were identified and the relationship established,

utu came into play. Utu has many meanings such as cost, revenge, respond or answer, but is essentially about maintaining balance and harmony in relationships. In the context of *Conversing to Connect*, teina shared their own personal stories and experiences and the tuakana responded with reciprocal sharing. By self-disclosing and sharing their own personal experience, the tuakana gave back to their teina, balanced the kōrero, and balanced the relationship. The exchange of common whakapapa connections and shared stories become part of the kōrero journey, and in turn part of the role of the tuakana. The following section discusses the theme of tuakana responsibility during the conversations.

Ngā Reo Tuakana – Conversing with Responsibility

This section presents the findings related to the second key theme: *Ngā Reo Tuakana* or *Conversing with Responsibility*. Although tuakana means older sister or brother, in the wider project a tuakana is based on experience. In this theme, tuakana symbolises and represents the responsibilities of an experienced person. The tuakana role came with many formal responsibilities and the subthemes focus on tuakana words that ignited and guided the kōrero journeys. The two subthemes were: *Ngā Kōrero Whakaohooho* or *Words of Ignition*; and *Ngā Kōrero Whakahoki* or *Words of Guidance*.

Ngā Kōrero Whakaohooho – Words of Ignition

The first sub-theme is *Ngā Kōrero Whakaohooho* or the process of igniting conversation. It centres on the tuakana spoken words that stimulated conversation ignited a spark for their teina to talk about the kaupapa at hand, and more in-depth about their experiences.

Over the course of the three conversations with her tuakana, Pounamu, Kapua (teina) shared in-depth stories about her past. Kapua opened up about her past that has seen her suffer serious losses: the death of two of her siblings as a child, and the loss of trust of family members. She

also talked about her having “*the most horrific childhood*” and her saving grace was attending the convent school and her faith in religion and God. Kapua also talked about some of her broken relationships with her family members and acknowledged that some she needs to repair and others she is the process of repairing. One focal point of the conversations was the significant and ongoing struggle Kapua had with raising her moko. After listening to what Kapua shared, Pounamu responded with the following:

Listening to you, you have survived a lot. You say that a lot of the growth in you has been through your connection to your church. So really, like you said first visit, you have survived a lot in your life but now you're in control of your life. People don't control you; people don't make the decisions for you; you make them for yourself from what you've learnt from your experiences. So, what would you say from the losses you have suffered, what would you say is the greatest achievement through those losses and how did you manage that? What have you achieved the most as you? (TPounamu,tKapua,C3)

Pounamu's response affirmed Kapua and guided Kapua to refocus the conversation. Pounamu reminded Kapua that she was strong and to reflect on her life and think about the resilient wahine (woman) she has become. Specifically, Pounamu asked Kapua to think about the process that has got her to where she is today. By doing this, Pounamu rebalanced the kōrero to move from focusing on the “*horrific childhood*” to- bringing the conversation to Te Ao Mārama, the now, and focusing on the positive.

Hakopa (teina) and Maia (tuakana) talked about family members, friends, and colleagues who had issues with alcohol and smoking and how these habits contributed to the demise of loved ones in their lives. Maia shared a story about his brother who on top of his alcohol abuse was also caring for his wife who had dementia. Maia talked about how challenging it was for his brother to see his wife to diminish as a person from a fully fit and active person to do things out of character. For example, the wife “*...would drag pallets around the house and she made a track, a dirt track...*”;

and “*stand there and shake the gate, break the padlocks off.*” Maia went on to say:

He couldn't take care of her. I was around there one day, and he started swearing at her because she was banging, punching the window. She could see herself in the window and she was punching the window, and he started swearing at her. I just said to him, “Bro, that's not good.” He goes, “What do you mean? Look at the stupid thing.” I said, “That's your wife.” And he said, “Yeah, but I can't stand her.” I said, “Put her in a home. Put her in a home.” The day he put her in a home; he went to the home every day. It was three years before she passed away. He was there every day...For him, I guess it was 24 hours a day of sheer exhaustion. When he put her in the home, he was able to go there for three hours of good time together. (TMaia,tHakopa,C3)

Maia's brother's story ignited a spark for Hakopa to share his experience of being a carer for his wife. Importantly, Maia's story about his brother created a safe space for Hakopa to speak about the impact the role carer had on him and made him feel. For example, Hakopa confided, and said “I hope that if you don't mind me saying so.” Hakopa had got to the point that he was just so tired of looking after his wife, and that when she passed, he was relieved. Later in the conversation, Maia said that “my wife's passing was a relief for both of us”. This open and honest kōrero from Hakopa happened as a response to Maia's kōrero and created a safe space that enabled the deep sharing between the two of them. This sharing highlights the toll of the role partner-carer can have on a relationship, and on both partners as individuals.

In an earlier kōrerorero, Oriwa (teina) and Una (tuakana) had discussed being on their own since losing their husbands. Una shared losing her husband to brain cancer, how he was her sole focus until he died, the toll on her own wellbeing, and how she had convinced her husband to go into hospice care. In addition to losing her husband, Oriwa shared stories of her heart problems and a double bypass, operation, her battle with breast

cancer resulting in losing a breast. Each kuia lives on their own and stressed that independence is something they hold onto. In another Una, talked about driving as being independent:

I don't have a car anymore. I still have a licence; I can still drive. There's always a car if I need one. You're still driving, eh?... Driving is probably one of the last things to go, if you know what I mean... It's an independence, too. We become so dependent on certain things.
(TUna,tOriwa,C2)

Una's comment about not having a car anymore sparked conversation about independence where Oriwa shared more about her own independence battles. Oriwa shared that her daughter is trying to encourage her to sell her car, but Oriwa refuses because she is still fit to drive. Oriwa also shared a story about her GP who told her that she needed home help. Una's ignition kōrero not only stimulated kōrero about independence and the desire to hold onto independence but highlights how dependence can be forced upon by those who care.

Words of ignition stimulated conversation that sparked more storytelling. Words of Ignition were a communication strategy to encourage teina to talk. As tuakana spoke words of ignition, the teina took their tuakana on journeys with insight, understanding, and connection. By providing words of ignition, tuakana were able to make the conversation teina-focused and bring it back to Te Ao Mārama as in Kapua's case. Tuakana words of ignition also enabled a deep and an emotional exchange between the pairs such as with Maia's and Hakopa's exchange. Words of ignition also stimulated kōrero about the topics of the wider project, KMM, and in Oriwa's case, independence. In the bouncing back-and-forth of kōrero between the tuakana and teina – the process of whakawhitikōrero – were times sometimes so stimulating for teina, that tuakana had to guide the kōrero back to the kaupapa.

Ngā Kōrero Whakahoki – Words of Guidance

This section presents the findings related to the second sub-theme: *Ngā Kōrero Whakahoki* or the process of guiding conversation. Much like their words of ignition to stimulate kōrero with their teina, tuakana knew they had a kaupapa to follow. Therefore, their words of guidance were about guiding the conversation, keeping it on track, and bringing the conversation back to the kaupapa when the conversation went wayward. Pounamu learned that Kapua (teina) was from a Pacific Island (as well as being Māori), and that Kapua went by her parents' sponsor's name. Kapua proceeded to talk in-depth about her name and its whakapapa, and the lands her parents came from in the Islands. Although Pounamu responses showed she was interested and engaged with Kapua's story, *"I wonder if part of her thinking was she was grateful to the [name] family for sponsoring her"*, Pounamu guided the conversation back to the kaupapa when she said, *"Interesting. Whatever our cultures are as Māori or Pacific Islanders, that culture is so rich. It really is, it's different. It's quite a story. Can you repeat that again why the reasons you accepted to become a teina?"* (TPounamu,tKapua,C1). Importantly, Pounamu acknowledged the value of Kapua's story before she guided the conversation back to the kaupapa with the question.

Hotu (tuakana) and Heke (teina) spent a good part of their conversation talking about singing artists and favourite songs they had in common. Hotu, like Pounamu, actively engaged with the kōrero and knew they needed to talk about the kaupapa, so he said, *"I see on YouTube this Māori lady sings. Beautiful. But you know, for our wellness now, when we get on in age, it's music. I listen to music all the time."* (THotu,tHeke,C3). Hotu guided the conversation back to the kaupapa with "but you know..." using their music kōrero as the link to wellbeing.

Similarly, Kiri (teina) was talking freely about her loss of independence, when she and her tuakana, Mako discovered a whānau connection which broke the flow of kōrero. Mako intercepted with *"It is beautiful. But getting back to our mahi, okay you've got your independence back by moving out of your son's place to go into a kaumātua unit. How was*

your health? How did your health manage?" (TMako,tKiri,C1). Maia acknowledged the connection with "It is beautiful" and refocused the conversation with "back to our mahi [work]" and two questions about health.

Words of guidance kept the kōrerorero on track and focused on the kaupapa. In the cases of Pounamu and Kapu, and Hotu and Heke, the words of guidance brought the kōrero back to the kaupapa after an engaging conversation that indirectly related kaupapa. In the case of Mako and Kiri, words of guidance followed an interruption to the kaupapa, that until that point was flowing and going well.

Ngā Tuakana Summary

The theme, *Conversing with Responsibility*, concerned the tuakana role and the communication method of whakawhiti kōrero. The tuakana was responsible for maintaining the kaupapa and were the ones with the experience. The themes clearly illustrated that kaumātua owned the role of tuakana. They had a duty to ignite conversation so that their teina would engage with the kaupapa, and throughout the conversations managed and directed the kōrero. Once kōrero was ignited, whakawhiti kōrero then began.

Generally, whakawhiti kōrero can mean conversation, dialogue, discussion, or communication that happens between two people or more. Through their words of ignition, tuakana engaged their teina in kōrero that was insightful, personal, and captivating. Sometimes, the tuakana sensed the conversations going off topic for too long or being an interrupted by a topic that could take the conversation off-track. Tuakana responses showed they were attuned to these shifts in the conversation and took their role seriously. Thus, serving as tuakana meant to ignite the kōrero with their teina and to recognise when the kōrero goes off track or is about to, and to guide it back to the kaupapa. Tuakana balanced such responsibilities with words of kindness. *Conversing with kindness* is discussed below.

Ngā Reo Tūi – Conversing with Kindness

The third key theme is *Ngā Reo Tūi* or conversing with kindness. This theme illustrated how the tuakana treated their teina and their teina's kōrero. Tūi is a native bird to Aotearoa New Zealand and can loosely be translated to mean sweet signing voice or an articulate speaker when paired with the word reo. Therefore, the name of this theme includes tūito reflect the bird's sweet sound, or singing voice, and symbolise the kindness approach of tuakana applied during their kōrero with the teina. Within this theme, two subthemes unfolded: 1) *Kōrero Whakaaroha*; and 2) *Kōrero Whakamanawa*. Each of these are explained below.

Ngā Kōrero Whakaaroha – Words of Empathy

This section presents the first subtheme: *Kōrero Whakaaroha*, or the process of talking with empathy. This subtheme concerns tuakana words that demonstrated understanding and awareness of the teina's feelings, thoughts, and experiences.

Heke (teina) alluded to his separation from his spouse and the feeling of loneliness his being "single" had brought to his life. Heke talked about how he has been single for 10-12 years, and that initially the loneliness made him unhappy, but went on to say he is now content with being single. Heke also talked about the loss of his parents two years prior, and how much he missed them. To fill the void of his loneliness, Heke talked about his strategy of staying connected to friends and whānau and ensuring he visits them often. Hotu (tuakana) responded with:

That's right, yeah. Especially when it's your parents or your tamarikis. I lost my wife, she passed away 1995 and I still had my kids when they were still all young at school, but when they left school, well, they went away. It just sort of left me high and dry and, oh gee, my kids have all shot off to Aussie. (THotu,tHeke,C1)

Hotu's response was empathetic. Drawing on his own, yet different experiences, Hotu conveyed his understanding of the loneliness Heke had experienced by sharing how the loss of his wife was unexpected and that he was not prepared for life without his her. Hotu also shared another loss which provided another level of loneliness, the loss of all his children to Australia. Not only had Hotu lost his wife, but he had also lost his children geographically, which exacerbated his loneliness. So, despite the differences in their experiences of loneliness, Hotu was able to put himself in the shoes of Heke based on his own personal experience of loneliness.

Similarly, Oriwa (teina) talked about her feeling of loneliness. Oriwa's feeling of loneliness was sudden (see the previous chapter). Oriwa talked about being in a block of flats with other kaumātua and being part of the bowling club down the road, which helped to fill that void. Oriwa highlighted that person-to-person communication was important to her. Una, Oriwa's tuakana, shared the sentiment, and responded:

My son bought a new house, and it's him and his wife's idea that his mother had to have somewhere private of her own. So, they bought a house with a unit under it, a two-bedroom unit. So that's where I live. But there are some days where I can go for two or three days, but if it's raining or something I can stay in my house and not talk or see anyone.
(TUna,tOriwa,C1)

Una shared a bit of insight into her loneliness, and how moving in with her son was one way of filling that void. However, Una alluded to the feeling of loneliness, despite living in a self-contained unit underneath her son's house, when she said "*I can go for two or three days, ... and not talk or see anyone*. Una was able to empathise with Oriwa about being lonely and highlight that even though she lives with her son and his whānau, she can still feel lonely at times. Una's living situation contrasts with Oriwa's where Oriwa lives in a block of kaumātua flats surrounded by like-minded people and with peers at a similar stage in life.

Rangi (teina) began her third conversation with Erana (tuakana) by sharing a change in her husband's health. Rangi shared that she is new to the partner carer role, and that her husband is becoming quite dependent on her. Rangi talked about the challenges for herself and her relationship. She now must do what she needs to do for her husband, for herself and for their household. Rangi questioned who can support her and other partner carers? Erana responded:

I understand what you're talking about, having somebody dependent on you...Well, I think it's an agreement between [husband] and I...And that is exactly right. He knows that if he wants to have anything done that I'm not there at his beck and call...he knows that if he wants something, that we have to meet halfway. So, he has responsibilities too...We're not mothers to these people that we are married to.
(TErana,tRangi,C3)

Erana conveyed an understanding of what it is like having a partner that is dependent on you as she also is caring for her husband too. Erana talked about her experience from the viewpoint that she has been in the role of partner carer for quite some time now. However, whilst Erana talked empathetically, she spoke with experience and imparted her own wisdom about being a partner carer. Erana suggested that although their partners are dependent on them, as carers, together they must create boundaries. Erana took the view that it's okay to put some responsibility back on their partners. By doing so, the carer-spouse is empowering their partner to be independent despite their situation or health condition and looking after their own health and wellbeing.

The tuakana's words of empathy showed their teina that they cared and understood. Tuakana shared stories from their own experience that conveyed a clear and deep understanding of what their teina was feeling or experiencing. Tuakana shared their understanding of loneliness regardless of differences in kinds of loss or living situations and provided perspectives. Tuakana conveyed understanding of the challenges of being a partner carer,

and at the same time imparted wisdom to providing learning and assurance for their teina. Through their words of empathy, tuakana connected with their teina at emotional and experiential levels. The next section considers a similar subtheme in words of affirmation.

Ngā Kōrero Whakatūturu – Words of Affirmation

This section presents the second subtheme: *Kōrero Whakatūturu*, or the process of talking with affirmation. This subtheme concerns tuakana words of encouragement to show support, offer hope, instil confidence, and provide acknowledgement.

Pounamu (tuakana) and Kapua (teina) spoke about the trauma and adversity Kapua has endured throughout her life (see the previous chapter). In conversation three, Kapua spoke intensely about her 17-year-old mokopuna and shared the detailed story of how she came to raise the child, the challenges of raising a moko, the destructional path her moko was heading down, and the similarities with Kapua's own upbringing. The difference was that Kapua had faith and God, and wanted to protect, guide and nourish her moko. Pounamu commented during the conversation

They [young people] have a lot of losses in their lives. This is what people don't understand. The losses that they suffer but then because of the experiences you have had, you've turned that into positives. Absolutely turned that around and formed your own boundaries. "I will go there, but I won't go there. I will say this, but I won't say that. I will mix but I won't mix." So, you have formed your own barriers, and you are in control of your life, and now you're trying to exemplify to your moko this is where I want you to end up, safe, secure and confident and well in this world. You're doing a great job.
(TPounamu,tKapua,C3)

Pounamu's words affirm the good Kapua is doing, especially with raising her moko. Pounamu acknowledges how Kapua has taken her struggles and

turned them into positives taking back control of her life and using her knowledge and experience to help her struggling moko through life. At the same time, Pounamu's words of affirmation offer hope that her moko will heal, encourages her to not give up on her moko and continue raising her, and to hold tight to the goal to have her moko safe, secure and confident. Finally, Pounamu affirms Kapua with "You're doing a great job." This story reaffirms the role grandparents play when moko come into their care as an important role and acknowledges the incredible work kaumātua do in raising their moko that is mostly unnoticed.

Kiri had shared her story of adversity with her tuakana, Mako. Kiri had lost her job in Auckland and moved to another town to live with her son and his family (see previous chapter). Kiri also shared her story of an abusive relationship, and the struggle and strength it took to leave her violent partner. Mako responded:

You stood up and made yourself smell those roses. Beautiful. That is absolutely beautiful. I'm glad you've got a lot of kaha here. You don't realise how much kaha you've got until you start to get into it. The best part is when you can help somebody else. That is the best part, then you know yourself that part of your mahi in life is being done by helping somebody else. (TMako,tKiri,C2)

Mako's response is reflective in nature and acknowledges the tough decisions Kiri had to make such as leaving her violent partner, leaving her life in Auckland, and leaving her son's house. Mako's words of affirmation were a reminder for Kiri that she was strong, resilient, independent, and confident. Mako's words of affirmation also reminded Kiri that her adversity and experiences were helping, enabling, and encouraging others.

Heke (teina) and Hotu (tuakana) chatted a lot about mahi. They learned they both worked in support services for the disabled. However, Hotu had retired and Heke was still working and a few years away from retirement age. Heke shared that he had worked since the age of 15, and by age 27 he was married, owned three homes, and over the years had gained

various certificates and qualifications. However, a couple of decades later, Heke was made redundant, separated from his wife, and lost his homes. Since then, Heke had pushed through a tough time emotionally, mentally, financially, and professionally and got through to a place of peace and acceptance. He talked about being grateful for the support services mahi he was in; he loved the mahi saying his heart was in it. He went on to say that he now only worked 60 hours maximum a fortnight. Heke said that he could just manage to live, to pay his bills and feed himself, and although couldn't do much more, was okay. Hotu responded:

But it's good that you've got those management skills in place because there's a lot of people that can't, and they're unable to think. A lot of people, I tell them if they say, "I can't" to me, I tell them, "Take the T off."...You can. (THotu,tHeke,C3)

Hotu's words reaffirmed that Heke could manage to get by on his 60 hours a fortnight. What stands out here is the way Hotu reaffirmed that Heke *can*; "take the T off" the "can't," so they can. He went onto say that most people wouldn't know how to manage in such situations, but Heke did. Hotu is saying here, that with the right attitude, intelligence, and support people can do anything. In Heke's case, he was able to draw on his years of work experience, qualifications, past adversity and his can-do attitude to manage and get by despite the circumstance.

This section, words of affirmation, allowed tuakana to reflect the teina's qualities back to them. Tuakana offered their teina sentiments to hold on, rethink, and to reflect. Words of affirmation offered hope, encouragement and assurance of their strength, confidence, and abilities to manage their situations. The common feature of the tuakana's words of affirmation was that they acknowledged their teina. Tuakana acknowledged their struggles, decisions, and situations, and most of all, their hard work, courage and resilience.

Ngā Tūi Summary

Conversing with Kindness explored how kaumātua tuakana engaged in communication that was both empathetic and affirming with their teina. These interactions only illuminated the role of kindness in these communicational engagements. The theme unfolded with *Words of Empathy* and *Words of Affirmation*. *Words of Empathy* offered kaumātua teina acknowledgement and understanding of their lived experiences, private thoughts, and personal feelings. Kaumātua tuakana emotionally connected with their teina as they shared their own personal stories about loneliness, loss and caregiving, which emitted understanding can connection. For instance, Hotu was able to relate to Heke's feelings of loneliness and isolation by sharing his personal story about the loss of wife to cancer and his kids to Australia. Similarly, Una was able to show solidarity with Oriwa as she expressed her own feelings of loneliness even though she lived with her son. *Words of Affirmation* offered kaumātua teina recognition, hope, and encouragement, which saw kaumātua uplifted, strengths and resilience reinforced, and potential realised. For example, Pounamu's affirmation offered Kapua the ability to transform past adversities into constructive and practical actions for her grandchild. Mako's affirmation provided Kiri with encouragement that her helping others was important and reinforced her resilience. Likewise, Hotu's affirmation reassured Heke's management skill that empowered him to realise his own abilities. Kaumātua tuakana were able to help teina realise their own mana (strength), which encouraged them to persevere through their struggles. Overall, *Conversing with Kindness* showcased how kaumātua tuakana were able to support and empower their teina as they employed empathetic and affirming communication. Underlined here is the significance of a shared understanding between two people in a developing relationship. Kaumātua tuakana not only listened with intentional care but offered their teina wisdom and validation to navigate their adversities with hope and confidence.

Ngā Paeoro Conclusion

The Māori concept of manaakitanga has clearly been demonstrated within the theme *Conversing with Kindness*. Manaakitanga can broadly mean kindness, hospitality, support, or generosity. Essentially, manaakitanga refers to the kind actions and words of others who make people feel cared for. In this context, the tuakana's application of manaakitanga was about uplifting the mana of their teina, and by doing so, upholding the mana of their role as tuakana. These efforts enabled balance. The tuakana's words of empathy and affirmation were communication responses that showed a deep understanding of their teina's feelings and situations. Empathy required the tuakana to employ their emotional intelligence, or awareness and sensitivity to provide teina with the care they needed. The tuakana's words of affirmation reminded teina that their adversities had helped shape the strong, resilient, hard-working person they were today, and to stand strong in being who they were. The affirmations also assured the teina that they did what they had to, with what they had, because it was the only way they knew how in their circumstances.

The tuakana kept the conversations teina focused through their words of empathy and affirmation and conversing with kindness. Tuakana connected with their teina at an emotional level, which enabled them to provide manaakitanga, emotional support and care to further develop and maintain their relationships with their teina. Through an approach that was about connection, responsibility and kindness, nurtured relationships were fostered, which promoted emotional connection, personal growth and enhanced wellbeing.

CHAPTER SIX

Ngā Rerenga Wairua-Hikoi-a-Kaupapa o Ngā Kaumātua Tokorua – Kaumātua Tuakana-teina Journeys

I begin this chapter with the first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth verses of my poem that started this thesis titled: *Pito is the Thread to First Feed Us Life*. In the Māori language, pito refers to our belly button, and the umbilical cord that connects us to our mother, and the cord that provides the feeding highway that nourishes and sustains us as we develop in the womb. I wrote this poem throughout my doctoral journey. The poem is a symbolism for life, life's transitions, and this thesis.

*Pito is the thread to first feed us life.
A small seed that sits dormant in the hold of Te Po.
A tiny traveller in search of a haven to grow.
The small seed in sight, the tiny traveller ignites.
The two collide, cause an explosion
Where the murmurs of our tūpuna echoed afar
Are heard through the chambers of heart and aroha
Aroha and explosion illuminate the path to new life
We embrace and grow in the warmth of creation*

*Pito is the thread to first feed us life
As once the tiny traveller navigated these chambers
That small seed of life journeys the chambers once more
As they hear the sweet soft sound of the tūi singing
Haere mai, haere mai ki Te Ao Mārama
The seed of life emerges through the chamber gates
Exhaling tihei wā mauri ora the breath of life.*

*Pito is the thread to first feed us life
That small seed of life is now out in the open*

*It grounds itself in Papatūānuku
As the light of dawn becomes the dawn of life
That new seedling is just beginning
As it brings fresh hope, joy, potential, and future
As the seed grows a barky trunk appears
Their curiosity grows within its branches*

*Pito is the thread to first feed us life
As the seedling grows into a youthful Kauri
Branches and leaves open up to the world
Their energy evokes a dance of sunlight on water
Now fully open to hopes, dreams, and aspirations
Their energy spreads like a gentle breeze
Uplifting and bracing all in its path
Until they find that one that one for life*

*Pito is the thread to first feed us life
That one has been found that seed's mate for life
They settle to ground to propagate more life
The wind carries their seeds throughout the lands
Travelling within the embrace of Tāwhirimātea
Until they find the chambers of heart and aroha
They settle and grow in the warmth of creation and Papatūānuku*

*Pito is the thread to first feed us life
Through the chambers once more
Comes many new lives
Lives that stem from that very first seed
From that singular seed, has grown a kauri forest
A forest of kauri that lasts generations to come
That first seed and its mate for life are content.....*

In this chapter, I present the key findings related to the third research question: *What is the nature of the kaumātua journeys in how the stories unfold and relationships develop?* This chapter, *Ngā Rerenga Wairua-Hikoi-a-Kaupapa o Ngā Kaumātua Tokorua, or Kaumātua Tuakana-teina Journeys*, examined the nature and development of each of the tuakana and teina conversations. The purpose was to honour the tuakana and teina as conversational pairs engaged in a shared conversational journey. Although each pair participated in three separate conversations, this chapter explores the three conversations as one conversational journey and the tuakana and teina as a pair of travellers in this journey. This chapter retells the stories of the kaumātua and how their stories unfolded throughout their conversational journey. Therefore, the metaphor of a travel journey framed the chapter. Next, I detail the overarching framework, *Mai i Te Rerenga Wairua ki te Hikoi ā-Kaupapa, or Purposeful Driven Kaumātua Tuakana-Teina Journeys*. The named framework I describe is in two parts.

First, *Rerenga Wairua* refers to a place of geographical significance because it is located at the most Northern end of Aotearoa, New Zealand. Te Rerenga Wairua as known to Māori and generally known as Cape Reinga. In addition to being the most Northern part of Aotearoa New Zealand, Te Rerenga Wairua is also a place of spiritual significance for Māori, as it is here that the spirit of Māori (after death) journey to before they return to their ancestral lands of Hawaiiki. In the context of this chapter, I use the metaphor of that spiritual journey to navigate some of the key themes.

Second, *Hikoi ā-Kaupapa* refers to a hikoi, or a march. Dame Whina Cooper's 1975 Māori Land March was a hikoi that was kaupapa driven in that the purpose, the kaupapa was about protesting against the continuing loss of Māori land and to bring awareness to those Māori communities who still had whenua (land) in their possession, the importance of retaining control of their whenua (Erueti, 2017; Jackson, 2020; Panaho, 2019). The hikoi journey started in the Northern most settlement of Aotearoa New Zealand, Te Hapua (40kms southeast of Te Rerenga Wairua), and ended in

the capital, Wellington. In the context of this chapter, I use the metaphor of a hikoi or protest march to journey through the themes.

Together, these two parts incorporated conversational journeys that were in parts kaupapa and wairua guided. The conversational journeys concerned those that were driven by tuakana and were kaupapa (purposed) focused on nature, and those that were steered by teina and were emergent in nature. Although these conversational journeys were steered by teina, the tuakana were being guided by their teina, and tuakana assumed their roles and carried out the mahi (work) that was required of them.

The destination for the tuakana-teina conversational journey was framed by the structure of three conversations. The tuakana navigated their journeys that also depended on directions from the teina. Extending the journey metaphor, the tuakana were the tour guides, and the teina directed the journey through their selection of topics related to later life. Tuakana were thus driven by the overall kaupapa as well as the life transitions kaupapa raised by teina. The journeys within this chapter include four key travel themes: 1) *Haere Tōtika*; 2) *Rerenga Titaha* 3) *Whakahokihoki Atu'* and 4) *Tangata Haere*. The key themes are described below each incorporating three exemplar conversational journeys, or “characteristic features” as I called them.

Haere Tōtika – Directly to The Destination

This characteristic feature, *Haere Tōtika*, were conversations that directly advanced the kaupapa. Tōtika translates to right or correct, and in this case, direct. In travel terms one would use the directive phrase or command, haere tōtika, to direct someone to go straight ahead. In the context of this subtheme, *Haere Tōtika*, signifies those conversations that were straight to the point – to the kaupapa. *Haere Tōtika* entailed tuakana being upfront about the kaupapa from the onset; it was the purpose of their conversational journey.

Haere Tōtika involved tuakana taking a directive approach to guiding the kōrerorero, which was *Haere Tōtika* in action. For instance, *Haere Tōtika* involved tuakana mentioning the list of the transition kaupapa and inviting their teina to discuss them early in the conversations. Some tuakana listed or referred to the five life transitions of: loss of independence; loss of spouse; loss of driver licence; changing health conditions; and retirement (e.g., pointing to the list of kaupapa on paper in front of them). With these life transitions said, tuakana then invited teina to talk to and about any of the listed kaupapa.

The first example of *Haere Tōtika* was Mako inviting Kiri to “pick a program that you would like to talk about that feels deep within yourself” and “At this stage I will just leave it at that and let you take it, whatever you want to talk about.” Kiri instantly responded to Mako’s invitation and without hesitation Kiri exclaimed “...independence...”. Mako had given Kiri the space and time to share her story and share her story she did about losing her independence (see chapter four). Kiri openly and emotionally shared her experience of losing her job; “As they say, out with the old, in with the new. They said there’s no job for you.” Kiri said she “just cried” and went on to talk about how challenging it was for her. Her job was her wellbeing as it got her out of the house (as she was living alone), provided her with some financial independence, allowed her to interact socially and most of all gave her a purpose. For Kiri, this loss came with massive and multiple impacts, leaving her at a crossroads, and lonely. Kiri instantly opened up in response to her tuakana’s initial question, and a relationship developed in a journey of mutual sharing,

A second example of *Haere Tōtika* is Una and Ōriwa’s story, which began with Una opening up their first conversation with “*this meeting is about you. It’s whatever you want to talk about.*” Ōriwa responded with “*I’m not a very good communicator.*” Una encouraged Ōriwa to open up and invited her to choose a topic from the listed transitions framing it as “*these problems come to us as we get older so I’m asking you to, if you don’t mind, just tell me about anything I might be able to help you with.*” Ōriwa responded with “*I’m such an independent person,*” and Una recognised that

Ōriwa's response here was a segue to talk about independence. So, Una invited Ōriwa to talk more about the kaupapa of independence, and the kōrerorero (conversation) flowed. Drawing on her courage, Ōriwa opened up and talked about how "*I've been through such a lot these last few years...*" Throughout the beginning, Ōriwa illustrated for Una the tough times she had been through (see her story in Chapter four). In turn, Una reciprocated with a shared experience of losing her husband and not coping very well with it. Oriwa was hesitant at the beginning, but after Una invited Oriwa to respond to the list of transitions, she nominated an aspect of herself that related to the kaupapa. Although Oriwa was hesitant at the beginning of their journey to communicate, Una was able to build trust for Oriwa to share the way she did. This is what provided the foundation for the relationship to develop through their conversational journey together.

A third example of *Haere Tōtika* is Hotu and Heke's conversational journey. Hotu (Tuakana) eased into the conversation by briefly explaining their purpose, followed with a direct question (a question regarded one of the five life transitions whether it was relative to the teina or not): "*we just ask questions of how you are and where you're at and things. I take it you're retired now?*" This question was asked to mention the kaupapa to encourage and begin the pair's conversational journey. Heke (Teina) replied "*No, I'm not retired. I work as a casual worker.*" Hotu responded with "*We've got a lot of our older ones that...retired and they're going through all new transitions in life. There's big changes, like having to finish work, losing a licence. Maybe they've lost their partners.*" At this point, Heke shared his experience with loneliness (see Chapter Five) and how his strategy of surrounding himself with good people was a way to combat that loneliness. Hotu reciprocated with his own journey of loneliness (see Chapter five) where he shared the story about losing his wife to cancer and then losing his adult children to another country. Hotu asked some initial questions and then made by a general statement about "*a lot of our older ones*" followed by examples of life transitions. This approach enabled Heke to disclose an issue for him.

Haere Totika comprised conversational journeys that were tuakana led and directive in nature. However, it is important to note although the

tuakana led their journey with their teina in a directive way, the tuakana were kaupapa focused and used the kaupapa to gently guide their teina in this journey. From the very beginning tuakana were clear and upfront about the kaupapa and the purpose of this journey, with the result being an outpouring of open, honest, personal and deep storytelling by the teina, where tuakana reciprocated. What is clear here is that kaumātua assumed their roles as tuakana and acted in ways that were inviting, encouraging, attentive, and reciprocal. Furthermore, this process helped in building teina trust, and therefore, the building foundations to cement the relationship during the conversational journey ahead.

Rerenga Tītaha – Side Tours

This characteristic feature, *Rerenga Tītaha*, concerned journeys that veered away from the kaupapa. Rerenga on its own has layers of meaning, but in a travel context it can mean travel, fly, journey, voyage, sailing, trip, flight, or fleeing, Tītaha can mean slanting, leaning, sideways, turning to one side, tilting and skewed. Together, *Rerenga Tītaha* represents conversational journeys that took either significant or minor side trips from the kaupapa, and these subthemes are presented next.

Kotiti Haere – Detours Becoming Defining Moments

In contrast to *Haere Tōtikia*, this characteristic feature, *Kotiti Haere*, entailed conversational journeys where digressions or non-related kaupapa had become defining features within the journey. Put simply, kotiti means to digress, deviate, stray, get sidetracked, or go off course. In the context of this section, *Kotiti Haere* represented the many parts of a guided journey that took the tangent route, but from it emerged stories that became the focal point either at that time or throughout the entire conversational journey. This would be similar to a travel journey that was emergent; no plan was started, and it emerged to what was an interesting place to visit by the kaumātua teina. These moments were off route kaupapa

that became a destination throughout the three conversational journey. Below are some examples of how these stories unfolded.

The first example is Hotu and Kapo who spoke about their shared love and passion for music. Hotu and Kapo reminisced about the old days when they both played and sang music, which instantly re-connected them. Music was a kaupapa that connected them all throughout their conversational journey. Kapo talked about his music and that he was still performing, to which Hotu responded with *“making people happy, yes.”* Kapo went on to say *“I’m always happy when I’m making music, to be honest with you. I’ve always had a passion for music”* Hotu shared with Kapo a loss he had suffered that *“[his] homestead burned down.”* And that he had *“lost all [his] backing music.”* And in his Tuakana role, he looked at the positive and told Kapo he was able to start anew and Hotu stated that he purchased himself a *“Rarotongan ukelele.”* And was also going to look at buying himself a guitar. Kapo responded *“you after any particular guitar? Because I’ve got a spare one if you want it. Keep it in mind, kei te pai?”* What happened here, considering a devastating situation (Hotu’s homestead fire disaster), was this outpour of aroha (compassion) and manaaki (care) by the Teina who offered his tuakana one of his guitars. Although a digression from the kaupapa, this *Kotiti Haere* became a focal point throughout their entire conversational journey. This allowed the pair to connect, but to also hold space for each other with aroha and manaaki through their love for music.

The second example is of Maia and Hakopa who spoke about Hakopa’s life after alcoholism, particularly the influence of the Salvation Army. Hakopa brought up his personal issue with alcohol consumption. As per his story told in Chapter Five, Hakopa’s story of alcohol abuse had become a central point of his story and this conversational journey. He shared how his abuse of alcohol significantly and negatively impacted his life causing job losses, relationship breakups, and broken family relationships. So, Hakopa made a life changing decision and said that he was *“going to do a big change in my life. I’m going to ask for the Salvation Army to help me.”* (C1) Since Hakopa sought help and refuge through the Salvation Army, his life changed drastically. Hakopa *“became a local Officer at*

Papakura...went into [named learning institution] to train as a Māori Minister...I took control of my life." (C1). He had a happy and stable marriage with his second wife who he lost in his 60s and shared with Maia "*We being from Salvation Army, we said well life has got to carry on after death so we made that agreement*" (C2) to carry on with life – however that was to look. Through his years as a Minister, helping others "*was part of my job when [he] was in the Sallies. If it wasn't for [them] [he'd] just be sitting home and doing nothing. Just waiting until something happens.*" (C3). For Hakopa, the Salvation Army was a huge influence in his later life and reference to it was evident throughout the entire conversational journey. Although this was not related to the five life transitions, it was intentional and integral. This part of Hakopa's story was in fact the backbone to his wider story. This story provided Hakopa's conversational journey with a foundation in which to build upon, which created the pathway for him to share stories about his experiences throughout the entire conversational journey.

The third example is of Maia and Piri who spoke a lot about the influences on Piri's life. Piri shared with Maia about his whānau growing up and how it was for them. He particularly spoke of his father who "*was steeped in the knowledge of tikanga Māori and in the King movement as well.*" (C1). And, through his upbringing with his father and living within his hapu iwi boundaries he "*[was] pretty clued up on [his] whakapapa regarding [his] whānau...*" (C1), and this has helped shape his life. However, what stands out in this conversational journey are the Pākehā (New Zealand Europeans) that influenced Piri's life. Piri shared that going to school he had "*a wonderful experience*" (C1) overall. Piri explained that "*not one of [his teachers] denied [him] korero of Te Reo*" (C1) and that they wanted to know about his "*taha Māori, the history of [his] people coming here to Aotearoa.*" (C1). Piri then went onto talk about "*a lovely Pakeha friend of [his whānau's], took [him] under his wing and put [him] through a trade, as a butcher...*" (C1) and gave him his first "real job". He also shared how there were some "*caring Pākehās out there and they pushed [him]*. Like his teachers as a child, the Pākehā in his working life could see his "*abilities.*" The Pākehā in his life helped progress his career, in particular an engineer who saw his potential

and put him through his education and training. The engineer said “[Piri] was wasted to just be driving machines and shifting the dirt around... (C2) and saw Piri through to becoming a project manager. With his experience with Pākehā in a time when it was even more challenging to be Māori and be a Māori, Piri acknowledged his Pākehā heritage exclaiming that he is “*Pākehā too*” and that he couldn’t “*deny [his European blood] too*”. (C3). What we see throughout this conversational journey is that Piri’s experience with Pākehā during a time when it was difficult to be Māori, was one of acceptance, partnership and friendship, personal and cultural growth, and most of all affirmed self-identity.

Kotiti Haere were digressions from the designated kaupapa route. These were conversations where non-related kaupapa became the focal point of a conversational story; they gave themselves a purpose throughout their entire conversational journey. What occurred here was the following of the conversational spirit; going where the wind took the conversation so to speak. For Hotu and Heke, their *Kotiti Haere* was a means to connect. Through their shared love and passion for music they bonded strengthening their relationship for their journey. For Maia and Hakopa, their *Kotiti Haere* was about adversity, strength, resilience, and manaaki. This journey highlighted how an organisation like the Salvation Army can have influence on one’s life from the very beginning of their hour of need to one’s life at the later end of life. For Maia and Piri, their *Kotiti Haere* was also one of influence like in Maia and Hakopa’s journey. What stood out in this journey is the positive influence of Pākehā during a period when being Māori was much tougher. Piri’s early life experience was different to most school aged Māori where his language and culture was able to live and not be suppressed, and where because he was Māori, he would be confined to shovelling dirt. These journeys whilst off kaupapa, were part of the kaupapa, and made an integral part of the conversational journeys. Furthermore, what has been clearly inferred here is that kaumātua have provided significant side stories that provide a whakapapa (genealogy), history, and foundation to their current journey – their current life

transitions. Next, are journeys that veered, like a wave on the ocean that comes to shore as quickly as it leaves the shore and returns to the ocean.

Tipi Haere – Tiki Tour

This characteristic feature, *Tipi Haere*, regarded conversations with tangents or digressions that then quickly returned to the kaupapa. Simply, *Tipi Haere* means to roam about or call into a place. In travel terms, this can be likened to a tiki tour where the experience involves seeing interesting places that come up along the way to a destination. In the context of this theme, *Tipi Haere* symbolises those tangents or digressions from the kaupapa with an eventual return of the conversation to the kaupapa. However, unlike in the previous section about *Kotiti Haere* or detours that became defining moments, this theme and its tiki tours are more of a side/day trip (within a bigger journey) with a purpose and value in the conversational journey. The purpose of the tiki tours in this context enables an exploration or discussion of something not directly related to the main journey or topic. Rather, an opportunity is presented to discuss and explore a unique insight, topic, experience, or idea along the way. The value in these tiki tours is multi layered. First, they enable both teina and tuakana to break away from the taumaha (heavy) conversations being had; much like a rest-stop when driving long distance. Second, they enable the kaumātua a process to strengthen their relationship as they share a tiki tour together as they collaborate or support each other in the tiki tour. Third, they enable the kaumātua an opportunity to learn more about each other outside the kaupapa/project as they make a tiki tour. Fourth, they add some enjoyment to the overall journey, such as some light relief and laughter.

The first example of *Tipi Haere* is when Mako and Kiri are in deep discussion about Kiri's living situation. As told previously in Chapter 4, Kiri had shared how she had lost her job and had been living with her son and his whānau, When Kiri talked about how her life had turned around when she got involved with the Rauawaawa. Throughout the entire conversational journey, Kiri revisits her loss of job and independence, her

physical and mental health frequently. However, multiple *Tipi Haere* moments occur throughout the conversational journey as well. Much of their *Tipi Haere* occurred naturally as a follow on from the journey's kaupapa. For example, after talking about regaining her independence again in conversation two, Kiri spoke about how she was able to purchase her current vehicle. From the sale of her parents' farms, Kiri shared that *"Now that I've got a car – I come into some money from my dad when he passed away. And I am one of 14 children."* Mako asked Kiri *"whereabout are you in line?"* which led them onto talk a bit about whakapapa – where they were from. Mako learned that Kiri was from [named area] responding that *"part of me is from [named area], that's [named ancestor] grandfather."* The pair made a common whānau (family) and iwi (tribe) connection, which took over the conversation for a few moments. But Mako brings the kōrero back to the Kaupapa: *"It is beautiful. But getting back to our mahi, okay you've got your independence back by moving out of your son's place to go into a kaumātua unit. How was your health? How did your health manage?"* The pair discuss Kiri's poor knee health until the next tiki tour. The value in this tiki tour was not only the common tribal connection, but also the learning of a common ancestor connection. Further, this tiki tour also allowed Kiri the pitstop needed after her heavy past to refresh and reflect to carry on with the kaupapa.

The second example of *Tipi Haere* had Una and Ōriwa talking off kaupapa for quite some time midway through their conversational journey. The pair talked about plant potting, gardening, and smoking before the project's transition kaupapa became the focal point again. Una, in her tuakana role, brings the kaupapa up by saying that she no longer has a car anymore, but still had a licence, can still drive, but a car was always available should she need one, but now preferred public transport to get around. She asked Ōriwa *"you're still driving, eh?"* who replied *"yeah..."* then talked about how her daughter is always suggesting she sell her vehicle. Ōriwa would always say no to her daughter and said, *"if it's a nice day and I feel like going out I can just hop in my car and go."* This provided Ōriwa with that sense of freedom, and independence, and provided Una the segue to specifically

mention the transition of independence, which had not developed in the previous conversation. So began the return to a more involved kōrero of independence. As told in Chapter Five, this return to the kaupapa enabled Ōriwa to talk about her desire to hold onto independence. The value in this *Tipi Haere* provided the perfect segue to the kaupapa and also allowed the pair to learn more about each other and their interests.

The third example of *Tipi Haere* is when Hotu and Heke both shared their experiences of loneliness from their respective standpoints. From having talked about how the loneliness made them feel, the pair progressed to talking about strategy; their strategy on how to fill that void, and a part of their strategy was through their connection and involvement with the Rauawaawa. It is at this point of the journey the pair spoke of a mutual friend, going through similar motions, who would benefit from being part of the Rauawaawa whānau. The pair continued their kōrero and spoke about several non-related kaupapa. They reminisced and talked about a common friend, the nature of Heke's paid work as a Carer, Te Reo and their desire to learn their language because they missed out on it growing up, and their tamariki and mokopuna. The value of this *Tipi Haere* is that it allowed the pair to talk strategy to combat loneliness and how they could help their mutual friend both agreeing that their friend would benefit from being a part of the Rauawaawa. Moreover, the pair were able to break away for a bit, a pit-stop from the loneliness topic, to learn a bit more about each other outside of the project, discovering that both had missed out on learning their native language growing up and how they want to re-connect and learn their language. This part of the conversation went on for a few minutes before Hotu dropped in and mentioned when their next conversation should be leaving it up to Heke. From this *Tipi Haere*, Hotu was able to get back on the bus, journey, by dropping in the kaupapa of driving and driver's licence and said "*I've still got my license and all that, but I haven't been driving because I've only got one karu (eye) because I lost this eye about a year ago.*" This got Heke interested and engaged that Hotu shared his story of how he lost his eye to an infection, and the impacts on his sight and driving. This kaupapa triggered Heke to share his weight loss journey, and

how his extra weight was having an impact on his osteoarthritis resulting in the need for two knee replacements. This part of the *kōrerorero* was kaupapa focused and concentrated on changing health conditions being experienced by both tuakana and teina – *Tipi Haere* in action.

Tipi Haere encompassed journeys that detoured from the kaupapa but made its way back to the kaupapa. In *Kotiti Haere*, tangents became defining moments, but unlike *Koiti Haere* detours, *Tipi Haere* symbolised shorter detours that provided another purpose and value to the conversational journey. These tiki tours allowed the kaumātua a break away from the heavy discussions, to strengthen relationships and trust, to learn and explore more about their conversational companions outside the kaupapa, and to provide some enjoyment and relief to the conversational journey. Tuakana acknowledged these moments and held space for their teina so that their teina could stray to balance out the taumaha (heavy) kaupapa being discussed. Mako and Kiri's conversation about whakapapa (genealogy) provided a connection that strengthened the pairs relationship and enabled natural segues to the other formal kaupapa (transitions). Likewise, Una and Oriwa's discussion about their every everyday activity such as pot-planting also strengthened their relationship, whilst providing another learning layer of who one another is outside of the kaupapa. Hotu and Heke's communication about their shared loneliness experience allowed them to strategise to combat their loneliness and, to also help a mutual friend who was in need. Their exchange demonstrated how *Tipi Haere* can offer insight and support for others outside the kaupapa. *Tipi Haere – Tiki Tours* offer a purposeful and valuable detour that further enrich the conversational journey. Although brief, the tiki tours were meaningful in nature and emphasise that tiki tours are just as valuable as the destination as they provide more depth (at times) and diversity during the conversational journey, but most importantly, they offered kaumātua relief from the heavy kaupapa that they share in-depth.

Whakahokihoki Atu – Place Revisited

This characteristic feature, *Whakahokihoki*, regarded conversations that revisited stories two or more times throughout the conversational journey. Simply, whakahokihoki can translate to answer, reply, respond, or to return frequently. In relation to travel, revisiting places happens for reasons such as familiarity, re-experience, annual vacations or events, further exploration and more. In the context of this theme, the travelling metaphor sees kaumātua revisiting conversation topics again to reflect, remember, re-affirm, delve deeper and more. In the context of this theme, *Whakahokihoki* signified places of the conversational journey kaumātua revisited more than once. *Whakahokihoki* encompassed stories that were revisited and retold by teina.

The first example of *Whakahokihoki* is Kiri revisiting and retelling her story of independence to her tuakana, Mako. Toward the end part of their conversational journey, Mako asked Kiri what she would like to talk about pointing at the transition Kaupapa listed on the table. Kiri picked independence to talk about, again (this was intensely discussed in the previous conversation), and specifically about her living experience with her son and his whānau. Mako then points to the voice recorder, who they both named Henry, as a gesture to provide comfort and assurance for Kiri to speak freely and safely. Mako told Kiri *“This is where you talk and every now and again, I’ll taringa whakarongo [use listening ears] but just spread your wings and just talk about how you feel if you was to move into a situation where somebody is looking after you.”* By saying that she would use her ears and just listen, Mako was providing Kiri with a space to share again. Kiri then retold the story of her experience of living with her son again, describing it as a position of a *“live in babysitter.”* And Mako, as the tuakana, gave her teina the space and time to retell her story. During this retelling, Mako managed to gently redirect the kōrero, and asked Kiri how long it took for her to do something about her independence – her living situation, to which Kiri responded *“Well, for two years, I think.”* From here, Kiri retold her story of how she regained her independence through the awhi of the Rauawaawa. Mako allowed Kiri the time to retell her story again and

provided Kiri the affirmation that she had her *“tinorangatiratanga [self-determination] back up and going...That’s a beautiful story. I love it. It’s heart breaking but I love it because you’ve got your own mana back.”* Creating the space to retell her story, enabled Kiri to travel to an important part of her life to reaffirm her decisions and assert her independence.

The second example of *Whakahokihoki* is Ōriwa revisiting and retelling her stories of her changing health conditions, and loneliness following the loss of her husband. In this instance, Ōriwa wanted to provide her tuakana, Una with an update. Ōriwa shared that her and a friend had been seeing a chiropractor and since seeing him, her pain issues have now gone. The alternative treatment seemed to have worked and had contributed to her better improved health both physically and mentally and stated *“I feel so good. I’ve never felt so good before.”*

Ōriwa also brought up the loss of her husband again just after the festive season. Una asked how was Ōriwa’s Christmas. Ōriwa replied that her and her children dined out for Christmas dinner. Ōriwa went on to say that *“I didn’t feel like Christmas.”* As it was her first one without her husband and *“I just wasn’t in the mood.”* Una responded, *“well those are the one of the hurdles. And how are you coping with that?”* with which Ōriwa replied, *“Yeah, good. I had to just let it go.”* Una complimented Ōriwa, *“Well, you’re very sensible. It took me a long time to let go.”* The pair, as they were talking, agreed that now and then they would *“crack at the odd moments”* where you would become emotional as you remember your husband. But the pair remind themselves that they both possessed the strength now to get them through that moment after they acknowledge and sit with it for a bit. These retelling of the stories allowed Ōriwa to reinforce that progress had been made and Una was able to ensure the kaupapa was being addressed.

The third example of *Whakahokihoki* is when Heke felt the need to revisit his entire story again and in-depth with his tuakana, Hotu. This time round, Heke spoke with much concern as he talked about his employment status, his need for more hours and pay and how his few hours now reflected his age. He also mentioned the increased GP visits and changing health conditions, and his realisation that these changes were due to ageing.

Finally, he talked about the pressures of being a father, uncle, grandfather, friend, and Kaumātua and how he was being pulled in all directions to be there for everyone. Heke questioned himself “*But other than that, I don’t know. Can I say that I’m okay and happy?*” Hotu, in his role as tuakana, could feel and hear how this was overwhelming his teina and reached out to him: “*As long as – it’s about looking after number one. It’s yourself. Because it’s so easy to fall off the... You’ve got to always have somebody, make sure somebody’s there to help you, lift you up.*” Heke demonstrated and illustrated here his love, care, and responsibility as a whānau member, a friend, a kaumātua, and an employee. However, this was challenging for Heke as he was being called here and there. The retelling of the story enabled Heke to further explore issues that were challenging for him and unburden the concerns that he had. The revisiting of the issues was Kaupapa driven by the tuakana.

Whakahokihoki involved repeated travels by teina, that were directed by tuakana, to a particular story. As evident in the examples above, teina revisited and retold their stories. Again, tuakana assumed their role, and held the space for their teina to revisit and retell their story, and for them, as tuakana, to gain a better understanding, whilst also reminding the tuakana of the story. By acknowledging this, tuakana knew that a retelling of stories needed to happen. Teina trusted the relationship with their tuakana and sought affirmation, assurance, and feedback. Teina also retold their stories because they needed to expand on it or report a new development in the story. These important and memorable stories needed to be revisited to further unpack emotional issues and demonstrate new growth.

Tangata Haere – Hospitality Becoming Defining Moments

This characteristic feature, *Tangata Haere*, concerned conversations where whakawhanaungatanga (the process of building connections) became an essential part of the conversational journey. Using the journey metaphor, this subtheme illustrates the Māori proverb “*He ihu kurī, he*

tangata haere”, which translates to “as a dog follows a scent, a traveller relies on the hospitality of other.” (Mead & Grove, 2003, p. 72). The ngako (essence) of this whakataukī symbolises how a dog instinctively trusts and depends on their nose to guide them on their journeys, just as a traveller relies on the directions, guidance and friendliness of others as they navigate their journey. This whakataukī underscores the essential human need for support and connection, and the importance of community and hospitality to ensure a safe and enriched travel experience.

This is linked to the word manaaki, which can mean to support others, take care of others, and give hospitality to others. Whakawhānaungatanga is similar to manaaki in that the process of establishing relationships and building connections between people is key; it is about relating well and connecting to others to manaaki a visitor or guest. In the context of this theme, the teina is the traveller on his or her journey and meeting with the tuakana for the first time represents the first stop of their journey. Whilst on this first stop, the tuakana or host welcomes their guest traveller by enacting whakawhānaungatanga, to put the teina at ease and the teina then reciprocates by talking about where they are from and who they relate to. From this point whakawhānaungatanga becomes an integral part of the journey as the pair get to know each other and make connections in the conversational journey.

The first example of *Tangata Haere* begins with the start of Hotu and Kapo’s conversational journey. From the outset, whakawhānaungatanga played an extensive and vital role in Hotu and Kapo’s journey. Once Hotu had introduced himself; his pepeha (a tribal specific way to introduce yourself and to connect with others) and shared where he was from, and provided a small brief about the kaupapa, he handed the rākau (talking stick) over to Kapo. From here, Kapo reciprocated and shared his pepeha. And for the next 20 minutes of the conversation, Kapo spoke about where he was from, where he was raised, all the marae he is connected to, and who some of his relations are and tūpuna (ancestors) were. Hotu had listed the multiple iwi and marae he had whakapapa, with one that stood out for Kapo. Kapo asked Hotu if he was from Ngāti [named iwi], in which Hotu replied

"Yeah. Well, connected to Ngāti [named iwi]" But the definite whakapapa link was identified when Kapo remembered his *"nana was from Ngāti [named iwi]"* and Hotu responded with *"wow, distant relations ay?"* The pair made their whakapapa connection through Hotu's grandfather and Kapo's grandmother. Through this natural whakawhanaungatanga, there was an exploration of whakapapa (genealogy) and hononga (connections) being made between the two. From here, Hotu just let Kapo have the time to talk and share, and where and when he thought it was relative, Hotu would respond. The pair later solidify their relationship when Hotu said more about his grandparents: *"...my great-grandfather was [named person]. One of the first ones to ever play the tin whistle with the band."* It is this topic about music that sparks a defining moment in the pair's relationship.

The second example of *Tangata Haere* is that of Maia and Hakopa. Like the previous conversational journey, Maia and Hakopa participated in whakawhanaungatanga and gave it time and space to happen. The journey began with Maia introducing himself. His introduction entailed a bit about: where his parents were from, his upbringing, his married life, his mahi and his later life finishing his introduction with *"That's just a little bit about me"* and handing the rākau (a figurative talking stick) over to Hakopa. Maia's brief but extensive overview of his life provided the blueprint for Hakopa to introduce himself. Hakopa was able to reciprocate but in addition was enabled to elaborate. For example, his issue with alcoholism and the destruction it brought to his life as told in Chapter Five in stories about Teina adversities. The pair whakawhanaungatanga for their entire first conversation talking about Auckland then and Auckland now, their own racism experiences, technology advancement and more. Significantly, the pair identified the many commonalities they shared when Maia said, *"It seems like we've got quite a bit in common, you and I"*. The pair were both born and raised in Auckland; both raised in a Pākehā world having had a disconnection to their Māoritanga; both gained an interest, in their older adult years, to reconnect to their marae and Māoritanga and learn Te Reo; both were partner carers to their wives; both experienced the loss of a spouse. Near the end of the conversation, Maia said *"I've got to know a little*

bit about you and hopefully you've learnt a little bit about myself..." to which Hakopa replied *"It's good to hear that there's people like myself still around."* It's these shared experiences that enabled Hakopa to elaborate and expand building the foundation for the rest of the conversational journey and kaupapa. This time given to whakawhānaungatanga cemented Maia and Hakopa's relationship and conversational journey together.

The third example of *Tangata Haere* is that of Maia and Piri, whose journey begins similarly to Hotu and Kapo's. Whakawhānaungatanga was a must, which played an extensive and pivotal part in their journey; an exploration of whakapapa, hononga and kōrero then presented. Maia welcomed his teina Piri to their first kōrero and thanked him for being part of this journey. Maia said, *"We've had a karakia or would you like to have another karakia or ...?"* to which Piri replied *"Well, we've [already] been blessed. I think kei te pai (okay)."* This moment of interaction set the tone for this first leg of the journey. Unlike the previous two pairs' journey where the teina was the main navigator, Maia and Piri both navigated their kōrero equally. For the initial conversation, Piri let Maia speak, starting with *"perhaps just a little bit about you myself..."* whilst Piri just listened. Then Maia would hand the rākau over to Piri to speak, who responded with *"Well, thank you Maia for a bit of your history. I think I can begin mine with I come from a very large whānau."* and Maia just listened. The pair, from this moment, talked about their upbringings, their whānau, their wives, whakapapa, music, the Rauawaawa, their mahi before retirement and more. Maia and Piri only intercepted when required. This journey was of a back-and-forth nature each allowing one another the space and time to talk.

Tangata Haere was clearly and importantly about whakawhānaungatanga and that first initial meeting between tuakana and teina. Like the stories in *Kotiti Haere – Detours Becoming Defining Moments*, also reflected the following of the conversational spirit. When teina first arrived at the first stop in their journey, their first conversation, they were greeted and welcomed with manaaki by their tuakana. The tuakana introduced themselves and shared their pepeha and whakapapa. As evident in the examples discussed, whakawhānaungatanga was intentionally given

time and space by the tuakana to put their teina at ease. By doing so, this enabled teina to reciprocate and gradually open up. For Hotu and Kapo, and Maia and Hakopa, the tuakana allowed most of the time and space for their teina to speak freely, whilst they just listened. For Maia and Piri, it was an equal sharing of talking and listening by both parties. For all parties, whakawhanaungatanga was critical in the initial conversation because it helped build trust, connection, and conversation, which helped to further cement their relationships.

Ngā Rerenga Conclusion

Mai I Te Rerenga Wairua ki te Hikoi ā Kaupapa– Purposeful Driven Kaumātua Tuakana-teina Journeys described how conversational journeys developed, and the stories unfolded. The nature of the conversations reflected journeys that were either kaupapa driven or spiritually guided. Journeys within *Haere Tōtika* (Directly to the Destination), *Tipi Haere* (Tiki Tours), and *Whakahokihoki* (Places Revisited) stayed explicitly with the kaupapa from the onset; the life transitions kaupapa. These journeys were tuakana led and guided. Although tuakana guided, the teina responded with their hearts and an overflow of sharing took place. When these conversations strayed off course, the tuakana acknowledged the tangent, valued its place in the journey, but then gently redirected the journey back to the kaupapa. At times, teina felt the need to revisit and or retell their stories later in their journey. Revisiting and retelling stories was a means for validation, affirmation, assurance, understanding, and feedback. These stories were much like the holiday that is planned out and guided by the navigator. They are in a “straight line” although allow some tangents to ensure it works for everyone but eventually comes back to the planned journey.

Journeys within *Kotiti Haere* (Detours Becoming Defining Moments) and *Tangata Haere* (Hospitality Becoming Defining Moments) are those conversations that were wairua guided. These journeys were teina led simultaneously with their tuakana. Wairua guided journeys allowed the

time and space for whakawhanaungatanga to take place as the first stop of the journey. Whakawhanaungatanga became an essential part of the conversational journey as it allowed both tuakana and teina to get to know each other and connect with each other at a deeper level. Wairua guided journeys also entailed non-directly related kaupapa or tangents that became a central part of the story journey. This journey provided connection through shared interests, a place for sharing to happen both ways, and foundational story building routes for stories to emerge and take shape. But like most journeys, wairua guided journeys arrived at the destination. In this case, the destination was the overall kaupapa. Although some on this journey did not quite get to discussing all five life transitions kaupapa, they turned up and journeyed through the kaupapa (project) visiting each of the three conversations. Despite the not following the life transitions kaupapa, kaumātua tuakana inherently followed the wairua (spirit) of the engagement.

What is illustrated throughout these conversational story journeys, is this notion that a traveller relies on the hospitality of others. What was evident and demonstrated throughout these journeys was the act of manaakitanga. We saw Kaumātua assume their role as tuakana in the relationship and carry out their responsibilities. Tuakana remained opened to teina, who guided them throughout this conversational journey. There was mutual respect between tuakana and teina, that tuakana held the space for their teina to talk and share their experiences, their stories openly and freely. Tuakana, in their role, provided their teina with encouragement, acknowledgement, feedback, and assurance.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Mā Te Rongo, Ka Mōhio; Mā Te Mōhio, Ka Mārama; Mā Te Mārama, Ka Mātau; Mā Te Mātau, Ka Ora – Concluding Discussion

This chapter is titled with the whakataukī Māori (Māori proverb) "*Mā te rongo, ka mōhio; mā te mōhio, ka mārama; mā te mārama, ka mātau; mā te mātau, ka ora.*" (Kingi et al., 2017) This whakataukī translates to "*through listening, comes knowledge; from knowledge, comes understanding; from understanding, comes wisdom; and from wisdom, comes wellbeing*" (Dell, 2021). The ngako, or central idea, of this whakataukī focuses on the entire journey of this research and those involved. It emphasises that gaining understanding and wisdom through knowledge creates wellbeing. The research processes used in this study highlight that advisory kaumātua voices and needs, centred and integral to the study, were communicated and listened to by the research team. Also, within each of the three tuakana-teina conversations, teina were listened to by their tuakana. From my participating in the initial stages of the KMM project, and listening to kaumātua narratives shared throughout the journey, came the knowledge.

In the wider context of the KMM project, the knowledge gains were derived from kaumātua and community advice and the KMM team (including kaumātua and community) development, implementation, and delivery of the KMM research project. The hua (fruits or findings) of this doctoral study were derived from the many conversations of the kaumātua tuakana and teina who took part in KMM. Therefore, the mātauranga, knowledge, of this study emerged in the form of the multiple themes to be discussed in this chapter.

In this thesis, I analysed the conversational data, and the pūrākau (stories, experiences, perspectives) told by kaumātua teina. I identified the key cultural and communication features employed by kaumātua tuakana to draw out pūrākau from kaumātua teina and looked at how the conversations unfolded and relationships developed as kaumātua

journeyed through this kaupapa (project) together. The three research questions this study sought to answer were:

- 1) *What are the cultural and communication features of the kaumātua teina narratives?*
- 2) *What are the cultural and communication characteristics of the kaumātua tuakana conversational styles? and*
- 3) *What is the nature of the kaumātua journeys in how the stories unfold, and relationships develop?*

The findings demonstrate how this strength-based research depended on solid cultural concepts and values, communication processes, community collaboration, and kaumātua connectedness and centredness. This chapter first discusses the key themes concerning the three research questions in relation to the literature. In addition, and in keeping within a Māori lens, the findings will also be discussed in relation to the various whakataukī used throughout this thesis. Second, the chapter identifies the research and practical implications of the study. Finally, limitations, future directions and a conclusion are offered.

Ngā Hua Me Te Kete Aronui – Findings Relative to Literature

This section discusses the “hua” of this research in relation to “te kete Aronui.” “Hua” can literally mean originate, accrue, bear fruit, to flower, product, result, answer, solution, or product and more. In the context of this study, “hua” refers to the three fruits or three key findings. “*Te kete Aronui*” is one of the three kete or baskets of knowledge retrieved from heavens (Kāretu, 2008). This particular kete contains the knowledge that relates to the humanities; knowledge that benefits all living things on Earth. In the context of this chapter, “*Te Kete Aronui*” refers to the literature used to discuss the “hua” or results of this research. This section, *Ngā Hua Me Te Kete Arohnui*, first discussed “hua” or narratives sprouting from the conversations of the kaumātua teina (mentee in-the-experience). The

second part discusses, the “hua” sprouting from conversational styles of the kaumātua tuakana (mentor experienced). The third, part discusses the “hua” sprouting from the conversational and relational journeys of the kaumātua.

Ngā Raranga o Ngā Kaumātua Teina – Teina Narratives

In the context of understanding the cultural and communicational features of kaumātua teina narratives, this study’s first research question investigated was *What are the cultural and communicational features of the kaumātua teina narratives?* The research found that kaumātua teina shared three types of pūrākau (stories). The first type was stories of the past. Within this main story theme, sub-stories of adversity were shared along with stories of turning points. The second type was stories of later life and with sub-stories of resilience and independence. The third type was stories of connections including stories and within this main story theme, sub-stories of connection to community, connection to culture, and connection to purpose were shared. The findings to the first research question are presented in **Table 2**.

Table 2. *Ngā Raranga o Ngā Kaumātua Teina – Kaumātua Teina Narratives*

Key Story Theme	Sub-Story Theme	Transition
Ngā Raranga o Ngā Kupenga Kaumātua Stories from past through to life-changing moments	Te Kupenga o Te Pō	Adversity
Ngā Raranga o Ngā Kupenga Kaumātua Stories from past through to life-changing moments	Te Kupenga o Te Ao Mārama	Turning Points
Ngā Raranga o Ngā Kete Kaumātua Stories in later life	Te Kete Manawaroa	Resilience
Ngā Raranga o Ngā Kete Kaumātua Stories in later life	Te Kete Mana Motuhake	Independence
Ngā Raranga o Ngā Whenu Kaumātua Stories of connections	Te Whenu Hapori	Connection to community

Key Story Theme	Sub-Story Theme	Transition
Ngā Raranga o Ngā Whenu Kaumātua Stories of connections	Te Whenu Māoritanga	Connection to culture
Ngā Raranga o Ngā Whenu Kaumātua Stories of connections	Te Whenu Kaupapa	Connection to the project

The first group of themes concerned the pūrākau (narratives) shared by the kaumātua teina. The story findings are discussed in two ways. First, the pūrākau of kaumātua teina are consistent with the literature on colonisation (Durie, 2003; 2011; Walker, 2004). These stories concerned the past, and in particular, stories of past physical abuse and significant loss. The majority of the physical abuse stories were shared by the koroheke (older men) who spoke of either abuse by parents and or family members or abuse by the state (those in foster care). The abuse the koroheke endured could be attributed to the intergenerational trauma experienced by their parents that stems from loss of lands, culture, language, and identity due to colonial marginalisation, assimilation and urbanisation of Māori (Griffiths et al., 2016; Isobel et al., 2019; Robson & Harris, 2007; Walker, 2004). Kuia (older women) alluded or referred to physical abuse during the conversations. However, the physical abuse kuia suffered was at the hands of their, then, domestic partner. These stories of the past reaffirm and highlight the detrimental, and ongoing, effects of colonisation concerning health and social inequalities Māori face (Griffiths et al., 2016; Isobel et al., 2019; Robson & Harris, 2007; Walker, 2004).

The stories shared by kaumātua teina about (re)connecting to their Māoritanga (culture) also emphasised cultural disconnection (Hapeta et al., 2019). Kaumātua teina shared stories about being brought up in and or around Te Ao Māori, but once they went through the high school system experienced a decline in their connection to culture. Others, however, spoke of not having any connection at all to their Māori culture. Again, this cultural disconnection stems from that loss of land, language, culture, and identity as Māori were assimilated and marginalised into a colonial society during a time when disconnecting from Te Ao Māori was forced, and perhaps about survival (Hokowhitu et al., 2020; Walker 2004). This cultural disconnection

for kaumātua teina emphasises and is consistent with literature that highlights loss of culture and connection to the Māori World as an impact of colonisation (Davis et al., 2006; Hokowhitu et al., 2020; Ministry of Health, 2000; Waikato District Health Board, 2007). The trauma of disconnection from culture and experiencing violence and physical harm contributed to upset and unbalanced hauora (health and wellbeing). However, the process of sharing pūrākau and the pūrākau themselves demonstrated the connection to their culture and identity to enable an improved state of wellbeing (Hapeta et al., 2019; Standing & Kahu, 2021) for kaumātua.

Second, the pūrākau are consistent with, and extend, the pūrākau literature (Cliffe-Tautari, 2020; Lee, 2009; Stansfield, 2020; Woodhouse, 2019). The pūrākau shared by the kaumātua teina tell stories of the past (i.e., adversities and turning points), present (i.e., resilience, independence and connections) and future (i.e., hopes and desires for this kaupapa). These stories highlight that kaumātua possess potential, strength, and resilience as they navigate their way through the life transitions and reinforce learnings from the past that can be taken into the future. The kaumātua teina stories were shared as a means to address their past trauma and loss (Cavino, 2019; Davis & Came, 2022). They also provided a pathway to (re)connect to culture, community, and identity (Cliffe-Tautari, 2020; Hapeta et al., 2019). What these stories reflect is health and healing in action and the cyclical nature of life in Te Ao Māori (Marsden, 2003) as they move from one phase – Te Pō (cycle of becoming) – to another – Te Ao Mārama (cycle of being). They also illustrate the holistic nature of ageing and health and wellbeing in Te Ao Māori (Durie, 1985; Pere, 1984) as they travel through a space of healing arriving at place of peace and balance today. The kaumātua teina stories can be viewed as a source of inspiration and sustenance for people and communities to grow and develop (Archibald, et al., 2019) as they showcase kaumātua teina taking control of their livelihoods and wellbeing in older age despite their adversities.

The kaumātua teina mirror and embody the “*Ko Te Kai a Te Rangatira he Kōrero*” (“*the sustenance of a leader is communication*”) as they stand in their own mana motuhake realising their own pathway to health

and wellbeing, whilst simultaneously communicating implicit teachings (Lee-Morgan & Hoskins, 2021). Holding these stories at the heart of the study, extends the pūrākau literature by responding to calls of Lee (2009), Stanfield (2020) and Woodhouse (2019) who challenge Māori researchers to apply pūrākau in place of Western narrative inquiry to strengthen the pūrākau scholarship (David & Came, 2022).

In summary, together, these stories demonstrate an “... *implicit beauty of knowledge and wisdom that only a carefully crafted pūrākau can encapsulate*” (Woodhouse, 2019, p. 15). In this way, the platform for pūrākau sharing enabled a journey to wellbeing restoration, and balance. These findings also highlight a critical facilitator within a health programme intervention such as the KMM project, that enabled kaumātua to openly share their personal experiences and journeys in older age. Specifically, the findings illustrate parts of the life cycle of kaumātua teina as they shared stories of their adversities, struggles, and challenges of their past, and talked to stories of turning points in their lives that enabled them to realise their full potential to get to a place of healing, success, and wellbeing through new and current ways of life and (re)connections.

Ngā Paeoro o Ngā Kaumātua Tuakana – Tuakana Characteristics

In the context of discerning the cultural and communicational characteristics of kaumātua tuakana conversational styles, the second research question was *What are the cultural and communicational features of the kaumātua tuakana conversational styles?* The research found that kaumātua tuakana communication featured three cultural communication qualities as they journeyed through conversations with their teina. The first finding was conversing to connect and comprised of words of kinship and words of reciprocation. The second finding was conversing with responsibility with words of ignition and words of guidance. The third finding was conversing with kindness and encompassed words of empathy and words of affirmation. The findings to the second research question are presented in **Table 3**.

Table 3. *Ngā Paeoro o Ngā Kaumātua Tuakana – Tuakana Conversational Characteristics*

Key Feature Theme	Sub-Feature Theme	Description
Ngā Reo Whenu – Conversing to Connect	Ngā Kōrero Whakawhanaungatanga	Words of Kinship
Ngā Reo Whenu – Conversing to Connect	Ngā Kōrero Whakautuutu	Words of Reciprocation
Ngā Reo Tuakana – Conversing with Responsibility	Ngā Kōrero Whakaohoho	Words of Ignition
Ngā Reo Tuakana – Conversing with Responsibility	Ngā Kōrero Whakahoki	Words of Guidance
Ngā Reo Tūi – Conversing with Kindness	Ngā Kōrero Whakaaroa	Words of Empathy
Ngā Reo Tūi – Conversing with Kindness	Ngā Kōrero Whakatūturu	Words of Affirmation

The second set of themes concern the cultural communication characteristics kaumātua tuakana used during their conversational and relational journeys with their kaumātua teina. The characteristic findings underline the importance of duty, care and responsibility of the tuakana in two ways. First, the findings reflect a moral and ethical compass on how tuakana are to engage with kaumātua teina. The findings demonstrate the tuakana’s responsibility to carrying out and upholding tikanga Māori. In this context tikanga refers to the tika (correct) ways of communicating, behaving, and relationship building (Durie, 2001; Mead, 2003; Pere, 1998). Through their words of kinship and reciprocation, the principle of whakawhanaungatanga (the relationship building process) is enacted. Through their words of empathy and affirmation the principle of manaakitanga (the act of care and support) is illustrated. Together, the two principles reinforce the understandings of tikanga Māori by Ka’ai and Higgins (2004) and Te Aho (2007) as they reflect the relational and behavioural responsibilities that guide how to engage with and treat people. Moreover, tuakana words of affirmation fostered a nurturing engagement

that enabled teina to see, know, and understand the sheer strengths, potential and qualities they possessed in providing them with a sense of empowerment (Komene et al., 2023; Rameka & Glasgow, 2017)

Second, the findings reflect the notion of open communication and how tuakana kept the lines of communication open and flowing with their teina to maintain the relationship. The findings underscored the relevance of two-way conversation and demonstrated the actions tuakana took to ensure this happened in a safe and engaging way. Through their words of ignition and guidance tuakana created a safe space that allowed and encouraged a shared conversation. This highlighted the reciprocal nature of the tuakana-teina relationship as both teina and tuakana had shared experiences (Callaghan et al., 2018; Glassey et al., 2023). Through their words of kinship and reciprocation, tuakana were able to build the relationship with and develop the trust of their teina. This emphasised the significance of making and establishing connection from the beginning but also throughout to maintain that relationship and trust (Rewi et al., 2023; Waiari et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the findings also accentuated the important role tuakana played in balancing the power of knowledge. The kaumātua enacted their role as tuakana with experience and knowledge of going through life's challenges and changes in later life. They shared similar experiences to reciprocate, suggest ways to manage changes and challenges, and offered emotional, informational and social supports (Dennis, 2003; Rewi et al., 2023; Waiari et al., 2021). Traditionally, the tuakana is often an older sibling, or older cousin of the same sex (Mead, 2003), but in more contemporary times the tuakana is the experienced and knowledgeable person in this customary tuakana-teina relationship as highlighted in studies by Callaghan et al. (2018) and Glassey et al. (2023). This is consistent with Hook et al. (2007) who explicitly talks about this relationship that can also include an experienced and knowledgeable person, who might be younger (tuakana) engaging and communicating with a less experienced and knowledgeable person, who might be older (teina).

In summary, these findings showcase how kaumātua tuakana craft their role, journey, and conversation with care and caution. What has been demonstrated here is the kaumātua tuakana shared their own learnings and knowledge from their experiences to their kaumātua teina to either ignite, reciprocate, address, or support kōrero from their kaumātua teina. The conversational styles of the kaumātua tuakana uncovers a deeply rooted connection between tikanga Māori and everyday communication and interactions. These findings highlight the valuable role of the tuakana to nurture a solid and respectful relationship with their teina via a culturally grounded communication framework that ensures the wellbeing of all, and continuation of tikanga Māori.

Ngā Rerenga Wairua-Hikoi-a-Kaupapa o Ngā Kaumātua Tokorua – Tuakana-Teina Journeys

In the context of understanding the relational and conversational journeys of the kaumātua pairings, this study examined the third research question *What is the nature of the kaumātua journeys in how the stories unfold and relationships develop?* The research found that the kaumātua conversations and relationships journeyed in four distinct ways.

The first journey theme included conversations that went straight to the kaupapa. The second journey theme concerned conversations that highlighted tangents but consisted of two sub-journey themes: 1) conversations that journeyed off-topic with the tangent becoming a defining moment; and 2) conversations that journeyed slightly off-topic but returned to the kaupapa swiftly. The third journey theme consisted of conversations that journeyed to points of the conversation multiple times. The fourth, and final journey theme comprised conversations that concentrated on the process of establishing relationships and building connections. The findings to the third research question are presented in **Table 4**.

Table 4. *Ngā Rerenga Wairua-Hikoi-ā-Kaupapa –Kaumātua Tuakana-teina Journeys*

Key Journey Theme	Sub-Journey Theme	Translation
Haere Tōtika – Directly to the Destination		
Rerenga Tītaha – Side Tours	Kōtiti Haere	Detours Becoming Defining Moments
Rerenga Tītaha – Side Tours	Tipi Haere	Tiki Tours
Whakahokihoki Atu – Places Revisited		
Tangata Haere – Hospitality Becoming Defining Moments		

This third batch of themes concerned the conversational and relational journeys of the kaumātua tuakana and teina as a pair and are discussed in two ways. First, the journey findings revealed the intricacies of pūrākau throughout the kaumātua conversations. Specifically, the focus here is the themes of *Haere Tōtika*, *Rerenga Tītaha*, and *Whakahokihoki Atu*. Traditionally, pūrākau conveyed cultural values and knowledges via storytelling (Lee, 2009). Aligned closely with the theme *Haere Tōtika*, the importance of focused and purposeful narratives is underlined (Williams, 1985). Thus, pūrākau resemble a thread that guide conversations to remain meaningful and grounded (van Sitter & Hopewell, n.d.). Moreover, pūrākau not only offers focused narratives, but also provides narrative flexibility (Woodhouse, 2019). The flexible nature of pūrākau is reflected in the theme *Rerenga Tītaha*, which highlighted how pūrākau can be adapted to conversation flow and participant needs. Pūrākau flexibility allow narratives and conversations to be dynamic, engaging, and memorable as narratives evolve based on the exchange and context (Cavino, 2019). Finally, these findings underscored the reflexive aspect of pūrākau during conversations (Cliffe-Tautari, 2020). This aspect is reflected in the theme *Whakahokihoki Atu* as places in the kaumātua stories are revisited. Pūrākau reflexivity allows for reinterpretations, new learnings, and reaffirmations, and ensures the shared wisdom stays relevant and impactful throughout the conversational journey (van Sitter & Hopewell, n.d.).

Second, the journey findings unveiled the dynamics of the tuakana-teina relationship throughout the kaumātua conversations. The themes *Rerenga Tītaha and Tangata Haere* illustrated how the roles of tuakana and teina played out in the relational journey by identifying, respectively, story and hospitality detours that became defining moments in the conversational journey. Together they illustrated how the roles of tuakana and teina played out in the relational journey. The tuakana's role can be conveyed as the "space holder" as they created and held space for their teina to share their pūrākau. This space-holding was vital for the relationship and the rest of the journey as it fostered a supportive and safe journey where teina voices could be heard and their experiences valued (Rameka & Glasgow, 2017). The teina's role can be depicted as the "co-captain" as they helped their tuakana guide the conversation. This co-captaincy illuminated a "two-way" highway that provided both kaumātua the opportunity to carry out their goals for this journey. This two-way dialogue is supported by Komene et al. (2023) who emphasised its importance in the growth and development of the conversation and relationship. The dynamics shown here illustrated a balanced relationship that reflects the mutuality and reciprocity (Callaghan et al., 2018; Glassey et al., 2023) and connection making (Rewi et al., 2023; Waiari et al., 2021) underpinning the traditional tuakana-teina relationship. Together these findings demonstrated how conversations, the kaumātua as individuals and as pairs strengthen and grow. In addition, the journey findings are encapsulated in the whakataukī "*Mā te tuakana e tōtika te teina, mā te teina e tōtika te tuakana*" meaning "*the older will lead the younger and the younger will lead the older*" (Kalan, 2024). Although the tuakana lead, the teina can lead when they want to discuss what they think is important to them. This reflects the reciprocal learning found in tuakana-teina (Callaghan et al., 2018; Glassey et al., 2023).

In summary, the journey findings revealed the complexities of sharing pūrākau within the kaumātua conversational journey, and highlighted the focused, flexible, and reflexive nature of pūrākau. Moreover, the findings unveiled the mutual dynamic of the kaumātua relationship as

they journeyed throughout their conversations, as this emphasised the theoretical underpinnings of the formal tuakana—teina relationship.

Te Ao Hurihuri - Implications

This section presents and discusses several implications of this study and is titled *Te Ao Hurihuri*. The Māori phrase literally translates to ‘*everchanging world*’ but also provides a much deeper meaning. As explained in chapter one, *Te Ao Hurihuri* also references whakapapa (Māori genealogy) and Māori cosmology (Marsden, 2003). *Te Ao Hurihuri* refers to our creation story; the beginning of time and the start of humanity (whakapapa) (van Sitter & Hopewell, n.d.). In the context of this study, *Te Ao Hurihuri* reflects the implications of this research.

This study investigated the cultural and communication features of the kaumātua teina narratives, the cultural and communicational characteristics of the kaumātua tuakana conversational styles, and the nature of the kaumātua conversations in terms of how their stories unfolded and their relationships developed. By exploring kaumātua teina narratives, kaumātua tuakana conversational styles, and kaumātua tuakana-teina conversations and relationships, this research provides significant contributions to academic scholarship, and valuable insights that will help inform future theoretical scholarship, methodological approaches, and practical applications.

Implications for Research

The findings, *Ngā Raranga o Ngā Kaumātua Teina*, *Ngā Paeoro o Ngā Kaumātua Tuakana*, and *Ngā Rerenga Wairua-Kaupapa o Ngā Kaumātua Tokorua* offer theoretical and methodological implications that contribute to further theorising tuakana-teina and pūrākau in the context of health and wellbeing and ageing. This section discussed the implications for theory and methodology.

Theoretical Implications

The theoretical implications from this study's findings offer a relational and dynamical theorisation of and enrich existing Kaupapa Māori theory (Bishop, 1999; Smith G., 2000; 2003) within the context of health and wellbeing and ageing research (Hokowhitu et al., 2017; Walter et al., 2020). Specifically, the findings contribute to the call for theoretical development of pūrākau (Lee, 2009; Stansfield, 2020; Woodhouse, 2019) and help extend the foundation for tuakana-teina (Biggs, 1969; Moorfield, 1998; Thornton, 1998; Winitana, 2012) within communication and wellbeing contexts (Hokowhitu et al., 2017; Walter et al., 2020). The insights presented here call for theory to be reframed from a Te Ao Hurihuri—Māori worldview lens that espouses transformation, movement, and cyclical time. Rooted in whakapapa, whanaungatanga, and mana motuhake, the following theoretical implications are living and guiding principles, and not just as theoretical constructs.

The findings that illustrate teina narratives navigating *Te Kupenga o Te Pō* (adversity), *Te Kupenga o Te Ao Mārama* (transformation), *Te Kete Manawaroa* (resilience), and *Te Kete Mana Motuhake* (independence) help reframe pūrākau from being narratives that simply carry knowledge to human communicative expressions of being positioning pūrākau as both epistemological and ontological. Furthermore, the findings bring Te Ao Hurihuri (change), whakapapa (genealogy), mana (strength) – all kaupapa Māori values – to the forefront of theorising. Such implications challenge, and offer alternatives to, Western narrative theory. Based on these findings, theorising must adapt and accommodate the complexities of Māori storytelling, which are relational, layered, and emblematic. Human turning points and adversities must be not seen as interferences but rather as constructive and catalytic spheres of transformation, identity, and narrative communication.

Notably, there is a tension between the understandings of kaumātua need for independence – mana motuhake – and the importance of family within Māori health and wellbeing models – whanaungatanga. Taking a more balanced and holistic view to understand this tension, mana

motuhake is self-determination, not isolation. Reflected in *Te Kete Mana Motuhake*, mana motuhake in this study demonstrates kaumātua asserting their autonomy to make their own decisions in all areas of life; retaining their own mana as they age while staying relationally rooted; and reclaiming their agency through later life transitions.

Whānau on the other hand is a support source, and not a control source. Whānau is positioned within the *Te Whare Tapa Whā* (Durie, 2003) and *Te Wheke* (Pere, 1984) Māori health models as one of the standing and supporting pillars to hauora (good health and wellbeing). This pillar highlights inherent connection of whānau to other areas of health and wellbeing. Whānau is a provision of sustenance that is social, physical, cultural, emotional and spiritual. Thus, Mana motuhake coexists with whānau, balancing roles with love and respect, rather than rejecting whānau relationships and supports. The practise of relational autonomy is reflected where kaumātua exercise their mana motuhake within their community of relationships, and not on the outskirts of their community. Mana motuhake and whānau are interwoven whenu (strands) that contribute to the korowai (woven cloak) of overall hauora.

The findings that emphasise connection, *Te Whenu Hapori* (to community), *Te Whenu Māoritanga* (to culture), and *Te Whenu Kaupapa* (to purpose/project) place connection as a foundational construct to theorising. These findings centrally position whanaungatanga and kaupapa relationships when theorising pūrākau and tuakana-teina, specifically in relation to health and wellbeing and ageing. The kaumātua teina narratives of connections can add depth to theories related to cultural, community and social wellbeing, such as Māori health models (Durie, 1984; 2003; Pere, 1984). These dimensions of wellbeing are underpinned by the Māori concept of whanaungatanga, which emphasises cultural connectedness and interconnectedness among people, support networks, and programme support systems (Walter et al., 2020). Further, the findings aid in reinforcing relational embeddedness as more than just context and underscores it as a living state of being. Therefore, theorising must look beyond individualism and welcome theoretical models and frameworks

that are value-laden and accentuate collectivism, generational inclusivity, and purposefulness. Connection, in various contexts, is more than an outcome or construct—it is a pivotal theoretical whenu (strand) that weaves theories together.

The findings that present tuakana conversational styles and mirror *whakawhanaungatanga* (kinship), *whakautuutu* (reciprocity), *whakaohooho*, *whakahoki* (responsibility), *whakaaroha* (empathy), and *whakatūturu* (affirmation) assist to theorise communication and peer-education as both relational and theoretical praxis. These findings provide mana-enhancing advancement of communication theories that encourage and enable relational, ethical and transformative language. The tuakana-teina relationship within a communication context, helps to reframe peer-support/education/mentorship as reciprocal, restorative. and balanced in nature rather than as a hierarchical relationship. Therefore, together, the implications contend that transactional communication models move to culturally embedded communication models that are more relational in nature. The tuakana-teina concept is more than a relationship and technique; it is a paradigm. This paradigm of connection, care, and collective-growth helps to theorise tuakana-teina.

Kaumātua tuakana conversational characteristics deepen theories of relationships (McLachlan, 2018), leadership (Constantinides, 2023), and emotional intelligence (O’Toole et al., 2021) in the context of health and wellbeing (McLachlan et al., 2023). The kaumātua tuakana characteristics of words of kinship and reciprocation come together to form the umbrella theme of conversing to connect. These characteristics provide valuable insights to enhance theories around relational dynamics (Wilson et al., 2021), social change (Fletcher, 2019; Ministry of Social Development, 2020), and tuakana-teina (Oetzel et al., 2021), as these characteristics emphasise how tuakana kinship and reciprocity are pivotal roles in the mentor-mentee relationship when underpinned by the Māori concept of whanaungatanga (relationality).

The findings that demonstrate kaumātua journeys include *Haere Tōtika* (direct progression), *Kōtiti Haere* (defining detours), *Tipi Haere*

(exploratory side tours), *Whakahokihoki Atu* (revisitations), and *Tangata Haere* (hospitality as transformation), help to theorise development and wellbeing models as journey-based frameworks. The findings propose, a Kaupapa Māori relational theory based in movement, restoration and relational depth. Therefore, collectively, the findings challenge linear wellbeing and development frameworks by embracing cyclical and local/community-based trajectories.

Theorising must honour Te Ao Hurihuri – the changing world –to develop a model that enables understandings of healing, growth, and identity which reflect a Māori cosmology that symbolises cyclical movement and growth (Marsden, 2003). Moreover, theory must prioritise and consider manaakitanga (hospitality) as an underpinning theoretical mauri (life force/energy) to help shape and understand relational transformation. The kaumātua journeys emphasised the interplay/intersection between storytelling and relationship development that is intentional and spontaneous. These findings bring out and reinforce a spiritual lament (Durie, 1983) that must be acknowledged in academia to inform communication theory to develop holistically “beyond communication” (Littlejohn et al., 2017, p. 189) in the context of development and wellbeing.

Collectively, the findings contribute significantly to Māori and Indigenous theorisation and enable communication, wellbeing and development to be reframed via a Kaupapa Māori world view. The findings afford scholars to research and theorise within the realities of the people and communities they may serve, rather than around or with them. This allows for a breadth and depth to theory that is multi-layered: lived, relational and cyclical. By doing so, theories become fluid and instead dynamic, reflecting Te Ao Hurihuri where deviations are not blunders, but rather the essence of transformation – the process of movement, return and connection

Methodological Implications

The methodological implications contribute to Kaupapa Māori and Indigenous methodologies and offer an ornately textured foundation for development that honours kaumātua narratives with relational depth. The findings offer another direction away from extractive and descriptive research to relational, pūrākau-driven, and culturally grounded research. The implications reinforce Kaupapa Māori and Indigenous methodological integrity and call for further fine-tuning and defining of pūrākau and conversational research methods that underscore and honour whanaungatanga, whakapapa, and mana, and most importantly, voices.

There is a need for Kaupapa Māori researchers to employ pūrākau methods to help grow, develop, and extend the pūrākau scholarship given its scarcity. By doing so, researchers can honour the fruitfulness of participants' realities, experiences, and stories that are culturally relevant and equal to Western narrative research approaches. Moreover, a pūrākau methodology offers researchers a space to explore culture and contextual nuances. Pūrākau encapsulates and highlights the implicit and explicit nature and beauty of mātauranga (knowledge, wisdom, understanding) that only pūrākau can carefully and cautiously craft (Woodhouse, 2019). The findings contribute to pūrākau scholarship, particularly in the area of analysis.

The findings relating to teina narratives navigating *Te Kupenga o Te Pō* (adversity), *Te Kupenga o Te Ao Mārama* (transformation), *Te Kete Manawaroa* (resilience), and *Te Kete Mana Motuhake* (independence) offer building blocks for pūrākau as method and analytical frameworks. These findings show that pūrākau are more than just data sets and commands. They represent a methodological approach that privileges Indigenous communities, voices, experiences, stories, and knowledges. Pūrākau methods to gather, analyse and present 'story-data' should reflect Te Ao Māori that is metaphoric, symbolic, layered, and cyclical (Archibald et al., 2019); Stansfield, 2020; Woodhouse, 2019). Researchers must enable nonlinear storytelling using pūrākau informed questioning and conversing to gather data. Research must apply thematic, symbolic, layered and

cultural approaches to analysing story data as opposed to a reductionist approach. Researchers must weave in Māori oral practices – such as metaphors and whakataukī (proverbs) – and Māori visual traditions – such as diagrams and images inspired by whakairo (carvings) and raranga (weaving) – to present data. In doing so, an intricately crafted, meaning-laden, and living pūrākau emerges for generations to come. What these findings provide is a caution to researchers to not colonise the narrative. Pūrākau encapsulates and highlights the implicit and explicit nature and beauty of mātauranga (knowledge, wisdom, understanding) that only pūrākau can carefully and cautiously craft (Woodhouse, 2019).

The findings highlighting kaumātua teina connections to *Te Whenu Hapori* (community), *Te Whenu Māoritanga* (culture), and *Te Whenu Kaupapa* (purpose/project) position connection as a methodological anchor; much like connection is a foundational theoretical construct. Research is not an isolated process, and must have community, culture, and kaupapa embedded in the design. This reinforces connection as a methodological condition, and not merely a backdrop to research. Research must be conducted collectively; co-designed with kaumātua, communities, whānau, iwi (tribes), organisations or kaupapa (purposeful events) alike. Once the research has been completed, peremptorily, findings should be returned to the collective/s in a culturally and ethically affirming manner to strengthen connections. From ethics to analysis, all methodological decisions should be guided by Kaupapa Māori principles and woven throughout the research process to ensure connections – between the people, kaupapa, findings, and processes within – are maintained, strengthened and shared.

In relation to the wider KMM project and the hua (fruit) of this current study is the underscoring value and importance of whakawhanaungatanga approaches in research generally and particularly, participatory approaches (Chaudoir et al., 2013; Smith, 2013; Wallerstein et al., 2018). The collaborative KMM project engaged kaumātua to be active participants in the research process (the Advisory and Expert boards, and the programme) to uphold the mana (prestige and authority) of kaumātua,

the project, its people, and the community. This active participation and inclusion of kaumātua in the research process highlights the significance and importance of such methodologies that empower kaumātua, whānau (families), communities, that in turn can support good health and wellbeing. Furthermore, by employing whakawhanaungatanga research approaches, community, kaumātua and whānau knowledge and experience is validated from a cultural stance. Whakawhanaungatanga research approaches emphasise the value in the collaborative nature of research and highlight a necessity for research practices that cultivate respect that is mutual, and knowledge that is co-created.

Implications for Practice

This study offers practical implications for application for organisations, communities and government. Applications may include service delivery, programme development and initiatives, training and education, and policy, relating to ageing, older people, holistic health and wellbeing, and individual and community growth and development.

Services Implementation

The story themes of adversity, turning points, resilience, independence and connections, and how they inform the present, can be used to provide pūrākau (narratives). Pūrākau can provide understandings, perspectives, and knowledges of what kaumātua have overcome, and stories of hauora pai (health and wellbeing). The learnings from these stories can inform service design and implementation to address the needs, and support the potential, and strengths of kaumātua mana motuhake (autonomy), their families and wider communities. New and improved services can enhance older people's quality of life and wellbeing (socially, spiritually, mentally and emotionally, physically, and culturally) by providing support services that are culturally and contextually relevant, and age appropriate. Such support services for our kaumātua and older people widely, will empower them to recognise their own potential,

strengths, abilities, solutions, and contributions to foster their own mana Motuhake (autonomy). As such, the pūrākau that emerged from the KMM tuakana-teina conversations provide concrete evidence that a peer-support programme works and can be used to set up either an organisational, regional or national kaumātua peer-support network using the KMM Tuakana Orientation Programme as a practical template.

Programmes and Initiatives Development

This study's findings can be used to inform, design and implement programmes and initiatives to benefit kaumātua and their communities. Such programmes can be informed by using the communication and cultural insights from the data sets to create intergenerational programmes. Such programmes can include an intergenerational exchange to promote the cultural practice of taonga tuku iho (nurturing with care the knowledge handed down from our ancestors/elders) between kaumātua and rangatahi (youth). This can provide kaumātua opportunities to interact and communicate with rangatahi and share their personal experiences, wisdoms, and ancestral knowledge with the younger people, whilst providing youth a space and time for cultural and life learning. Such programmes foster cultural continuity, knowledge and values transmission, and mutual intergenerational respect and relationships. Additionally, programmes can include mentorship programmes that leverage the strengths of the tuakana-teina relationship. These programmes can promote and provide the tools, support, and guidance to navigate and foster both personal and professional growth for younger peoples.

Further, new and developed initiatives can be informed and inspired by conversational and relational journeys had by the kaumātua in this research. These initiatives offer opportunity to engage communities, provide social and spiritual connectedness, and prioritise cultural relevance. The initiatives can provide individuals and their communities with a sense of purpose and belonging, whilst fostering hauora pai (wellbeing), engagement, and connection.

Training and Education Offerings

This study can be used to inform and develop new training and education offerings into community organisations like The Rauawaawa Kauātua Charitable Trust. The offerings can provide training and education for individuals, youths, adults, kaumātua, groups, communities, and organisations in the contexts of tuakana-teina peer-support and education. By incorporating the findings related to ngatanga (kinship), whakautuutu (reciprocation), whakaohoho (ignition), whakahoki (guidance), whakaaroha (empathy), and whakatūturu (affirmation), these offerings can holistically equip tuakana and other mentors with contextually relevant, and culturally sensitive communicational tools. To better serve their communities, training and education providers can incorporate these principles into their strategies to better align with their communities' values and practices. The importance and emphasis here are the terms 'co-design' and 'collaboration', which give weight to partnerships and the skills each person or group brings to the kaupapa, this is demonstrated not only in the broader KMM project, but also in this doctoral research. The Orientation Programme offers a template to develop future formal tuakana-teina peer-support/education programmes in various contexts.

Implications for Policy

The study's findings can be used to aid policymakers to inform and develop policies concerning older people's health and wellbeing policy and services, programme guidelines and strategies, retirement and funding regulations, and future forecasting as the population ages. Such informed policies, guidelines, strategies and regulations can support cultural and communicational practices to, with and between kaumātua and the communities in which they live in and serve. These policies, guidelines, strategies and regulations will ensure organisations, who provide elder services and deliver elder programmes and initiatives, align with government policy, but most importantly, align with the needs and values of kaumātua and their communities (e.g. Oetzel et al., 2020). Lastly, policy

development informed by these findings have the potential to promote cultural and community wellbeing and sustainability as the nation, and the world in fact, prepare for an increased ageing population. And as Oetzel et al., points out, Oetzel and team claim that running a programme like the KMM project is cost-effective whilst improving kaumātua health, wellbeing and social outcome.

These findings encourage a paradigm shift in policy development. There needs to be a move away from individualised and outcome-driven policy frameworks to policy models that are whanaungatanga (relationally), pūrākau (narratively) and Māoritanga (culturally) grounded. To better reflect kaumātua lived realities, aspirations and needs, policy developers could incorporate the kaumātua teina narratives – as anecdotal evidence, the tuakana communicational styles -, and the kaumātua journey patterns.

Overall, this study underlines collaboration, co-design, community, and communication. The study and its kaumātua, health experts, community and academic researchers, and emerging researchers combines a collective of mana (strength and power) and mātauranga (knowledge) that enables potential and opportunity. Together, the wider KMM project and this doctoral research can enable further research on a wider project to go beyond its funding parameters. As in this doctoral study, rich data sat within the KMM project, and there was an opportunity for that data to be further analysed, and the result is a significant offering for further development of theory, methodology and practice.

Ngā Wahitanga – Limitations and Future Directions

Although this doctoral research offers valuable insight into kaumātua tuakana-teina relationships and its communicational and cultural dynamics, limitations must be acknowledged. Firstly, this study's connection to the Kaumātua Mana Motuhake (KMM) project is one notable limitation. Despite the value in the KMM relationship and direct accessibility to participants and recourses, this connection did provide

some constraints. The project already had established networks, which potentially influenced participant selection bringing in biases and limiting participant pool diversity. This study's results closely relate to the KMM project's context, potentially affecting the results' generalisability to other populations or contexts. Therefore, when generalising the study's results to other settings, caution must be taken by readers because KMM's unique qualities may not appear elsewhere. Thus, future research should consider carrying out similar studies in different contexts and with other participant populations to further extend and validate this study's findings.

Secondly, in comparison to KMM's overall size, this study's data set was relatively small making this a limitation. The data set provided deep, meaningful, rich, and valuable insight which is consistent with qualitative research. However, the small sample size could have excluded other participants' experiences perspectives, and pūrākau. However, in the context of this research, an acknowledgement of the small sample size must be made as this was a choice; a choice to include the kaumātua pairs who completed all three conversations, and those conversations with the highest ratings on the communication scales. The chosen pairs and conversations indicate engaged kaumātua teina as choosing to continue with the three conversations. Therefore, future research needs to include a broader and more diverse participant group. In doing so, this study's findings would be strengthened and enhanced, within more comprehensive research.

Thirdly, the cultural context in which KMM and this study was conducted presented a further limitation. The KMM project and this thesis was grounded in Te Ao Māori (our world view), tikanga Māori (our practices, beliefs and values), and hauora Māori (our view of health and wellbeing). Although this cultural immersion approach provided KMM and this study with specific cultural clarity, context, responsiveness and appropriateness, this potentially could make generalising the findings to other populations challenging. Further research could consider similar studies and application in different cultural, community, and or regional contexts. Moreover, future research could include cross cultural studies to compare similarities and differences, or facilitators and barriers to such a

programme. By doing so, this would further extend, enhance, validate KMM's and this study's findings as it would provide a much bigger population scope.

Lastly, my own personal health and medical journey have been identified as a significant limitation. As mentioned earlier, I experienced the continuous lock-down effects of COVID-19 pandemic, a head injury, two spinal cord surgeries, a spinal cord injury, an amputation, and of course, the harsh mental health impacts from such adversities. These adversities provide several constraints. My own shared health experiences and challenges enabled me to connect with kaumātua and their stories at a deeper, emotional, and empathetic level. However, this connection could have presented biases in the data interpretation and writing of the findings potentially influencing the subjectivity of the analysis. The progression and continuity of this research may have significantly been impacted due to my extended suspension and absence from the research because my health and medical journey is continuous. Significantly, the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual impacts and strain related to my medical conditions and disability may have inhibited research and thesis writing productivity, limiting the depth and or quality of this examination and thesis. Despite these limitations, my own journey granted me with new perspectives and outlook on life. With this, I gained a unique depth of empathy and understanding of the life changes kaumātua were facing, because I now have experienced some loss of independence, loss of licence, and change in health conditions. My shared experiences enabled me to write this thesis through a kaumātua lens because of my own experience, which hopefully has enriched the overall depth and narrative of this study.

In summary, by acknowledging these limitations, I have highlighted the need for care, caution and consideration when interpreting, utilising, or applying the research findings in future studies. By caveating this, I have provided transparency about this study's affiliation to KMM, the small sample size given the large participant numbers in KMM, the cultural context of KMM and this study, and my personal experience relative to the research.

He Kai kei Aku Ringa – Thesis Conclusion

This whakataukī “*He kai kei aku ringaringa*” translates to “*there is food in my hands*” (Mead & Grove, 2003, p. 79). This whakataukī symbolises resilience, strength, independence, hope, empowerment, and economic mana motuhake (self-determination, autonomy) of Māori. It references Māori ability to utilise our own recourses and skills to create our own success. The whakataukī speaks to the practice of knowledge and wisdom transmission from kaumātua to rangatahi (youth; next generation). This ensures cultural continuity and wellbeing via pūrākau (sharing of stories) and fostering healthy relationships. This whakataukī emphasises the significance and value of kaumātua, and the part that pūrākau (narratives) play in maintaining and sustaining tikanga (practices, principles) and hauora (wellbeing).

In this doctoral research, I sought to examine and unearth the nuanced narratives, cultural and communicational features, and story and relational voyage interplay between and of kaumātua as tuakana (mentors) and kaumātua as teina (mentees). The kaumātua in this study were part of the wider KMM project, which aimed to support kaumātua going through life changes and challenges in older age. Fundamental to the KMM project was community, collaboration and conversation (the three Cs), which provided some vital and directional pillars for this doctoral study. Based on the directional pillars, it was important for this study to encapsulate the three “Cs”, which was to take an approach that was cultural, kaumātua centred and captivating. Imperative to this doctoral study was that kaumātua voices were heard. Consequently, a pūrākau (storytelling) approach was undertaken enabling this thesis to shed light on not only stories, but of the intricacies and interrelationships between the kaumātua teina narratives, kaumātua tuakana communication styles, and the evolving conversational relationships between kaumātua pairs. Via a kaumātua tuakana and teina lens, these conversational and relational story journeys laid a foundation for kaumātua to be empowered, culturally and socially

connected, and nourished as they navigated their life transitions. Ultimately, this study within the KMM research provided kaumātua a space to tend to and enhance their spiritual, social, mental, emotional, cultural and elder wellbeing. The findings have contributed to the wider scholarship in three ways.

First, the findings related to the opening research question surveyed the cultural and communicational landscapes implanted within the kaumātua teina narratives. This weaving of kaumātua teina voices revealed shared experiences that reflected pūrākau of past adversities and turning points, sheer resilience and independence, and current connections to community, culture and purpose. Not only were the kaumātua teina lived experiences reflective narratives, but they were also exemplifications of healing in action as they addressed their past traumas due to colonisation, reclaimed their culture and identity caused by marginalisation and assimilation, and created new connections because of isolation. Together, the findings gathered commissioned the creation of a collective tapestry of woven kaumātua teina pūrākau. In this way, the shared pūrākau not only provided a rich layer of emotional and experiential depth but also offered another complex layer of understanding as to the continuous effects of intergenerational trauma and a cultural connection that liberates hau (vitality, breath) and ora (wellness, wellbeing, life).

Second, the findings related to the subsequent research question observed the cultural communication qualities detected within the kaumātua tuakana conversational styles. The listening to kaumātua tuakana voices revealed that tuakana conversation styles reflected three key communication characteristics: whenu-connection, tuakana-responsibility and tūi-kindness. Through their role as tuakana in the relationship, kaumātua tuakana not only upheld the communication characteristics, but they also embodied tikanga Māori, specifically the practices of whakawhanaungatanga (relationship building) and manaakitanga (care and support). Kaumātua tuakana enacted these practices via their words of kinship and reciprocation, ignition and guidance, and empathy and affirmation, which fostered a safe, empowering,

and supportive place for kaumātua teina to share, and for both parties in the relationship to learn. Together, the findings detected aided to compose a song sheet/written script of kaumātua tuakana conversational styles. Their words exemplified how the communication styles mirrored Te Ao Māori (Māori world view) where relational development and connection are essential to upholding cultural practices and fostering wisdom exchanges.

Third, the findings related to the final research question traversed the conversational journeys and relational dynamics discovered within the kaumātua tuakana and teina voyages together. My observations of the kaumātua voyages revealed journeys that were multilayered. These layers consisted of five distinct journey types that led or guided conversations to destinations directly, to defining detours, to tiki tours, to places revisited or to itinerant travellers. These five journey types highlighted the importance of purpose and meaning in communication. However, they also highlighted the relevance of flexibility in conversations in two ways. First, they permitted digressions to become critical points of travel defining the shared story and relational journeys. Second, they allowed little side trips where the destination was insignificant, but the sights enroute were important and meaningful. These journeys also echoed reciprocity, a central principle that underpins a tuakana-teina relationship, where both kaumātua tuakana and teina learned from and guided each other along the way. This in turn strengthened kaumātua cultural connections, developed the tuakana-teina relationship, and enhanced kaumātua wellbeing. The journey findings discovered helped to sign post a road map of conversational and relational pathways within a wellbeing, ageing, and tuakana-teina setting.

Together, the three core findings only highlighted the relevance of the tuakana-teina relationship in older age, the significance of pūrākau in capturing kaumātua voices, and the importance of cultural preservation to enhance overall kaumātua wellbeing. Moreover, the findings centralise the whakataukī Māori (proverb), "*Mā te rongo, ka mōhio; mā te mōhio, ka mārama; mā te mārama, ka mātau; mā te mātau, ka ora.*" (Kingi et al., 2017) and is translated to "*through listening, comes knowledge; from knowledge,*

comes understanding; from understanding, comes wisdom; and from wisdom, comes wellbeing." The key themes of this study are encapsulated, and the research route charted by this whakataukī whereby kaumātua voices transmitted personal and cultural knowledge and shared interpersonal and cultural wisdom contributed to enhanced overall kaumātua wellbeing.

Important here, is to acknowledge the wider KMM project and its people who have demonstrated culturally, with collective integrity, dignity and care what it meant to include and support kaumātua navigating life changes and challenges in the research process. This thesis, through its examination, has emphasised the profound and unique role of the tuakana-teina relationship in older age, but more importantly, how the transformative nature of that relationship enhanced kaumātua wellbeing. The application of and value in cultural principles and practices also highlighted its contribution to kaumātua wellbeing enhancement by connecting and centring kaumātua in the process. The study has recognised and underlined how important sharing, listening, and learning from each other is when knowledge and wisdom is exchanged between kaumātua. In essence, the wisdom and wellbeing derived from the tuakana-teina relationships have provided a pathway for governments, organisations and whānau alike to support and invest in the wider goal to nurture healthier, stronger and resilient communities of kaumātua Māori, Indigenous elders, and other older peoples, especially in this ageing world.

I conclude this thesis with my own personal reflection throughout this doctoral voyage. But first, I want to reflect to when I first started this doctoral journey. I boarded this ship in 2017 not long after my Masters graduation. I boarded this ship keen, younger, energised, excited, grounded, fully brown haired, connected and able-bodied. The first year of this voyage went well. It was smooth sailing. Then slowly, bit by bit, piece by piece, month by month, then year by year, I saw myself gradually disappear; as per *My Personal Story* in Chapter One. Having experienced a major PhD research topic detour, a world-wide pandemic, a head injury, some spinal cord issues that led to surgery, a spinal cord surgery that caused some nerve damage to my left leg, a corrective spinal cord surgery that was too late, an

above knee left leg amputation, and all the continuous physical and mental recovery and rehabilitation on top of everything, one might find it difficult to understand how one could go through such adversities to now be concluding a doctoral thesis. This is a question that I have asked myself for the last year and a bit. How the heck have I got to this point? What does it all mean?

Now, I can look back, I can reflect and understand my journey. As I sit here writing this conclusion, I have not long finished a therapy session with my psychologist. During this session my psychologist helped me to realise and understand the enormity, significance and meaning of my journey in the bigger scheme of things. She talked about making sense of the dire situations we as humans can find ourselves in and giving it meaning. I now know that, despite what I have had to go through, my experience was about strengthening my understanding and connection to this study that goes far below the top-soils of Mother Earth. I have not only acknowledged my trauma; I have also accepted that trauma. I have used that trauma to help others who are experiencing similar trauma. I have used that trauma to fight a health system that is unethical and unjust and continue the battle. I have used that trauma to better connect (empathetically and spiritually) with and understand the kaumātua participants' experiences. I have used that trauma to give me the strength, courage and confidence to get me through the last leg (pun intended) of this doctoral journey; to completing and submitting this thesis. I have been able to take my traumatic experiences and utilise them productively. I am not diminishing my adversities here. For me, this is more about drawing on those experiences to help others and make a positive difference (albeit personally, interpersonally, systematically, politically), rather than allowing myself to sink into a deep and dark hole to wallow. This doctoral journey has also allowed me to make further sense of my trauma. I have come to the realisation that what I am now doing (this study), and what I will do after this doctoral journey comes to an end, equals healing in action. I can now appreciate the multitude of struggles, challenges, and adversities I have endured. And to think I was just one click away from withdrawing from this

doctoral journey. There are plenty of learnings through this, but if I was to highlight one major learning throughout my journey that is, *to quit is to fail. To endure is to build. To learn is to know. To complete is to overcome.*

I also want to take a moment to reflect on my experience and involvement with being part of the KMM kaupapa (project) and whānau (team). To be part of a high calibre research team and a significantly important research project was not only a privilege, but a significant learning and personal and professional growth opportunity for me. By being part of the KMM tuakana orientation programme for the kaumātua from design, development, piloting, and implementing, I was exposed to and privileged in experiencing first hand a real-life funded team research project in action; how theory translated into practice. The skills and experiences gained from being part of KMM provided me with the foundation I needed to start this doctoral journey. The KMM experience has also expanded my networks and enhanced my inter-relational skills. Thanks to this experience, I have learnt how to network within a health setting and have also strengthened my capability to build meaningful and professional relationships. I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to be part of such unique research that has strengthened my skills as an emerging Māori researcher, added more knowledge and wisdom to my kete (basket), but has also cemented by desire and decision to work in the Māori health and wellbeing space to contribute to the enhancement of Māori and Indigenous communities.

I want to further reflect on my hope for this research. My doctoral journey, the kaumātua of the KMM project whose stories I share in this thesis, and my own personal health journey has made me become more aware of our ageing community, but more importantly, the standing and value of our kaumātua and older peoples in our community. As I shared in Chapter One my yearning for grandparents, I guess I never truly understood what that meant until this journey. I think of the saying "*the youth are our leaders of tomorrow*" which rings true. At the same time, our older people are our leaders of today. They are here, now, to guide and navigate us through life as they did, to teach us their lessons they learnt, to pass down

our cultures from our ancestors, and to keep our relationships and connections strong and healthy. These are the reasons why our older people are of such value and importance and why we should maintain our connections with them and ensure their hauora (health and wellbeing) is physically, mentally, socially, spiritually, and financially cared for and supported from all layers and levels of society. Furthermore, I want to reflect on the intergenerational exchange this journey has provided me with. Engaging with our kaumātua, getting to know some of them, and gaining an understanding of their lived realities, has given me a new appreciation for our older peoples, but also, I have been given a life consideration. Since this exchange, I have been able to think more about my own future in becoming a kaumātua and going through further life transitions. The experience has posed a question for me to ponder that is what kind of example do I want to be as a kaumātua for my children, my grandchildren, and my community? This research has provided me that answer and that is a kaumātua who is resilient, strong, independent and wise; a kaumātua that helps guide younger generations like the kaumātua of this study have done so for me.

Finally, for me, this thesis has highlighted and reaffirmed that our kaumātua voices matter. Their experiences matter. Their realities matter. Their stories matter. Their memories matter. Their past matters. Their lives matter. Our kaumātua matter because they are our peoples' holders and carriers of lived experiences, knowledges, wisdoms and culture. Their kete (basket) of everything they know and have experienced is vital to ensure the continuity and hauora (wellbeing) of our culture and community as Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand. Kaumātua pūrākau provide us with more than just insights, they provide us with taonga (treasures) which only they can provide. Kaumātua are our present link to the past and future. Kaumātua are our teachers who guide us as we go through life as they did. Kaumātua are our preservers of culture that has survived generations. Kaumātua are our nurturers who foster our sense of belonging to community, identity as individuals and as part of a collective, and relationships with ourselves, others and the environment in which we live

in. Kaumātua are our promoters of intergenerational knowledge transmission. Kaumātua are our adhesives that keep our communities together and strong. Through this thesis, kaumātua and their pūrākau have offered us perspectives to enrich our understandings of life's challenges and changes, to build resilience, and restore and maintain wellbeing as we navigate our own lives. At the heart and soul, our kaumātua and their voices are the vital connector to and between our past, our present and our future. This thesis and the kaumātua voices within it also provide us with a strong reminder of the sheer mana motuhake (independence and autonomy), mana (strength), and manawaroa (resilience) our kaumātua possess. Therefore, I encourage us to engage, support, and celebrate these central and significant taonga of our communities. Our kaumātua.

I now take you back to the whakataukī that begins and titles Chapter One "*Ko te kākano, ko te mātanga - the seed is the elder.*" That seed truly is the elder. So, here, I leave you with the entirety of the poem that started this thesis, the poem that provided consecutive versus throughout this thesis, and the poem that will conclude this thesis. This is a symbolism of life, life's transitions, and this thesis. A poem I wrote in pieces during my doctoral journey, this is *Pito is the Thread to First Feed Us Life*.

*Pito is the thread to first feed us life.
A small seed that sits dormant in the hold of Te Po.
A tiny traveller in search of a haven to grow.
The small seed in sight, the tiny traveller ignites.
The two collide, cause an explosion
Where the murmurs of our tūpuna echoed afar
Are heard through the chambers of heart and aroha
Aroha and explosion illuminate the path to new life
We embrace and grow in the warmth of creation*

*Pito is the thread to first feed us life
As once the tiny traveller navigated these chambers
That small seed of life journeys the chambers once more*

*As they hear the sweet soft sound of the tūi singing
Haere mai, haere mai ki Te Ao Mārama
The seed of life emerges through the chamber gates
Exhaling tihei wā mauri ora the breath of life.*

*Pito is the thread to first feed us life
That small seed of life is now out in the open
It grounds itself in Papatūānuku
As the light of dawn becomes the dawn of life
That new seedling is just beginning
As it brings fresh hope, joy, potential, and future
As the seed grows a barky trunk appears
Their curiosity grows within its branches*

*Pito is the thread to first feed us life
As the seedling grows into a youthful Kauri
Branches and leaves open up to the world
Their energy evokes a dance of sunlight on water
Now fully open to hopes, dreams, and aspirations
Their energy spreads like a gentle breeze
Uplifting and bracing all in its path
Until they find that one that one for life*

*Pito is the thread to first feed us life
That one has been found that seed's mate for life
They settle to ground to propagate more life
The wind carries their seeds throughout the lands
Travelling within the embrace of Tāwhirimātea
Until they find the chambers of heart and aroha
They settle and grow in the warmth of creation and Papatūānuku*

*Pito is the thread to first feed us life
Through the chambers once more*

*Comes many new lives
Lives that stem from that very first seed
From that singular seed, has grown a kauri forest
A forest of kauri that lasts generations to come
That first seed and its mate for life are content*

*Pito is the thread to first feed us life
The seasons have come and gone and so has time
That first seed and its mate transition once again
To standing tall and ancient as the gods they are
Protecting, guiding, connecting, nurturing
As their leaves fall to the ground of Papatūānuku
Their leaves become one with Mother Earth again*

*Pito is the thread to first feed us life
Through this very first seed we grow and learn
How to weather the season that falls
How to weather the season that freezes
How to weather the season that blooms
How to weather the season that heats
How to weather that storm that brings devastation
Just remember....
Pito is the thread to first feed us life*

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APPENDICIES

Appendix A: Kaumātua Tuakana Information Sheet

RAUAWAAWA KAUMATUA CHARITABLE TRUST

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Research Information Sheet

Kaumātua mana motuhake: Kaumātua managing life-transitions through tuakana-teina/peer- education

Funded by Ageing Well National Science Challenges

Tēnā koe

My name is Rangimahora Reddy, CEO of Rauawaawa. I am working in collaboration with a team of researchers from Rauawaawa and the University of Waikato's Faculty of Māori and Indigenous Studies—led by Professor Brendan Hokowhitu—and Faculty of Management—led by Professor John Oetzel. All of the researchers working on this project have the approval of the Board of Trustees of Rauawaawa.

What is this project about?

The aim of this research project is to introduce a tuakana/teina model to enhance kaumātua mana motuhake (autonomy and identity). Tuakana will be oriented to assist other kaumātua working through life transitions such as loss of spouse, retirement, health problems, and loss of independence.

The overall project is guided by kaupapa Māori. The project model and orientation programme was developed through the participation of researchers, kaumātua, the Board of Trustees, and outside experts. The information that you provide by answering our questions will help us determine whether our orientation model is effective and could be used elsewhere.

Kaumātua
mana
motuhake



What are we asking of you?

We invite you to be a tuakana in this project. This will involve you:

- completing a questionnaire at the start of the project, one during the middle of the project, and another at the end. You can complete the questionnaire in writing or one of our researchers can ask you the questions orally and fill in your responses. You can also have someone else's support if you like.
- participating in an orientation programming of three sessions, to prepare for your role.
- interacting/conversing with six teina about their experiences and needs at least three times over the next few months.

Your participation is entirely voluntary (your choice). You can choose not to take part in this project. You will be offered *koha* at the completion of each stage of participation.

Your rights as a participant

As a participant in this research project, you have the right to:

- participate voluntarily knowing that refusal to participate will not affect you in any way;
- ask questions about the project at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your identity will not be disclosed at any time, in any way, shape or form;
- withdraw from this project without giving reasons for doing so at any time knowing that this will not negatively affect the services you currently or potentially receive from the providers that have referred you to this project (*specifically, you should notify us after completing the questionnaire which means that you can participate and then ask us not to use your information*);
- if we do the questionnaire orally, we will ask to record it so we make sure we get all the information—you can decline to be audio recorded and request the recorder be turned off at any time you are speaking;
- have a support person present;
- decline to answer any question during a discussion, and;
- access a summary of the findings from the study, when it is concluded.

If you have any questions or queries about your participation, please feel free to contact one of the three lead researchers as outlined below.

Confidentiality and the Results

Statements you make may be referred to as part of the analysis. All responses and discussion during the project will remain confidential. A pseudonym (fake name) will be used in any publications so that you will stay anonymous. Only the research team will have access to the information, which will be kept on a password protected computer.

The results of the questionnaires will be analysed and grouped so as not to identify an individual. We will look for common themes and patterns across the various people we interview. Those will then be shared in such formats as research articles, conference papers, community reports, policy briefs and student research reports.

What next?

If you agree to participate, then we ask that you complete the first questionnaire now. We will have the orientation sessions in about the next month or so. At some point after this over the next few months, we will connect you to your teina, for you to arrange conversations with them. At a later date we will ask you to complete the second and third questionnaires. The entire project will last about 14 months.

If you have any questions about the research, please feel free to contact me or one of the researchers for the project.

Aku mihi nui ki a koe

Brendan Hokowhitu; brendan.hokowhitu@waikato.ac.nz; 07 838 4737

John Oetzel; john.oetzel@waikato.ac.nz; 07 838 4431

Rangimahora Reddy; rangimahora@rauawaawa.co.nz; 07 847 6980

Te Pua Wānanga ki te Ao

Faculty of Māori and Indigenous Studies

Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato/ The University of Waikato

Private Bag 3105

Hamilton, New Zealand

Appendix B: Kaumātua Teina Information Sheet

Research Information Sheet

Kaumātua mana motuhake: Kaumātua managing life transitions through tuakana-teina/peer-education

Funded by Ageing Well National Science Challenge

Tēnā koe

Who are we?

The project team is led by Professors Brendan Hokowhitu and John Oetzel, of The University of Waikato's Faculty of Māori and Indigenous Studies and Faculty of Management; and Rangimahora Reddy, CEO of Rauawaawa. There are seven more researchers from these faculties and two more staff from Rauawaawa.

What's this project about?

Our research project is about kaumātua mana motuhake (autonomy and identity). It's about orienting or making a way for kaumātua who've gone through changes in their senior years (tuakana), to help other kaumātua who may be going through/haven't yet gone through those changes themselves (teina) e.g. retirement, losing your spouse and significant health changes.

We look at things from te ao Māori and do things in a kaupapa Māori way. Our tuakana-teina model is based on prior experience. Our tuakana orientation programme comes from the participation of researchers, kaumātua, and experts in the kaumātua sector. Your participation in this project will help us find out if our tuakana-teina model is effective and could be adopted regionally or nationally.

What are we asking of you?

We're inviting you to participate in this project as a teina. This involves:

- completing a questionnaire at the beginning, middle and end of the project. You can complete the questionnaire yourself, or ask one of the researchers/someone else to complete it for you.
- talking with a tuakana, about your experiences at least three times over the next few months.
- staying behind at the end of each stage of participation to receive a koha.

.....Page Break.....

Kaumātua
mana
motuhake



¶ **What are your rights?**¶

As a participant in this research project you have the right to:¶

- choose to (a) participate, (b) stop participating. You don't have to explain why. Nothing negative will come back to you in terms of the services you receive if you withdraw e.g. asking us not to use your information.¶
- provide information understanding that we will protect your identity.¶
- ask (a) questions about the project, (b) us to turn off a voice recorder if you answer a questionnaire orally, while we're trying to record all the information.¶
- decline answering questions during a discussion.¶
- bring a support person with you.¶
- obtain a summary of what we found out.¶

¶ **How are we being confidential with the results?**¶

Everything that's said and discussed during the project will be kept confidential. We will use fake names in all publications so that you stay anonymous. Only the research team can get to project information, and only one team member keeps your personal information, stored on password-protected computers and in locked cupboards.¶

The answers from all the kaumātua participating in this project will be studied and used in a way that doesn't identify individuals. We will look for common themes and patterns across the answers we receive. What we learn will be shared in ways such as research articles, presentations to kaumātua, and student research reports.¶

¶ **What's the time frame?**¶

If you accept our invitation to participate as a teina, then we'd like you to:¶

- provide us with personal information and ¶
- complete the first questionnaire in October.¶
- wait to link up with tuakana and to complete the second and third questionnaires¶
- hold on for the entire project which might take about 14 months (five months hands on involvement).¶

¶
Please feel free to contact me for information on behalf of the Kaumātua Mana Motuhake research project team. ¶

¶
Ngā mihi ¶

¶
Nā Pare Meha, 847-6980 ext. 7211, kmmresearch@rauawaawa.co.nz Or you can contact Brendan Hokowhitu; brendan.hokowhitu@waikato.ac.nz; 07-838-4737. ¶

.....¶

Appendix C: Ethics Approval

Faculty of Maori & Indigenous Studies
Te Pua Wānanga ki te Ao
The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton, New Zealand

Associate Professor Maui Hudson
Phone +64 7 838 4028
maui.hudson@waikato.ac.nz



Te Manu Taiko: Human Research Ethics Committee
Faculty of Māori & Indigenous Studies
Te Pua Wānanga ki te Ao

28/03/17

Ethics Approval

Tēnā koe e te manu hakahaka e whai atu ana i te whānuitanga me te rētōtanga o ngā kaupapa rangahau o te wā.

This letter is to confirm that Professor Brendan Hokowhitu, Professor John Oetzel, and Rangimahora Reddy have received ethical approval for the study '**Mana Motuhake Kaumatua**'. The ethics application was reviewed by members of Te Manu Taiko and was signed off by the chair of the committee on 28/03/17. Good luck as you embark on your research.

Kimihia, rangahaua!

Associate Professor Maui Hudson
Convener, Te Manu Taiko
Te Pua Wānanga ki te Ao
Faculty of Māori & Indigenous Studies