ADDRESSING DISPARITIES BY LISTENING TO MĀORI WHĀNAU:

Lessons for Kāhui Ako

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Abstract

This research involved interviewing five Māori whānau, with children attending four of six schools across a Kāhui Ako, to identify the extent to which their children were enjoying and achieving education success as Māori.

A review of the literature highlighted precolonial ways of teaching and learning where whānau were highly involved in the education of their children and where teaching and learning was reciprocal and where the mana of children, whānau and hapū were important. Applying culturally responsive methodologies and using group focussed, semi-structured interviews to collect whānau perspectives it was revealed that many Māori children were neither enjoying education nor achieving success as Māori. Māori whānau spoke sincerely about their own experiences and those of their children. Critical and consistent messages from Māori whānau identified what must be addressed if Māori children are to reach their full potential and enjoy and achieve education success with their Māori cultural identity secure.

This thesis identifies that it is crucial for school leaders and teachers to listen to what whānau are saying if educators are to take greater responsibility for the performance of Māori students' learning and cultural identity by delivering their teaching performance against the cultural competencies stated in Tātaiako. Addressing, reducing and removing the ongoing challenges and disparities Māori children and whānau face in education is essential. However, unless school leaders and teachers believe they have to change, then Māori will continue to get from schooling what they have always got. That is not good enough for Māori whānau and nor is it good enough for anyone's whānau. This thesis discusses how together we can make this happen.

He Mihi

Hoea mai te waka tapu o Te Arawa me Mataatua ki New Zealand nei –

Te Arawa and Mataatua are our canoe.

Tu mai ra te maunga tapu o Te Pare o Wahirua me Mauao –

Te Pare o Wahirua and Mauao are our Mountains.

Kei raro ko nga waititonga o Pongakawa me Tauranga –

Pongakawa is our river and Tauranga is our ocean.

Ki te kainga o oku iwi ko Te Arawa me Ngati Ranginui –

Te Arawa and Ngati Ranginui are our tribes.

Ngati Whakahemo me Pirirakau tu mai ra –

Ngati Whakahemo and Pirirakau are our sub-tribes.

Ko tōku patuwatawata ko Pukehina me Paparoa –

Pukehina and Paparoa are our tribal meeting place

Ka moe a Kiritapu ki a Len ka puta mai a Carol –

My grandparents are Kiritapu and Len, their daughter is Carol.

Ka moe a Kararaina ki a Hokohinu ka puta mai a Hokohinu –

My grandparents are Kararaina and Hokohinu, their son is Hokohinu.

Ka moe a Carol raua Ko Hokohinu, ka puta mai ki te taonga nei a Sharon –

My mum is Carol my dad is Hokohinu, I am their daughter, Sharon.

Ka whakakapi ahau i taku kōrero i te whakataukii nei –

My proverb for this kōrero is…

He waka eke noa – We are all in this canoe together.

Ko te ngako o te whakataukii nei, ko te Mahi tahi–

The translation of this proverb is – Working Together -Collaboration.

Hei akiaki kia tatou, kia mau, ki nga tikanga a kui ma, a koro ma, no reira

tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa.

Acknowledgements

Incorporating the whakataukii (proverb) '*He waka eke noa'* captures the notion of *'We are all in this together'.* This whakataukii is included in my mihi (tribal introduction) because it reflects what I believe has encouraged me to get through this journey.

Completing this thesis has been extremely challenging both mentally and physically, when at times I have had to ensure *'our'* four walls of hauora (wellbeing) remained connected. When making reference to Sir Mason Durie's (1982), Te Whare Tapa Wha (four walls of wellbeing), ensuring te taha hinengaro (mental wellbeing), te taha tinana (physical wellbeing) te taha wairua (spiritual wellbeing) and te taha whānau (family wellbeing) were still connected to embrace this journey together was crucial.

- I include 'our' into this acknowledgment, for this journey was not just about me, but also for my three beautiful children who were paddling the waka with me. I appreciate your patience, your tautoko (support) and the faith you had in me to complete this mahi (work). I hope that the education you receive enables you and all Māori children to enjoy, engage and achieve education success as Māori. Continue to believe in yourselves, be proud of who you are and take your culture, your identity, your experiences with you and reach for the stars – Ngā mihi Aroha kore mutunga āku tamariki ataahua.
- A special thank you to the amazing whānau members who gave their time to share their stories to enable me to include them into this thesis – 'our' thesis – ngā mihi aroha kia koutou katoa whānau.
- To my whānau – thank you for your tautoko and your aroha throughout this journey. To my dad, continue to share your stories relating to your schooling experiences and life during times of colonisation. These stories will always encourage us to stand proud of who we are and not to give up. Ngā mihi aroha kore mutunga whānau.

  'Wā muri ka oti āmua...To understand the past is to know the future'.
- And to you both, Mere and Therese thank you for having faith in me, thank you for your guidance and ongoing support. This is honestly an achievement I will encourage others to embrace and never to give up. Again to you both – he mihi nunui kia kōrua – kei te mihi, kei te mihi, kei te mihi

Table of Contents

CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This chapter introduces this research which was undertaken in New Zealand. The research specifically explores the experiences and perspectives of indigenous Māori parents and whānau (family) whose children participate in an English medium[1] schooling network known as a Community of Learning which translates in Māori to a Kāhui Ako. The chapter begins by explaining the education debt that is owed to Māori after decades of colonial education policies. It then provides an overview of the research and presents the research questions. It also explains how the chapters in the thesis are organised.

The Education Debt

Education debt is a term used by African American scholar, Gloria Ladson-Billings (2006) to explain educational disparities that have accumulated overtime between "Black and White, Latina/o and White and recent immigrant and White students" (p.3). She proposes that a combination of the "historical, economic, socio-political and moral decisions and policies that characterise our society" (p.5) have resulted in an education debt in the United States of America. Ladson-Billings (2006) further contends that these decisions and policies need to be understood in relation to how they relate to past education outcomes for these student groups as well as how they impact present progress as this would help to clarify "the potential for forging a better educational future" (p.9). In light of achievement disparities that characterise the education context of New Zealand, the idea of an education debt in our own country that is owed to Māori is worth considering.

Achievement disparities in New Zealand have, over many decades reflected a situation whereby Māori students achieve less well than their Pākehā (people of European descent) peers and leave or are excluded from school in greater numbers than Pākehā, with many having left schooling before they attain secondary school qualifications (Office of the Auditor General, 2012, 2013, 2015; Bishop, Berryman, Taikiwai & Richardson, 2003; Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh & Teddy, 2007; G. Smith, 1991; Hattie, 2003, Ministry of Education, 2018). Achievement disparities between Māori and Pākehā were first officially identified in

[1] Schools where the predominant language of instruction is English

the 1960s (Hunn, 1960) and in 1991 respected Māori academic, Graham Hingangaroa Smith referred to the situation as a Māori educational crisis. More recently, a 2018 United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) report indicated that New Zealand ranked 33rd from 38 countries for inequality in education across early childhood, primary and secondary school settings and that Māori children were over represented in lower educational achievement. In the same year the Secretary of Education explained in a radio interview that the underachievement of Māori students was "chronic, intractable and systemic" (Radio New Zealand, 2018). This consistent picture of evidence indicates that the idea of an education debt as an accumulation of historic and recent educational policies is as relevant in New Zealand as it is in the United States of America.

The disparate situation that characterises education is concerning for many people in New Zealand who value equity and care about the wellbeing and success of Māori people. As a mother of three Māori children in English medium education and as an educator in the same system, I feel responsible for ensuring that Māori students achieve to their potential, and that they can do this without having to compromise their Māori identity. This aspiration resonates with the vision of Ka Hikitia, the Māori education strategy which is "Māori enjoying and achieving education success as Māori" (Ministry of Education, 2013, p.6). Like many other Māori whānau, I want the best education possible for my children (Bishop & Berryman, 2006) which means I want them to achieve academically and be strong in their cultural identity as Māori, which was not my own experience.

When I was a Māori student in English medium education, I did not achieve education success and I did not experience teaching practices that valued and responded to my Māori cultural identity. As a teacher I have tried to demonstrate that I genuinely value and am prepared to be responsive to Māori students and their whānau. Now as a parent of Māori children in the English medium education system across primary and secondary school settings, I have some ideas about how my children can enjoy and achieve education success as Māori. Over the years through my relationships with other Māori parents in my community, I have become increasingly interested in their experiences and their perceptions about the extent to which their children are enjoying and achieving education success as Māori and this interest has been the catalyst for this research.

Research Overview

This research sought to explore Māori whānau perspectives within a Kāhui Ako, to understand the extent to which they believed their children were enjoying and achieving education success as Māori. Kahui Ako are community networks of schools that were established as part of a Ministry of Education policy entitled Investing in Education Success (IES). This policy was an educational system change aimed to lift the performance of all students and create career pathways for teachers (Ministry of Education, 2020, van Ansem, 2017). Kāhui Ako provided a means by which early childhood education centres and schools, located within a community could work together to help students achieve their full potential. Each Kāhui Ako was expected to develop shared goals based on the needs of their students and they work with students, Board of Trustees, parents, whānau, iwi and communities to achieve set goals. Given that IES is a reasonable recent policy it is important to acknowledge that this research is being undertaken within this context.

In the Kāhui Ako that constituted the research community, a central strategic aim focused on involving whānau, hapū (sub-tribe) and iwi (tribe) to increase the likelihood that Māori students would experience education success as Māori (name removed Community of Learning Proposal, 2016). This research therefore offered an opportunity to understand the degree to which this aim was being achieved, from the perspective of Māori whānau.

While as mentioned above, Māori enjoying and achieving education success as Māori is the aspiration of the Maori education strategy Ka Hikitia, there is a lack of research that examines whether or not this aspiration is being realised from the perspectives of Māori whānau themselves. Although there is some research detailing the benefits of schools working in educationally powerful ways with whānau to improve Māori student achievement and success (Alton-Lee, Robinson, Hohepa & Lloyd, 2009; Auditor-General, 2016) further research is needed to add to this important body of knowledge.

This research included an examination of existing research and literature pertaining to Māori education. Five Māori whānau members were invited to participate in a group-focused, semi-structured interview. These whānau were a purposive sample in that they were drawn from a specific Kāhui Ako.

Research Questions

In order to understand the extent to which Māori whānau in a Kāhui Ako felt that their children were enjoying and achieving education success as Māori, a range of questions were posed to frame the semi-structured interviews as conversations. The research questions and sub-questions were:

1. As a parent of Māori children what does enjoying and achieving education success as Māori mean to you?
2. What has been your experience of their education to date? What has worked well? What has not worked well?
3. What opportunities might schools explore to increase the potential of your children enjoying and achieving education success as Māori. (Start doing)
4. How confident do you feel as a parent of Māori children to ask for what you want in education for your child? If not, what gets in the way?
5. What support would be most effective in helping you have these conversations with your child's school?

Thesis Structure

This thesis is organised into six chapters. This first chapter provides an overview of the research along with the research questions. Chapter Two examines a range of research and literature pertaining to Māori in the education system and thus provides a theoretical background and justification for this study. The inclusion of policies that are relevant to Māori education are also discussed in this chapter. Chapter Three outlines the methodology and methods including the data collection and analysis process. An explanation about the participants across the Kāhui Ako and the ethical concepts considered for this research are also outlined. Chapter Four presents a positionality statement explaining my own personal experiences in relation to the research findings. Chapter Five contains a discussion while Chapter Six presents the conclusion, it identifies the limitations of the research and outlines some recommendations.

Summary

This chapter has contextualised this research within the notion of an education debt that is owed to Māori in light of the concerning achievement disparities between Māori and Pākehā that have existed for decades and persist today. It has provided an overview of the

research, presented the research questions and outlined the structure of the thesis. The next chapter will examine existing research and literature related to Māori education.

CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter provides a review of literature and research that relates to Māori education. It will specifically examine Māori ways of learning prior to colonisation and the policies that were implemented with the onset of colonisation. It will also discuss the current education context, the various policy responses that have been implemented in recent decades as well as the research that has been undertaken in response to these policies.

Precolonial Maori ways of learning

In his book *Māori Pedagogies,* Hemara (2000), explores traditional and contemporary teaching, learning and child rearing practices. He explains that the children and adolescents in traditional Māori society were considered to be the greatest resource that iwi had. Children from a young age were educated by learning various skills that supported them to develop positive attitudes towards work, and moral values that ensured the wellbeing of the whānau and hapū. Whānau were highly involved in the education of their children and it was the "kaumātua (elders) who took on the important roles of teachers and guardians" (p.11).

Another point Hemara (2000) references, was that "children would not have their spirits broken, and that they were encouraged to assert themselves and the mana (strength) of their whānau, hapū and iwi" (p.13). Traditional Māori perspectives also placed students and teachers at the centre of the education process so that the teaching and learning process was reciprocal, and that both the teacher and the student were always learning from each other (Hemara, 2000).

G. Smith (1991) also references the well organised system of education that Māori applied prior to colonisation. He explains that:

> *prior to the arrival of Pākehā in New Zealand, Māori had a sophisticated and functional system of education. This system consisted of a powerful knowledge base, a complex oral tradition system and a dynamic ability to respond to new challenges. The traditional system of education, while*

> *complex and diverse, was fully integrated in that skills, teaching and learning were rationalised and sanctioned through a highly intricate knowledge base. The linking of skills, rationale and knowledge was often mediated through the use of specific rituals (cited in Simon, 1998, p.2).*

More recently, in an address to educators, O'Regan (2018) also outlined that early generations of Māori were self-taught, literate people. She further explained that they were prolific writers, historians and political commentators in the late 1800s and early 1900s, and were proportionately more literate than Pākehā.

These accounts of complex and sufficient systems of education (Irwin, 2004) that depended on whānau, hapū and iwi collaboration that enabled successful and sustainable learning provide an impressive insight into precolonial Māori history. It also raises questions about how these Māori systems of education were impacted by colonisation.

The beginning of colonisation

The beginning of the colonisation of New Zealand can be traced back to the explorations of Dutch navigator Abel Tasman in 1642 and then English Captain James Cook in 1769 (Anderson, Binney & Harris, 2015; King, 2003). These exploratory voyages enabled the captains and crews of each ship to take important information back to Europe and not long after those first voyages sealers and whalers made their way to New Zealand in the late 1700s (King, 2003; Walker, 2004).

Another important group of European settlers to arrive in New Zealand in the early 1800s were the missionaries. While Māori welcomed the trading and learning opportunities that the new settler groups represented they particularly embraced missionary schooling opportunities for both adults and children to learn to read and write initially in Māori and then English (Anderson et al., 2015; King, 2003; Walker, 2004).

Missionary schooling

The first missionary school opened in Rangihoua in the Bay of Islands in 1816. While Māori were keen to expand their education systems to embrace this form of schooling they are unlikely to have known that this would also become the first step towards assimilating them

into European ways (Simon, 1998). It seems that some missionaries were surprised to find that Māori were quick to adapt to new learning and were capable scholars. Simon (1998) explains that:

> *One missionary argued that while Māori were as capable as Europeans in learning to read, their perseverance in mastering the necessary skills was much greater. In their enthusiasm to learn to read and write, Māori were soon teaching each other and setting up their own village schools (p.4).*

This commentary confirms that Māori thrived in learning to read and write in English and Māori. The missionaries converted the Bible into te reo Māori (Māori language) which enabled them to effectively and efficiently spread Christianity through their teaching (Caccioppoli & Cullen, 2006, Simon, 1998).

Māori enthusiasm to learn through the missionary schooling system however, was to come at a cost to traditional Māori culture and knowledge during the 1830s. Research from Jenkins (1991) stated that "gaining the skills of literacy resulted in Māori being influenced by European values – especially the missionaries' beliefs about the inferiority of Māori culture' (cited in Simon, 1998, p.6). Simon (1998) further contends that the Christianising mission of the missionaries was an effort to civilise Māori.

The implications of missionary schooling would become more apparent as the settler population, which was mostly British immigrants, steadily grew in the 1830s (King, 2003; Walker, 2004). Māori were certainly aware that the growing British population represented risks to how they lived and this meant that they were very keen to establish some constitutional guidelines that would clarify how the increasingly bicultural society could live harmoniously in New Zealand. Their willingness to negotiate the terms of the Treaty of Waitangi, is a clear example of their efforts to come to some shared understandings (Orange, 2004).

The Treaty of Waitangi

On February 6th, 1840 representatives from the British government invited Māori to a meeting in Waitangi, a small settlement in Northland, to sign what became known as the

Treaty of Waitangi (King, 2003; Orange, 2004). British officials had prepared both an English and a Māori version of the Treaty which detailed different interpretations of the agreement. A number of Māori chiefs attended this meeting and signed the Māori version, Te Tiriti o Waitangi. They believed that the Treaty promised them a constitutional partnership with the British government that would enable power-sharing in the political decision-making processes of New Zealand (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). British officials then took the Māori version of the Treaty around the country so that more Māori chiefs could sign the agreement although not all chiefs were provided with the opportunity (Orange, 2004).

Despite the promises of the Treaty of Waitangi, many Māori were worried that the British government would not honour the agreement especially as the Pākehā population began to outnumber the Māori population (Anderson et al., 2015). Tensions began to grow between the Māori and Pākehā settlers as both groups competed for land. In the 1860s these tensions gave way to land wars which enabled the British government to use the population advantage they had to overpower Māori and consolidate the control that they had over the governance of New Zealand (Anderson el al., 2015; King, 2003; Orange, 2004). This then enabled the British to establish laws in all areas of society and in terms of education, the establishment of the Native Schools Act had a considerable impact on schooling for Māori children (Simon & L. Smith, 2001; Walker, 2004).

Native Schools Act

In 1867 parliament passed the Native Schools Act which resulted in two schooling systems namely, Public and Native schools (Simon & L. Smith, 2001). These schools were controlled by the government and the Native schools were primarily for Māori children while the Public schools were established primarily for Pākehā children. The implementation of the 1867 act however, came at a cost to Māori communities who had to make a written request to the government for a school to be established. They also had to gift the land for the school to the Crown, pay a share of the cost for the teachers' salary and contribute to the cost of the buildings (Simon, 1998).

Te reo Māori and tikanga (cultural protocol/values) were not used or recognised by teachers as "their emphasis was on English language and knowledge" (Simon, 1998, p.12). Education

policy would continue to evolve through this period with a determined focus on eradicating te reo. In 1903 a nationwide policy was imposed to ban te reo Māori being spoken in school playgrounds and Mathieson (2010) posits that during the period between 1900s to the 1960s the proportion of Māori fluent in te reo Māori decreased from 95% to 25%.

While the policies that played out in Native schools certainly compromised the Māori language, they also compromised the quality of the learning programmes that Māori students experienced and this had wider implications. Walker (2016) contends that Māori knowledge was disqualified and eliminated from curriculum programmes. He further suggests that the curriculum programmes that were implemented in Native schools deliberately focused on non-academic, manual labour curriculum to prepare Māori "boys to be good farmers and girls to be good farmers' wives" (p.26). This deficit position regarding Māori intellect and the place of Māori in society was articulated explicitly by colonial school inspector Henry Taylor, who stated that he did "not advocate for the natives under present circumstances a refined education or high mental culture…they are better calculated to get their living by manual than by mental labour" (Simon, 1998, p.11).

At least one Pākehā principal however, went against the requirements of the Native school system. Walker (2016) explains that John Thornton was appointed principal of Te Aute College for Māori boys in 1878 and provided the students with opportunities to do academic courses for the matriculation exam that would enable them to go to university. The curriculum at Te Aute included a range of academic courses and in the late 1800s Māori students were passing the matriculation examination. Amongst the Māori graduates were acclaimed Māori leaders including Apirana Ngata, Māui Pōmare and Te Rangihīroa (Peter) Buck. These graduates demonstrated that when provided with the opportunity, Māori were entirely capable of academic excellence, however, the authorities in education quickly squashed this success by pressuring Thornton to discontinue the academic curriculum for Māori boys (Simon, 1998; Walker, 2016).

This manual focused curriculum that Māori students experienced in Native schools that reflected the government's and teacher's low expectation, stood in contrast to the academic curriculum that was implemented in Public schools which served predominantly Pākehā communities (Simon, 1998). It is hardly surprising therefore that disparities

between the achievement of Māori and Pākehā students started to become evident at the beginning of the 1960s.

Hunn Report

In 1960, Jack Hunn was appointed to lead an enquiry on Māori Affairs and the Hunn Report (Hunn, 1960) became the first official publication to highlight the educational gaps between Māori and Pākehā. The report indicated that Māori remained an essentially marginalised people and that addressing their social, educational and economic advancement needed to be a priority. In his interpretation of the Hunn report Hill (2009) proposes that assimilation of Māori was the preferred means of addressing the disparities stating that "ultimately Māori would be assimilated within a 'blended new species' in which, essentially, they would be brown-skinned Pakeha" (Hill, 2009, p. 95).

While the findings of the Hunn report were useful, Walker (2016) posits that it raised implications that were not addressed. He states that Hunn "did not question the moral integrity of an education system that tracked Māori away from the professions and into manual work. Nor did he see structural inequality in the distribution of power as the root cause" (p.30). Without any internal critique to understand and therefore address the structural inequality that was generating disparities between Māori and Pākehā one would expect these disparities would persist. As the education system transitioned from the 1960s into the following decades however, more Māori began asking questions about the nature of education and the conditions that enabled Pākehā to be more successful in education than Maori.

Māori responses to education disparities

In 1973 Walker proposed that the underachievement of Māori students in education could be linked to the monocultural, Pākehā system that characterised their schools. He described a system that belittled and ignored Māori culture which in turn meant that Māori students could not see positive associations with their own cultural identity and the education system. He also made reference to the tensions that this created for Māori parents who he believed were "afraid of their children becoming monocultural and losing them to the Pākehā world" (p.112). As an alternative to monoculturalism, which was perpetuating the underachievement of Māori, Walker (1973) challenged policymakers and educators to

recognise the importance of biculturalism and the need to equally privilege the status of both Māori and Pākehā cultures and both worlds.

While biculturalism was adopted by policymakers in the 1970s, many Māori were becoming increasingly concerned by, and intolerant of political, social and economic systems that enabled Pākehā to maintain dominance in education and wider society while Māori continued to be marginalised and confined to subservient positions. This frustration was the catalyst for what became known as the kaupapa Māori movement (L. Smith, 2012) and the associated development of kaupapa Māori education was an important shift in the evolution of education in New Zealand.

The origins of kaupapa Māori education can be traced back to the early 1980s and the establishment of kōhanga reo (Māori language preschools) in Māori communities (Berryman, Glynn, Woller & Reweti, 2010). These same Māori communities advocated for kaupapa Māori education options to be established at the primary school level in the 1990s to cater for graduates of kōhanga reo as this education pathway was a means to ensure the survival of Māori knowledge and te reo. G. Smith (1991) identified that what was needed was a model that located culture at the centre of the educational reform in the face of deeper colonial, structural limitations. In explaining a kaupapa Māori stance and response G. Smith (1991) states that:

> *Kaupapa Māori speaks to the validity and legitimacy of being and acting Māori; to be Māori is taken for granted. Māori language, culture, knowledge and values are accepted in their own right. Kaupapa Māori is the critical factor underpinning Te Kohanga Reo, Kura Kaupapa Māori and some bilingual units. It is not a rejection of Pakeha knowledge and or culture. Kaupapa Māori advocates excellence within Māori culture as well as Pakeha culture. It is not an either/or choice – they want access to both cultural frameworks (p. 17).*

Within the early kaupapa Māori education settings, G. Smith (1997) further explains that parents were given opportunities to choose what would constitute education that would work for Māori. They could voice their opinions on the administrative, organisational,

pedagogical and curriculum pathways that they believed were necessary for successful Māori education. Although there were only limited numbers of kaupapa Māori education options, Māori parents who sought alternative education outside of the state system relocated to gain greater control and autonomy over decision-making relating to the education of their children. In describing how important it was to minimise the impact of the colonial, English medium system on Māori children G. Smith (1997) points out that:

> *Kaupapa Māori strategies question the right of Pākehā to dominate and exclude Māori preferred interests in education, and asserts the validity of Māori knowledge, language, custom and practice, and it's right to continue to flourish in the land of its origin, as the tangata whenua (indigenous) culture (p.273).*

Kaupapa Māori education emerged at the end of the twentieth century directly from Māori lived realities and experiences. At the beginning of the twenty first century L. Smith (2000) reminded policymakers that "one of those realities is that for over a century and a half the New Zealand education system has failed the majority of Māori children who have passed through it" (p.5).

Mason Durie is another prominent Māori scholar who over many years, has also contributed his knowledge and has provided advice to the government about what they need to consider as they seek to respond to the underachievement of Māori and address disparities between Māori and Pākehā students. At the first Hui Taumata Mātauranga, (national conferences of Māori leadership in Education) held in February 2001 Durie outlined a framework for considering Māori aspirations for education. The recommendations were based around the whānau, Māori language and tikanga, quality in education, Māori participation in the education sector and the purpose of education. He proposed three goals for Māori educational advancement. He believed that Māori should be able to live as Māori, actively participate as citizens of the world and enjoy good health and a high standard of living (Durie, 2001). These goals later informed the development of policies such as Ka Hikitia where the earlier mentioned vision of this strategy encompasses the notion of 'as Māori'.

In 2006, almost 150 years to the day, after 1600 tribal leaders gathered in Taupo to discuss how they would address threats to Māori survival, Durie (2006) gave another address at the fifth Hui Taumata. The focus of this hui was centred on the role of whānau in education and included discussions around whānau contributions to Māori advancement through, educational achievement, effective whānau engagement with schools, iwi strategies for education and whānau development and "trans-sectoral government policies that had impacts on whānau" (Durie, 2006, p. 177).

Durie (2006) highlighted the point that whānau have a dual interest in education because they are interested in the achievement outcomes for Māori learners, but they themselves are educators with the knowledge of culture that they bring to the learning. He then emphasised that when educators develop educational partnerships with whānau and students this provides them with a sense of ownership and control. He further states that:

> *Co-construction is also at the heart of customised learning. Whānau, student and teacher work together to develop a personalised programme of learning where the teacher's experience and knowledge combines with the goals and aspirations of whānau and student to create pathways for achievement (p. 182).*

More recently Durie (2011) has continued to share his views about the importance of schools working in partnership with whānau if Māori success is a desired outcome. He reiterated that" success for Māori will be more likely where whānau and school can share positive attitudes, aspirations, and expectations" (p.5).

Despite the wise words from Māori overtime however, statistical data continues to highlight educational disparities between Māori and Pākehā students. At this point therefore, it is appropriate to examine the current education context for Māori students.

Current education context for Māori

The UNICEF report referenced in Chapter One provides an international insight into the picture of student achievement in New Zealand in 2017. The data shows that inequalities exist across the whole system and that these inequalities are reflected in the differences

between Māori and Pacific Island students when compared to Pākehā and Asian students (UNICEF, 2018).

In another summary of achievement data in secondary schools in 2018, the Ministry of Education (2019) reported that Māori students had the lowest attainment rates when compared to other groups for the National Certificate of Education Achievement (NCEA) Level 2 (or any higher qualification) and the proportion of Māori students remaining at school to age 17 was 70.6% compared to European/Pākehā students of 84.1%(Ministry of Education, 2018). Concerning the same data set showed that Māori students in English medium education continued to be stood down at a greater rate than any other group and the stand-down rate for Māori was two times higher than European/Pākehā students.

In contrast it is interesting to note a different picture of success emerged in Māori-medium[2] education in 2018 when there was an increase in the number of students gaining NCEA Level 2 (Ministry of Education, 2018). Craig Jones is currently the Ministry of Education's Deputy Secretary for Evidence, Data and Knowledge. In 2018 Jones stated that:

> *the increased numbers in Māori-medium achieving NCEA is really encouraging and shows just what can be achieved when schools have high aspiration for their ākonga/learners and personalise their learning. We will be learning from the remarkable success in Māori-medium to see how the same outcomes can be achieved for Māori and Pacific ākonga in English medium settings (Ministry of Education, 2018)*

While it is unwise to make direct comparisons between English and Māori-medium settings because the number of students participating in Māori-medium educations is significantly lower than those in English medium, it is important to remember that Māori whānau do have access to this information and do make comparisons between the settings.

It is useful to reconnect with Ladson-Billing's (2006) idea of an education debt and remember that these disparities between Māori and Pākehā were first documented in the Hunn report of 1961 so they are not a recent phenomenon but a pattern that has repeated

[2] Schools that are either bilingual or total immersion in Māori language.

over decades. Decisions, policies and responses that have played out overtime have contributed to the current disparities therefore it is worth considering the policies and strategic responses that have been implemented in over the past two decades.

Policies and responses

Ka Hikitia

The first phase of the Māori education strategy Ka Hikitia was officially launched in 2008 and was entitled *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success 2008 – 2012* (Ministry of Education, 2008). As well as focusing on improving outcomes for and with Māori learners this strategy was also seeking a "system change to meet the needs of the learners, rather than learners having to change for the system" (Ministry of Education, 2008, p.10). Accordingly, the Māori metaphor of Ka Hikitia can be translated to mean:

> *step up, to lift up or to lengthen one's stride. In the context of Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success it means stepping up the performance of the education system to ensure Māori students are enjoying and achieving education success as Māori (Ministry of Education, 2008, p.11).*

In 2012, the second phase of Māori education strategy was refreshed and *Ka Hikitia – Accelerating Success 2013-2017* (Ministry of Education, 2013) was launched. This strategy detailed five principles one of which was *Productive Partnerships* with whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori organisations. This principle centred the role of whānau by stating that:

> *A productive partnership starts with the understanding that Māori children and students are connected to whānau and should not be viewed or treated as separate, isolated or disconnected. Parents and whānau must be involved in conversations about their children and their learning" (Ministry of Education, 2013, p.17).*

The policy also outlined two critical factors that must exist if the vision of Māori students enjoying and achieving education success is to be realised. The first key factor related to ensuring quality provision across formal roles in education while the second critical factor

focused on “strong engagement and contribution from parents, whānau, hapū, iwi, Māori organisations, communities and businesses” (Ministry of Education, 2013, p.10).

While the vision, principles and critical factors of Ka Hikitia were clearly articulated in the strategy, a report from the Auditor-General in 2013 found that decisions and processes that were undertaken by the Ministry of Education did not support the spread understandings about what Ka Hikitia is and how it might be implemented. The report specifically outlined that:

> *The Ministry of Education (the Ministry) introduced Ka Hikitia slowly and unsteadily. Confused communication about who was intended to deliver Ka Hikitia, unclear roles and responsibilities in the Ministry, poor planning, poor programme and project management, and ineffective communication with schools have meant that action to put Ka Hikitia into effect was not given the intended priority. As a result, the Ministry’s introduction of Ka Hikitia has not been as effective as it could have been (Auditor General, 2013, p. 7).*

In 2020 the education sector and Māori communities can expect the third phase of Ka Hikitia and there will be interest in how the Ministry of Education’s decisions and processes play out in light of the observations of the Auditor General. Ka Hikitia however was not isolated from other initiatives of the Ministry of Education in the 2000s *as Tātaiako: Cultural competencies for teachers of Māori learners* (Ministry of Education, 2011) were also developed and then launched in 2011.

Tātaiako

Tātaiako was positioned as a resource to support all key personnel in education to develop the cultural competencies to support Māori learners. Tātaiako emphasised the importance of productive relationships among teachers and their Māori students, whānau, iwi and wider communities and it was envisaged that the resource would enable teachers in early childhood education, primary and secondary schools to develop personalised learning for, and with, Māori learners, to ensure they enjoyed and achieved education success as Māori (Ministry of Education, 2011).

Tātaiako challenged teachers, educators, education services and schools to consider how much they knew of their Māori students' history, tikanga and worldview. The resource also supported teachers to critique their classroom environment and their curriculum and encouraged them to think about whether or not they understood the aspirations that whānau and iwi had for their young people, and how visible and involved whānau and iwi are in the teaching and learning of their children.

Two central principles from Ka Hikitia, productive partnerships and identity, language and culture underpinned Tātaiako. The productive partnership principle acknowledges the importance of whānau within Tātaiako which strengthened the connection between the policy and the resource. There were also synergies between Tātaiako and *Our Code, Our Standards* (Education Council, 2017) which constitute the responsibilities inherent in teaching in New Zealand.

Our Code Our Standards

The Treaty of Waitangi is privileged in *Our Code Our Standards* which set the aspirations for ethical behaviour of all certificated teachers and describes the expectations of what effective teaching practice looks like (Education Council, 2017). Teachers are required to demonstrate through the quality of their practice, their commitment to honour The Treaty of Waitangi. *Our Code Our Standards, explicitly* outlines the importance of the connection between teachers and Māori with regard to the Treaty constitution, and the links between this framework and Ka Hikitia is implicit through the connections made to Tātaiako. Obligations regarding how teaching practices interface with Māori whānau in terms of productive partnerships are less explicit in *Our Code Our Standards*, however clear reference is made to the place and importance of whānau in *Hautū: Māori Cultural Responsiveness Self Review tool for Boards of Trustees (NZSTA, 2019).*

Hautū

Hautū is a self-review framework that was developed by the New Zealand School Trustees Association (NZSTA, 2019) and the Ministry of Education, for Boards of Trustees to use to critique how culturally responsive they are to their Māori community. This process supports boards to subsequently, develop policies and practices that support Māori students to enjoy and achieve education success as Māori and thus supports the implementation of Ka Hikitia

(NZSTA, 2019). Māori whānau are prioritised within the resource which clearly states that Boards of Trustees are responsible for ensuring "that Māori parents, whānau and representatives of the school's Māori community contribute to governance, planning and decision-making." (p.1). Additionally, a central aim of the Hautū review process is to "foster commitment to set and achieve goals, targets and expectations for and with Māori students, their parents and whānau" (p.2). Another review process within the education system that can complement a Hautū review and further support schools to understand their performance from the perspective of Māori students and whānau are the reviews undertaken by the Education Review Office (ERO).

Education Review Office

In 2010 ERO developed an updated version of the: *School Evaluation Indicators: Effective Practice for improvement and learner success* (ERO, 2016). The purpose of the indicators is to evaluate how well the system is performing in particular policy interest, for example, education and learning outcomes, student engagement and participation, family and community engagement, and resourcing. The primary purpose of ERO's evaluation indicators is to promote improvement, focusing on the things that matter most in improving student outcomes.

Within the school evaluation indicators document, ERO affirm their commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi and confirm that in New Zealand, achieving equity and excellence is a major challenge, particularly for Māori and Pacific students. The current education priority to reduce achievement disparities within and across schools is outlined and the importance of students feeling confident in their identity, language and culture are also acknowledged as being essential for achievement and progress.

Educationally powerful connections and relationships is one of six domains of the ERO evaluation indicators "that work together to promote equity and excellence in student outcomes" (ERO, 2016, p. 9). The primary and ongoing influence that parents and whānau have on the development, learning and wellbeing of their children is acknowledged within this domain which also references research to further explain and contextualise the importance of these home and school connections especially for Māori students and learners from other marginalised groups:

> *A growing body of New Zealand research shows that by establishing educationally powerful connections and relationships with parents, whānau and communities, schools gain access to a greater and deeper range of resources to support their educational efforts. In this way they enhance outcomes for all students, but especially for those who have been under-served by the system and/or are at risk, and can achieve large positive effects on academic and social outcomes (ERO, 2016, p.26).*

In the development of the evaluation indicators ERO have drawn extensively from a range of research. Importantly, research that has been undertaken in New Zealand, within Māori communities to identify what has been successful in accelerating the achievement of Māori learners is represented in the evaluation indicators. These particular research projects are also important and relevant to this research.

Related Research

Te Kotahitanga

The Te Kotahitanga research and professional development programme started in 2001 with the aim of improving the educational achievement of Māori students in Year 9 and 10 secondary mainstream (English medium) classrooms (Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai & Richardson, 2003). To understand the schooling experiences of Māori students, researchers gathered narratives, initially from Māori students themselves and then from their whānau, principals and teachers (Bishop & Berryman, 2006).

Across a number of different schools Māori students identified that the main influence on their educational achievement was the quality of in-class relationships and interactions they had with their teachers. The whānau of these Māori students and the principals of their schools also believed that relationships between students and teachers crucially important, however teachers felt that the students themselves were the largest determinants of education success or failure.

Students expressed that they wanted their teachers to care about who they were as culturally located individuals and value their prior knowledge and experiences. They also wanted their teachers to believe in them and have high expectations for their learning. One

Māori students explained that it helped to have "a good teacher like a teacher that you respect and get along well with. Like in a teacher/student relationship. You like and respect them and they like and respect you" (Bishop et al., 2003, 49).

Unfortunately, many Māori students felt that mutual respect and high expectations did not characterise their relationships with teachers. One Māori student reflected on their observations of teachers:

> *They tell Pākehā kids that their work is not up to standard and they'll need to see their parents if it doesn't improve. They don't say that to us! They just don't think Māori have the brains to do better. They're scared of the whānau or think it will be a waste of time (Bishop et al., 2003).*

Many Māori students indicated that they did want their whānau to be involved in their schooling despite the fact that there was limited opportunities for them to make contributions. Māori students felt that school practices that focused on reporting negative aspects of their classroom experiences did not support the development of positive school and whānau relationships (Bishop & Berryman, 2006).

Whānau members who participated in the interviews helped to paint a detailed picture of what the context for education looked like for their children and what it should look like to enable greater success. Like their children, whānau spoke about the importance of teachers developing relationships of respect with Māori students and with the parents and whānau who stood beside them. Despite the fact that Māori parents wanted to contribute to and support the schools to increase the success of their children, some found that this was difficult:

> *It is about respect and relationships. Respect and relationships between the staff of the school and the families whose children come here…Secondary schools have hardly done anything to involve parents, even Pākehā parents because secondary school think they know what is best for the education of the children there (Bishop et al., 2003, p.61.).*

In some cases, relationships were not just difficult, but Māori whānau were made to feel unwelcome by schools:

> *They don't want parents to be part of it really. They don't want to be accountable to us…if the kids don't learn it is everyone else's fault but the schools… anything else but the relationship and respect between the school and the students and the school and the parents (Bishop et al., 2003, p.61.).*

There were consistencies between what Māori students and their whānau believed contributed to progress and achievement. The idea of caring relationships was a consistent theme as whānau felt that when teachers prioritised relationships, their children's self-esteem and positive sense of identity improved. Like their children, whānau also wanted teachers to have high expectations of their children's learning ability. Importantly they wanted teachers to value their children's cultural knowledge and experiences and see them as capable academic learners. One parent explicitly identified the tension that was represented for them when Māori students are expected to perform in a kapa haka (cultural performing arts) group, but not necessarily expected to perform academically. They explained that some Māori students:

> *have poor self-esteem about who they are, they fail academically and then the schools give the message that Māori only do well in kapa haka and some sports. Some examples of this mentality are when the kapa haka group is good enough to be pulled out for visitors, for prize giving but not good enough to be part of the curriculum (Bishop et al., 2003, p.63).*

Based on these findings a professional development programme was established and iteratively implemented over five phases, in a range of secondary schools to improve the achievement of Māori students. The narratives of experience, particularly from Māori students and whānau, informed the process of professional development and by the fifth iteration an analysis of data in Te Kotahitanga Phase 5 schools, undertaken by Alton-Lee (2015) showed that:

> *Māori achievement in NCEA was accelerating at around three times the rate of the comparison group. Even better, because of increased enrolment and retention through into year 13, this accelerated improvement occurred for*

> *more Māori. The greatest acceleration, was in NCEA level 2. Even though the gains in University Entrance achievement were smaller, the actual number of Year 13 Māori achieving the qualification in Phase 5 schools more than doubled over the period 2008-2012 (p.31).*

As well as seeing impressive academic gains, Māori students in Te Kotahitanga Phase 5 schools also reported a high degree of pastoral wellbeing. Examples of improved wellbeing included feeling really good to be Māori, associating being Māori with being a leader and having an improved sense of self and independence (Alton-Lee, 2015).

During the implementation of Te Kotahitanga in secondary schools, members of the research team undertook a similar exercise in primary schools and gathered the narratives of experience from Year 4 and 5 Māori students and their whānau, principals and teachers. The Ministry of Education was interested in understanding if the experiences of Māori students in primary schools were similar to the experiences of Māori students in secondary schools.

The experiences of Year 4 and 5 Māori students in primary school classrooms

While the research team applied the same methodology when collecting and analysing the narratives of experience from the primary schools as they did in the Te Kotahitanga secondary schools there was a much wider distribution of responses regarding how Māori student engagement and achievement might be improved (Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh, Teddy & O'Sullivan, 2007). Evidence from one school indicated that across the participant groups there was recognition of the importance of classroom relationships and interactions. The researchers noted that this school was representative of schools at the high end of the continuum who appear to be "highly active in the community and have strong, positive links to whanau who are engaged in school activities" (Bishop et al., 2007, p. 7).

Schools that were represented in the middle of the continuum had data that indicated "medium support for the importance of classroom relationships and interactions" (Bishop et al., 2007, p. 7). In this middle group, references to school and whānau relationships were not made. In the third group of schools were positioned at the low end of the continuum as

there was a mismatch between teachers and students understanding of the importance of classroom relationships and interactions. Interestingly teachers had a lower understanding of the importance of classroom relationships and interactions than students and schools in this group also located the problem with Māori engagement and achievement with the community.

One of the recommendations that was made from this research was that further research was needed to test these results. This research seeks to contribute to the body of knowledge that engages with and responses to Māori whānau perceptions of engagement and achievement. At this point therefore, it is useful to consider other examples of research that explores how some schools have worked with their Māori whānau and community to improve engagement and achievement.

School Leadership: Best Evidence Synthesis

Chapter seven of the *School Leadership and Student Outcomes: Identifying What Works and Why Best Evidence Synthesis (BES)* is entitled, *Creating educationally powerful connections with families, whānau, and communities* (Alton-Lee, Robinson, Hohepa & Lloyd, 2009). The authors of this chapter drew from extensive research to provide three reasons which describe why school leaders should concentrate on developing partnerships and connections with family, whānau and communities. The researchers propose that particular kinds of connections that schools can have with whānau and communities can potentially have large, positive effects for students in terms of academic and social outcomes. They caution that it is important to understand what kinds of connections are positive because there are practices that can result in negative impacts and they also assert that through the establishment of educationally powerful connections the school can benefit from important knowledge and expertise that is located in the community.

Chapter seven of the school leadership BES details examples of research projects that have enabled schools to work effectively with Māori whānau and the community to improve the learning outcomes of Māori students. One example includes joint parent/whānau and school interventions which resulted accelerated progress and achievement for Māori

learners. The collaboration that played out between the school, whānau and the community was characterised by the development of mutually respectful relationships within which the knowledge and skills of both school personnel and whānau were honoured.

Alton-Lee et al., (2009), surmise from their analysis of effective whānau and school engagement that "one of the most educationally powerful strategies is to help students connect their school work with their family, cultural, and community experiences, knowledge, and skills" (p. 150). They further contend that as students progress through school, "the extent to which the educational cultures of their homes and schools align has a powerful influence on their success" (p. 150), which is a critically important proposition for teachers, school leaders (including Kāhui Ako leaders), Boards of Trustees and policymakers to consider.

As well as contemplating how the existing research can dually accelerate the learning of Māori students and address systemic disparities, teachers and leaders must also consider how Māori students can enjoy and attain success, as Māori. In 2015 a group of researchers asked a range of senior Māori students, what success 'as Māori' meant to them.

Understanding success 'as Māori'

Kia Eke Panuku was a professional development intervention implemented in secondary schools throughout New Zealand between 2014 – 2016 (Kia Eke Panuku, 2019). The kaupapa of Kia Eke Panuku was to give life to Ka Hikitia and address the aspirations of Māori communities by supporting Māori students to pursue their potential. In line with Ka Hikitia, the notion of supporting Māori students to pursue their potential, was inherently linked to ensuring that they enjoyed and achieved education success as Māori. In order to better understand what success 'as Māori' meant from the perspectives of senior Māori students, researchers from the Kia Eke Panuku project team gathered the narratives of experience of over 150 senior Māori students at nine hui (meetings) held across New Zealand.

The senior Māori students who attended the hui were asked to think about and share what they considered to be their own successes and they were also invited to share what they believed enjoying and achieving education success as Māori meant to them. Berryman, Eley

and Copeland (2017) contend that despite the fact that the hui were held with different groups of students across nine different regional locations there was remarkable consistency between the experiences and understandings of what the students shared. The research team identified ten themes that emerged from these narratives. In summary, enjoying and achieving education success as Māori for these students meant:

- *being able to resist the negative stereotypes about being Māori*
- *having Māori culture and values celebrated at school*
- *being strong in your Māori cultural identity*
- *understanding that success is part of who we are*
- *developing and maintaining emotional and spiritual strength*
- *being able to contribute to the success of others*
- *experiencing the power of whanaungatanga (family like relationships)*
- *knowing, accepting and acknowledging the strength of working together*
- *knowing that you can access explicit and timely direction*
- *being able to build on your own experiences and the experiences of others (Berryman et al., 2017, p .488-489)*

The students indicated that there were connections between each of these themes and they did not consider them to be isolated from each other. The strongest message from across this group however was "that to be successful as Māori within the school system, they had to be able to resist and overcome other people's low expectations and *negative stereotypes about them being Māori"* (Berryman et al., 2017, p .489). In describing negative stereotypes of Māori these students specified their experiences of being subjected to racist thinking and practice and felt strongly that "this as an area where adults and non-Māori could and should be supporting them" (Berryman et al., 2017, p .489).

The centrality of relationships was fundamental and commonly these students saw their own successes as outcomes of a collaborative endeavour that included their whānau, friends and their schools. They also felt a strong sense of responsibility to contribute to the success of others. Some students explained that being in a school environment where "their own culture and values were explicitly celebrated, modelled and thus valued by others" (Berryman et al., 2017, p.489) was essential for ensuring that the success they achieved was

'as Māori'. It is hoped that this research will build on these Māori students' voices by adding perspectives of success 'as Māori' from whānau.

Summary

This literature review has focused on the historical events in New Zealand and showed that Māori had a successful system for learning prior to the arrival of the Pākehā/European. It summarised key events in the development of education policy which have contributed to the underachievement of Māori in the English medium education and detailed some Māori responses to these policies. In the current education context Māori continue to be less successful than their Pākehā peers and despite a range of policies that have been implemented overtime. Research that has been undertaken in the past two decades offers some insights into what it will take to ensure Māori students enjoy and achieve education success as Māori, and it is hoped that this research will contribute to this pool.

The next chapter outlines the methodology process of the research and the ethical considerations.

CHAPTER 3 - METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter identifies and explains the research methodology applied in this research. An explanation justifying why this form of methodology was utilised is outlined and the process for undertaking the method of group focused, semi-structured interviews with five whānau Māori is also explained, including the findings analysis. The Kāhui Ako document report has been included to identify key information pertaining to the Kāhui Ako in which their children are schooled. My research procedure for engaging with these participants and the process for analysis is also explained. I conclude with a statement to affirm how the research was ethically undertaken.

Methodology

In the chapter, '*Culturally Responsive Methodologies from the Margins'*, Berryman, SooHoo and Nevin (2013) explain that:

> *Traditional Western frameworks have given little regard to participants' rights to initiate, contribute, critique, or evaluate research. Traditionally, the "right to-be-studied (or not)" and decisions about how the study would be carried out have not been maintained by the researched community, rather they have been sustained by groups of outsiders who have retained the power to research and to define (p.1).*

The implementation of Culturally Responsive Methodologies for this research was to challenge traditional paradigms, where the researcher's voice, lens and practices would dominate the research and devalue or dehumanize the voice and the stories of the research participants.

In her book 'Decolonising Methodologies', Linda Tuhiwai-Smith (1999) explains that:

> *research of Māori is marked by a history that has shaped the attitudes and feelings Māori people have held towards research. Research is implicated in the production of Western knowledge, in the nature of academic work, in the production of theories which have dehumanized Māori and in practices*

which have continued to privilege Western ways of knowing, while denying the validity for Māori of Māori knowledge, language and culture (p.183).

I chose to use Culturally Responsive Methodologies (Berryman et.al, 2013), which are underpinned by kaupapa Māori and Critical theory to undertake this research because these methodologies prioritise participant self-determination so that the participants and the researcher share control over the development of the research narrative. These methodologies also enabled me as the researcher to participate in and contribute my perspectives (as a Māori parent of children who attend schools in the same Kāhui Ako) to the research narrative. "Being culturally responsive requires the researcher to develop contexts within which the researched community can define in their own ways, the terms for engaging, relating and interacting in the co-creation of new knowledge" (Berryman et.al, 2013, p.4).

Through the implementation of culturally responsive methodologies, participants and the researcher bring together their identities and ideologies so that these inform the co-creation of new knowledge (Berryman et.al, 2013). Co-construction takes place through dialogue which Freire, (1998) suggests is the place where we can "find our truth". He "reframes the researcher's stance as expert to one of learner… and that they do not come to teach or to transmit or to give anything, but rather to learn, with the people, about the people's world" (cited in Berryman, et.al, 2013, p.5).

Culturally Responsive Methodologies are about "establishing respectful relationships with the participants. The researcher is required to develop a relationship that will enable them to intimately come to know the 'other' with whom they seek to study" (Berryman, et.al, 2013, P.1). Forging new relationships in a cultural context may require one to undergo rituals which recognise and show respect towards a culture, customs and beliefs. Culturally responsive researchers must respectfully develop these relationships and the cultural preservation of Māori autonomy or any other cultural group with whom they seek to engage (Berryman et.al, 2013).

Kaupapa Māori

According to Bishop and Glynn (1999), and the scholars detailed in the previous chapter (Berryman et, al., 2010; G. Smith, 1991; G. Smith, 1997; L. Smith, 2000; L. Smith, 2012); kaupapa Māori developed as a response to addressing power and control issues in educational research, and aims to benefit all the research participants. Berryman et.al (2013) suggests that, "kaupapa Māori theory involves challenging previous Western ideas of what constituted valid knowledge. Rather than abuse and degrade Māori and Māori ways of knowing, it allows Māori communities to take ownership and support the revitalization and protection of all things Māori" (p.9). All cultures have a right to have their ways of living and being in the world respected, understood on their participants' terms and viewed as legitimate. Culturally responsive researchers must first, seek to be invited into the world of their participants and then listen and learn from them. They have a responsibility to their participants, prior to the research being undertaken, all the way through the research and even when the research has been completed, this responsibility continues. Mahuika (2008) explains that,

> *Kaupapa Māori theory provides a platform from which Māori are striving to articulate their own reality and experience, their own personal truth as an alternative to the homogenization and silence that is required of them within mainstream New Zealand. Within this approach Māori have fundamentally different ways of seeing and thinking about the world and simply wish to be able to live in accordance with that specific and unique identity (p.4).*

Researchers have identified key principles that guide and are an integral part of kaupapa Māori. These include: tino rangatiratanga - self-determination, whānau, whakawhanaungatanga; whakapapa – family identity, connectedness and relationships; kawa and tikanga – Māori protocol; te reo – Māori language; a Māori worldview and social justice (Bishop 1996; L. Smith, 1999; Walker, Eketone, & Gibbs, 2006). L. Smith (2000) outlines that "Kaupapa Māori principles and practices are inseparable", and G. Smith (1997), "stresses the need for Kaupapa Māori principles to be in active relationship with practice" (p.1).

The “principle of Tino Rangatiratanga is at the heart of kaupapa Māori. It recognises sovereignty, autonomy and mana Motuhake, self-determination and independence. Tino Rangatiratanga guides kaupapa Māori initiatives, reinforcing the goal of seeking more meaningful control over one’s own life and cultural wellbeing” (L. Smith, 2000, p.9). Durie’s (1995) explanation of self-determination is “it captures a sense of Māori ownership and active control over the future” (p.16).

It is of great importance through Culturally Responsive methodologies, that the inclusion of kaupapa Māori guidelines and principles as explained in Berryman et.al (2013) are implemented. It is crucial for the “knowledge to be co-created between the researcher and the participants” (p.3). Kaupapa Māori research is participant - driven; an empowering form of research where the self-determination of participants is at the forefront of the research (Bishop, 1996). Historically, much research regarding Māori issues has been conducted by non-Māori researchers and more often than not it has benefited the researchers rather than Māori themselves (Bishop, 1996, 1997; Bishop & Glynn, 1999; L. Smith, 1999). Bishop (1996) explains that “central to kaupapa Māori research, is that the research should not be done to Māori but serve to benefit all research participants, particularly Māori” (cited in Berryman et al. 2013, p.93).

L. Smith (1999), goes on to say that, “Kaupapa Māori research has provided a focus through which Māori people, as communities of the researched and as new communities of the researchers, have been able to engage in a dialogue about setting new directions for the priorities, policies, and practices of research for, by and with Māori” (p.183). Irwin (1994) points out that kaupapa Māori research encompasses the different sets of ideas and issues that are important in doing culturally safe, relevant, and appropriate research in Māori communities. L. Smith (2015) builds on previous thinking and contends that research that is undertaken by Māori, with Māori and for Māori creates opportunities for others to understand and recognise the impact of the policies and practices of assimilation and colonisation on Māori in New Zealand.

Bishop (1994), frames kaupapa Māori research in the context of the Treaty of Waitangi and proposes that kaupapa Māori research addresses the ideologies of Western cultural superiority. Through the inclusion of the Treaty of Waitangi, Bishop makes reference to the

Treaty partners, and involves Pākehā in support of Māori research, and in particular Pākehā who have a genuine interest to support the cause of Māori. However, L. Smith (1999) points out that kaupapa Māori research cannot be carried out by non-Māori researchers working on their own, but they can work in collaboration with Māori researchers when they are invited or seek acceptance from a group. Ensuring kaupapa Māori guidelines were implemented and ongoing throughout the process contributed to the participants feeling a sense of trust and self-determination. Implementing kaupapa Māori principles of whakawhanaungatanga and tino rangatiratanga enabled the participants and researcher to be confident to critique and question, and to "bring their identities and ideologies to the research table so that these authentic selves inform the co-creation of new knowledge" (Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1996; cited in Berryman et.al, 2013, p.5).

Critical Theories

Critical theory complements kaupapa Māori theory in that it requires us to challenge and critique assumptions and existing social inequities. L. Smith (1999) explains that critical theory includes the "notions of critique, resistance, struggle and emancipation" (p.185). Pihama (1993) takes a similar position and suggests that:

> *intrinsic to Kaupapa Māori theory is an analysis of existing power structures and societal inequalities. Kaupapa Māori theory therefore aligns with critical theory in the act of exposing underlying assumptions that serve to conceal the power relations that exist within society and the ways in which dominant groups construct concepts of 'common sense' and 'facts' to provide ad hoc justification for the maintenance of inequalities and the continued oppression of Māori people (cited in L. Smith, 1999, p.185).*

Berryman et.al, (2013) explain that:

> *Critical theory asks us to address the power differentials within the research context and unlearn our hegemonized notions of conducting research on people rather than with people. Unlearning means visualising the derailing or peeling back the tracks of the oppressor/colonizer, erasing the vestiges of uninvited stranger, in order to reclaim space and resources, and re-*

> *territorializing the intellectual and /or physical landscapes that were taken or oppressed. This process means questioning rather than accepting the concept of the few having power and privilege over the masses (p.14).*

Critical theories require us to think about and apply methods which eliminate that of the oppressor to regain and reclaim emancipation. Applying critical theory in this research provided all participants with the opportunity to be self-determining and have autonomy. This was necessary to ensure that their voices and perspectives were heard and valued. Therefore, bringing both kaupapa Māori and critical theories together into Culturally Responsive Methodologies provided an ideal, participatory research methodological frame for the researcher and participants in this study.

Method

The main method for collecting data was group focussed interviews with whānau gathered as semi-structured interviews as conversations.

Group-focussed, semi-structured interviews as conversations

Bishop (1997) contends that Burgess (1984), Oakley (1981) and Haig-Brown (1992) propose that semi-structured interviews "offered the opportunity to develop a reciprocal, dialogic relationship based on mutual trust, openness and engagement" (p.32-33). Implementing group focussed semi structured interviews can provide participants with a greater level of control over the interview process because they can revisit aspects of the interview and clarify their understandings and perspectives (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Goulding, 2002; Mutch, 2005). Therefore, this approach enables participants to share their understandings in greater detail (Bishop & Glynn, 1999).

Burns (2000), outlines that interviews as conversations resemble unstructured and open-ended interviewing because they allow for free-flowing dialogue between the researcher and the participants. Bishop, (1997) citing Reinharz (1992) and Oakley (1981) suggests "that the interview process needs to explore people's views of reality, and needs to encourage openness, trust between participants, engagement and development of potentially long lasting relationships, in order to form strong bonds between interviewer and interviewee", (p.32). This was developed through whānau collaborating and sharing their experiences and

perspectives within the group focus or 'whanau' context and embracing the kaupapa Māori concepts of whānau, whakawhanaungatanga, connectedness and relationships.

The inclusion of a group-focused semi-structured interview as conversations with five Māori whānau members was implemented to coincide with the kaupapa Māori principles – tino rangatiratanga – self-determination and whakawhanaungatanga. Providing 'critical' opportunities for whānau to lead the interview process and feel a sense of ownership with their conversations was crucial to ensure that trust was developed and that the voices of the participants were valued. Their voices were then analysed using a thematic analysis.

Thematic Analysis

Qualitative data analysis requires researchers to engage in a process of, "making sense of data in terms of the participants' definitions, of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities" (Cohen et.al, 2007, p.184). A thematic analysis can be applied to examine the data, to identify common themes which consist of ideas and patterns of meaning that come up repeatedly and are reinforced by participants. Reoccurring messages become the key themes for the findings from the transcribed interviews. Eisner (1991), explains that in the process of formulating themes, researchers are required to 'distil the material they have put together'. The notes, interviews, ideas, comments, recollections, reflections can be used to "inductively generate thematic categories" (Eisner, 1991), and that:

> *all these categories represent efforts to distil the major themes that would provide a structure to the writing. Within this structure authors select material, which they then use to illustrate the theories they have formulated (p.190).*

The researcher makes sense of the major themes identified, then the themes are used to provide the structure upon which to present the participants' voices alongside other important contextual information.

Collaborative Storying

Collaborative storying first involves identifying, developing and examining the participants' sense making through the interview process as discussed above. Through the process of thematic analysis, the researcher can then weave together the various participants' narratives and perspectives. In this way the focus becomes on what can be learned from the processes, experiences and practice of the collective research participants. The combined narratives can potentially contribute greater understandings than any one of the participant's narratives might do on their own.

Document Analysis

To support this research, I have analysed some of the Kāhui Ako documents prepared by the leaders of the Kāhui Ako that are readily available in the public domain. I use this information to provide an overview of the schools and, given the context of this thesis, to understand the extent to which Māori students are present across these schools. I also include some brief extracts from the Kāhui Ako report to better understand how the aspirations of these whānau are supported by the leaders' aspirations within and for this initiative.

Participants

Five whānau Māori were invited to participate in the research from across one Kāhui Ako. All whānau involved in this research have strong connections or whakapapa to this local area which means that some identify as mana whenua (people from the local tribes and sub-tribe). To reiterate, all whānau participants currently have children enrolled in schools across this Kāhui Ako. Some whānau involved have had older children who have been through primary, intermediate and secondary school within this Kāhui Ako.

Within this research, rather than maintain an objective outsider researcher position, it was important to utilise culturally responsive methodologies which enabled the researcher to also adopt an insider perspective and participate in the research to collaboratively develop the research narrative. I included myself as an 'insider' due to the association I have as a Māori parent with three children currently enrolled at three different schools within this Kāhui Ako. I also see myself as a product of the English medium education system during the

1970s – 1980s within this very same Kāhui Ako. My insider status is also relevant due to my relationship with the whānau participants. I have a connection to all participants through our own schooling experiences. I have taught their children, we were raised in the same community, I have had friendships with some participants for over 20 years and I have been involved with coaching their children in a range of sporting codes.

Smith (1999), contends that research expectations and goals, and developing community relationships are essential for the insider researcher. Collaborating and co-constructing our narratives as a whānau, provided opportunities for perspectives to be listened to and heard. This engendered a sense of kotahitanga (unity) for all involved.

Research Procedure

Following the concepts and principles of kaupapa Māori, the inclusion of tikanga Māori were implemented to guide this research procedure. This topic was important to myself as the researcher and the participants, and to ensure we were all guided safely, establishing boundaries which upheld cultural safety, honesty and respect. As a culturally responsive researcher working with Māori participants, tikanga Māori would determine how the conversations would unfold, and who would lead the discussions. Therefore, the role of the researcher was contextual to the research participants and relative to tikanga Māori, rather than prescribed by the research topic alone (Cram, 2009).

Firstly, the initial hui was held with selected whānau to explain the kaupapa of the intended research. From this hui, whānau were invited to participate in the research. The participants were provided an opportunity to comment on and make suggestions to the research design, for example, whānau were able to suggest if they thought different questions should be included in the interview and/or if they thought of other whānau participants that they felt should be included into the focus group. The participants were also invited to make suggestions about what other data might be included, how the data might be analysed and how the data could be presented in the thesis. Through a process of ongoing dialogue to check my practice as a researcher, I sought to ensure that power and control over the research narrative was shared so that the mana and integrity of all participants was upheld.

Following the initial hui, whānau participants were invited to take part in a group focused semi-structured interview. This invitation was issued through kanohi ki te kanohi (face to face) conversations. Once they had accepted the invitation the participants were provided with a consent form to complete. A copy of the group focused semi-structured questionnaire was provided to the participants, which provided them time and space to reflect and record their thoughts and perspectives prior to the interview.

Whānau were advised on the research instruments which were to be included such as the questionnaire and a recording device to collect accurate data during the interview. Explaining to the whānau about the inclusion of tikanga Māori protocols was important to ensure they felt a sense of connectedness to the kaupapa from the beginning. This discussion included informing the whānau about their involvement and how their participation in this research through sharing their perspectives and their aspirations to ensure their children (and all Māori children) were enjoying and achieving education success as Māori, would benefit all involved and potentially through the research benefit other Māori whānau. Through the use of tikanga Māori, whānau were able to contribute in ways that maximised self-determination. Participants were provided with the opportunity to determine what they contributed to the research and how their stories were represented in the research narrative.

Once the outline of the research was established, whānau were invited to suggest a time and place to meet. This provided whānau to be self-determining in the interview process being provided this opportunity to initiate where and when the meeting would take place. It was decided that the group focused semi-structured interview would take place at my home, which enabled whānau to bring their younger tamariki (children). Catering for whānau where they were able to bring younger children, or attend to their children throughout the interview was all part of whakawhanaungatanga. Implementing tikanga Māori was vital to ensure the whānau participants felt comfortable and welcomed within the environment. Prior to the interview starting it was also important that whānau were provided with kai (food).

During the interview process, whānau spoke when they felt comfortable, and often they would add to the kōrero (discussion) from those around them if they could relate to the

same response. At the conclusion of the interview process, whānau were provided more kai before leaving to show gratitude for their participation and also to follow tikanga Māori.

Once the interviews as conversation had been collated and transcribed, whānau were provided a copy to allow them the opportunity to clarify and confirm for editing. This process was important as it was the first stage of co-constructing the narratives to ensure that whānau voice had been transcribed in a way that accurately reflected what they had said. This process also ensured that power and control was shared by all involved as the whānau ultimately determined what dialogue stayed in, what was removed and what was changed. This process included whānau participation in the analysing of the interview data. Following the compiling of the transcribed interview notes, whānau were invited to check, share and express their thoughts and make suggestions to include or remove any of the information.

When whānau returned their narrative, the transcripts were analysed to identify recurring themes that had emerged. This thematic analysis was then provided to whānau to enable them the opportunity to revisit and reflect on their comments again and also attest to the accuracy or not of the themes. Throughout this time of reframing, re-establishing, and the rewriting of their stories, I continued to have ongoing conversations with the whānau participants to ensure their voices were being represented in a way that was tika (correct).

When whanau confirmed that they were comfortable with the themes that I had identified I grouped direct quotes that reflected each theme together. These themes are presented in the following findings chapter.

Ethical Consideration

Correct ethical procedures as directed and outlined by the University of Waikato were followed during this research.

Written and verbal consent was requested prior to the research commencing. Whānau participants were provided an outline of the research and a general description of the process that I intended to follow.

Prior to the research commencing, in an effort to be transparent and display courtesy, the lead principals of the Kāhui Ako were also informed about the research project.

Informing whānau participants about my insider/outsider position was crucial to ensure they understood my role and contribution with my pre-existing relationships with whānau being addressed, and also clarifying that the research was 'our' research, and not just mine as the 'researcher'. Whānau participants were also informed that their identities and schools would remain confidential.

Summary

Working in culturally responsive ways with the experiences of these five whānau members highlighted the importance of bringing together cultural identities and the implementation of tikanga Māori principles. The sharing of perspectives to develop new knowledge and understandings from the group focus semi-structured interview was applied to allow for the whānau participants and the researcher to collaborate our stories. In the next chapter I position my experiences in these same spaces as a Māori woman, a parent of children in English medium education and now an educator within this Kāhui Ako.

POSITIONALITY STATEMENT

The whakataukii, '*He waka eke noa'* captures the notion of '*We are all in this together.* This whakataukii begins my positionality statement because it reflects what I believe needs to occur in education today if Māori students are to enjoy and achieve education success as Māori in line with Ka Hikitia (Ministry of Education, 2013). This "means that ensuring all Māori students, their parents and their whānau participate in and contribute to an engaging and enjoyable educational journey that recognises and celebrates their unique identity, language and culture" (p.13).

I was born in Tauranga, and raised in a small community known to Māori as Arataki, in the Western Bay of Plenty of New Zealand. Arataki means 'to guide or to lead'. I was raised here and have remained closely connected to this community.

My schooling was completed within English medium education, sometimes referred to as mainstream education. I have very little recollection of the opportunities that enabled me, and many other of my Māori peers to enjoy and achieve education success as Māori. Throughout my primary schooling, Kapa Haka was the only cultural opportunity that enabled me to be Māori. However, when I entered secondary school I was then able to select te reo Māori (Māori language) as a 'subject'.

When I reflect on my education, I recall that my culture, my language, my identity were not authentically acknowledged or integrated into my learning. If it was, it was very tokenistic with pictures placed around the classroom. I have no recollection of learning about things related to te ao Maori (the Māori world). My learning and my education focused on and reflected the dominant western culture, along with the culture of my mainly Pākehā teachers. I have little recollection of any teaching and learning about Māori history, and I didn't engage in any learning about Te Tiriti o Waitangi until I attended university. This is perhaps unsurprising given that the colonisation of New Zealand means that our society was (and remains) dominated by western culture, resulting in a westernised education system, which required myself and my Māori peers to conform to the Pākehā way of being. This was all I knew. I didn't even consider the concept of 'Māori enjoying and achieving as Māori'.

In my final year of college, I returned to attempt another year of fifth form, also then known as 'second year fifth'. This meant, returning to college to repeat another year of fifth form subjects because I didn't pass them the first time. I was ashamed and embarrassed to be returning to school as a 'second year fifth'. I saw myself as a failure. My main motivation for returning to school was a sports excursion that would enable me to travel overseas, I had no other inspirations or aspirations to return to school. I do not recall any teachers or school deans such as the head of our year group, providing pathways of support or encouragement to keep me in education. There was one teacher at secondary school that thought one day I would be successful and that I would make a great teacher. To think only one teacher cared during my final years of education, only one teacher had faith in me, was a pretty dismal conclusion to my schooling.

My schooling experience had not prepared me for participation in wider Māori society. As I have reflected on the final years of my schooling, I have thought about a paper completed by Mason Durie (2004) from the Hui Taumata Mātauranga, the national conference of Māori leadership in education, entitled *'Preparing for the Future'*. He proposes that:

> *Rangatahi (adolescents), mātua (parents) and kaumatua (elders) see schooling as a step towards preparation for life rather than an end in itself, but also that education has dual responsibilities to Māori learners: to prepare students for full participation in wider society, and to prepare students for full participation in te ao Māori (p. 7-8).*

It still disturbs me that my twelve years of English medium education ended in such a negative way. I was not being wrapped in a korowai (cloak) of my own cultural experiences and opportunities, high expectations for learning, pride and success or manaakitanga (care) were also not my experience. Rather I was assimilated, also not very successfully into the mainstream.

I left school at the age of sixteen having achieved School Certificate in te reo Māori. The school certificate qualification which was the minimal school qualification for school leavers has now been replaced with NCEA Level One. My feeling of failure, embarrassment and shame, would be carried with me throughout my next journey in life.

Leaving school in the late 1980s with low self-esteem and confidence, I had little understanding of cultural identity and no connection to what being Māori really meant. I wasn't proud of who I was – or was it more that I didn't know who I was? Teachers didn't show that they cared, or that they wanted to know about me, or my Māori culture. Or was it because I was the brown girl, because I was Māori, that I didn't matter? Did my teachers see me as just another 'failure?'. As I reflect now, I do not believe I was a failure. I firmly believe now, that the colonised education system failed me and not only me but those Māori before me, and still to this day, those Māori who have followed after me.

After leaving school, I secured a job in a factory making boxes, jam and chocolate syrup toppings. Six years later I was promoted to office work as a production clerk. In my late 20s I realised I was ready, and I wanted to return to education.

I attended university and successfully completed a Bachelor's degree in education. At the conclusion of my university study I wanted to return and give back to the community where I was raised. I secured my first teaching position at Arataki Primary School where I taught for 14 years. In a slight change in direction I accepted a position as a Resource Teacher of Learning and Behaviour (RTLB) which saw me work across a number of schools alongside teachers and with children who needed support with learning and behaviour. Through this role I worked alongside teachers and Māori whānau to support them with their learning and behaviour goals and aspirations for their children. Compulsory study was a requirement in this position which enabled me to successfully complete a Postgraduate Diploma in Specialist Teaching with Distinction. On completion of this study I returned to teaching within an English medium school.

While I have described my experiences of the education system in the 1970s and 80s colonisation preceded this timeframe. My father and my tupuna (ancestors) also experienced the consequences of this colonised system. Not only did the education system of assimilation and integration affect my father and his 15 siblings with the removal of te reo Māori (their language) and tikanga (their culture) from their direct experience, but this system impacted the generations that followed, including my generation. My father was strapped or punished in other ways for speaking te reo Māori at school, therefore, he was

adamant that he would not put his own children through the same torture he faced as a child. This included refusing to gift any of us with a Māori name.

The Māori cultural practice of gifting children with ancestral names to signify and affirm whakapapa is an extremely important tradition that I have continued. I choose to gift my children with Māori names and consider this to be a privilege. I am determined to ensure my children's names are pronounced correctly and I have supported my children to build the confidence they need to correct those who mispronounce their names. When my son, Hokohinu, was two years old, I removed him from his Early Childhood centre as a result of the ongoing mispronunciation of his name. This mispronunciation happened every day when we were greeted upon arrival at the centre. My son would look at me every morning with a look in his eyes I will never forget. A look of embarrassment and a look of humiliation. This lack of cultural respect for our language and his ancestral name has stayed with both of us. When we moved to a new school, six years later, my son who was then eight asked 'Mum will they know how to say my name?' The unconsciousness of the preschool educator, which was experienced by us as a lack of care and respect, has had a huge impact on my son. While this was certainly a negative experience, as a whānau we try to be strong and resist feeling the shame that can emerge when we encounter ignorance and disrespect. As a whānau we want to ensure that our whakapapa names, through names gifted to us, are pronounced correctly, and carry on to ensure our identity as Māori, lives on.

Today, I reflect on two decades of teaching within English medium education and my experiences of being a mother of children who are being educated in English medium schools. I question why the disparities between Māori and non-Māori in the New Zealand education system continue. Why is it that my children and their Māori peers do not feel confident to bring who they are, in through the school gates?

As an educator within the English medium education system, I feel I am responsible for ensuring our Māori children can receive an education that enables them to be who they are, and that they can be Māori. I believe we can make a difference for our children where they enjoy and achieve education success as Māori, and can confidently be proud to be able to walk in both worlds – te Ao Māori and te Ao Pākehā. My position resonates with the words of the Auditor General (2012) who stated "if New Zealand educators truly believe that every

Māori student must be given, and deserves to be given, a high-quality education that matches their potential, then there is no time to lose" (p.3).

Teaching has enabled me to give back to my community and to ensure Māori students and whānau within English medium education are provided opportunities to engage and achieve success as Māori. Through my teaching experiences, and through my approach to teaching, I seek to develop a culture of 'whānautanga' (acting like family) and culturally responsive and relational pedagogy so that Māori students want to be at school, they want to learn, and their whānau can support and be involved. As a teacher, I listen, I encourage and I care.

My commitment today both as a mother and as an educator within the English medium setting, is to ensure these two words, '*as Māori*', are a part of our everyday living, learning and teaching experiences. I feel this research will contribute to the past, present and future work that is being done around this kaupapa in English medium education towards ensuring Māori students can enjoy and achieve education success as Māori.

My positioning within this thesis, through the sharing of my personal journey and experiences, means that I sit alongside whānau who have encountered ongoing educational disparities, racism and education bias within the English medium education system in New Zealand. The following chapter will present the research findings collected from whānau sharing their perspectives and experiences of the English medium education system.

CHAPTER 4 – RESEARCH FINDINGS – WHĀNAU VOICE:

Introduction

This research explored the perspectives of Māori whānau and how they feel their children are enjoying and achieving education success as Māori in English medium education. To reiterate, whānau who participated were all from Kāhui Ako which included primary, intermediate and secondary schools. This chapter introduces the Kāhui Ako setting in which this research was undertaken. It then presents an analysis of the whānau narratives as a collaborative story.

The research setting

As discussed in the introduction, IES is a policy aimed at lifting the performance of all students and creating career pathways for teachers. The implementation of IES in 2014 was to help raise achievement in the compulsory school sector. The IES policy went on to establish Kāhui Ako which is about bringing schools together across primary, intermediate and secondary schools through the creation of more seamless transitions from one sector of schooling to the next for students and their whānau. Therefore, a Kāhui Ako is essentially a group of education and training providers working together to help all students achieve their full potential.

Across this Kāhui Ako, there are over 4000 students, 28% are Māori, with between nearly a third who whakapapa to local iwi. This Kāhui Ako, consists of six schools, including three primary schools, one full primary, one intermediate and one secondary school. Whānau who have contributed to this research have connections to four of the six schools, with these schools ranging in decile ratings from 3 to 7.

To underpin what whānau are saying, it is important that I contextualise their experiences of their children's learning by including some brief extracts directly from the Kāhui Ako plan from 2016-2019. I do this to show how the aspirations of the Kāhui Ako leaders across the schools aligns or not, with what whānau are experiencing for their tamariki. What follows are direct extracts from this report followed by a brief summation prior to the whānau narratives.

As a Community of Learning - Kāhui Ako we agree to engage with each other in a way that values and promotes:

● *Building iwi partnerships*

● *Using student voice to inform our decision-making*

Data Analysis The data we looked at was drawn from a number of sources, including:

● *Combined ERO report 2016*

● *School (name removed) Research - Achieving as Māori*

● *Community consultation – strategic direction*

● *Inquiry into Rumaki/bilingual educational provision and development of Māori language, identity and culture.*

Achievement Challenges:

● *To design and implement a common strategic framework that sets and monitors appropriate goals and school targets which aim to accelerate and progress achievement of Māori and others at risk of not achieving.*

● *We aim to develop a Community of Learning - Kāhui Ako strategic plan for Māori through involving whanau, hapu and iwi that will ensure they experience success as Māori.*

Community of Learning - Kāhui Ako Goals as identified by ERO:

● *Continue to develop shared expectations for teaching and learning across the Community of Learning - Kāhui Ako, which effectively engage students in their learning and encourages them to be self-managing 21st Century learners*

● *Implement a cohesive Community of Learning - Kāhui Ako wide curriculum document that is aligned to local iwi education plans and whānau aspirations for tamariki*

● *Design and implement a common strategic framework that sets and monitors appropriate Community of Learning - Kāhui Ako goals and school targets, which aim to accelerate the*

progress and achievement of Māori students and others at risk of not achieving positive educational outcomes.

Brief Summation

What is clear throughout these vision statements, plans and goals, is the intention to make a difference for Māori learners across the Kāhui Ako. Furthermore, the need to do this is reinforced by the external evaluators of schools, the Education Review Office (ERO) goals identified for this Kāhui Ako.

Gathering Whānau narratives

As discussed in Chapter 3, prior to the interviews as conversations taking place, whānau were provided with a copy of the research questions. This enabled them time to think about and reflect on their own, and then their children's educational experiences within English medium settings in our Kāhui Ako. Providing whānau with opportunities to guide when and where the conversations would take place, developed a sense of mahi tahi (working together) from the beginning which set the tone, promoted trust and whanaungatanga amongst all involved.

The group-focused, semi-structured interview began by revisiting key information that was included in the initial questionnaires to ensure whānau were feeling comfortable and safe with the research process. It was important to revisit the process around collaboration and that whānau understood that the research was 'ours' and not just mine as the researcher. I reiterated that they could determine how the ongoing discussions would occur (either through kanohi-ki-te-kanohi, hui or email) so that we could continue to develop our collaborative story. I reiterated that these discussions would be for the participants to confirm, elaborate or remove information that they had shared. My commitment to maintain confidentiality was also restated and I checked to ensure whānau were comfortable that the kōrero (conversation) was recorded on a device.

As the researcher I led the interview by first reviewing each question prior to commencing our kōrero (conversations). Participants were encouraged to voice their honest perspectives.

As outlined in chapter one, the questions put forward to the participants for this thesis had required them to think about:

In New Zealand the goal of the Māori education policy Ka Hikitia, is Māori students enjoying and achieving education success as Māori.

1. As a parent of Māori children what does enjoying and achieving education success as Māori mean to you?
2. What has been your experience of their education to date? What has worked well? What has not worked well?
3. What opportunities might schools explore to increase the potential of your children enjoying and achieving education success as Māori? (Start doing)
4. How confident do you feel as a parent of Māori children to ask for what you want in education for your child? If not, what gets in the way?
5. What support would be most effective in helping you have these conversations with your child's school?

All whānau participants shared generously and spoke sincerely about their personal experiences of being parents of Māori children in English medium schools. Through the analysis of the interview data, similar experiences and therefore consistent ideas began to emerge across all participants. The two main themes that whānau discussed centred around relationships and school systems and practices, however sub-themes also emerged within each of these main themes. These themes are presented in the following sections and direct quotations exemplify whānau experiences. I have also attributed numbers to each whānau (for example Whānau 1 and Whānau 2) to differentiate the voices that contributed to the korero.

Relationships

All whānau recognised and expressed the importance of relationships as they believed that developing and maintaining positive relationships was paramount to ensuring that their children were going to enjoy and achieve education success as Māori. They talked about relationships at three levels: relationships between students and teachers, relationships between whānau and teachers and relationships between whānau and their children's schools.

Relationships between students and teachers

These whānau highlighted the importance of teachers enacting small relational gestures towards their children, such as greetings and a smile to acknowledge their children on

arrival. Whānau spoke about the wairua (spiritual feelings) of their children being prioritised through gestures such as this. They believed that teachers needed to acknowledge and understand who their students were. Specifically, they felt that if students could see and hear that their teachers cared, then not only would relationships between students and teachers thrive, but so to would their students' academic success. The emphasis on knowing and caring about students was evident in a number of whānau comments such as:

> *Whānau 1 - Māori kids are relational. They need to know that you know them, that you see them, that you understand them, and that you care about them'.*
>
> *Whānau 2 - Know me before you teach me, know me and care for me'.*
>
> *Whānau 1 - I think for many teachers unfortunately still; they don't get that. He's just a 'tutu', he's just a 'hōhā' in my classroom'. Well, [when] you don't care about them, you don't make an effort so he's not going to make an effort for you'.*
>
> *Whānau 4 - Genuinely getting to know the kids. Show that they care, that they care to know'.*

One mother shared how much she appreciated a teacher who took the time to get to know her daughter and demonstrated care and support after they moved back to New Zealand. Unfortunately, this was not the experience of her older daughter where she felt teachers had not worked to develop a relationship and therefore her daughter had become disengaged. This disengagement greatly concerned the mother and other parents who shared negative experiences of interactions between their children and their children's teachers. This included instances when teachers did not listen to and respect their children which in turn led to children not respecting them. Some whānau recalled particularly demoralising experiences when teachers had made deficit assumptions that resulted in degrading and sarcastic comments to their children. One parent specifically recalled a time

when a teacher accused his daughter of cheating on a test because the test showed that she had improved.

In terms of learning and achievement, whānau expressed strong opinions about how teachers could set up and maintain positive learning relationships within the classroom environment. They worried that some teachers focused more on their subjects than they did on their students. They stressed that the wellbeing of children needed to be central so that they felt that they belonged and were safe to participate in the learning, and share their knowledge and understanding:

> *Whānau 5 - Depending on the relationship and the teaching approach within the classroom, teachers can enhance or crush our kids' mana.*

> *Whānau 5 - The teachers need to ask the kids – how can I help you, how can I make the learning easier for you? How students learn and how they do better, then apply it – action it – don't take it as a negative.*

> *Whānau 4 - Teachers and schools need to recognise the different levels of confidence kids have – you know confidence to ask a question, confidence to answer a question, confidence to seek help and advice.*

> *Whānau 5 - If you see a kid achieving, teachers need to take an incentive from it, if you see your student being successful shouldn't it be celebrated and encouraged?*

Whānau also spoke about the importance of creating and implementing a culture based around whanaungatanga and manaakitanga within classroom settings with teachers setting high expectations and believing in the ability of Māori students to achieve. If the teachers don't show that they believe in the students, then the students don't believe they can achieve so they don't try and unsurprisingly, they don't achieve:

> *Whānau 2 - The teachers who encourage and engage our kids, then kids want to be at school, kids enjoy the learning, they are having fun,*

friendships are prioritised–looking out for, and looking after one another – whanaungatanga.

Whānau spoke about teachers implementing Māori cultural practices to create an environment where students felt a sense of belonging and a sense of safety, leading to students feeling safe to participate, to question, and to enjoy and engage in and with, their learning. In situations like this students' confidence levels will rise, at all levels. Whānau expressed that providing a safe environment where students know and feel that it is ok to voice their ideas and thoughts, opens up opportunities for students to share their knowledge and understanding:

Whānau 4 - For the environment that they are learning in to be safe, the culture needs to be safe for the students to express their ideas and know that it's ok to have a say and share their thoughts and/or experiences.

Whānau 4 - Teachers need to create a positive, safe environment for our kids to speak up.

Whānau 4 - Revisit the 'Form Class' structure – what is the purpose of these? Are students actually identifying with these form classes and teachers? Is it meant to create a sense of belonging/whanaungatanga? This is not working, especially when the form teachers are still mispronouncing names at the end of a year, and not identifying who is who.

Connected to the theme of relationships and knowledge of learners, another area of huge importance for whānau, was to ensure teachers knew and understood their kids as Māori. Whānau wanted to see and hear the inclusion of te Ao Māori (the Māori world) and this included integrating te reo Māori (language) me ona tikanga Māori (traditions, customs and beliefs), on a daily basis. They also felt it was important for teachers to provide opportunities for students to lead the learning through the sharing of their own personal knowledge and experiences of te Ao Māori:

Whānau 1 - It means having their culture valued, so they feel valued as Māori.

Whānau 4 - I would go even further to say just who they are, and they also are Māori, you know just teachers actually getting to know their students, just outright getting to know who they are.

Whānau 4 - I've been in conversations around this and we've talked about things like - it means having aspects of Māori in your everyday interactions with the kids having karakia, having things up around your room, but what I would really like to see is the teachers having a real understanding of where the kids come from, you know the environment they come from, the things that they bring into school each day – you know knowing who our kids really are, as Māori'.

Two parents talked about the importance of teachers pronouncing the names of their children and other Māori students correctly. They felt that correct pronunciation was significant for their identity, their culture and their language. Some whānau expressed that the mispronunciation of names had led to Māori students feeling a sense of shame, and where their mana (personal strength and integrity), and their confidence levels significantly reduced. Therefore, the mauri (wellbeing) of Māori students was weakened, students' feelings were humiliated and often relationships between students and teachers were diminished.

Relationships between whānau and teachers

The whānau participants identified that positive relationships between themselves and teachers were of great importance. They shared personal experiences of how they had been treated or mistreated. They felt at times that they were being judged, and that the only time the teachers contacted them was to follow up on their children's behavioural issues. This created a situation whereby relationships between whānau and teachers were generally negative in primary and secondary school settings. The importance of feeling a positive sense of whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, and kotahitanga when walking into a school environment was reiterated. Relationships between whānau and teachers needed to be more collaborative:

Whānau 3 - Primary and Intermediate - I felt I could talk with the teachers about my child's learning and I felt things I spoke about were followed up, it's not the same at college.

Some whānau felt that some teachers were arrogant and interpreted feedback as a criticism some became defensive. For others, similar experiences meant they felt uncomfortable approaching teachers:

Whānau 5 - I'm not confident to go into the school due to teachers not being relational. Teachers speak in terms that are a barrier, teachers speak down at us, not with us.

The participants spoke about wanting to support their kids with their learning, however, if teachers were not going to communicate and action a more collaborative, working together, respectful mindset, whānau expressed their concerns that the ongoing disparities and negative trend in our English medium school settings would continue. Whānau participants expressed their cultural belief in regards to mahi tahi, working together as a collective, and that when Māori voice or express their thoughts or concerns, they are speaking for all, not just for one. The participants spoke about the importance of teachers listening and valuing the voice of whānau:

Whānau 3 - If I go into the school to voice or clarify a concern, as Māori, we do it for all of our kids not just for one, not just for our own – we work as a collective, I don't think the teachers get that.

Whānau 2 - Teachers not listening or valuing whānau voice – this could be shown through even a courtesy email to acknowledge whānau for making an appointment, you know showing that they care, that they listen.

Whānau 3 - I don't see concerns or whānau voice actioned. When I raised a concern regarding a teacher, the concern was put back onto the student instead of the teacher. I felt like I wasn't listened to. Also what is the role of school deans? School deans are not supportive of working together.

Whānau 5 - Don't approach whānau voice in a defensive or negative way, schools come at it from a different perspective.

One parent spoke about giving teachers the benefit of the doubt instead of looking at it in a more critical way. She expressed thinking that teachers were doing the best that they could. However, now as her child is coming home and saying things, she has realised that she needs to get into the school to question or clarify her concerns:

Whānau 3 - As a Māori parent knowing my own schooling wasn't the best, I question 'who am I to question the teacher'? But actually, we need to speak up and ask for what's right, and what works for our kids.

Relationships between whānau and schools

Throughout the interview process the participants also spoke about how crucial it was for schools to build stronger partnerships and more positive relationships with whānau to ensure a system is in place that is focused on being stronger together. Whānau want to take part in their child's education, they want to see their kids and actually all kids achieving, and they want to work together with schools. However, they shared experiences of too often only being contacted by the schools when there was a behavioural concern or a negative issue to be dealt with. In contrast to being the recipients of messages that problematise their children, whānau were wanting schools to create an environment where achievements for their children were celebrated, and where they were valued as partners. The whānau spoke about not being informed or invited to celebrate their child's achievements:

Whānau 3 - Invite whānau into the school to celebrate successes not just a phone call about the negatives.

Whānau 3 - It can be for wairua support, whānau working with schools and the students to support students' wellbeing and learning.

Whānau 5 - Communication breakdown within schools – whānau receiving absentee emails and/or text messages when their child is actually at school or on a school event or trip causes unnecessary concern and worry.

Whānau wanted to feel welcomed and they wanted to feel a sense of belonging when entering the school gates or when walking through the school office doors. They spoke about the negative experiences and the rudeness that they had faced at times with office and administration staff, often through the tone of the greeting, being made to wait, or being given limited eye contact. They expressed feeling judged and discriminated against in the ways in which they had been questioned about their visit, who and why they were visiting, or about who their child was. This contributed to making whānau feel unwelcomed, therefore not wanting to return. The participants highlighted the fear of speaking up to schools in case that gave rise to repercussions for their children:

Whānau 5 - Ensure that Whānau are involved, welcoming them and bringing them into the school so they feel comfortable.

Whānau 5 - The way schools handle or deal with parents, the community – very poor, lack of communication.

Another concern from whānau relating to empathy and relationships, was the promoted school values. Whānau spoke about their children being reminded to show and live by the school values in school and out in the community. However, whānau raised a question in regards to school staff and how often they were questioned about their understanding or practice of their school values:

Whānau 3 - How often do schools review their school values with all staff? How often are staff asked to explain how they implement these values? How are these values demonstrated daily by all staff? What should they look like, what should they sound like within schools, within the community?

Whānau shared the importance of schools needing to be inviting and being a place where whānau feel a sense of belonging, where whānau feel a sense of whanaungatanga. Whānau

want opportunities to participate in the learning experiences through sharing personal knowledge and skills and developing greater working partnerships. They are wanting schools to reach out to whānau and to engage with whānau more regularly. The participants spoke about working more collaboratively, sharing knowledge to develop knowledge. One mother expressed her concern and stated that we are clearly not working well enough together, because our relationships is not working:

> *Whānau 4 - Schools need to work together with whānau – don't put up a wall. Accept the voice of the whānau. Listen to, and value what the whānau know, and be open and willing to work together to make a difference.*

> *Whānau 4 - Be willing to work with the whānau, with the community – the whānau are not saying 'this is the problem and you fix it – we're saying this is what we know and we can help, we just need you to want to have a go at it and apply it.*

> *Whānau 5 - We're not there to point fingers, we're there to help and to work together to sort things out.*

> *Whānau 3 - We come with a 'whanaungatanga' perspective – what are 'WE' going to do about the situation that isn't working? It's about WE, it's about working as a collective.*

School systems and practices

Ensuring school systems and practices were catering for all students was another theme that came through strongly from the participants. Whānau spoke about equity for all and they felt too often, the school systems and teaching practices were not catering for Māori students and their whānau. Whānau were wanting schools to ensure they are being culturally responsive and inclusive when implementing systems, with leadership filtering these pedagogies down and out to their teachers' to ensure teacher practices were responsive to the learning needs of Māori. The participants spoke about the importance of school systems that reinforced teaching pedagogies that would engage Māori students and enable students to be strong and confident in their culture, language and identity. Within

this conversation the participants made specific connections to Kura Kaupapa Māori school settings, along with other schools where Māori students were engaged and achieving education success *as Māori.* They acknowledged that the systems and approaches applied within these schools supported their student engagement and achievement success *as Māori.* Whānau questioned 'what are Kura Kaupapa schools doing differently that English medium schools are not implementing, and why can't our schools implement similar systems and practices?':

> *Whānau 2 - We need to be having more kōrero with our kura kaupapa. Work more together – seeing what's working and why they think it's working. And how can we bring that into mainstream education for our Māori kids to achieve as Māori? And why can't we bring that in?*
>
> *Whānau 2 - Prior to moving overseas, my eldest two tamariki started in a kura kaupapa and their school had that real sense of identity and grounded-ness that is really important. Returning to NZ and now in their mainstream schooling that identity does not seem to be continuously valued and built upon. Being Māori is not just during pōwhiri, kapahaka and Māori language week.*
>
> *Whānau 2 - Like letting them be the leaders in that space, being valued and having their culture, their identity, their reo and te Ao Māori valued and visible like in their schooling - everyday.*
>
> *Whānau 3 - Our kids being able to express themselves as they are, being able to enjoy education whilst bringing their identity and culture and bringing who they are into their school – and not being dictated as to 'who to be.*

Clearly these whānau had concerns about both the relational culture and the structures of these schools that reinforced such a culture that felt demeaning and deficit to them. Whānau believed that both had features that reinforced negative assumptions about them and their tamariki. Therefore, both the culture of relationships that they experienced as

negative and overpowering and the structures in place to reinforce this status quo, needed to be reconsidered and changed if the tamariki of these whānau were going to succeed as Māori.

Whānau experiences of school systems

The whānau explained that their experience of school systems had been as learners themselves and still was often negative as parents. The participants shared their views of the current systems and how it is not working for many Māori students. It was also discussed that English medium schools needed to work better alongside schools that were doing well for Māori students and implement, or just try some of the systems and practices that schools that were effective for Māori learners, had in place. Despite this being clear goals under the Kāhui Ako vision, whānau believed that schools needed to revisit their systems and question; Are we catering for all? Are we inclusive and do our school systems promote equity for all?

> *Whānau 1 - Acknowledge that the current systems are not supporting Māori potential and/or success. It's not working.*
>
> *Whānau 1 - Schools are failing our Māori students – in particular Māori boys. The statistics are screaming.*
>
> *Whānau 3 - I'm thinking why can't schools go and see what Kura Kaupapa are doing you know what I mean? What are they doing to engage students in their learning, and gain higher success results with their NCEA. Their academic results are rising so what are they doing to engage and enhance student achievement? Students in Kura Kaupapa are enjoying and achieving education success as Māori. They feel a sense of belonging, a sense of identity.*

One parent raised an interesting question. She raised concerns about how ERO reports display achievement data for Māori and non-Māori. She expressed that the data actually needs to show transparency about Māori students achieving education success, as Māori:

Whānau 2 - If our schools ERO reports show that our schools don't have the usual disparity for achievement between Māori and non-Māori, they think that everybody is doing ok, and Māori are achieving as Māori. No they're not. Our Māori kids are achieving in a Pākehā system, that is different to Māori achieving as Māori in my eyes.

The participants questioned is it that the teaching and learning contexts are more relevant to the learners within Kura Kaupapa Māori? Is it that the students can make connections to the teaching and learning? Is it the relationships – are the teachers more relational? Do the students feel they have a place of belonging within Kura Kaupapa Māori compared to English medium settings? Whānau questioned again why can't we implement what our Kura Kaupapa schools are doing to ensure our Māori students in English medium schools are enjoying and achieving education success *as Māori*?':

Whānau 4 - Look to other schools that are doing well, and be willing to learn from these schools and have a go, share and have a go to implement – don't be competitive.

Whānau 4 - Where are the schools heading within our community when looking at raising success and engagement for Māori to achieve as Māori?

Whānau 3 - Are our schools using the 'experts' to improve Māori achievement and engagement as Māori? If yes – who? Have whānau had the opportunity to meet with the experts? Have whānau and students had a voice?

Whānau discussed the need for our schools to take a more collaborative approach when transitioning between primary, intermediate and college. They spoke of the importance for these schools to be all working together for the betterment of their children. Whānau raised their concerns: '*by the time some of our kids arrive at college they've already switched off*.' Some whānau also mentioned that when many children entered college, they quickly became disengaged, and had no drive or motivation to go to school. There needs to be better transition systems in place. The children need to feel supported, and whānau need to

feel included in the transition process. Schools need to reduce the barriers for whānau engaging in their children's education which includes transition:

> *Whānau 3 - What systems are in place to ensure our children transition successfully, but most importantly, transition successfully as Māori?*

> *Whānau 3 - Is there community engagement, whānau voice in schools planning around transition?*

Whānau expressed huge concerns with school systems they had experienced, that lowered their achievement expectations for Māori students. School systems were setting lower standards and channelling kids into alternative education. One parent raised questions around the life skills class and if parents actually understood what values were implemented and taught in this class:

> *Whānau 4 - How are students placed into this class? Where are the students heading to from this class? Is this class focused on the students' interests, and what they want to do when they finish school? Is it focused on the students and whānau goals and aspirations?*

Whānau said that the systems needed to be addressed and schools needed to question and revisit barriers that were restricting or preventing Māori students from achieving education success as Māori. In terms of barriers they spoke of low expectations and lack of opportunities:

> *Whānau 3 - That's another thing for me it's about expectations – every student, yes that includes our Māori students, they can achieve if they're provided opportunities. Sometimes our Māori kids feel like they are just a 'number' so our kids will just cruise. But if expectations are set, if they are challenged, set that wero [challenge] our Māori students will go for it you know, and that needs to be instilled.*

Whānau 3 - We need to ensure our kids are being challenged to achieve, you see it within them when they start to feel challenged and succeed, then they believe in themselves, their confidence lifts.

Whānau 1 - Setting high expectations for all Māori students. But I think before that having culturally knowledgeable and experienced teachers, so upskilling those that need it so that they have that understanding of what these kids are bringing and where they are potentially coming from.

Whānau 3 - Teachers that set high expectations for our Māori kids, they believe in our Māori students achieving.

Another area of great concern for our whānau was around students not being provided school resources to support their learning due to the cost. One parent expressed his concerns regarding school systems failing our students before the school year even starts. If students hadn't paid for a particular textbook or stationery, schools were not providing students the materials required to undertake the subject area. Teachers were questioning students about the stationery in front of their peers, then causing embarrassment with students becoming whakamā (shy and embarrassed), then often not wanting to return to that subject. Parents questioned:

Whānau 4 - Why don't schools have a system in place to prevent students from missing out? Can they not have a system in place to ensure materials required for learning are accessible? Can they not have sets of textbooks, or spare rulers, calculators or whatever it is that the students require? Why add another barrier to students learning?

Whānau also questioned uniforms being prioritised as more important rather than the actual learning of their tamariki or teachers developing positive caring relationships with them. Both were concerns voiced by whānau. They expressed that school systems need to ensure that they are catering for all students and whānau, and that there is equity for Māori students; those who have greater need, receive more consideration, rather than all students receiving the same. That means additional support so that no-one misses out on the

opportunities to access all of the benefits of education – rather than quality education being just for some or for those who can afford it:

> *Whānau 5 - Teachers not providing resources to students unless they have paid – this is putting up a barrier to learning also embarrassing towards our kids. Kids feel ashamed when teachers question them, this is shutting our kids out. If you can afford it you'll learn, and if you can't then hard luck.*

> *Whānau 4 - Uniforms being the focus and not the learning. Is the uniform of greater importance than the learning, than the relationships? Have schools actually checked-in with whānau first, or had a conversation with the child before accusing them, telling them off and humiliating kids in front of the class, or before sending them to 'detention?*

> *Whānau 4 - Reduce the barriers to learning – resources, cost for stationery, equipment, uniforms – put less stress on the kids uniforms and more stress on developing positive, caring relationships.*

Whānau spoke about te Tiriti o Waitangi, and questioned how this was authentically and respectfully integrated and embedded within and across schools. Whānau raised questions around the Treaty being at the forefront when schools established their school wide systems. They expressed the importance of schools weaving the Treaty principles into their school systems, which would then filter into teaching pedagogies and contexts for learning. They spoke about the colonisation of the education system that is continuing to assimilate their children, despite the obligations and the Treaty principles that were promised:

> *Whānau 2 - Obligations under the Treaty are no way being met in schools. Partnership –there's no partnership. It's not in place in schools, it's not what it looks like in the classroom. Schools are way off. It's a Pākehā educational system and for our Māori kids to achieve success they're achieving it but in a Pākehā educational system. So how can that look differently and how can we bring about other ways of them finding success not just in that*

criteria? Where are the Māori criteria of achievement? What does that look like? What is valued and what is not?

Whānau 2 - What I do see and hear in a mainstream school is that it's te reo for a mainstream school. The reo is present and it is developing. It's normalised, the kids and teachers greet in te reo but I don't know that it goes far enough at all. You know, I think that because they're greeting, saying 'morena' that ticks the schools 'cultural box.

Another area that was of interest to whānau was that of culturally responsive pedagogy. Whānau questioned the extent to which schools understood and embedded Culturally Responsive and Relational pedagogy into their school systems and teaching practices. Whānau discussed the importance of culturally responsive pedagogies being filtered down and out within the school, from leadership modelling and setting expectations from all staff personnel within schools:

Whānau 2 - Teachers need more education about cultural responsiveness and what that looks like. This needs to be filtered down and out from leadership, also monitored, sharing of who is doing what to engage our Māori students.

Whānau 4 - We want a community of educators that are open to learning, open to sharing their knowledge and skills that work, so everyone can thrive.

Whānau 3 - We need to see more of a Kotahitanga system – a system of Unity, systems that embrace and highlight working together.

Understanding pedagogy and the importance that we are all in this together – 'He waka eke noa' is a whakataukii that the participants often referred to. '*Learning with, from and together*,' was quoted from whānau to ensure we are sharing our skills and knowledge to support and develop respectful mana ōrite (interdependent relationships), where we treat each other in the same way that we want to be treated ourselves:

Whānau 3 - Schools developing and implementing systems and teaching programmes that reinforce and acknowledge Māori perspectives and practices that work for Māori, will raise achievement and engagement for Māori, but also for Māori to succeed as Māori.

Whānau 3 - Our schools need to work together as a collective with whānau, and with students to ensure Māori voice and whānau goals and aspirations are heard and taken into consideration.

The participants spoke about education valuing and acknowledging things that Māori bring with them into the school. They emphasised that schools need to make connections to what Māori already know and what they already have within their cultural kete (basket), their cultural toolkit, their prior learning experiences and knowledge. The whānau want schools to acknowledge the culture, to celebrate it and know that it's exciting. They spoke about schools providing more opportunities for Māori led learning within a cultural context so Māori are achieving as Māori. They suggested integrating learning to include; wānanga (gatherings), Marae noho (Marae sleepover), waka ama (outrigger canoe), mau rakau (Māori weaponry), whaikōrero (speech), poi (performing art), waiata (singing), harakeke (weaving), bone carving, food gathering and preparation. They emphasised the importance of inviting whānau into the schools to be the experts and to tautoko (support) the teaching and learning fostering the development of positive partnerships between schools and whānau. The participants spoke about having a syllabus that was culturally-inclusive and not just mono-cultural:

Whānau 1 - Schools need to acknowledge their students' Māoritanga, it's a taste of success.

Whānau 1 - Including cultural components to allow Māori students to have maybe a lead role or to empower them to teach others.

Whānau 1 - Doing it, integrating the learning, then comes the stories, the vocab, the maths, everything that comes with it. More integration so we need to look at a school wide, subject wide approach.

Whānau spoke about the importance of incorporating more Kaupapa Māori teaching and learning initiatives to support their children with learning but also developing positive relationships with teachers and students to engage within a positive learning environment. Given that teachers are required to make reference to the professional standards and show their commitment to their learners, implementation of inclusive practices to support the needs and abilities of all learners should be a given:

> *Whānau 2 - Would including more Kaupapa Māori pedagogies something like 'Tuakana-Teina work? Like if there was more peer support, if they had like the senior or older students looking after the juniors or younger ones essentially and helping them through. They're seeing their support person is achieving, is enjoying school, is staying at school, this could potentially help and support kids to keep them engaged and want to be at school. Check in on them. This could be implemented at every year group. Tuakana-Teina – Year group leaders to tautoko/support, encourage, and engage.*

> *Whānau 3 - Tuakana-Teina role model groups for each year group to support students - academic or socially. This would also provide leadership opportunities for more kids.*

Another area that whānau discussed was in relation to when and how schools go about gathering student voice and feedback. Whānau highlighted that through this process schools and teachers could plan and implement systems and practices that would benefit student engagement and learning. It was also suggested that student feedback should become a regular part of a teachers' reflection journals to give guidance as to what is working well (keep doing), what is not working well (stop doing), and what needs to be done (start doing). As examples:

> *Whānau 1 - A designated person who oversees Māori students. I don't know if that's achievable?' Schools could explore some sort of wrap around support. Maybe track each Māori student through primary, intermediate and high school and keep the data – but each child goes through and there's*

some sort of system to keep an eye on them, as they progress through their schooling – wrap around support so no one falls through the gaps.

Whānau 1 - Perhaps have focus groups on Māori students and their achievement levels.

Whānau 3 - Localise the Curriculum – this is huge what the kids are learning about.

Whānau 5 - Local curriculum will engage the kids, they will want to learn. Learning about something that's relevant to them will also help them develop their confidence.

Pedagogy experienced by students

As an important part of the school's systems, whānau spoke about the delivery of teaching in different sectors, as they felt that a teacher's pedagogical practice influenced the outcome of the students. They explained that their children often found themselves in learning contexts that did not reflect their prior knowledge and experiences. This concerned whānau because they believed that teaching pedagogy should be culturally relevant, relational and responsive for all students and cultures. Whānau spoke about the students not having ownership of their learning as there were often no connections to their prior knowledge and experiences. This highlighted the importance of ensuring that te Ao Māori was integrated into the teaching and learning. They felt that this kind of integration would make learning more meaningful and relevant to the life and experiences of the students. The participants questioned how often teachers reflected on their practice to do better for Māori students, and in fact to do better for all students:

Whānau 4 - Pedagogies need to be reviewed – they need to ensure it's not just an 'English' focus pedagogy.

Whānau 2 - Our kids need to be able to bring who they are, their experiences, their knowledge to the learning, then develop the curriculum from there. You know it's about designing the teaching and learning around

what the student's interests are as Māori. What is it that the students are bringing into the class, let's design the learning, kaupapa around that – to hook the students in.

Whānau 4 - Teacher reflection needs to show the difference they are making towards Māori students achievement. Teachers need to question what it is they are doing to make a difference for Māori students achieving as Māori.

Whānau 3 - Teachers who are making a difference need to model and share their pedagogies and teaching strategies with colleagues that may require support to adapt and or change their current teaching methods. Teachers must understand the vital role they have in the learning partnership. If teachers are not making a difference, then they must question and have a look at themselves and critique their pedagogy.

Whānau 3 - Schools need to be efficient and effective with reflection and recognise what's working and what's not? Then question if it's working - why? And if it is not working – why not?

Whānau spoke of the cultural toolkit their tamariki already come to school with, their knowledge, their skills and personal experiences needed to be used and encouraged to lead and support learning. The importance of listening to student voice and what engages them in their learning was also discussed. They spoke about including and co-constructing with students within the contexts for learning, providing opportunities for student voice to be a part of the teaching and learning contexts that would enable connections and links to their prior learning to be made. Whānau expressed the importance of students understanding the context for learning, for example, why they were learning about it and how they could make connections to the kaupapa (topic). Understanding how this learning could support them with their current knowledge but also how they could transfer and apply this knowledge within other subjects and life in general was also important. Whānau discussed the importance of learning together, learning with and learning from one another:

Whānau 2 - The ability for co-construction to allow for that student voice, Māori voice to come through.

Whānau 2 - When kids are confident they're willing to be at school, they're willing to engage then comes the success because they can make a connection to their learning.

Whānau 3 - Question what is being taught and WHY? Is it relevant to the students and their world? If not, then question WHY is it being taught?

Whānau 4 - The content is disengaging, just lots of theory, sit there and listen and write, no communication, no sharing of ideas. It was like that when I was at school just copying down content that is not relevant. If it does not link to their world in some way, either find a way that it does, or, we need to question it or question why they need to learn it? If the students are not engaged then find ways to engage them – you know talk to them about what's going to engage them, what they're interested in and then channel the learning from there because you can make anything fit you know, what's more important is you need to get them first, hook them in.

One father spoke about the lack of teaching support for tamariki when the content was disengaging. Often, he believed his daughter preferred a more 1-1 teaching and learning approach for her to understand the content of the teaching. For some children who required a clearer explanation they found it difficult when the teacher didn't create a more "learning together" approach, or even encourage tuakana-teina (peer support). It was also expressed that if the content was not meaningful, the students were not going to engage in the learning and importantly they are unlikely to question or ask for help:

Whānau 5 - Teachers that create learning based around the students and their experiences, these are the teachers who engage our kids.

Whānau 2 - For schools to be creative –engage our kids with opportunities and creative teaching and learning.

Whānau 5 - Whānau and kids fear if concerns are raised with teachers regarding teaching and learning –they fear that they will they be put into one of those 'categories' where their child becomes labelled.

Whānau 4 - A teacher who participates in the learning and is willing to be a learner with the kids.

Whānau questioned how often teachers were upskilling their knowledge of evidence-based research to support Māori learners most effectively. Again, they expressed their concerns around teachers ensuring that they were implementing teaching practices and pedagogy that supported and worked best for Māori students to engage and achieve academic success as Māori. In practical terms they offered:

Whānau 5 - Provide more opportunities for collaboration – students to feel confident to share their ideas with their peers in class, work together to share ideas, to learn and succeed together.

Whānau 4 - Include the whole class in the learning discussions to help each other, more group focus to share ideas, thoughts and learning.

Whānau 1 - This year they have done pepeha, the teacher is awesome. My child feels supported, he is able to voice his thoughts, he feels comfortable to be himself, the teacher is supportive of things Māori, she has high expectations, my child has been pushed and he feels a sense of identity and connection. This was lacking at primary school he has definitely lifted his game this year as a result I've seen big changes.

Summary

The narratives whānau shared through the semi-structured interview presented in this collaborative story provided insight into two main themes that reoccurred throughout the interview process from all involved. The theme based around Relationships was divided into three sections that came through strongly – Relationships between: students and teachers, Relationships between: teachers and whānau and Relationships between: schools and

whānau. Messages from all whānau members were consistent and coherent throughout their children's schooling stages. From these conversations, whānau expressed concerns around the lack of classroom culture which would include a culture of whanaungatanga, manaakitanga and kotahitanga (unity). Including te reo Māori, tikanga and learning based on the students' prior knowledge and experiences was also raised. This also raised questions around how well did teachers get to know the children they taught and the culture they brought with them? Whānau want to be involved with supporting their child's education, including academic, cultural and sporting achievements and celebrations.

The second theme was based around School Systems and Practices. This theme was also divided up into two sections. The first section discussed: Whānau experiences of school systems and the second section was about the: Pedagogy experienced by students.

Again these messages were consistent and reinforced the importance of teaching practices and learning contexts that work for Māori. Whānau spoke about the importance of working as a collective with schools, a more kotahitanga approach, and that whānau were wanting to know how they could work with schools to support and raise Māori achievement and reduce the education disparities. Whānau wanted a collaborative partnership with the schools, they wanted to work stronger together. They wanted to know that equity is at the forefront of the schools' systems and teaching practices.

Whānau reiterated the negative experiences school systems can promote and the barriers that made it difficult for their children to succeed. Whānau also shared that their children wanted to feel a sense of belonging within their schools and not have to compromise their cultural identity in order to experience success. Whānau wanted to hear and see more of a dual-cultural curriculum focus being implemented in schools and they were willing and able to be part of co-constructing the learning to ensure Māori ideologies, historical and current, are woven into the teaching and learning contexts. This offer is generous indeed. Whānau expressed the importance of school leadership engaging in teaching pedagogy that reflected in culturally relevant, relational and responsive ways, which would then be filtered down and out to all staff. They discussed the need for schools to ensure that they had systems in place where teachers and staff are reflecting on their practice and implementing their understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy and competencies.

The next chapter will discuss these findings in relation to the research questions and the literature.

CHAPTER 5 – DISCUSSION

Introduction

In this chapter the findings are discussed in terms of how the collaborative story from the whānau participants provide answers to the research questions. Answers to the research questions will be discussed and synthesised in order to lay a foundation for the conclusion in Chapter 6 and propose some suggestions for the way ahead.

Research question 1: Enjoying and achieving education success as Māori

Whānau were introduced to the New Zealand, Māori education policy Ka Hikitia, which has as its central tenet - Māori students enjoying and achieving education success as Māori. As parents of Māori children, whānau were asked "what does enjoying and achieving education success as Māori mean to you?" Whānau were clear and confident that the main areas that are crucial to ensuring Māori children are enjoying and achieving education success as Māori are the relationships that students have with their teachers, that whānau have with these same teachers, and finally the relationships between whānau and schools. As well as relationships influencing whether Māori children enjoyed and achieved education success as Māori whānau talked about the importance of the school systems and teaching pedagogies and the influence these have on their children's learning, their identity as Māori and their overall sense of wellbeing.

Ensuring that schools work to develop positive relationships between: their students and their teachers; between leaders, teachers, administrators and whānau; and also at all of the interfaces between schools and whānau must be the priority. Whānau felt sure that once strong, open and respectful two-way relationships were established they would provide a pathway to ensure their tamariki enjoy schooling and that they are able to achieve education success as Māori. If two-way relationships were not well established when their children first entered the schooling system it seemed that these could deteriorate over time as their children moved through the education system. This means that a Kāhui Ako could be an important and ideal structure for ensuring relationships are developed at early childhood and nurtured from one schooling institution to the next.

Whānau said that it was crucial for teachers to develop relationships that showed that they care for and show respect in their children's ability to achieve in all curriculum areas, rather than pigeon hole them as only good for certain activities that were less academic. Importantly, like the narratives of experienced gathered by Māori whānau by Bishop et al. (2003), these whānau also want teachers to show that they care for and respect the cultural identity that Māori children bring with them into the school everyday. Teachers need to recognise and acknowledge the cultural identity of Māori students and provide opportunities that will enable Māori students to have their culture as Māori nurtured and strengthened every day and in every way, not just when the school needed to hold a pōwhiri or it was Māori language week. Developing a culture of manaakitanga and whānautanga within classroom environments where children are treated like family, will provide this. Through the implementation of manaakitanga and whānautanga, children will feel safe, their Māori cultural identity will be valued and they will develop trust with those educating them. The importance of children knowing and feeling that their teachers care was highlighted if they were to feel valued as Māori and as individuals. Through this the children will then develop a sense of belonging where they will feel free to move between two worlds - te ao Māori and te ao Pākehā which is what Walker (1973) was promoting in his call for biculturalism in the 1970s discussed earlier. Unfortunately, whānau gave numerous examples where this was not happening and they were having to resolve these situations at home which meant their own relationship with the teacher and often the school also deteriorated.

Relationships between teachers and whānau was another important area that if embraced whānau believed their children could begin to enjoy and achieve education success as Māori and if this happened they believed the school would also benefit. Listening to the aspirations from whānau, and understanding the educational goals whānau want for their children is vital for schools to understand and be respectful of which directly connects with what Durie (2001; 2004; 2006; 2011) has been suggesting for many years. Whānau suggested that when schools invited them to contribute then acknowledged the support and involvement of whānau, this had a positive flow-on to their children's enjoyment and learning at school. This notion of deliberately seeking and respecting the opinions of whānau links to the what G. Smith (1991) works so well in kaupapa Māori, (Māori-medium)

education settings. Unfortunately, despite whānau saying they wanted to contribute, this was not a common experience in the Kāhui Ako. Again like the narratives gathered by Bishop et al. (2003) and Bishop et al. (2007) whānau talked more often, about being contacted when something was wrong, such as incorrect uniform, absenteeism, lack of payments for school events or materials or their child's poor behaviour. Whānau talked about never being rung when their child did something good at school. It seems important therefore, that the Kāhui Ako leaders across the schools reflect on the previously mentioned strategic aim set for the Kāhui Ako (see p. 3), to ensure that these align or not, with what Māori parents are experiencing for their tamariki. It is also important that these aspirations of the Kāhui Ako are transparent for all parents to view, understand and be able to question. Developing positive relationships begins with individual learners and their whānau, where whānau feel welcomed and acknowledged, then this must translate to all whānau whoever they are and whatever background they come from. This is crucial if schools and Kāhui Ako are wanting to engage in stronger whānau community relationships.

School systems and teaching pedagogy was the other area that whānau believed will enable Māori to enjoy and achieve educational success as Māori. Schools must ensure they are catering for all students and that a more equitable response is implemented for those students who needed greater assistance or support. Implementation of culturally responsive and inclusive pedagogies when developing school wide systems might be the rhetoric but it was what whānau believed, another area to be addressed. Ensuring school systems and teaching practices are inclusive and responsive to Māori whānau goals and aspirations is vital to ensure Māori are enjoying and achieving education success as Māori. While I have spoken about each of these relational aspects separately they are of course all interconnected and dependent upon each other. They can also be captured in the Māori metaphor of mana ōrite; treat my mana and my children's mana in the same way that you want the mana of your leaders, teachers and schools to be treated.

Research question 2: Experience of their children's education

As a parent of Māori children, whānau were asked about their experience of their children's education to date. Whānau believed that for Māori to enjoy and achieve educational success as Māori, experiences that reflect positive relationships and cultural connectedness

for learning will more likely reinforce engagement for all, and see more positive outcomes for their children in education.

Whānau talked about their children being relational, needing to feel a sense of success within education, and needing to know that their teachers believe they can achieve in whatever they choose to do, but being able to achieve proud of their Māori identity rather than whakamā of their cultural heritage. Even though Māori whānau may have had negative experiences of schooling, they want their children to succeed and to achieve to their full potential, as Māori. For Māori whānau they want their children to be proud of who they are, they want their children to know who they are and that they are Māori. Māori whānau want their children to stand tall and to be able to leave school knowing that their teachers cared for them and their schools acknowledged and respected their cultural identity, as Māori.

Whānau talked about ensuring that schools were not just putting the 'blame' on Māori whānau for their children's disengagement in education, and instead helping leaders and teachers to reflect on their own relationships, teaching practices and cultural understandings, to reflect on the possibility that this might be why their children were disengaging with learning. They talked about how often their children's experience of education was negative due to the lack of cultural inclusiveness, understanding and acknowledgement from their teachers. For them, the mispronunciation of Māori names continues to raise concerns in the education system today. When children hear their names, or the names of their peers being mispronounced it brings about a feeling of shame and embarrassment. This resonates with the example I discussed in my position statement about my own son's experience of having his name mispronounced. This can have a huge negative influence on Māori children's self-confidence and sense of Māori cultural identity. This lack of cultural awareness and disrespect from teachers can develop a negative relationship, but also create their disengagement from learning as they see this as a sign of disrespect and that their teacher doesn't care about who they are.

Another concern that was raised from whānau is that their children are experiencing negative and limited learning opportunities due to the barriers schools have in place. This continues to include teachers who deficit theorise about them and other Māori learners.

This continues to be a major impediment to Māori children's educational achievement, often resulting in them not wanting to come to school, or avoiding the classes of particular teachers and continues to be an ongoing reality of what they are continuing to face in education. Teachers who have low expectations of Māori children's achievement often look at the weaknesses of the child instead of working from their strengths. Whānau talked about teachers making sarcastic comments, and assumptions about their children accusing them of cheating when they achieved positive test results. Whānau also expressed their concerns that because their children are Māori they have been labelled or categorised as the 'hoha (nuisance) kid' or the 'tutu (mischievous) kid'. Whānau were also questioning the placement of children into the 'life skills' class and that this is lowering the achievement expectations for Māori placed in this class, demoralising Māori children. This is where whānau also spoke about teachers either enhancing or crushing our children's mana.

Research question 3: Opportunities schools might explore

Whānau were asked about the opportunities that schools might explore to increase the potential of their children to enjoy and achieve education success as Māori.

Whānau suggest that it is vital that schools across this Kāhui Ako are providing opportunities that allow Māori children to lead their learning if the Kāhui Ako schools are to more effectively engage and raise education success. Whānau understand that their children come with their own cultural toolkit and experiences. Within this cultural toolkit, many Māori children come with knowledge and experiences relating to te reo me ona tikanga Māori. Encouraging and properly supporting those Māori children and whānau who are confident to share this knowledge would enable students to feel a sense of success and pride in their own culture and also open this learning up to others who may not have had these experiences. Providing these opportunities will develop the cultural context for learning and ensure it is responsive, relevant and purposeful to their world - te ao Māori. Enabling Māori led learning with Māori and with all, will enhance engagement of all learners and achieve education success by opening up pathways where Pākehā can begin to learn and respect what te ao Māori has to offer. This must be led first with whānau and by the leaders and teachers.

This means that it is important that schools are providing opportunities for whānau to be respectfully involved and engaged. While this is not always their experience, including whānau when they want to be involved, or when they can, is important if schools are to develop stronger connections and partnerships with them. For example not just for traditional "Māori" things like putting down a hangi, but providing opportunities for whānau to be included when developing and planning curriculum will strengthen the relationship between schools and whānau. Whānau input at this stage will also develop the learning context making it more responsive and relevant for Māori learners to enjoy their schooling experiences as Māori. Whānau raised the importance of schools developing a dual-cultural curriculum that is inclusive of both te ao Māori and te ao Pākehā knowledge but taking this knowledge beyond Māori cultural ceremonies and myths and legend. Integrating a curriculum that will provide effective learning opportunities for Māori children to succeed in both worlds, and where Māori can also see their own culture being valued through curriculum integration can raise engagement and education success. Inviting whānau to be involved in the co-constructing of a dual-cultural curriculum will ensure that appropriate Māori ideologies, historical and current can be woven into the teaching and learning contexts. However, if these invitations are issued by schools to whānau, before respectful relationships as discussed above can and have been developed, this would be disrespectful.

The success of Māori children who are engaged in kura kaupapa Māori schools settings is another area that whānau discussed and as they felt that schools within this Kāhui Ako could explore. Exploring the systems and approaches that are integrated into the kaupapa Māori education system (including kōhanga reo - total immersion/Māori medium preschools, kura kaupapa Māori, kura Māori, and kura ā-iwi) that support student engagement and achievement would provide an opportunity for schools to work closer with, and weave together a cultural curriculum that will engage and raise Māori potential. Whānau know from the data on the Education Counts Website that Māori school leavers educated in the kaupapa Māori education system are much more likely to gain entrance to university than Māori leaving from the English medium system and they know, based on their observations that they also stand bilingual and proud as Māori and can stand strong in both worlds. The question whānau ask is, if the Ka Hikitia policy and Tātaiako are

both promoting this for all schools and have been for more than a decade, why can't they have that as well?

Revisiting the transition process for children when moving from primary to intermediate, then from intermediate to college is another area that whānau spoke of. Inviting whānau to be a part of this process will strengthen the school - whānau relationship, but for their children this will also ensure a feeling of support and that whānautanga is actually present. Māori children who develop positive relationships with their teachers and schools, see and feel manaakitanga when they are supported through their next transition of schooling with their teachers.

Research question 4: Māori parents confidence to speak up on these matters

Māori whānau who are confident to speak up and ask for what they want for their child's education, explained that it was the lack of support or follow up conversations from teachers confirming any implementation that was an important part of this problem. At times these parents felt their concerns raised were not seen or heard as being important from the teachers and schools. Parents need to feel listened to and acknowledged for their contribution that could benefit not only the learning and engagement of their child, but for all Māori. It is also important that schools understand that when Māori speak up for their child, they are actually speaking up for all. A point that was raise by the Māori students that Berryman et al. (2017) was reinforce by whānau when they acknowledged that Māori work together as a collective not as individuals, they want the best for all Māori children.

Some Māori parents did not feel confident to express their ideas and speak up to teachers. This was often due to their own personal experiences of not being listened to. Some whānau expressed their thoughts about who were they to question teachers given that teachers were the paid professionals and therefore must know best. The way in which some leaders and teachers spoke down to parents, making Māori parents feel 'dumb' through the tone in the voice, was also a specific concern raised.

Research question 5: Effective support for parents from schools

Whānau were asked about the type of support they would find most effective in helping them to have conversations with their child's school. Again it came back to the importance of the established relationships between teachers and their children and then between the school and whānau. Where these were mutually respectful and two-way like the types of whānau and school engagement discussed by Alton-Lee et al. (2009), the conversations were easy. However, when the school was a faceless bureaucracy wanting to talk about their child as having done something wrong then the conversations were more challenging.

Schools and teachers providing a more whānautanga and manaakitanga approach for including parents would support Māori whānau to feel more comfortable to express their thoughts and ideas in good times and in more challenging times. This would also provide opportunities for schools to enhance a more positive relationship between parents and teachers. If teachers invited parents into the school to engage in the teaching and learning process, as was the case in the research discussed by Alton-Lee et al. (2009), this would benefit schools, teachers, parents and the children. Implementing a more collaborative space where Māori whānau felt a sense of belonging to participate and engage, would also encourage a more positive connection between parents and teachers, therefore whānau feeling more confident to have conversations with schools. Another area of support could be that schools invite parents along to celebrate their children's learning experiences and successes, or share any celebrations to acknowledge the engagement of their child.

Teachers acknowledging the voices of Māori whānau and listening to the goals and aspirations they want and have for their children is an important area where schools can support whānau with speaking up and having these conversations to ensure their children are engaged and achieving success as Māori. Schools listening to whānau and doing something effective in response were more important than having something written down in their school's policies. This was definitely a case of actions speaking louder than just words, and words being meaningless without effective actions to back them up.

Summary

When you consider these overall responses from whānau there appears to be a number of critical messages that need to be addressed if we are to ensure that their children are enjoying and achieving educational success, as Māori across the schools in this Kāhui Ako.

Although relationships are key to establishing positive actions, it is more than just relationships that are going to address the educational disparities between Māori and non-Māori and help them be proud of their cultural heritage in English medium schools. These whānau are clear they want both. Teacher curriculum, pedagogy and expectations to provide learning opportunities for Māori to achieve to their full potential, are all vital and must change if Māori learners are able to enjoy and achieve education success in these schools. This requires leaders and teachers having a deep understanding of culturally responsive and relational pedagogy and believing in the cultural competencies in Tātaiako rather than seeing them as a transactional, tick the box activity. Although they are still not being used as such, these are all areas that can make a huge difference to ensuring we as a nation are giving life to the beliefs and aspirations of Ka Hikitia. Ensuring schools and teachers have a solid understanding of Māori cultural knowledge, and that this is implemented through dual-curriculum integration will not happen until teachers are fully conscious of the need to do things differently. Until this happens we will continue to get the same results that we are getting over multiple generations. School systems will not change until leaders and teachers in schools believe they need to change and understand why and how this can happen. These whānau believe that this requires a new culture of inclusive and responsive teaching, that is inclusive and responsive to Māori knowledge and ways of doing things and making sense of the world. This can be achieved by developing positive relationships of mana ōrite with and between schools, teachers, whānau and children. Making these connections across all of the schools in this Kāhui Ako, will provide opportunities for Māori children to enjoy and achieve education success, as Māori. This is about whānautanga, these whānau want to support schools to metaphorically be whānau to the students who attend; and it is about manaakitanga, this is about everyone's mana, the mana of their children, the mana of whānau and the mana of leaders and teachers. Importantly, these whānau are prepared to support schools to do this and there are whānau like this in every community.

CHAPTER 6 – CONCLUSION

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to find out from a small group of Māori whānau, their perspectives about the extent to which they believe their children are able to enjoy and achieve education success, as Māori. The intention was to provide these whānau with a context to hear their voices, to then analyse and share their experiences and finally to highlight areas that they believed need addressing. In this chapter, I do this by identifying some of the limitations of the research and then outlining recommendations that whānau believe need to be addressed.

Limitations of the research

The limitations of this research are related to the size and the scope of this study. The research included five Māori whānau who have children attending four of the six schools within a selected Kāhui Ako. The focus of the study was to understand what they were experiencing of their children's education in terms of the aspirations of Ka Hikitia, and what they believe needs to happen if their children are to enjoy and achieve education success as Māori.

There is currently not a lot of research around Kāhui Ako, and especially not Kāhui Ako and whānau voice. Therefore, further study to widen the scope of this story could include the perspectives of more whānau voices across the entire range of schools and centres. Or it could include the experiences of Māori and Pākehā whānau, from each of the schools to see how their experiences might differ from school to school and Māori to Pākehā. Research could also be undertaken by listening to the stories of grandparents, nannies and koro to understand through their experiences what if anything might be changing for subsequent generations. Given whānau talked about how relationships changed from primary, to intermediate and then to secondary, widening the scope of this study could also include the interviewing of whānau from early childhood education. Interviewing whānau from kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa Māori would also widen the scope of this study and provide interesting comparisons about the types of things these whānau are experiencing to ensure

they are developing pride in their cultural heritage. This could provide a model for English medium schools to emulate.

Despite the limitations of this research, this study has provided an insight into what Māori whānau want for their children, and in fact all Māori children within the education system today. It also gives a look into their desire to support and be a part of this work with schools so that all are able to benefit from education initiatives.

Recommendations in terms of Responses at Multiple levels

The following recommendations outline what whānau are saying they want in relation to their children enjoying and achieving education success, and what is required at the different levels of the education system. Recommendations from these whānau provide a strong call for new, more effective kinds of relationships across all levels of the schooling system between Māori and educators in the system. Like kura kaupapa Māori they want two-way relationships where Māori and Māori ways of knowing are central rather than ticking someone's box or words on a page. This will require different kinds of power relations "with Māori" rather than "over Māori". It will also require individual educators understanding at a personnel level, how and why whānautanga, the type of education they want for their own whānau can play out for the children of other whānau.

Relational Response

Whānau expressed the importance of schools and teachers understanding the concept of the Māori metaphor mana ōrite. They talked about having the mana of their children respected and when this happened their children felt as though they belonged and whānau wanted to support that teacher and school as well. However, when this didn't happen their children and they themselves could become disengaged because they felt disrespected because of who they were. Whānau believe that although leaders, teachers and schools wanted to be treated with respect these relationships of respect were not always reciprocated.

Relationships of mana ōrite can be achieved by establishing relationships where whānautanga and manaakitanga are fully understood and embraced rather than words on a

policy document or strategy. These metaphors are crucial for schools and teachers across this Kāhui Ako, and all Kāhui Ako, to ensure Māori whānau and children are treated with similar levels of respect to other families and whānau gave numerous examples of where, in their experience, this was not happening. What this means from the perspective of these Māori whānau is that schools and teachers need to show that they care, both for their children and the Māori culture their children bring with them to school. While it was more likely to happen if the leaders or teachers were Māori this was not an automatic given.

Whānau believed that it is paramount for teachers to actually take the time to get to know the children they teach, and they must also get to know them "as Māori". This means understanding who the whānau are that stand beside the child, now, from the past and into the future. If schools are to value the culture of Māori children, teachers must be prepared to get to know their whānau as well. Knowing the child's whakapapa goes a long way towards acknowledging the experiences and knowledge that Māori children bring with them to school. Providing opportunities for Māori children to lead the learning and to share their knowledge, raises mana therefore enhances the relationships. Māori are wanting more than just a tokenistic approach to their cultural identity, they are wanting to be Māori and to do this with pride.

System level Response

Little has effectively disrupted the disparities facing Māori in the education system despite the aspirations and promises of Ka Hikitia - Managing for Success: Māori Education Strategy 2008-2012 (Ministry of Education, 2008) or the refreshed version, Ka Hikitia - Accelerating Success 2013 - 2017 (Ministry of Education 2013). The Auditor-General (2012) in her review of Ka Hikitia identified that Ka Hikitia had not promoted any significant positive change for Māori in education. Furthermore, listening to, and hearing the voices and experiences from these whānau in 2019, regarding the ongoing challenges their children are facing daily within schools, confirms that schools are potentially neither implementing nor achieving the vision and goals outlined in either of the Ka Hikitia strategies. Now that whānau have become familiar with this strategy they question why this is acceptable under the expectations of honouring the Treaty of Waitangi. And, what happens to the latest Ka Hikitia strategy launched in July 2020, when this foundation from the first two, has not been laid?

Ensuring the Government's Māori education strategy is enacted so that Māori students are enjoying and achieving education success as Māori, must be addressed across our schooling system. The vision stated in Ka Hikitia - Accelerating Success 2013 - 2017 explains that "ensuring all Māori students, their parents and their whānau participate in and contribute to an engaging and enjoyable educational journey that recognises and celebrates their unique identity, language and culture" (Ministry of Education, 2013, p.13). Whānau raised some critical questions about this policy statement, the first being, if this vision is meant to be at the forefront of all schools, then why do Māori children and whānau still feel disadvantaged and disengaged? This has implications for system leaders as well as school leaders. Whānau wanted to know what system and school leaders are doing to filter this vision down and out across the system and schools to ensure that the vision is implemented. They believed that system leaders must take greater accountability for the disparities that are evident in education for Māori children and whānau and that the implementation of this strategy would be one way to make that possible.

For educational experiences to be more culturally inclusive for Māori children, teacher registration and appraisal is another area of unfulfilled potential. If teachers are being appraised against the cultural competencies as outlined in Tātaiako, Māori children should be enjoying and achieving education success as Māori. A concern raised was the lack of leader and teacher reflection to critique and delve deeper into the cultural metaphors so that they could be fully understood and taken into their teaching pedagogy in more meaningful ways. The inclusion of feedback from children and parents could be an ongoing process of a teacher's reflective journal. Leaders and teachers should be reflecting on what is working well (keep doing) for their Māori learners, what is not working well (stop doing) and what needs to be done (start doing) to disrupt and change the status quo of disparity. If teachers are being appraised according to the cultural competencies outlined in Tātaiako, questions must be raised in regards to who is observing and appraising the teachers, and what happens if the person appraising has less cultural competency knowledge and understanding then the teacher. Ongoing reflection on teacher practice to ensure Māori children are experiencing positive educational opportunities is vital to raising the engagement and success as Māori. Although the system has these two powerful levers for

change now, after at least a decade of little change, the questions must be asked, how is this acceptable and what now?

Kāhui Ako level response

As well as revisiting their response to Ka Hikitia and Tātaiako, it is important that schools within this Kāhui Ako also revisit the barriers they are placing on Māori children when they are not providing the essential learning resources for children who need them. Kāhui Ako need to have a positive, more proactive and consistent approach in place across their schools to support their learners. As an example, ensuring an equitable response is available for those learners who need additional support. Teachers must understand why it is needed for some and not all and administer it in ways that are mindful of the mana of students requiring and receiving additional support but unapologetic that that they are providing an equitable response rather than an equal response. Ensuring that all students have access to learning resources, and that the financial cost of textbooks is not placed on the child causing embarrassment and disengagement were specific examples given.

Another example of inconsistency across the Kāhui Ako is making contact with whānau regarding situations such as incorrect uniform, late payments or behavioural concerns and this is also causing barriers towards whānau wanting to be present within some schools. Whānau expressed that many schools are only making contact with them when it is negative and when they have a concern. Whānau are wanting to be present and involved in the education of their children, however unnecessary phone calls, emails or text messages which often state behaviour, incorrect uniform or financial costs, are making whānau question what is more important to the schools across their Kāhui Ako and why are some of their expectations inconsistent from one school setting to the next?

Revisiting the transition process for children when moving from primary to intermediate, then from intermediate to college is another area schools within the Kāhui Ako should explore further. Providing whānau the opportunity to be involved and included in these processes is important to ensure that Māori children and all children are feeling a sense of belonging at this important change. Whānau who are available should be able to be “really” present at these important transitions and this needs to go beyond the use of pōwhiri. How,

for example, do whānau get to know their child's new teachers from day one? Providing support for that next journey for Māori children is to ensure that they feel connected, and that they feel valued.

It is important that the Kāhui Ako are being transparent with their aspirations and goals for Māori enjoying and achieving education success as Māori. Whānau want to know that the Kāhui Ako are implementing strategic goals that are in line with their own aspirations for their children to achieve to their full potential. It is also crucial that whānau are aware as to what the Kāhui Ako have in place and what they are focusing towards to ensure that their children, and all Māori children are being provided opportunities to engage and enjoy education success, as Māori. This means if this is not happening they will want to know why.

School level response

School systems and teaching pedagogy were of great importance and huge concern to whānau. Whānau shared their understandings of school policies and systems and reinforced the importance of schools ensuring that their systems are catering for all students, and that equity for all is evident and transparent. It is vital that schools are including whānau perspectives, and evidence of their knowledge and understandings around culturally responsive and inclusive pedagogy. Whānau voiced that many of the current systems and teacher pedagogy were not working for Māori and that better systems needed to be in place.

When developing school wide systems whānau are wanting to be included, whānau want to be invited. Schools need to be reaching out to whānau to ensure their perspectives, knowledge and experiences are integrated into systems that will weave a more culturally responsive and inclusive pathway for Māori, and as Māori. It is paramount that schools work collaboratively with whānau when developing and co-constructing their curriculum. Whānau highlighted the importance of integrating a dual-curriculum covering both te ao Māori and te ao Pākehā rather than the very mono cultural education they had received as learners in these same schools. Whānau believed that this would go some way to ensuring Māori children are able to experience Māori topics at school. However, they

also understood how this would be taught and by whom needed to be prioritised and well-resourced if it was to be meaningful and more than yet another exercise in ticking someone's box. Whānau also expressed that schools needed to review teaching pedagogy and practice to ensure teacher practice is responsive to the learning potential of Māori rather than just working from a deficit position, perceived or otherwise. Schools needed to reinforce the importance of teaching pedagogies that engage Māori children and enable children to be strong and confident in their culture, language and identity.

Ensuring that mana ōrite is reflected in and across schools must also be filtered down and out from the school's leadership to include all staff including the person at the front desk. School leaders need to reflect and question what they are doing to ensure that the mana of Māori students and whānau is recognised, valued and respected in all of these various school roles. Treating children and whānau how they themselves want to be treated is crucial. This means addressing the way staff speak at and towards Māori children and whānau at times. The tone in peoples' voices, the racism through the negative sarcasm and remarks made towards Māori children, and the categorising of Māori through negative stereotyping is an ongoing issue that our Māori children and whānau face on an almost daily basis. Before positive relationships can be established schools and their staff and Board of Trustees need to seek appropriate expertise to reflect on their own cultural competencies so that they can truly begin to work more collaboratively with, and for, Māori children and whānau.

The question was also raised as to why schools were not connecting to, or working alongside schools where Māori children are engaged and are achieving education success as Māori. Whānau made reference to kura kaupapa Māori and Rotorua Boys High School and expressed the importance that schools within the Kāhui Ako should be working with these schools to implement systems that these schools have in place that show how and why they are doing well for Māori children and whānau. It is crucial schools are revisiting their systems and policies to ensure they are catering for Māori, as Māori.

Another recommendation was about schools finding ways to report not just on achievement outcomes but also on achieving education success, as Māori. Whānau expressed the

importance of wanting schools to be able to explain how they record Māori achievement as Māori, and what this looks like across the Kāhui Ako.

Teacher level response

If Māori children are to be provided with a more positive and encouraging education to engage and succeed to their fullest potential as Māori, whānau talked about the need for many teachers to change their deficit thinking about Māori. A particularly distressing example that was raised by whānau was that of a Māori child being accused of cheating when making progress in learning. Not only does this highlight the deficit thinking of some teachers, it also reinforces their low expectations of Māori children. This is concerning due to the ongoing challenges that Māori children face when they feel that their teachers see them as failures because they are Māori. Rather than dumbing down the curriculum this often means having higher expectations and challenging Māori students to engage and achieve to their full potential. This is more likely to happen when Māori children have been invited to contribute their ideas to the learning and they are able to use their own cultural toolkits to engage with new learning. Whānau suggested that too often Māori children are still made to feel dumb and this can crush their mana, therefore causing disengagement from learning.

How often are teachers reflecting and challenging their own teaching practice? If teachers are not making a positive difference for their Māori learners, questions need to be asked as to why not? Are teachers aware of the knowledge and experiences that Māori children bring to the classroom? Do teachers provide opportunities for Māori children to lead the learning and share their knowledge? How often are teachers co-constructing the learning with Māori children to ensure they have a voice? Are teachers inviting whānau in to share their experiences and knowledge? Questions need to be asked to ensure Māori children and whānau are participating in and contributing to an engaging and enjoyable educational journey (Ministry of Education, 2013).

Conclusion

This research has been immensely rewarding in that it provided me with opportunities to engage with the experiences and perspectives of Māori whānau to better understand

whether they believed their children were enjoying and achieving education success, as Māori and what they thought about this. While in many respects whānau confirmed my own experiences as a Māori mother and teacher, this research does provide some valuable insights into what schools in this Kāhui Ako, and other Kāhui Ako, could potentially do to address, reduce and remove the ongoing challenges and disparities Māori children and whānau face in education.

Whānau identified relationships as one of the main concerns affecting Māori children enjoying and achieving education success as Māori, and they described what these needed to look like. Unfortunately, as we first learned from Culture Speaks (Bishop & Berryman, 2006), it is crucial that schools work with Māori whānau to develop a more reciprocal relationship where power is shared. Reflecting on what mana orite, whānautanga and manaakitanga look like, and how they are implemented within these schools across the Kāhui Ako is also vital to ensure action is taken and addressed.

Another area of concern from whānau was that school leaders and teachers must want to change if Māori potential is to be recognised, acknowledged and capitalised upon. The deficit position many leaders and teachers currently hold must be addressed to ensure schools are committing to make the change that they often want out of schooling for their own family. Leaders and teachers need to challenge themselves to change their thinking and take the actions that are required, and this needs to be across the Kāhui Ako. The voices of whānau expressed that they want to help within schools, they want to be invited and included, however schools need to let them in and this requires a different power relationship. Schools must be making more of an effort to work together with whānau to ensure a focus is more towards unity then a 'them and us' approach.

As Māori whānau we hope that the perspectives and experiences shared within this research are valued by school leaders and teachers across this Kāhui Ako, and that action to resolve and ensure all Māori children enjoy and achieve education success, as Māori is at the forefront of the education systems within these schools.

Unless school leaders and teachers believe they have to change, then Māori will continue to get what we have always got. That is not good enough for our whānau and nor is it good enough for yours. Together we can make this happen.

GLOSSARY OF MĀORI VOCABULARY

Māori	English
Ako	Reciprocal, two-way teaching/learning
Ākonga	Learners
Aotearoa	New Zealand
Arataki	To guide or to lead
Hapū	Sub-tribe
Harakeke	Weaving
Hauora	Wellbeing
Hoha	Nuisance
Hui	Meeting
Hui Taumata Mātauranga	National Conference – Māori Leadership
Iwi	Tribe
Kāhui Ako	Community of Learning
Kai	Food
Ka Hikitia	To step up, to lift up
Kanohi-ki-te-Kanohi	Face to face
Kapa haka	Cultural performing arts
Kaumātua	Elders
Kaupapa	Topic
Kawa	Protocol/customs
Kete	Basket
Kohanga Reo	Māori immersion preschool
Kotahitanga	Unity
Kōrero	Conversation
Korowai	Cloak
Kura Kaupapa Māori	School operating under Māori customs
Mahi	Work
Mahi tahi	Collaboration/Working together
Mana	Strength/integrity
Manaakitanga	Caring

Mana Motuhake	Self-determination/Independence
Mana Orite	Interdependent relationships
Mana whenua	People from the local tribe and sub-tribe
Māoritanga	Māori culture
Marae noho	Marae sleepover/stayover
Mau rakau	Māori weaponry
Mauri	Wellbeing
Mihi	Greeting/Tribal introduction
Mōrena	Good morning
Pākehā	People of European descent/Non-Māori
Poi	A light ball on a string, swung & twirled
Rangatahi	Youth
Taha hinengaro	Mental wellbeing
Taha tinana	Physical wellbeing
Taha wairua	Spiritual wellbeing
Taha whānau	Family wellbeing
Tamariki	Children
Tangata Whenua	Indigenous People of New Zealand
Tautoko	Support
Te Ao Māori	Māori worldview
Te Reo Māori	Māori language
Te Tiriti o Waitangi	Treaty of Waitangi
Tika	Correct
Tikanga	Protocol, customs
Tino Rangatiratanga	Self-determination
Tuakana-Teina	Peer support - younger/older
Tupuna	Ancestors
Tutu	Mischievous/naughty
Waiata	Singing
Wairua	Spiritual feeling
Waka ama	Outrigger canoe
Wānanga	Gatherings - seminar, conference

Wero	Challenge
Whaikōrero	Formal speech
Whakāro	Thoughts
Whakamā	Shy/embarrassed
Whakapapa	Identity/Family lineage
Whakataukii	Proverb
Whānau	Family
Whanaungatanga	Family Connectedness - relationships

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Appendix A

Participant Information Sheet

Respondent Name

Address

Date

Tena Koe (Name of whānau participant)

Nga mihi nui ki a koe.

I am currently a student at Waikato University completing my Masters in Education. To complete my thesis project, I am conducting a research investigation based on '*Exploring Māori whānau perspectives of the extent to which their children are enjoying and achieving education success as Māori across one Community of Learning/Kāhui Ako'*.

I aim to work alongside whānau across one Community of Learning/Kāhui Ako to gain an understanding of their perspectives, their aspirations and the education for their children to enjoy and achieve education success as Māori. The collection of data will be through the form of a semi-structured group focused interview. The results of the research project will raise an awareness as to what our Māori whānau within our learning community would like to see implemented into the schooling and education for their children.

This research project will affirm good teaching practice that is working to engage and raise achievement success for Māori students in mainstream education, along with identifying practice (teaching and leadership) that can be strengthened across one Community of Learning/Kāhui Ako.

I am interested in your experiences and what you would see as the biggest impact towards engaging and raising achievement success for our Māori students in mainstream education.

I want to stress that your participation in this research project is voluntary and all efforts to protect your identity and keep all information confidential will be taken.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. If you choose to participate please sign and date the consent form and return it to me within the provided self-addressed envelope. I look forward to working alongside you and learning about your experiences within this kaupapa. Your participation will be greatly appreciated.

Noho ora mai

Kind Regards

Sharon Horne.

Appendix B

Participant consent form:

34a Macville Road

Mt Maunganui

TAURANGA

NAME OF PROJECT:

Whānau perspectives on how they think their children are enjoying and achieving education success as Māori in English medium education.

FULL NAME OF WHĀNAU PARTICIPANT:

I/We _____ agree to participating in the above research project to support the kaupapa of 'Māori whānau perspectives to ensure Māori students are enjoying and achieving education success as Māori'.

I understand that my identity will remain confidential throughout and on completion of the research project.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

INTERVIEWER: Sharon Horne

Appendix C

Proposed interview questions

The participants will be provided with the following questions:

Research Questions:

In New Zealand the goal of the Māori education policy Ka Hikitia is '*Maori students enjoying and achieving education success as Māori*'.

1. As a parent of Māori children what does enjoying and achieving education success as Māori mean to you?
2. As a parent of Māori children what has been your experience of their education to date?

- What has worked well? (Keep doing)
- What has not worked well? (Stop doing)

3. What opportunities might schools explore to increase the potential of your children enjoying and achieving education success as Māori? (Start doing)
4. How condiment do you feel as a parent of Māori children to ask for what you want in education for your child?

- If not, what gets in the road?

5. What support would be most effective in helping you have these conversations with your child's school?