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25 and 26 November**



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FOREWORD

Dr Neda Sal
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Whitireia and WelTec

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The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand, Whitireia and WelTec had the pleasure of co-hosting the 2021 ITP Research Symposium online on 25 and 26 November 2021. The theme for the 2021 symposium was aumangea (resilience), a concept that resonated across the sector through the multiplicities of change and the realities of Covid-19. The event was originally intended to be a kanohi ki te kanohi symposium on site at the Whitireia Campus in Porirua, but as with many conferences and symposia, Covid-19 measures saw it being transformed into a totally online affair. We were humbled to have hosted over 300 delegates and just over 130 abstracts from experienced, emerging and new researchers from diverse discipline areas. The presenters were geographically dispersed across Aotearoa, from the Far North all the way to the Deep South, but committed in their enthusiasm for and appreciation of research even during a worldwide pandemic, which is a true testimony of the 'resilience' of our researchers across the sector during testing times. It was also great to see strong representation of researchers particularly from EIT, Toi Ohomai, Unitec and MIT, and the hosting institutes, among others.

We strongly believe that we are at the dawn of a new age in vocational education, and this, too, is reflective in rangahau and research. In 2023, we will be all one within Te Pūkenga, which will be a national polytechnic with the mandate to bring Te Tiriti to life, to make a difference in the lives of communities, to provide effective vocational journeys for those seeking a different educational pathway. To truly effect this vision, Te Pūkenga needs a strong culture that embraces rangahau and research.

Symposia provide platforms for this to occur, and opportunities to share ideas, to collaborate, to learn and to receive feedback are, without doubt, at the heart of why we host such events. The strength and value of research lives in its collaborative and applied nature; both values that the sector is deeply committed to. The diverse nature of the discipline areas of the papers in this publication are an indication of the comprehensive scope of cover in the ITP sector and the strong applied role the sector plays in the various industries. This publication consists of research papers under the following categories: Resilience

in Tertiary Education, Nursing Pedagogy and Professional Development, Resilience in the Workplace and Community, Organisational Behaviour and Culture. As expected, Covid-19 features strongly in the papers in this volume, and each presents original and valuable insights regarding the challenges, and thus the resilience demonstrated, during the Covid-19 pandemic in and among the various communities and industries. Moreover, in this snapshot edition, we can see the importance of rangahau and research alongside pedagogy, we can see how rangahau and research can aid in the navigation of change and in the decision-making process, and we can see that rangahau and research navigate a breadth and depth of practice.

While we hope this collection will have particular appeal to new readers in the ITP sector, we are confident that the volume will raise interest and encourage debate and dialogue among the regular readership of scholars and practitioners. We hope that you find the insights presented here as interesting and valuable as we have.

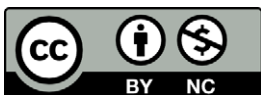
This is the first time an ITP research symposium has resulted in a peer-reviewed proceedings publication, made possible through collaboration and partnership with our colleagues at Unitec's publishing house ePress. Therefore, we would like to express special thanks to their amazing team of editors. We also extend thanks to Te Pūkenga and its network of ITP subsidiaries as the sponsors of the symposium who provided financial support. Finally, we also thank the anonymous peer-reviewers for their insightful remarks and suggestions, as they have played an important role in ensuring the quality of the scholarly work. Without this collegial service, research publishing would not be possible.

BLENDÉD LEARNING FOR ACUPUNCTURE AND TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE

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<https://doi.org/10.34074/proc.2205002>

Resilience in tertiary education



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ABSTRACT

The world is experiencing unprecedented times for education with the global pandemic. New ways of learning, even for practical skills like acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), need to be developed and implemented if skilled TCM practitioners are to enter this field of practice. Because TCM and acupuncture require many hours of clinical practice within an undergraduate degree, a completely online delivery mode is unsuitable. However, the theoretical components of the degree can be presented online.

In this research project, data was gathered from an in-class survey about students' perceptions of blended learning (BL), completed by all the students at a private tertiary institution delivering BL for acupuncture and TCM.

Preliminary results suggest that these students display a high level of resilience in coping with uncertain delivery methods and are willing to adapt to whatever mode of delivery is available. Many students use multiple platforms, multiple devices and multiple ways of learning. The information will contribute to how TCM schools can improve their performance in educating TCM practitioners of the future, especially in the current uncertain times.

KEYWORDS

Blended learning, traditional Chinese medicine, acupuncture, pandemic

INTRODUCTION

Clinical studies form part of every health qualification requiring a practical skills component. Clinical studies in acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), have always been regarded as a challenge when teaching a blended model (Coyne et al., 2018). As a first step in embarking on the journey of taking such a course into blended learning (BL) mode, a necessary step in addressing the issues that have arisen due to the global pandemic, students' perceptions of BL have been addressed in this study.

In the following sections, the concept of BL is introduced, the background to the study is given, the research questions addressed, and the research method is described. This is followed by the results section, where the data analysis is presented, and the discussion section, in which the results of the study are compared to findings from the literature. Finally, a conclusion containing the recommendations from this study is presented.

Blended learning concept

There is no single definition of BL (Hrastinski, 2019; Bowyer & Chambers, 2017). The most commonly cited articles for BL definitions are by Garrison and Kanuka (2004), and Graham (2006). Graham defines BL as follows: "Blended learning systems combine face-to-face instruction with computer-mediated instruction" (p. 5). Garrison and Kanuka define BL as "the thoughtful integration of classroom face-to-face learning experiences with online learning experiences" (p. 96).

BL provides multiple approaches to teaching that integrate three main modes of delivery:

- Face to face – consists of the classroom setting where the course content is taught in person, either in groups or to individuals (Apandi & Raman, 2020).
- Flexible – allows learners the freedom to choose how, what and where they learn (Denton, 2020).
- Distance learning – consists of the physical separation of learner and tutor (Khogali et al., 2011).

BL uses technology to bind different modes of delivery to create a flexible learning opportunity, benefiting both face-to-face and distance learners.

BL also integrates a range of teaching methods and technologies within a single delivery mode to enhance learning outcomes.

BL ensures tutors/teachers still maintain responsibility for:

- Content structuring and presentation.
- Supporting learning.
- Organising social learning among students (Kintu et al., 2017).

The world is experiencing unprecedented times for education with the global pandemic. New ways of learning, even for practical skills like acupuncture and TCM, need to be developed and implemented if skilled practitioners are to enter this field. Because TCM and acupuncture have many hours of clinical practice within the undergraduate degree, a completely online delivery mode is unsuitable. However, the theoretical components of the degree can be presented online. This study explores how BL is perceived and what influences the decision of students to enrol in BL programs in TCM. The information will contribute to how TCM schools can improve their performance in educating TCM practitioners of the future, especially in the current uncertain times.

Research overview

The first research question is:

- What are the factors that contribute to the successful implementation of blended learning for acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine?

The second research question is:

- What are students' perceptions of the delivery of blended learning for acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine?

Secondary data for the first question was gathered from a systematic literature review using the PRISMA method of finding, excluding, including and classifying peer-reviewed research articles (PRISMA, 2021). These articles were sourced from the following databases: PubMed, EBSCO, Proquest, and Google Scholar. Fifty-seven papers were included and were analysed thematically. Peer-reviewed articles from 2016–2021, written in English, were considered. Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis have been used to present the results.

For the second research question, an in-class survey was collected from all students at the school. This decision was made because the school currently offers one, undergraduate, degree with, at present, 76 students enrolled from the first year to the fourth year. The survey was divided into four sections: demographic data, student preferences for learning mode, learning habits and surroundings, and communication preferences. Data was entered into an Excel spreadsheet and analysed with descriptive statistics.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Four major themes were identified in the literature on BL, as shown in Figure 1. These were: deficits and prospects (Medina, 2018), critical factors (Mozelius & Hettiarachchi, 2017), effectiveness (Kintu et al., 2017), and best practice (Margolis et al., 2017). Prospects include enhanced learning and flexible features (Medina, 2018); and deficits include students' awareness of online materials available for learning, and both student and staff training. Critical factors include: appropriate technology for BL; course outcomes compared to in-class learning, collaboration and social interaction; course design; update of technology-enhanced distance courses; multi-modal overloading; and economic considerations (Mozelius & Hettiarachchi, 2017). BL effectiveness includes the following factors: the BL environment; the use of technology; learning characteristics and/or background (demographic factors); online design features; and learning outcomes (Kintu et al., 2017). Best practice includes: setting the scene; consistency; accountability for online activities; feedback; and user-friendly technology (Margolis et al., 2017).

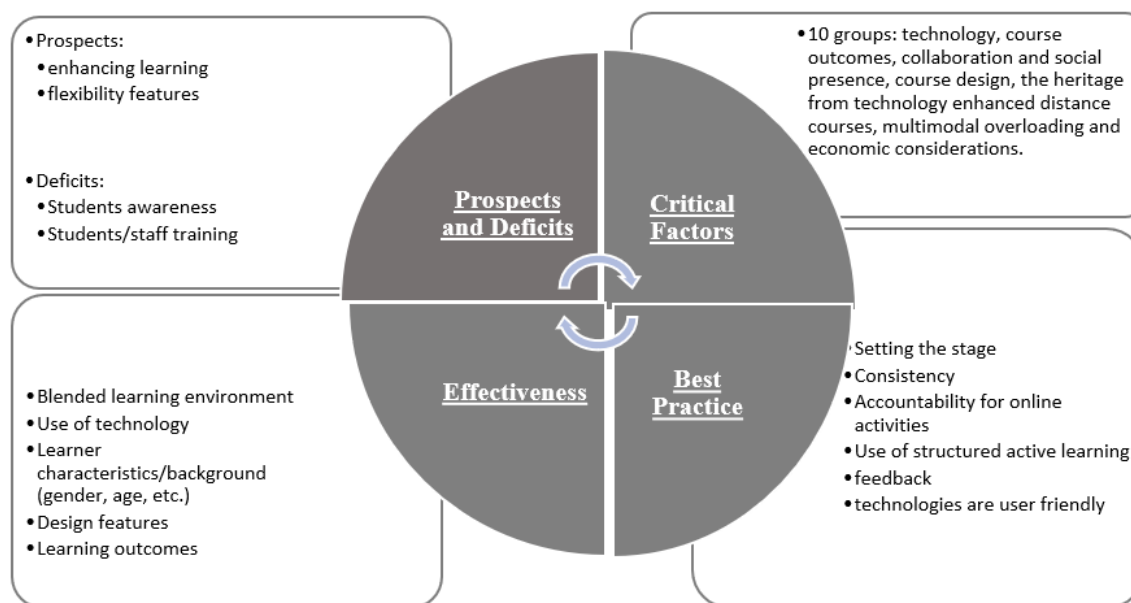


Figure 1. Literature themes.

Prospects and deficits of blended learning in higher education

The main benefits of implementing a BL programme include the possibility of offering learners additional, carefully designed and varied learning materials, available at any time and place (flexibility feature) to enhance their learning practices and to achieve specific learning objectives through the support of an online medium (Medina, 2018). Thus, BL is seen as a digital-literacy strategy that supports student and staff development, and that enables students to take advantage of resources, not only at technological but also at pedagogical levels, namely community-building and collaborative learning opportunities (Armellini & Rodriguez, 2021).

One of the principal challenges of implementing a BL programme is making students aware of the online materials that are available, as well as training them, and the staff, in the use of these materials and effective approaches to autonomous learning (Medina, 2018).

Ten categories of critical factors include: technology; didactics (pedagogy, instructional design and teacher role); course outcomes; collaboration; social presence; course design; synchronicity vs asynchronicity; background of technology-enhanced distance-learning courses; multimodal overloading; trends and hypes; and economy. To

maintain viability in times of crisis it is important for tertiary institutions to be economic and cost efficient. In dealing with government pandemic mandates, forward planning and investment in BL are required, both of which come with the risks associated with uncertainty (Mozelius & Hettiarachchi, 2017).

Blended learning effectiveness

An effective BL environment is necessary for undertaking innovative pedagogical approaches using technology in teaching and learning. An examination of learner characteristics/background (such as gender and age), design features and learning outcomes are factors that can help inform the design of effective learning environments involving face-to-face sessions and online aspects (Houssein et al., 2018; Kintu et al., 2017; Li et al., 2020).

Best practice for the use of blended learning

Best practices for the use of BL were identified from focus groups (Margolis et al., 2017): setting the stage; consistency when team teaching; timeliness in posting materials; time spent on task; accountability for online activities; use of structured active learning; instructor use of feedback on student preparation; incorporation of student feedback into the course; short reviews of online material during class; and ensuring technologies are user friendly. Putting these best practices into effect for teaching clinical skills in acupuncture and TCM involves the use of coaching cards (Watsjold & Zhong, 2020), a BL toolkit including teaching and assessment strategies (Power & Cole, 2017), working with virtual patients (Lehmann et al., 2013), gaining knowledge from a students' value e-survey (Gormley et al., 2009), and using videos online (Coyne et al., 2018). BL can also be enhanced by virtual field trips, as undertaken in China (Li et al., 2020).

METHODS

In this research project conducted in a private tertiary institution teaching acupuncture and TCM, students' perceptions of BL were gathered from an in-class survey. The survey had a 100% response rate, from a total of 76 students (n = 76).

Survey questions

A critical part of the survey design was to ensure the questions covered a wide range of information about the students. A total of 22 questions were designed to find out more about learning preferences with a focus on BL. Questions were divided into five sections.

Demographics

These questions targeted age group, gender, year of study, and the number of papers in which students were enrolled. Based on the common learning issues, questions were included about the student's English-language background, number of years and place of learning English. Time spent on learning is a known problem in adult education, so students were asked how much paid employment per week they did (Phillips et al., 2016).

BL activities and preferences

The second set of questions was focused on what the students understood BL to be and their preferences among the following activities: videos/webinars, forums, quizzes, learning games and role play. Students were asked about prior experience of BL, its benefits and disadvantages. Reasons for choosing BL classes included convenience, flexibility, reduced need to travel, or simply that it is a required option. Responses concerning benefits included cost-effectiveness, consistency of activities, the convenience of 24/7 access, and immediacy of feedback. An important aspect of this study was in understanding what methods students find useful for BL. Options relating

to the important components for BL were easy access to the learning platform, course design, clear session instructions, consistency in layout, and teacher support (Pickering & Swinnerton, 2019; Power & Cole, 2017).

Learning habits and environment

Students were asked about their preferences for studying in groups, individually, or a combination of both. As some BL learning was found to happen at home, questions were asked about that environment; available study space (shared or separate); and the technology used (phones, laptops, tablets or desktops). Most commonly used resources were books (personal or library), e-books, printed papers, audiobooks and video clips.

Communication

As communication is a key aspect of learning (Anderson, 2017), students were asked if their preferred practice with fellow students and teachers was through Moodle, face to face in the classroom, text or mobile apps.

Barriers to learning

Students were asked about whether they experienced personal barriers to learning that included having enough time for work and family, financial issues, and level of English language.

RESULTS

TABLE 1. DEMOGRAPHICS.

SQ	Demographics									
1	Year of study	Year 1 39.47%		Year 2 11.84%		Year 3 15.79%		Year 4 32.89%		
2	Courses enrolled	1 1.32%		2 3.95%		3 5.26%		4 89.47%		
3	Gender	Male 25%				Female 75%				
4	Age	18–30 35.5%		31–40 25%		41–50 21.1%		51–60 12%		>60 7%
5	Employment (hours per week)	None 48.7%		1–20 39.5%		21–35 9%		>36 3%		
6	Country born	New Zealand 20%		China 39%		South Korea 16%		India 0		Other 25%
7	English first/second lang	ESL 75%				EFL 25%				
8	Years English	<5 12%		6–10 32%		11–15 20%		>15 36%		
9	Where	PreS* 12%		PriS* 41%		SecS* 36%		LanS* 9%		Other 2%

* PreS = Preschool, PriS = Primary School, SecS = Secondary School, LanS = Language School

As shown in Table 1, this small private tertiary school in New Zealand has mainly full-time students (94.73%), enrolled in three or more papers each semester. Seventy-five percent of students are female. Most students are aged 18–50 (81.6%), 48.7% of students do not work and 39.5% work 1–20 hours per week. Seventy-five percent

of these students have English as a second language and 77% of the ESL students studied English at primary or secondary school.

TABLE 2. RESULTS.

SQ	RESULTS							
10	Activities	Video 72%	Forum 38%	Quiz 32%	Learning games 47%	Roleplay 37%	Other 20%	
11	Blended learning before	Yes 63.16%		No 14.47%		Not Sure 17.11%		Don't know 5.26%
12	Choice	Convenience 55%		Flexibility 66%		Required 21%		Can't travel 16%
13	Benefits	Cost-effective 34%		Consistent activities 51%		24/7 access 58%		Immediate feedback 26%
14	Disadvantages	Tech problems 43%		Info overload 33%		Cheating 22%		Self-directed 46%
15	Useful	Moodle easy 78%	Well- defined course 47%	Session instructions 39%	Consistent layout 39%	Good comms 49%	Teacher ans qs 50%	Other 2%
16	Study	Self 20%		Group 4%		Both 64%		Not sure 10.67%
17	Home study	Own study 86.67%		Shared study 6.67%		No study 5.33%		Other 1.33%
18	Technical equipment	Phone 55%		Laptop 90%		Tablet 32%		Desktop 25%
19	Learning resources	Own book 76%	Library book 51%	E-book 59%	Printed papers 62%	Audio books 16%	Video clips 47%	Other 0
20	Communicate students	Moodle 17%		Face to face 89%		Txt 63%		WhatsApp 32%
21	Communicate teachers	Moodle 54%		Face to face 86%		Txt 24%		WhatsApp 7%
22	Barriers	Time (work) 43%		Time (family) 51%		Money 30%		English 39%
								Other 14%

As shown in the survey (Appendix 1), students gave as many responses as were applicable. Preferred learning activities were: video clips (72%); learning games (47%); forums (38%); roleplays (37%); quizzes (32%); and other (20%); (Q10, Table 2). Sixty-six percent of students reported that flexibility was important when choosing a BL course, 55% reported that convenience was important, 21% noted that BL was a requirement, 16% reported that they were not able to travel, and 4% stated that they had other reasons.

Of all respondents, 63.16% indicated that they had experienced BL before, 14.47% indicated they had not, 22.37% either did not know or were not sure whether they had (Q11, Table 2). Benefits of BL included 24/7 access (58%), consistent activities (51%), cost-effectiveness (34%), and immediate feedback (26%), (Q13, Table 2). Disadvantages perceived by students were self-directed learning (46%), technical problems (43%), information overload (33%), cheating (22%), and other reasons (11%), (Q14, Table 2). Features of BL that students found useful were: Moodle was easy to use (78%); teachers answered questions (50%); there was good communication (49%); the courses were well defined (47%); session instructions were clear (39%); and there was a consistent layout (39%).

The next set of questions concerned students' study environment (Q16–19, Table 2). Sixty-four percent preferred to study both in a group and by themselves, 20% preferred to study by themselves, 10.67% were not sure how they preferred to study, 4% liked to study in a group, and 1.33% stated 'other.' In terms of space, 86.67% of students had a separate study at home, 6.67% shared a study, 5.33% had none, and 1.33% opted for 'other.' In terms of technology, most students used a laptop (90%), 55% used a phone, 32% used a tablet, and 25% used a desktop computer. All students had at least one piece of equipment, with many using multiple devices. For other learning resources, 76% owned course texts, 62% used printed articles, 59% used e-books, 51% used library books, 47% used video clips and 16% used audiobooks. Many students used multiple resources. Questions 20 and 21 (Table 2) demonstrate that face to face was the preferred method of communication with both fellow students (89%) and teachers (86%). Fifty-four percent of students communicated with teachers on Moodle and 17% of students communicated with other students on Moodle. Texting was used by 63% of students to communicate with other students and 24% with teachers. WhatsApp was used by 32% of students to communicate with other students and 7% with teachers. Twenty-one percent of students used other methods of communication with other students (email, WeChat, KakaoTalk), and 34% communicated with teachers through these methods. Time was selected as the greatest barrier to learning (43% for work and 51% for family). English was a barrier for 39% of students and money was an issue for 30%; 14% selected 'other,' which related mainly to family issues.

DISCUSSION

The students in this study favoured videos and learning games over other choices, which mirrors the findings of Coyne et al. (2018), that interactive video quizzes and the ability to play and pause the recording fostered flexible learning opportunities. Convenience and flexibility were the main reasons these students chose a BL course, which is also supported by the findings of Coyne et al. (2018). Students surveyed in this study believed consistent activities and 24/7 access were the main benefits of BL. In a study by Gormley et al. (2009), health students reported that good technical access had a positive effect on clinical learning. Technical problems and self-directed learning were the main disadvantages for these students in a BL course, supporting a finding in Malik et al. (2017). These students found Moodle, the online platform used to deliver BL, and the fact that teachers answered questions promptly, were the main factors contributing to its benefits, as corroborated in other research on BL (Kintu et al., 2017; Venkatesh et al., 2020).

Most students in this survey preferred to work in groups. Other authors have noted that students found that working in groups facilitated their learning (Albarrak et al., 2021; Malik et al., 2017). As stated in the literature (Albarrak et al., 2021), this group also preferred face-to-face interaction. All students had at least one device for use in BL. Most used laptops, the second-most popular device being the mobile phone. In a study by Gormley et al. (2009), students reported confidence in using IT equipment in BL activities.

Students participating in this study preferred overwhelmingly to communicate face to face with both staff and fellow students. From the results of the survey and as seen in the literature (Albarrak et al., 2021; Langedård et al., 2021; Venkatesh et al., 2020), there is a real need for students to interact socially.

Among this cohort of students, 75% of whom have English as a second language, English is a barrier to learning. Students also found that balancing time between work, family and study was a barrier to learning, even with the flexibility offered by BL. Another barrier to learning was having enough money to study. As has been found by others (Kintu et al., 2017; Venkatesh et al., 2020), family and social support contribute positively to the success of BL; equally, a balance between study and work can drive its effectiveness.

Limitations and further research

The major limitation of this study is the small sample size. Even though there was a 100% response rate, students numbered only 76. Further research could include analysing the sample group regarding gender, age, ethnic origin and English-language proficiency, and to embed the study in the Community of Inquiry theoretical framework

(Garrison et al., 2010), which posits three contributors to student learning: social presence, cognitive presence and teaching presence. In BL, further research is required to establish how social presence can be included when students are learning in isolation at home.

CONCLUSION

The first research question – What are the factors that contribute to the successful implementation of blended learning for acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine? – has been addressed by examining relevant literature. Successful BL is dependent on technical infrastructure, course design, flexibility, 24/7 access, a high level of teacher involvement in providing guidance and relevant and immediate feedback, a willingness for staff to innovate, and for students to engage.

The second research question – What are students' perceptions of the delivery of blended learning for acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine? – was answered from the in-class survey. This cohort of students enjoyed 24/7 feedback from teachers, the flexibility offered by BL, 24/7 access, working in groups, the structure offered by online courses, and the ease of use provided by the online learning platform. These students also had a great need to interact socially with others face-to-face. Barriers to learning were English language, time (family and work), and finances.

Results suggest that these students have displayed a high level of resilience in coping with uncertain delivery methods and are willing to use whatever mode of delivery is available. Many students use multiple platforms, multiple devices, and engage in multiple ways of learning.

This study has shown that the online learning forced upon tertiary students in this school has both advantages and disadvantages. Recommendations from this study are the need for subject-specific English language support, reliable technology to support BL, the maintenance of reliable 24/7 access to online learning materials and infrastructure, and innovation in online practical subjects.

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APPENDIX 1

Blended Learning Survey

In the first section of the survey, you will be asked questions about who you are, how long you have been studying, where you live, and from which country you come. The purpose of this survey is to find out your learning preferences, particularly about Blended Learning. Blended Learning means that learning happens both in the classroom led by a teacher and outside of the classroom in your own time directed by yourself. This survey should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete. This is a voluntary activity and you do not need to complete this survey. If you wish to complete the survey, please tick this box .

No.	Survey Questions				
<i>The questions in this section are about who you are.</i>					
S1	In what year of study are you?				
	<input type="checkbox"/> First Year	<input type="checkbox"/> Second Year	<input type="checkbox"/> Third Year	<input type="checkbox"/> Fourth Year	
S2	How many courses are you enrolled in this semester?				
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	
S3	What is your gender?				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Female	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't want to state	
S4	In which age group are you?				
	<input type="checkbox"/> 18-30	<input type="checkbox"/> 31-40	<input type="checkbox"/> 41-50	<input type="checkbox"/> 51-60	<input type="checkbox"/> 61+
S5	How much paid -employment do you do outside of your studies?				
	<input type="checkbox"/> no work	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-20 hours/ week	<input type="checkbox"/> 21-35 hours/ week	<input type="checkbox"/> >36 hours/week	
S6	Where were you born?				
	<input type="checkbox"/> New Zealand	<input type="checkbox"/> China	<input type="checkbox"/> South Korea	<input type="checkbox"/> India	<input type="checkbox"/> Other please state
S7	Is English your first language?				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No			
S8	If no, for how many years have you studied English?				
	<input type="checkbox"/> < 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 6-10 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 11-15 years	<input type="checkbox"/> > 16 years	
S9	If English is not your first language, where did you first study English?				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Preschool	<input type="checkbox"/> Primary school	<input type="checkbox"/> Secondary school	<input type="checkbox"/> Language School	<input type="checkbox"/> Other please state
<i>The next set of questions is about how you prefer to learn. There are questions about Blended Learning (happens both in the classroom led by a teacher, and outside of the classroom in your own time directed by yourself), Online learning (only online), Flexible learning (no fixed pattern), Face-to-face learning (in the classroom), and Flipped learning (traditional teaching flipped – student-centred learning).</i>					
S10	What blended learning activities do you like?				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Videos or Webinars	<input type="checkbox"/> Forums	<input type="checkbox"/> Quizzes	<input type="checkbox"/> Learning games	<input type="checkbox"/> Roleplay or interviews online or in the classroom
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other please state				

S11	Have you had any blended learning classes in your education so far?				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know	
S12	Why would you choose a blended learning course? (tick as many as apply)				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Convenience	<input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility	<input type="checkbox"/> Required	<input type="checkbox"/> Can't travel	<input type="checkbox"/> Other please state
S13	What do you believe the benefits are for using Blended Learning? (tick as many as apply)				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Cost-effective	<input type="checkbox"/> Consistent activities	<input type="checkbox"/> 24/7 access	<input type="checkbox"/> Get immediate feedback	<input type="checkbox"/> Other please state
S14	What do you believe the disadvantages of blended learning are? (tick as many as apply)				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Technology problems	<input type="checkbox"/> Information overload	<input type="checkbox"/> Cheating	<input type="checkbox"/> Self-directed learning (study by yourself)	<input type="checkbox"/> Other please state
S15	What do you find useful with blended learning? (tick as many as apply)				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Learning platform easy to access (Moodle)	<input type="checkbox"/> Well-defined course	<input type="checkbox"/> Session instructions	<input type="checkbox"/> Consistent layout	<input type="checkbox"/> Good Communication (Clear instructions on what to do)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher answers my questions	<input type="checkbox"/> Other please state			
<i>The questions in this section are about your learning habits and surroundings</i>					
S16	Do you prefer to study by yourself or with a study group?				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure	<input type="checkbox"/> Other please state
S17	Where do you usually study at home?				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Own study	<input type="checkbox"/> Shared study	<input type="checkbox"/> No study space	<input type="checkbox"/> Other please state	
S18	What technical equipment do you use at home? (tick all that apply)				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Phone	<input type="checkbox"/> Laptop	<input type="checkbox"/> Tablet	<input type="checkbox"/> Desktop	<input type="checkbox"/> None
S19	What learning resources do you use? (tick all that apply)				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Own book	<input type="checkbox"/> School library book	<input type="checkbox"/> E-book	<input type="checkbox"/> Printed papers	<input type="checkbox"/> Audiobooks
	<input type="checkbox"/> Video clips	<input type="checkbox"/> Other please state			
<i>The questions in this section are about how you communicate.</i>					
S20	How do you communicate with other students? (tick all that apply)				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Moodle	<input type="checkbox"/> At school face to face	<input type="checkbox"/> Txt	<input type="checkbox"/> WhatsApp	<input type="checkbox"/> Other please state
S21	How do you communicate with your teachers? (tick all that apply)				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Moodle	<input type="checkbox"/> At school face to face	<input type="checkbox"/> Txt	<input type="checkbox"/> WhatsApp	<input type="checkbox"/> Other please state
S22	What are the barriers for you to study? (tick all that apply?)				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Time (work)	<input type="checkbox"/> Time (family)	<input type="checkbox"/> Money	<input type="checkbox"/> English	<input type="checkbox"/> Other please state

STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT IN THE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AND POLYTECHNICS (ITP) SECTOR IN NEW ZEALAND

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Resilience in tertiary education



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ABSTRACT

The paradigm shift in learning from a behaviourist to constructivist approach has changed the focus from traditional learning to the development of an interactive learning environment in both the classroom and online settings. An interactive learning environment encourages student engagement with educators, peers and the course content, thus contributing to greater academic success. With the globalisation of education, educators face the challenge of engaging international students (IS) in their teaching and learning environment. IS face significant academic, sociocultural and environmental barriers that inhibit their classroom and online engagement. The purpose of this study is to identify strategies that would help enhance IS academic engagement in the Institute of Technology and Polytechnics (ITP) sector in New Zealand. This paper systematically reviewed existing literature on IS engagement in tertiary business education. The emphasis was on identifying educationally purposeful activities that educators in ITPs can adopt in the classroom and online environment, to influence the behavioural dimension of learner engagement. Three well-known strategies, designing a blended learning environment, effective student–staff interactions, and designing a collaborative learning environment, were identified to enhance student engagement in the tertiary education context. The shift to emergency online teaching during the Covid-19 pandemic has increased the challenges educators face to engage IS. Actionable strategies for educators to engage learners in the online teaching and learning environment are discussed. Knowledge of these strategies will enhance the efficiency of educators to facilitate an interactive learning environment that fosters successful student engagement.

KEYWORDS

International students, learner engagement, engagement practices, ITP sector

INTRODUCTION

The paradigm shift in teaching and learning from the traditional behaviourist approach to the innovative constructivist approach (Nepal & Rogerson, 2020; Ullah & Anwar, 2020) has significantly influenced the learning environment since the early 1990s, in both classroom and online settings. This shift was initiated by Malcolm Knowles (1970), who argued that adult learning is different from children's learning and hence must be practised in different ways – the core difference being that adults profit more by directing their own learning (Illeris, 2018). It has been acknowledged that adult learners construct their own knowledge, as they build and develop their understanding through experience (Umida et al., 2020). The behaviourist approach is more educator-centred and learners are passive recipients of knowledge and information (Nepal & Rogerson, 2020; Illeris, 2018), whereas the constructivist approach is a learner-centred pedagogy where students actively participate in learning. Adopting a learner-centred approach requires the educator to engage the learners in such a way that they construct new knowledge by associating it with their previous experiences (Umida et al., 2020; Sharma & Poonam, 2016).

Student engagement

Many studies discuss the importance of student engagement in classroom and online learning environments. Student engagement is recognised as a key contributor to learning and academic success (Nepal & Rogerson, 2020;

Wang & BrckaLorenz, 2018). Engagement is linked to student success and academic achievement (Nkomo et al., 2021; Korobova & Starobin, 2015; Kahu et al., 2014). Empirical research reports a statistically significant relationship between student engagement and academic performance (Kearney & Maakrun, 2020). A supportive learning environment that facilitates engagement is found to influence the learning process (Kahu, 2013), enhance students' critical thinking skills (Carini et al., 2006), and support student retention (Bowden et al., 2019; Waldrop et al., 2019). It is also found to increase student perseverance (Khademi et al., 2018) and work readiness (Krause & Coates, 2008). The level of student engagement is also perceived as a valid indicator of institutional excellence as it is recognised as a meaningful contributor to student success (Axelson & Flick, 2010).

Despite the importance of engagement to student learning, development and success, it has been contended that it is a challenge to engage higher-education students and that this is an ongoing issue in institutions that provide higher education (Asif et al., 2021; Ullah & Anwar, 2020). Apart from the continual permeation and influence of online technologies on adult teaching and learning practices (Wong & Torrisi-Steele, 2015), the current Covid-19 situation has intensified the complexity educators face in engaging learners. Since the beginning of 2020, educators have had to shift to emergency online teaching and learning options to cater to learners who were equally as stressed with the unexpected transition to the online learning environment (Marinoni et al., 2020).

Internationalisation of education

Pre-Covid-19, higher education around the world was increasingly internationalised due to the growing mobility of students, who sought opportunities for further education in foreign nations (Ammigan & Laws, 2018; Fujita et al., 2017). These international students (IS) are defined as those students who move from their country of residence to other countries for the purpose of pursuing higher education (Shapiro et al., 2014). The IS population is identified as playing an active role in enhancing the internationalisation and globalisation of higher education and is posited as being essential to building a global society (Wekullo, 2019).

Researchers have identified 'push-pull' drivers that influence IS to pursue higher education in other countries (Cowley & Hyams-Ssekasi, 2018). The 'push' factors include the political, economic and social factors in the student's home country, while the 'pull' factors may be the destination factors including potential career or employment opportunities, higher-education institution reputation, and aggressive marketing strategies employed by institutions.

The intake of IS has been paused by the New Zealand Government since the end of March 2020 due to Covid-19 travel restrictions. However, the government is planning to relax the restrictions by mid-2022, based on criteria including students' vaccination status and the Covid-19 situation in their country of residence. This country's efficiency in handling the pandemic is posited to be seen as a 'pull' factor for IS to choose New Zealand as their host nation for higher education; the number of IS applying to study in New Zealand is presumed to increase from mid-2022. The expected increase in the number of IS post-Covid-19 intensifies the need to prepare a successful learning environment wherein IS not only achieve successful education outcomes but might also successfully contribute to the economic, social and cultural benefits of the country.

Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics ([ITP] currently Te Pūkenga) play a significant role in the tertiary education sector in New Zealand. This sector attracts a considerable number of IS to the various programmes it offers. According to statistics provided by the New Zealand Government, 3505 IS enrolled in ITPs in 2020 for graduate certificates and diploma programmes as against only 785 in universities. Though enrolments dropped in 2021 due to restrictions on international travel, ITPs still had higher enrolments than universities – 630 as against 460. Enrolments in certificate and diploma programmes were 1935 for ITPs compared to 265 in universities. This indicates that certificates and diplomas offered by ITPs attract more IS than universities (Education Counts, 2022).

The purpose of this review is to identify specific strategies to enhance IS academic engagement in the ITP sector, which educators can adopt both in the classroom and the online learning environment. This study will focus on the behavioural perspective of student engagement, where students and their institutions commit to educational

activities which lead to desired learning outcomes. The review begins with a detailed description of the background to the study. Next, the research methodology for the study is presented, followed by the findings. The discussion section presents the practices identified from literature to enhance IS academic engagement in the ITP sector. The paper ends with a conclusion addressing the practical implications of this research and directions for future research.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

This section begins with an introduction to the education sector in New Zealand, followed by the IS contribution to this sector. Challenges that are barriers to IS engagement in tertiary education are then presented. This section concludes with a discussion of the theoretical context that defines the scope of this research study.

The ITP sector in New Zealand

The ITP sector is thriving in New Zealand, consisting of 16 polytechnics across the country, significantly contributing to the New Zealand economy, environment and society (Tertiary Education Commission, 2018). It provides pathways for both domestic and international adult learners, with the intention to prepare them for jobs in the marketplace or to develop skills as entrepreneurs and job creators. The New Zealand Government has stated its intention to strengthen the ITP sector to make it more supportive, flexible and relevant to the workplace. However, the mobility of IS has decreased significantly since 2020, due to Covid-19 restrictions affecting IS enrolments in all higher-education institutions across New Zealand.

As a major step towards reforming vocational education in New Zealand, Te Pūkenga was established in the year 2020. All 16 ITPs and Industry Training Organisations (ITOs) in New Zealand were merged to form Te Pūkenga, the country's largest tertiary education provider, with the goal to become a long-term skills training partner for firms and industries. Te Pūkenga aims to provide students with a wider range of learning options that align with industry requirements and provide them with increased exposure to industry networks (Te Pūkenga, 2022). This structural change is not only expected to have a profound impact on the vocational education offered in New Zealand, but also on the policies and practices that will govern IS education in the country.

Contribution of international education to the New Zealand economy

According to a report submitted by Education New Zealand (ENZ) in November 2021, pre-Covid-19 international education was the country's fifth largest export industry, with the total value estimated at NZ\$5.23 billion dollars. Approximately 69,930 students pursued higher education in the country, of which 16,643 were enrolled in ITPs. IS contributed to regional economies by spending on local businesses, accommodation, utilities, transportation and other services.

International education also contributes to employment, tourism, global trade and international collaboration, to name a few. Recognising the importance of international education, the government introduced its 2018–2030 International Education Strategy He Rautaki Mātauranga a Ao, with a futuristic goal to build "a thriving and globally connected New Zealand through world-class international education" (New Zealand Government, 2018, p. 2). The intent of this strategy is to provide excellent education and student experience, to facilitate sustainable growth and to transform students to become global citizens so that they can thrive and provide economic, social and cultural benefits for all New Zealand.

Barriers to international student engagement

Several studies have recognised the unique challenges that IS face in the higher-education environment. These challenges are identified as "stressors" that act as barriers preventing learners from being engaged in the learning

process. Stressors are categorised into academic stressors, sociocultural stressors, and environmental stressors (Chen, 1999).

Academic stressors include the language barrier, English being the second language for most IS (Sullivan, 2018); and the Western style of teaching, which students may not be familiar with (Brown & Holloway, 2008). This creates anxiety among the learners and influences their academic performance. The language barrier impacts their ability to comprehend lectures, interact with peers and educators, and write assignments (Lin & Scherz, 2014). IS struggle with sociocultural stressors of being away from their home country. Upon arriving at their new destination, they face challenges – homesickness, culture shock and isolation (Sullivan, 2018; Barclay et al., 2019). They may be overwhelmed by the social activities in an unfamiliar environment and the differences in cultural norms, values and beliefs (Banjong, 2015). Evidence also suggests that sociocultural stressors alienate IS from forming beneficial relationships with the domestic students (Montgomery & McDowell, 2009).

Environmental stressors include financial issues and visa restrictions that can create a huge strain on the IS during their study period (Sullivan, 2018). They hold student visas that are valid only for their length of study. Visa requirements include full-time enrolment and restrictions on employment, including limited working hours. Students are required to keep up with enrolment requirements while they strive to find suitable jobs for financial support and experience. A significant percentage of IS enrol for one-year graduate or postgraduate diploma courses offered by ITPs in New Zealand. This brief time of study adds to the challenge as they must be prepared for employment by the end of their course.

Theoretical contexts from literature

This section presents the contexts from literature that provide the scope for the study. The theoretical base that clarifies the scope is drawn from two strands of the engagement literature: definitions and dimensions of engagement.

Definitions of student engagement

Student engagement is a multifaceted construct that is widely researched and has evolved over the years. A literature search revealed that student engagement has been defined from two perspectives. A considerable number of definitions of engagement are student centred and focus only on the students' involvement with activities that are likely to generate learning. Astin (1984) defines student engagement as the physical and psychological efforts that the students devote to gaining academic experiences. Appleton et al. (2008) define engagement as an individual's active involvement in any learner activity, wherein the driving force behind the involvement in activities is facilitated by learner motivation.

The other set of definitions integrates institutional efforts with the student-related variables. Thus, the definitions include policies and practices that institutions must use to encourage students to take part in those activities that generate learning (Kuh, 2003). Literature posits that for student engagement to be effective students need to spend effort and be engaged in educationally purposeful activities – institutions must also provide opportunities and environments that are conducive to engagement. Kuh (2003) defines student engagement as: "The energy and time a student devotes to educationally sound activities outside and inside classrooms, and the practices and policies that educational institutions use to encourage the students to participate in these activities" (p. 26). The scope of this study is to identify the practices that educators can adopt to actively engage IS in the ITPs in educationally purposeful activities in the learning environment.

Dimensions of student engagement

For this systematic review, the typology of student engagement as developed by Fredericks et al. (2004) is used to understand the dimensions of student engagement. In this model, student engagement is conceptualised as a

tripartite construct that includes three integral dimensions: behavioural, emotional and cognitive. Even though this typology addresses the application of the engagement theory in a school environment, the conceptualisation of engagement has implications for higher-education institutions as well (Lester, 2013).

Behavioural engagement is comprised of the students' active participation in classroom and extracurricular activities. Fredericks et al. (2004) propose three ways to define behavioural engagement. The first involves the positive conduct of the students in the classroom, such as following the norms and rules and desisting from engaging in disruptive behaviours. The second, involvement in learning, pertains to active participation in learning and academic-related tasks such as interaction with staff, on-task behaviour, accessing academic resources and contributing to class discussions. The third is participation in school-related activities, including athletics and school governance.

Emotional engagement helps create ties with the institution and builds students' desire to work towards achieving success. This dimension includes components such as students' attitudes and interests, and is specifically related to interactions with faculty, staff, other students and the institution. Three main aspects of this dimension are the students' affective reactions (interests and emotions), emotional reactions (feelings towards their instructors and the institution), and institutional identification (sense of belonging and importance).

Cognitive engagement is divided into psychological and cognitive components. The psychological component emphasises students' investment in learning and their motivation to learn. It relates to the effort, including the investment, thoughtfulness and willingness students put in to comprehend complex ideas and champion difficult skills. The cognitive component entails self-regulated learning, meta-cognition, application of learning and being strategic in thinking and studying.

This study focuses on identifying educationally purposeful activities that educators in ITPs can adopt in the classroom and online environment to influence the behavioural dimension of learner engagement. Positive behavioural engagement is posited to enhance academic engagement in the learning environment. Behavioural engagement enables learners to develop a "strong sense of self-esteem and self-efficacy" (Bowden et al., 2021, p. 1218), which subsequently strengthens their sense of competence and enhances their perceived work-readiness.

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive systematic review was used in this research to examine the breadth and depth of the existing body of literature related to IS engagement strategies (Xiao & Watson, 2019). The review also gives an account of the current state of the existing literature pertaining to the chosen area of study to explore gaps that provide directions for future research. A narrative descriptive review was employed, as the focus of the researchers was to gather relevant information that provided context and substance pertinent to the research objective (Kastner et al., 2012).

The search of literature drew on techniques adopted in systematic literature reviews. To ensure that the retrieved articles were within the scope of the study, specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were established prior to the review process. The review included studies published in English between January 2011 and October 2021. Only peer-reviewed journal articles were included in the search to ensure quality. Studies conducted on IS pursuing higher education in developed host countries were included in this study to enhance the applicability of the results in New Zealand. All other studies, especially the ones conducted in schools, were excluded from the review.

The final search strategy was refined to include the following search string: "International students" AND "Learner engagement" OR "Academic engagement" OR "Student engagement" NOT "Schools". The search string was run on the institutional database that provided access to EBSCOhost, ProQuest Business Journals, Gale Databases Suite, and Google Scholar databases. The search yielded 114 results. The abstract of each paper was individually read and validated against the inclusion and exclusion criteria. After review, the result yielded 33 relevant peer-reviewed journal articles. The papers' introductions and discussion abstracts were then read for their relevance to the objective of this review. Out of the 33, articles only 15 addressed strategies to enhance behavioural engagement

in both classroom and online settings. The full list of journal articles was compiled and then systematically reviewed to identify studies that focused on strategies that could be employed to engage IS in a classroom or online learning environment.

RESULTS

The review yielded 33 articles that discussed IS engagement. Of these, 14 were published in the United States (n = 14, 42%), 13 in Australia (n = 13, 39%) and the remainder in the United Kingdom (n = 4, 12%), New Zealand (n = 1, 3%) and Canada (n = 1, 3%). All the journal articles were published between 2011 and 2021, with the majority (n = 20, 60%) being published after 2017. The 33 peer-reviewed journal articles were specifically related to IS engagement. Out of these, only 15 articles talked about strategic practices the educators could use to enhance the behavioural engagement of the learners in higher education (n = 15, 45%). The rest of the articles (n = 18, 55%) discussed cognitive, emotional dimensions of engagement. Seven articles out of 33 (n = 7, 21%) included theories or models or conceptual frameworks to explain engagement dimensions.

The descriptive statistics indicate that studies on staff practices to improve IS engagement are gaining attention, but limited work has been done in this area. The systematic review also identified three strategies that could be used to enhance the academic engagement of learners: designing a blended learning environment, effective student–staff interactions, and designing a collaborative learning environment.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

There is limited research on strategies to enhance academic engagement in polytechnics. The literature review revealed that there exists ample literature on IS who pursue higher education in different host nations. A sizable proportion of these studies relate to students transitioning and acculturating while addressing the challenges and barriers they face in their host countries (Wekullo, 2019). There is limited research that addresses IS engagement in higher-education institutions. All studies were conducted in universities, with almost none focusing on the ITP or vocational-education sector.

Within the limited research on IS engagement, the majority of studies focus on community and social engagement, emotional engagement and engagement with social media. The academic engagement practices that facilitate result-oriented behavioural engagement of IS have received extremely limited attention among the researchers. Thus, there exists a gap in the literature in identifying the educationally purposeful practices that educators could use to influence behavioural engagement in the learning environment.

Strategies to enhance IS academic engagement in the learning environment

Designing a blended learning environment

Information and communication technology tools are effectively used in tertiary contexts for teaching and learning specialised knowledge practices. One of the many ways in which these technologies have been embedded in institutions internationally is through blended learning (McPhee & Pickren, 2017). Emergence of blended learning is also a response to the interests and practices of contemporary learners who have grown up with interactive technologies and find using them relevant and engaging for transference and acquisition of knowledge (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008).

According to Garrison and Vaughan (2008), blended learning is the integration of thoughtfully selected face-to-face and online approaches for teaching and learning that complement each other. It is also defined as “a pedagogical approach that combines the effectiveness and socialization opportunities of the classroom with the technologically enhanced active learning possibilities of the online environment” (Dziuban et al., 2004, p. 3). Integrating technology

into teaching and learning is posited to encourage autonomous learning, which increases learner engagement and helps in overall achievement.

Even though educators recognise the need to integrate technology into teaching, they give less importance to integrating the same to support the teaching and learning process (Salas-Pilco et al., 2022). Prior to Covid-19, in most tertiary institutions, blended learning predominantly involved learning in the classroom, while learning management systems ([LMS], such as Moodle, iQualify, Canvas, Blackboard) were used as archives for all teaching and learning materials (Noni et al., 2017). The Covid-19 pandemic has forced tertiary institutions to transition to emergency online teaching (Kohnke & Moorhouse., 2021), demanding greater use of LMS as an interactive digital technology platform (Demuyakor et al., 2020). Apart from providing learners with easy access to course content, the system should be used as an engagement tool and as a mode of communication with students (Godwin-Jones, 2012). The interactive features of LMS should be used effectively to create and share interactive content relevant to topics discussed in class (Sahni, 2019). Educators could use asynchronous modes such as recording their lectures and making them available on the LMS. This is highly valuable for IS facing academic challenges as it allows the students to access the recordings at any time and learn at their own pace (Nkomo et al., 2021; Suddaby et al., 2012).

The HyFlex mode of teaching can be used to offer courses to increase student engagement in an online learning environment. This is a blend of synchronous and asynchronous modes of teaching where the educator teaches the lessons from a physical classroom, simultaneously live streams the session using Zoom or other relevant applications, and records the session for reusability (Kohnke & Moorhouse, 2021). Thus, HyFlex provides students with an option to attend courses either in a physical classroom, synchronously online in real time, or asynchronously online, as the recordings will be available so they can learn at their own pace. HyFlex is a valuable online option to continue studies, especially for IS who are stuck in their home country due to the pandemic, or are in different countries.

Significant barriers for technology integration to facilitate blended learning are beliefs and abilities of staff members. Some staff are sceptical about the effectiveness of technology in improving student learning outcomes while others hesitate to use technology due to their own lack of technical knowledge (Schindler et al., 2017). Furthermore, developing constructive resources online requires better understanding of pedagogical practices with digital technology. These barriers hinder the process of integrating technology for blended learning. Tertiary education institutions may have to provide training for educators to enhance their technical knowledge and to develop better understanding of successful pedagogical practices to improve IS engagement in online platforms.

Effective student–staff interactions

In their study on IS engagement, Wang and BrckaLorenz (2018) found that educators who frequently interacted with IS contributed to strengthening students' sense of belonging, fostering an inclusive learning environment that enhances learner engagement in both classroom and online settings. IS were found to be formally and informally engaged in academic activities on campus through relationship-building interactions with their staff members (Sullivan, 2018; Wang & BrckaLorenz, 2018). These interactions happened when the educators would take time in and out of class to answer students' questions, clarify doubts during lectures, express interest in their academic success and discuss their career plans. However, the quality of the interactions matters more than the quantity (i.e., the number of interactions between the students and the educator) (Wang & BrckaLorenz, 2018; Kuh, 2003).

Educators can design the course to include increased opportunity for face-to-face interactions between student and educator (Barclay et al., 2019). In the current context of Covid-19, face-to-face interactions with students is a challenge. Dassanayake et al. (2021) suggest educators can interact efficiently with students by using the Zoom platform for teaching, while students use microphones, video capabilities and chat windows for questions, clarification and comments. However, lower attendance for online sessions and students switching off their videos during the Zoom sessions are major concerns that inhibit effective student–staff interactions in online teaching and learning (Sunasee, 2020).

Providing written and oral feedback (comments) and feed-forward for assessments and in-class activities are other strategies educators can use to interact with learners (Su, 2012). For this strategy to be effective, both educators and learners require feedback literacy – educators need the capability to understand students, and the expertise, competency and knowledge relating to the content, while students need the ability to comprehend and use the provided feedback to improve their learning (Henderson et al., 2019). This communication of knowledge and sharing of opinions on academic work helps minimise academic stressors and enhances engagement (Halverson & Graham, 2019).

Significant barriers to student–educator interactions are the academic and sociocultural differences that exist between the staff and the IS. Studies by Wu et al., (2015) and Wekullo et al., (2019) posit that IS have difficulties in communicating with their educators due to academic stressors such as language barriers, fear of not being understood by the educator, and sociocultural stressors – including differences in beliefs and value systems, and signs and symbols of social contact. For the educator, designing specific approaches to overcome these challenges might demand input of additional time and use of unique pedagogical practices.

Designing a collaborative learning environment

Collaborative learning happens when students engage with one another and work towards “attaining shared understandings of meanings” (Dillenbourg et al., 1996, p. 204). Designing a collaborative environment for IS improves interaction between students and enhances learner engagement among them (Barclay et al., 2019; Marrone et al., 2018). It is important that the educators facilitate social interactions among students in the collaborative learning environment to enhance IS academic performance (Burdett & Crossman, 2012).

To facilitate collaboration between students, educators could encourage them to form online learning communities. An online learning community is a virtual environment where students can share their views without fear of being judged via blogs, bulletin boards or chat rooms (Lai et al., 2019). The results of an experimental study conducted by Lai et al. (2019) revealed that students who were a part of an online community had higher peer interaction and more system-usage time, which led to enhanced learning engagement.

It is also recommended that staff use peer evaluations in collaborative learning activities to promote accountability among members in a group project (Wang & BrckaLorenz, 2018). Gikandi & Morrow (2015) evaluated student participation and engagement in peer evaluation in an online course. Their findings suggest that peer evaluation promotes engagement when students collaborate within the online discussion forums with their peers to share their thoughts, to evaluate views and opinions of their peers, and to offer constructive feedback to others. The educator’s role in this process is significant as they should facilitate and foster the peer-to-peer feedback process by providing reflective summaries, and design collaborative online discussions to stimulate students’ thinking and develop self-directed learning. According to Marrone et al. (2018) the number and quality of peer interactions experienced by the IS will help them achieve a sense of belonging and friendship, which promotes engagement in the learning environment.

It has been suggested that educators use group discussions in classrooms or use online platforms for group work to facilitate digitally mediated collaborative interactions (Sahni, 2019). Some of the popular online collaboration tools identified are Google Docs and Google Slides to collaborate on group tasks; Teams or Zoom to hold online meetings or discussions; and social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Messenger and Meta. This practice was found to improve student participation. Studies indicate that creative use of interactive collaborative tools encourages participation, reduces anxiety (Ullah & Anwar, 2020), and improves accountability and responsibility among tertiary students (An & Mindrila, 2020). Keeping the virtual classroom open throughout the week could enable students to collaborate and socialise outside of class time (Andrew et al., 2021). However, the platforms used for collaboration can become a distraction if not used properly. Therefore, institutions should consider investing in training educators to use the tools effectively to enhance IS engagement (Sleeman et al., 2019).

It has been found that IS can on occasions feel uncomfortable collaborating with peers from the host country due to their lack of English proficiency and cultural differences – hence they often work with peers from the same country or similar culture (Yuan, 2011). This gives an opportunity for the educator to design an environment where IS feel comfortable participating in discussions. The educator may develop group tasks based on concepts studied in class, encourage them to apply those to their culture/country/their own experience and share them with the group. Such globally inclusive tasks allow IS to collaborate with host-country peers, share their culture and learn about the culture of the host country (Barclay et al., 2019). Understanding the host country's culture develops a sense of belonging, which leads to increased engagement and participation of IS (Yuan, 2011).

The strategies discussed above, identified from literature, are posited to increase IS academic engagement in higher education. However, institutions must invest resources in building staff capacity through ongoing professional development workshops. To overcome resource shortages, educators in the ITPs in New Zealand can form educator learning communities where faculties can share and learn from each other's experience to engage IS (Wekullo, 2019; Arthur, 2017). Educators can also use the peer-observation teaching and learning circles (TLC) model proposed by Rogers et al. (2019). TLC is a "voluntary, non-evaluative, reciprocal peer-observation of teaching with an emphasis on collegial dialogue and self-reflection" (Rogers et al., 2019, p. 3). Application of the TLC model is found to effectively improve professional relationships, collaboration and self-efficacy among educators. In times of uncertainty, peer-observation TLC is said to be an efficient way of upskilling teaching practices that can better support IS engagement.

Limitations and directions for future research

The importance of vocational education in New Zealand cannot be understated. The unique nature of this student-centred sector to align the wider range of learning options with industry requirements attracts both domestic and international enrolments. As the ITPs transition to Te Pūkenga, there will be changes in the policies and practices that will govern IS education in this country. Even though there will be structural changes, IS will continue to be part of the teaching and learning environment. Knowledge of both synchronous and asynchronous teaching strategies will enhance the efficiency of the educators in engaging the learners.

This is a foundational study on IS engagement literature. More rigorous and robust research is needed to confirm and build upon the findings of this review. The study gives an account of the current state of the existing literature pertaining to IS behavioural engagement in tertiary education, drawing from the empirical research studies conducted in university settings. The review evidences the lack of similar studies in the ITP or vocational-education sector in New Zealand. It is possible that most of the identified behavioural engagement strategies may already be frequently used by educators in the ITP sector in this country. However, due to the applied nature of the business courses offered by the ITPs, the acknowledged resource constraints and the prevailing volatile teaching and learning environment, educators may have adapted these strategies or may be adopting other innovative best practices that positively influence the behavioural engagement of IS. Future research must focus on identifying and documenting such innovations and best practices adopted by educators to enhance behavioural engagement among IS in the ITP sector in New Zealand. It is also suggested that studies be done to understand the emotional and cognitive dimensions of IS engagement in the ITP context.

The number of IS arriving in New Zealand is expected to increase in the next few years. The post-Covid-19 situation will present unique challenges for educators. They may have to switch between synchronous, asynchronous, or even HyFlex modes of teaching to provide flexibility to learners. Best practices to promote blended learning environments, to facilitate student-staff interactions and to enhance collaboration will evolve in such a dynamic and challenging environment. Future research should focus on identifying these innovative practices adopted by educators to mitigate the challenges they face in increasing IS engagement.

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PRACTICAL USE OF EDUCATION AND DYSLEXIC LENSES WITHIN TERTIARY EDUCATION: THE DYSLEXIA-FRIENDLY QUALITY MARK

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Resilience in tertiary education



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ABSTRACT

This paper offers a lens to the Dyslexia-Friendly Quality Mark experience, from the perspective of a dyslexic person, how their perceptions shaped their perspectives, and the manifestation of these while journeying towards achieving the Dyslexia-Friendly Quality Mark.

Normalising dyslexia and providing safe environments where dyslexia awareness is seen to be commonplace is important, and will support those who have prior experiences of struggling with education. Positive awareness of dyslexia supports diversity, performance, motivation and retention. It also benefits the learning of all learners and staff, not just those with dyslexic tendencies, by equipping them with awareness of advantageous strategies for themselves, their communities and organisations, both now and in the future. It is important for tertiary organisations to remember that a dyslexic person is likely to have dyslexic family members. Dyslexic people and whānau (family) may not know they are dyslexic (or may not identify as such), dyslexic people remain in education despite prior experiences or frustrations, and our dyslexic people are resilient and determined, having manoeuvred their way around obstacles to be in our organisations.

The discussion surrounding dyslexia continues globally; significantly, there are things afoot in Aotearoa New Zealand that have gained attention overseas, and will have a resounding impact on tertiary staff and learners. It is an exciting time for dyslexia and Aotearoa New Zealand.

KEYWORDS

Dyslexia, Dyslexia-Friendly Quality Mark, DFQM, vocational education, tertiary education

INTRODUCTION

The true depth of dyslexia remains an unknown in most countries, but even more so in Aotearoa New Zealand as it was only recognised by the Ministry of Education in 2007 (Tertiary Education Commission, 2021a). Aotearoa New Zealand's dyslexia discussion is in its infancy, but rapidly gaining maturity, particularly within the tertiary sector; certain key people and organisations are driving change and raising awareness through research, discussion and training. These catalysts are establishing connections, joining people together in spaces such as the Neurodiversity Community of Practice's private Facebook group, which grew to over 140 members in its first year. In 2020, the Tertiary Education Commission set up their Dyslexia Work Programme Advisory Group, followed by the release of the Commission's report, *International Practice in Support of Dyslexic Learners in Tertiary Education: Potential Applications in the New Zealand Context* (2021a). During 2021, the Dyslexia-Friendly Quality Mark (DFQM) trial was undertaken by three organisations in preparation for its national release in Quarter 3 (Ako Aotearoa, n.d.a).

For one of these three organisations, the intention from the outset was to provide solution-focused, robust and sustainable processes, supporting staff, learners, whānau, business and community. The holistic approach encouraged by the DFQM meant a period of review and reflection for the organisation, leading to identification during the trial of practical, efficient, cost effective and flexible practices. Dyslexia is valued and recognised by the organisation as a learning difference and that success for dyslexic people requires a whole-of-institution approach,

including research-based practices, management and leadership, the quality of teaching and learning, the teaching and learning environment, and the organisation's engagement with external stakeholders.

The starting point was to acknowledge that dyslexia is a different way of thinking and learning (Dyslexia Scotland, 2018b; Made by Dyslexia, 2021; Ministry of Education, 2018). It is a neurological and genetic difference influencing learning and everyday life, both at work and at home (British Dyslexia Association, n.d.; Made by Dyslexia, 2021). Ten percent of the global population is believed to be dyslexic (British Dyslexia Association, n.d.) although this could be as high as 20% (Australian Dyslexia Association, 2018; Made by Dyslexia, 2021).

AUMANGEA AND DYSLEXIA

The 2021 National ITP Research Symposium's theme was Resilience/Aumangea (The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand Ltd, 2022).

Resilience is only one of the translations for the reo Māori word 'aumangea.' The depth of meaning and spirituality that are retained within te reo Māori give words a greater intensity. Aumangea means strength, bravery, persistence, determination, tenacity and advocacy, as well as resilience (Sinclair & Calman, 2012). These attributes align themselves naturally to dyslexia and the journey in progressing the DFQM within the emerging, and relatively youthful, dyslexic landscape of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Aumangea and dyslexia are both invisible qualities. They are both specific, and unique, to the individual. Depending on prior experiences, they can manifest in positive, proactive, creative and supportive actions. Alternatively, they can act as a defence mechanism, generating protection for the individual within social situations, education, employment and at home.

Challenges requiring resilience could be as small as filling in a form for a child's activity at school, finding a car park (and, at the end of the day, remembering where the car was parked), writing a shopping list, interacting positively with others in the supermarket or attending a meeting at work (Dyslexia Scotland, 2018a). Small is subjective, as is large. For other people, resilience is needed when working on large-scale projects, managing complex data sets, identifying and interpreting patterns, or facing a classroom filled with 30 teenagers.

Subjectivity, assumptions, and perceptions can often hinder progress, understanding, and strategy development. Aumangea and resilience are quite subjective areas, as the resilience one person requires can be quite different to another's. It can change task by task, day by day, hour by hour. Aumangea encompasses more of a holistic embodiment of resilience. It has a depth, containing a challenge within to drive a person forward, in a value-based and reflective way, to recognise their current limitations and move beyond. Experiences will develop perspectives, but these perspectives are still engineered by perceptions and therefore, subjectivity.

Dyslexia is not, in itself, a subjective area. Dyslexia is a learning difference (British Dyslexia Association, n.d.; Made by Dyslexia, 2021; Nalavany et al., 2018) that uses the brain in an alternative way (Caskey, 2020; Dyslexia Scotland, 2018b). However, how people respond in daily life and how their dyslexia manifests itself, are subjective, and based upon prior experiences, perceptions and perspectives (Benchetrit & Katz, 2019). There can be dichotomies in their abilities, achievements, career pathways and educational history (Addressing Dyslexia, 2017). Frustration with the inability to communicate effectively, the belief in deficit statements, and the lack of awareness from those around them, may generate barriers and limit choices in all facets of life (Addressing Dyslexia, 2017). A dyslexic individual develops their aumangea from this space. The daily challenges could be small to others but huge to the dyslexic individual. The more complex and holistic challenges perceived as too difficult for others, could be the most joyous and exciting to the creative and empathetic dyslexic person.

SPELD NZ (n.d.) and the Dyslexia Foundation of New Zealand (n.d.) both suggest that dyslexia is found in about 10% of the population of Aotearoa New Zealand. The United Kingdom uses the same figure (Government Digital Service, 2017) but the Australian Dyslexia Association (2018) estimates this could be higher, if people were identified as being dyslexic, with dyslexia estimated to affect up to one in five (20%) of the population, a figure that Made

by Dyslexia (2021) agrees with. Within vocational contexts, 29% of learners at London's Royal College of Art (2015) identified as dyslexic, concurring with Wolff & Lundberg's (2002) findings. Caskey et al. (2018) suggest a figure of one in five adults within tertiary education is dyslexic, and Logan (2009) discusses how entrepreneurs had a higher incidence of dyslexia than the general population.

For every one of our dyslexic learners and staff, there is a strong chance that other family members are dyslexic too (Addressing Dyslexia, 2017; Dyslexia Scotland, 2018b; Ministry of Education, 2018), as it is "a hereditary, life-long, neurodevelopmental condition" (Education Scotland, 2020, p. 5). Once learners are identified as dyslexic, other family members may see similar behaviours in their own lives and find themselves self-identifying as dyslexic. This could be an emotional period, as they may be coming to terms with prior life experiences and adjusting to what that means to them, as well as deciphering how dyslexia impacts their current life, relationships, skills and employment. If learners have journeyed through school without being identified as dyslexic, there may have been difficult experiences that affected them and their whānau, compounded by generational dyslexia (Ministry of Education, 2018). Negative experiences and interactions, issues with communication, and degraded self-confidence and self-esteem could have existed within families for several generations. An identification of dyslexia could assist the family with understanding their experiences, but it could equally open the door to more questions, wellbeing issues and negative emotions. Support pathways and holistic awareness need to be put in place to ensure the learners' whānau have the ability to access appropriate advice and direction when required, in a respectful, kind and objective way (Wissell et al., 2021)

Learners, staff and their whānau can be supported in developing strategies to combat the difficulties associated with dyslexia. Strategies can be developed to support literacy and numeracy skills, to assist with organisation and time management, and to encourage positive communication (Dyslexia Scotland, 2017). Providing a supportive, safe and collaborative learning environment will support dyslexic strengths to flourish – creativity, practical ability, visual thinking, verbal skills, problem solving and holistic thinking (Dyslexia Scotland, 2018b). Dyslexic characteristics are often aligned with relationship-based occupations, such as nursing (Crouch, 2019) and teaching, and these are discussed by Wray et al. (2013) in their paper on the nursing curriculum. The University of Oxford (2021) notes that 80% of learners who are dyslexic leave school unidentified as being so. The implications for tertiary education are considerable, but the more prepared our tertiary education organisations are, the better the prospects for our learners, our communities and our workplaces (Tertiary Education Commission, 2021c).

Vocational education is attractive to dyslexic learners as it is a kinaesthetic, creative space where people learn practical skills in areas they want to live and work in. Learners can access education with minimal prior achievements, work their way towards higher-level qualifications and gain skills in their vocation. Vocational education is not the same as school, it is an adult learning environment, encouraging ideas and seeking solutions through a range of options in a flexible and often more inclusive way (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, n.d.).

The challenge to tertiary education is how to support and inspire people who bring a multitude of subjective experiences, possibly repair educational damage caused by non-inclusive compulsory environments, and encourage strategies for our people to recognise their potential. The DFQM is a key development in this area (Tertiary Education Commission, 2021c). It provides a systematic framework to raise awareness, review organisational structure and provide action points for future development (Ako Aotearoa, n.d.a; Independent Tertiary Education New Zealand, 2021).

THE DYSLEXIA-FRIENDLY QUALITY MARK FOR AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

The DFQM came to the attention of one organisation in 2019 during a presentation at a Language, Literacy and Numeracy Professionals Community of Practice meeting. Over the next two years, the DFQM evolved until it was ready to be trialled. Three organisations took up the challenge of a six-week trial to see how it worked in practice within their individual areas of the tertiary space. One organisation was Capital Training, a private training establishment, with just under 1000 learners across six campuses in the lower North Island of Aotearoa New Zealand; one was Kāpiti Youth Support, a registered charitable trust providing a free confidential health and support

service for all youth living in Kāpiti, and one was an Institute of Technology and Polytechnic (ITP) (Ako Aotearoa, 2021b). This article focuses on the ITP, a subsidiary of Te Pūkenga at the time of the trial.

Te Pae Mātauranga ki te Ao, Universal College of Learning (UCOL), is a modern ITP built on a history of over 120 years in education (UCOL, 2022b). It has a network of learning environments and campuses across Aotearoa New Zealand's Central North Island, extending from Taumaranui in the King Country to the north, meandering through Tongariro, Ruapehu, Rangitikei, Whanganui, Manawatū and Horowhenua, and journeying south to Masterton in the Wairarapa.

The ITP's vision, to inspire learners, businesses and communities to succeed, generates a holistic culture focused on success (UCOL, 2022c). This success is not solely directed at employability. The vision for success encompasses creativity, flexibility and the agility to strategise in a shifting environment. The importance of connecting with each other and establishing meaningful relationships built on trust and integrity enhances the learning environment for all learners.

This holistic outlook reflects the DFQM ideal, with the DFQM being seen as important to the organisation because of how it aligns with their vision and how dyslexia-friendly practices align with their existing values. In addition to the organisation's values of excellence, relationships, transformation and agility, the values promoted within the classroom, team and across the organisation include manaakitanga, mana motuhake, whakapiringatanga and kōtahitanga. Although these relate to the cultural responsiveness of Te Atakura's approach (UCOL, 2022a), they are also important to the development of dyslexic learners and staff. Providing an environment where an individual is welcomed as an individual, where explicit values, clear routines and high expectations are the norm, will encourage a dyslexic learner to engage and thrive. Relationality is a key component of dyslexic thinking, and extending a family-like whānau environment within an organisation can promote belonging and self-esteem (Carawan et al., 2016). Te Pūkenga's values uphold this by stating:

Manawa nui / We reach out and welcome in.
Manawa roa / We learn and achieve together.
Manawa ora / We strengthen and grow the whole person.
(Te Pūkenga, 2022)

The DFQM was an important standard to achieve, making the organisation's intentions to support dyslexic people explicit, aligning with their vision for inspiration and success. The benefits for the organisation in achieving the DFQM included raising awareness of dyslexia across the organisation, connecting people and resources, providing a supportive environment for learners, staff and whānau, and encouraging engagement with education. From a business perspective, it would potentially attract more learners, and improve retention and graduate outcomes. The benefits for the organisation's dyslexic people – both staff and learners – strengthened inclusion and developed awareness and support to ensure dyslexia became part of the culture. It also developed and enhanced networks, guidance and understanding.

As with most organisations, good teaching practices and inclusive policies existed but were not explicitly linked to dyslexia-friendly practices. The self-assessment checklist, action plan and portfolio of evidence that were part of the DFQM process (Ako Aotearoa, n.d.a) enabled discussions to take place that activated connections, linking current practices explicitly with dyslexia-friendly practices. The effects rippled outwards as the DFQM processes encompassed more parts of the organisation than the original trial area. Staff in other campuses accessed the free online training (Microsoft, 2022) to raise their awareness of dyslexia and a network evolved, linking staff with a shared interest in dyslexia. The main organisational changes for completion of the DFQM included reviewing signage for the trial site and reviewing access to social media, including the use of assistive technology.

Future growth in the organisation's region places a demand on education from the business and community sectors (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, n.d.). Being proactive by identifying and supporting dyslexic learners and staff in the tertiary sector will benefit local, national and international communities in business, education and research (NZIER, 2021; Nalavany et al., 2018; Tertiary Education Commission, 2021a). The DFQM will

benefit the organisation by ensuring that procedures and awareness within it remain current, and adhere to DFQM standards. This in turn will not only reassure learners and whānau, but it also has the potential to encourage further diversity through the retention and recruitment of dyslexic staff.

The educational space that the DFQM inhabits is an interesting one. It is a transition space where secondary intertwines with tertiary, it is a vocational space where people can utilise their creativity and discover their vocations, it is a challenging space where prior learning and experiences need to be overcome, and it is a transforming space where people can change direction or career pathway, refocus to reflect life's changing pattern, or re-engage with education (Ministry of Education, 2022; The Education Hub, 2022). It is also a diverse educational space with underserved learners who bring their own perspectives, culture and skills to the tertiary landscape. The diversity throughout the transition spaces means these learners can be demanding to work with; high levels of guidance, support and services may be required in order to respond to the demands, with staff who are equipped and empowered to actively engage with the transition of learners, and all that entails. This holistic environment is required for learners to flourish. However, if there are deficit mindsets, a lack of awareness or ineffective professional development, the underserved learner will not function successfully and is at risk of leaving the organisation or quitting education entirely (NZIER, 2021; UP Education, 2022). To reduce this risk, tertiary education needs to become an environment where it is a safe space for sharing experiences and receiving support (UP Education, 2022). As more people talk about dyslexia and discuss it objectively with positive mindsets (James & Walters, 2020), wider connections will be made and a greater understanding will lead to proactive, appropriate support for dyslexic people. Development and creativity will be enhanced as the availability of safe, engaging environments and spaces increases, both virtual and face to face, for interaction and the exchange of ideas.

Currently, however, there is a deficit in the local, national and international peer-reviewed research in the tertiary space surrounding learner support (Tertiary Education Commission, 2021a), and particularly for dyslexia in vocational education (Caskey, 2020). Internationally, there is an increasing interest in the creativity of dyslexia and the role dyslexic people could play in a world that requires greater agility, flexibility and new ideas (Caskey, 2020; Nalavany et al., 2018). Aotearoa New Zealand is moving forward, especially in the tertiary sector, with the introduction of the DFQM and the awareness it is raising, which has not gone unnoticed by the international community (Independent Tertiary Education New Zealand, 2021). Beyond this, the report from the Tertiary Education Commission (2021a) makes recommendations for future projects and ideas to research, support and normalise the dyslexic context; its voice, strategies and differences.

DYSLEXIA – LEARNERS AND STAFF

As previously mentioned, dyslexia brings with it subjectivity built upon a foundation of potentially challenging prior experiences. These prior experiences may have disconnected an individual from education, whānau, employment, or their own self-confidence and self-esteem (Carawan et al., 2016). This can make people vulnerable, provoking self-preservation behaviours (Nalavany et al., 2018). Developing and demonstrating effective strategies to support people in overcoming these behaviours is part of the DFQM's holistic framework, and built into the DFQM process (Ako Aotearoa, 2021a). In addition to strategies, organisational procedures should provide direction for learners and staff when requesting support or seeking referral information (Waterfield, 2002).

When considering the DFQM process, staff may assume that dyslexia awareness and organisational strategies relate solely to learners. However, and possibly more importantly, staff themselves need to be considered. For a member of staff, the DFQM may bring to the surface additional challenges surrounding their own hidden learning differences, protection of professional standing, and wellbeing (Wissell et al., 2021). Protection and safety for learners are part of the organisational structure, but providing protection and safety for dyslexic staff is challenging on several levels. Dyslexia generates vulnerability in how people react to different situations, how they may respond to different stimuli and how prior experiences may manifest. Staff may feel vulnerable, exposed, anxious about how other staff interpret dyslexia or how their dyslexia is perceived (Wissell et al., 2021). They may be concerned that

people will think they are less professional, or comment on their ability as an educator or member of staff (Hiscock & Leigh, 2020). There is the perception that the potential to be misunderstood is great.

The DFQM is an opportunity for organisations to reflect on their current processes, procedures and policies to ensure vulnerable people, including their own staff, are recognised with respect and appropriately supported.

THE DYSLLEXIA-FRIENDLY QUALITY MARK – A PERSONAL PATHWAY

This section discusses the personal pathway of one person involved in the DFQM process. There are several lenses in place – one from the perspective of a member of staff, one as a dyslexic person, one as an educator, and one as a member of a dyslexic whānau (current and historical). As a member of staff and as an educator, the organisational benefits and educational importance for learners have been discussed earlier in the document. Being dyslexic, and part of a dyslexic family, brings in a highly personal aspect to the DFQM, which may not have been considered by its developers, or the organisation undergoing the DFQM process.

The challenges surrounding vulnerability, exposure and anxiety for dyslexic staff (Hiscock & Leigh, 2020; Wissell et al., 2021) could be heightened, affecting the wellbeing of the staff member as they work through the DFQM standards, and collaborate with other staff, raising awareness and discussing dyslexia in depth. Reflections during the DFQM process could accentuate prior experiences, and have an impact on their professional identity (Benchetrit & Katz, 2019), potentially generating a perception of an unsafe work environment with regards to health and wellbeing (Wissell et al., 2021). It is possible that the organisation and DFQM external facilitator may need risk-assessment-management statements to mitigate for any issues that could arise from this type of personal investment in the project.

Using the interwoven lenses, the DFQM pathway started from a base centred on the perceptions and perspectives of the person leading the process. Visual and auditory perceptions gave a sense that the buildings, interactions, signage, noise and distractions were going to be difficult to overcome, over-stimulating, and possibly offering a negative experience for a dyslexic person coming into the organisation. The language about dyslexia was not normalised or commonplace, it was misunderstood by some and it appeared to lack context. The initial situation was interpreted through these perceptions as lacking a cohesive, inclusive and positive environment in which to develop the DFQM smoothly. Looking through the lens of a dyslexic person re-engaging with education, the initial perceptions were that the organisation could be overstimulating, and signage and entrances were confusing and ambiguous. There appeared to be a lack of awareness, resources and organisational tools – for example clocks. These factors could lead to an interpretation that the organisation was a difficult entity to engage with; it could remind the person of prior experiences and lead to an emotional or behavioural reaction, for example leaving both the building specifically, and education in general.

Perceptions alone could have meant that the DFQM did not progress further than the idea stage. However, these initial perceptions were not the only ones influencing the perspective of the staff member moving the DFQM forward. Their perspective was an amalgamation of experiences gained personally and professionally within the dyslexia sphere. Elements came from seeing individuals who had been excluded or isolated within education, supporting people who had been misunderstood, working on strategies with people to overcome barriers and listening to personal narratives. A confident holistic view could envisage the transformational nature of the DFQM. This outlook incorporates an understanding of how dyslexia awareness would encourage further discussion, benefiting staff and learners, and how significant the DFQM is for vocational education, both nationally and internationally. Importantly, the determination and perseverance that dyslexic people develop experientially was combined with the confidence to adhere to DFQM standards, follow through with the process, and have the ability to work independently to focus and achieve the goal.

During preparation, and throughout the DFQM process, challenges for the staff member included anxiety over balancing the personal with the professional, and acknowledging the weight of responsibility for the process, for the organisations involved, and the learners. Dyslexic behaviours were reflected upon regularly to ensure

the approach was tempered with calmness and professionalism. This provided strong parameters, meaning the overstimulation and excitement of a new project was restrained, and the intense, complex picture of the whole *raison d'être* became gentler and more digestible to others. Post-DFQM, these challenges remain, but deeper reflection will need to consider how a dyslexic person transitions through different roles, from personal experience to advocate for wider exposure after involvement with the DFQM, and how that impacts on them, their *whānau* and their workplace.

The DFQM process has also altered the initial perspectives, from a space where it appeared to be quite a solitary experience, to one where dyslexia discussions have given a collective and inclusive atmosphere to the organisation. In some ways, after years of experiencing barriers, it was reassuring to see how enthusiastic staff were; how they have built and developed new awareness and relationships, to hear about learners who have come forward with stories of their experiences, and watch how people have collaborated and connected. The experience has taken resilience to reach an initial conclusion. It has pushed boundaries, shone light on issues and good practices equally, and encouraged people to look beyond and see what is possible.

Linking with the community was part of the process. Collaboration and sharing knowledge encourage the relationships necessary for supporting learners across the transitions from primary to secondary and secondary to tertiary (Ministry of Education, n.d.). Communication with Learning Support Coordinators was invaluable, and developed mutually supportive connections. Their learners will become the tertiary organisation's future learners (Ministry of Education, 2020), who will bring with them the expectation of awareness and appropriate learning environments, therefore the DFQM is a valuable component of this process.

An afternoon of filming closed the trial, creating an additional challenge. Face-to-face interviews, focusing on remembering questions and providing appropriate answers, generate difficulties for a dyslexic person but the film company, and the DFQM external facilitator, provided a supportive environment. It is important to be aware of how dyslexia can generate barriers to achievement, including interviews for film or employment (Dyslexia Scotland, 2018c). Support, reassurance, respect and *manaakitanga* reduce these barriers by creating positive relationships and partnerships (Ako Aotearoa, 2022), allowing the dyslexic person to step forward, whether that is over or around the issue.

The DFQM is a valuable process to follow, but it is not a tick box that magically grants the organisation an understanding of dyslexia-friendly practices. It is challenging, and transformational, with the expectation that the organisation recognises the seriousness of the task ahead and acknowledges the responsibility of supporting their people effectively and appropriately.

SUPPORT

The DFQM, developed by Ako Aotearoa (n.d.a), is one measure that can highlight an organisation's commitment to being dyslexia friendly. Ako Aotearoa continually develop tools to support organisations (Ako Aotearoa, n.d.b) and are active in providing flexible access to the neurodiverse landscape through their website, Facebook pages, and the Neurodiversity Community of Practice. The Tertiary Education Commission (2021b) continues to research, discuss, report and generate accessible resources to aid understanding, raise awareness and develop inclusive practices for underserved learners. Ako Aotearoa and the Tertiary Education Commission are two of many organisations, groups and individuals providing information, resources and support in this area in Aotearoa New Zealand. As more discussions are held, more people will come together to increase the local and national network connectivity.

Internationally, support is available online and through different social media networks (Ako Aotearoa, n.d.a; British Dyslexia Association, 2021; Dyslexia Canada, n.d.; Dyslexia Scotland, 2017). Dyslexia toolkits (Royal College of Nursing, 2010) are available to support tertiary organisations in Aotearoa New Zealand, with information on raising awareness and developing strategies. Although these may be based in international settings, the strategies for supporting dyslexic learners can be utilised in Aotearoa New Zealand, as learning differences do not recognise

state boundaries (Dyslexia Canada, n.d.). The DFQM itself has been inspired by the British Dyslexia Association's (2021) DFQM and developed to sit comfortably within the Aotearoa New Zealand context (Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training, 2021). Further information on international practices are contained in the Tertiary Education Commission's report (2021a), which explores aspects of the current dyslexia landscape.

LIMITATIONS

The overarching limitation of this piece is that it draws on one person's perceptions and perspectives. It is a unique lens, both in terms of its seemingly isolated and single viewpoint and because aumangea and dyslexia are individual experiences within that landscape. However, the very natures of dyslexia and aumangea encompass broader spectrums and depth of meaning. Personal experiences weave through professional experiences; educational and academic material has been referenced to provide a foundation of evidence-based practice; this piece has been written to provide that individual lens to share and highlight experiences rather than impose them on others.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could consider how practical the framework is for the diverse range of organisations it has been designed for, and its impact on staff and learners in those contexts. As more organisations undertake the DFQM there will be multiple experiences to explore. Understanding how to interpret the framework for their learners would offer an opportunity to review and evolve the DFQM. The practicalities of implementing the framework may be different for smaller organisations, private training establishments, or tertiary-adjacent organisations, when compared with the ITP in this article. Interpreting and implementing the framework may also impact staff differently. There may be differences in professional development requirements, expectations, workloads, available time and support. Learners may also require additional support and pastoral care from exposure to an elevated level of dyslexia awareness. Research into learner outcomes could be conducted to explore the impact of the DFQM, and whether its implementation has generated any practical and measurable achievements.

Another area for future research could investigate the transferability of strategies and skill sets developed through the DFQM and how these could support a better understanding of learners' journeys. Exploring how these transferable skills are used or adapted for progression in either academic or workplace contexts could enhance these pathways. Additionally, it would be interesting to explore how these strategies and skills could be utilised within transitional spaces, supporting school leavers into tertiary education or supporting their pathways from education to the workplace.

CONCLUSION

The DFQM is more than a quality mark. It is a practical framework for organisations to work with to ensure inclusive practices for their staff and learners. It provides explicit awareness and support for strategies to recognise abilities, realise potential and develop more holistic and relationship-based interactions. However, the foundation needs to be grounded securely, with respect for the responsibility of what the DFQM entails.

Professionally, the standards drive a review of processes to enhance the organisation's impact on tertiary education. The DFQM offers an opportunity to focus on staff development for the whole organisation, without the segregation of academic and non-academic, in an inclusive and flexible way. Networks and relationships are enhanced, developing efficient pathways for support and the development of strategies. Collaboration, positive mindsets, and relationality are encouraged. The resulting learning environment should feel safer, more inclusive and creative, with the strength to be agile and flexible as circumstances change.

The DFQM has the ability to link organisations within the tertiary sector, allowing it to reach out across the transitional space to the secondary and primary sectors. It promotes a shared space where dyslexic learners can participate in lifelong learning with support and awareness throughout their educational journey.

Finally, a reminder that dyslexia is unaware of international boundaries and social issues. Dyslexia is complex and individual. The personal intertwines with the professional, and barriers can be constructed from prior experiences, preventing people from aspiring to understand their potential or work towards it. The DFQM framework is a step towards achieving parity in our organisations for all learners and staff. It is timely, especially considering the currently evolving tertiary educational environment, and there is a greater need for the creativity, flexibility and agility gained from dyslexic strengths.

It requires resilience to persevere through the DFQM standards, and aumangea to accept the challenge.

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GLOSSARY

aumangea	strength, bravery, persistence, determination, tenacity, advocacy and resilience
DFQM	Dyslexia-Friendly Quality Mark
dyslexia	a different way of thinking and learning
ITP	Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics
kotahitanga	promote, monitor, and reflect on outcomes in a collaborative manner that will lead to improvements in educational achievement for all learners (UCOL, 2022)
mana motuhake	care for and having high expectations for the performance of learners to enable the development of personal or group identity and independence (UCOL, 2022)
manaakitanga	care for learners as culturally located human beings above all else within a supportive environment (UCOL, 2022)
raison d'être	purpose or reason for being (living)
UCOL	Universal College of Learning
whakapiringatanga	creating a secure, well-managed learning environment by incorporating routine pedagogical knowledge with pedagogical imagination (UCOL, 2022)
whānau	family

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USING A REPERTORY GRID TO REVIEW COMPLIANCE REPORTS ON LITERACY PROVISION IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN THE TERTIARY SECTOR IN AOTEAROA

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Resilience in tertiary education



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ABSTRACT

The main aim of this article is to outline the findings of a grid-based review process (Caputi et al., 2012; Fransella et al., 2004) directed at literacy and numeracy (LN) practices documented by the literacy team in the institute's evidence-based LN compliance reports for a four-year period (2017–2020). Outlined is the author-reviewer's use of a repertory grid to address two research questions: How could a repertory grid be used to explore his constructs (as a reviewer) and show how these constructs were interconnected? How could the repertory grid findings raise his and his team's awareness of hidden meanings in his construing? Hence, the focus of convenience of the grid was defined as follows: *Reviewing LN-embedding practices at a tertiary institute in Aotearoa from a business strategy perspective*. The ten most recent institutional LN compliance reports and a selection of six schools of business strategy served as sources for identifying 12 elements to be used in constructs elicitation. The so-called difference method was applied in formulating 12 bipolar constructs for the review. The author then donned the reviewer's hat, rating each element on a 7-point rating scale for the 12 constructs – this yielded a 12 x 12 matrix of data for analysis. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (Version 27) (IBM Corp, 2020) was used to perform a principal components analysis (PCA). Five components, explaining 81.25% of the variance in the grid ratings, were identified. These components highlighted the underlying structure and connectedness of the constructs elicited for the review, uncovering five themes: deliberate innovative practices, solution-centred transformation, deliberate evidence-based tracking, contesting contentious LN practices, and flexibility and responsiveness to unintended events in the educational setting. The conclusion was that anyone performing a review or reflective activity could profitably use repertory grids to raise their awareness of hidden meanings in their construing.

KEYWORDS

Literacy review, repertory grids, principal components, construing, strategy

INTRODUCTION

Rationale

To counter the myth of objectivity, grid methods can be used to make explicit and systematically investigate one's construing as one enacts one's role in an institution. In this case, a manager (the author) set about eliciting his constructs in relation to his managing a literacy and numeracy (LN) team in a tertiary vocational-education context. More specifically, he reviewed ten institutional LN reports (all of which are available on the internet), using grid methodology, to create a framework for interpreting these reports and establishing a point of orientation for team planning.

There is no doubt that LN is important in all forms of education. In managing a team (or in any other role), one has to be explicit and deliberate, as well as know the why and the how of one's practices. In that sense, this paper is an invitation to other LN practitioners in vocational settings to be explicit about their practices and to share perspectives. Although excellent LN resources are available to the sector from Ako Aotearoa, we do need evidence at an institutional level of how LN managers and practitioners enact their LN roles and practices – explicit evidence-

based practices are at the heart of accountability; hence, a section on institutional reports has been included in the References section.

Main aim

The main aim of this article is to outline the findings of a grid-based review process (Caputi et al., 2012; Fransella et al., 2004) directed at LN practices the literacy team had documented in the institute's evidence-based LN compliance reports for a four-year period (2017–2020). Outlined is the author-reviewer's use of a repertory grid to address two research questions: How could a repertory grid be used to explore his constructs (as a reviewer) and show how these constructs were interconnected? How could the repertory grid findings raise his and his team's awareness of hidden meanings in his construing?

On repertory grid methodology

George Kelly (1955) pioneered repertory ratings grids to develop a numbers-based account of individuals' construing. These grids were intended to address a specific focus of convenience (Caputi et al., 2012; Fransella et al., 2004). This focus refers to the context in which the constructs to be elicited will be most relevant and will have the best predictive efficiency. The so-elicited constructs may have a wider range of convenience. In the case of this study, the focus of convenience was defined as: *Reviewing LN-embedding practices at a tertiary institute in Aotearoa from a business-strategy perspective*. The elements used in the difference method to elicit constructs were derived from the author's reading of the reports and a selection of schools of business strategy. In this sense, formulating a focus of convenience, defining the elements, eliciting the constructs and then rating the elements, it was argued, would yield ratings data which could be analysed to address the two research questions.

A hierarchical construct

The *compliance versus going beyond compliance* construct, shaped while reading the ten reports, prompted the author-reviewer to adopt a business-strategy perspective to accommodate the view that the realities we face in institutions require flexible, solution-centred actions. These schools of thought were selected as they were deemed potentially useful in elaborating the polarity. The six schools of strategy that appealed to the author-reviewer were: strategy as practice, transformation, positioning, discourse, environmental responsiveness, and three-horizons thinking (Mintzberg et al., 1998; Lampel et al., 2014; Balogun et al., 2014; Sharpe et al., 2016).

BACKGROUND

Evidence-based practice and compliance

The LN team at the institute produced compliance reports for LN provision in response to Tertiary Education Commission policies (TEC, 2009; 2015; 2017a; 2017b), guidelines for a whole-of-organisation approach (TEC, 2013) as well as specific targets for LN assessment tool (LNAT) participation, reading and numeracy progress, as well as educator training (TEC, 2015; 2017a; 2017b). Consistently, over more than a decade, Tertiary Education Strategies have prioritised foundation skills as potential barriers to success (see, for example, the most current priorities [TEC, 2020]). The institute's LN Policy (Revised) (Wintec, 2018) specifies processes and procedures that align with these guidelines and funding requirements (TEC, 2009; 2012; 2013; 2015; 2017a; 2017b).

Intuitive sensing and deliberate choice

An initial reading of the ten reports led to the author-reviewer construing the reports as entailing much more than compliance. The reports were perceived as seeking to go beyond compliance to address challenges, identify opportunities, and create a pathway to improved future performance. As stated earlier, these reflections prompted

the selection of six schools of business strategy (Mintzberg et al., 1998; Lampel et al., 2014; Balogun et al., 2014; Sharpe et al., 2016) as sources of elements that could be useful in the review. The choice of strategy perspectives was reflected in the choice of elements, the elicited constructs, and the grid design (Fransella et al., 2004).

Brief account of the ten reports

The ten reports covered LNAT progress analyses and narrative accounts of how tutors enacted the LN-embedding triangle of knowing the LN demands of a course, knowing the LN skills of the learners, and knowing the strategies to scaffold learning so that the distance between current learner skills and the exit-level demands of the programme could be navigated. The reports focused on learners' LN progress from baselines established at the start of each course and progress assessments administered at the end of each programme (Greyling, 2018; Greyling & Ahmad, 2019a; 2019b; Greyling et al., 2020a; 2020b). A second category of reports related to the LN-embedding practices of Level 1 to Level 3 tutors in the organisation. More specifically, these reports illustrated how initial and axial coding in a grounded theory framework (Charmaz, 2014; Saldaña, 2013) were used to develop a parsimonious account of the LN strategies tutors enacted in their instruction (Greyling & McKnight, 2017; Greyling, 2019; Greyling et al., 2020d). The third category of reports included a report on a whole-of-organisation perspective on literacy-embedding practices at the institute (Greyling et al., 2020c) and how LNAT intent statements could be aligned more closely with reading-development practices (Greyling et al., 2020e).

Key meanings from the reports

Several themes in these reports extended beyond compliance, highlighting challenges, opportunities and alternatives in LN pedagogy and practices in the LN domain at the institute. The challenges, covered in the progress reports, were related to the following aspects of the LNAT: the layout of downloaded LN performance data files from the LNAT did not follow a multivariate structure; an interface between the institute's data management system and the LNAT website did not exist, which made applying the so-called sequence concept cumbersome (TEC, 2017a; 2017b); and the algorithm for calculating learner progress was seen as contestable (Greyling, 2018; Greyling & Ahmad, 2019a; 2019b; Greyling et al., 2020a; 2019b). The LN team at the institute deemed reliable and valid LNATs, as well as easy-to-use download files, as key to identifying learner needs as part of the three-part LN-embedding strategy for vocational contexts and tracking their performance (TEC, 2009; 2017a; 2017b).

These challenges were seen as opportunities for finding solutions. The reports, referred to above, recorded the step-by-step process for solving data-file layout issues; illustrated the limited view created by the LNAT algorithm as a measure of learner gains; and outlined an alternative approach, based on cross-tabulations, which the LN team have consistently used as an added measure that far more clearly illustrates shifts in learners' LN development than the current algorithm-based gain calculation function on its own.

To enhance LN tracking, we also included in all these reports disaggregated data for ethnicities, Centres or Schools, and funding types. Although we reported on a repeated-measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) and two-way ANOVAs in the 2018 report, showing statistically significant within-subject differences between initial and progress assessments (with ethnicity and Centre/School as fixed factors); and two-way ANOVAs to show between-subject differences, we found these results not to be of practical significance. In our 2020 report (Greyling et al., 2020c), we used initial scores on reading and numeracy as predictors of pass/fail (at module level) in a regression analysis of learner performance on modules taught by tutors enrolled on the New Zealand Certificate in Adult Literacy and Numeracy Education (Vocational) programme. The absence of statistically significant results indicated that the two independent variables (initial reading and numeracy scores) were not seen as efficient predictors of learner success, an association which, arguably, could have been disrupted by vocational educators' LN-embedding strategies.

We also reported on how intent statements in individual learner protocols could be used to identify and address the high-frequency reading and numeracy needs of groups (Greyling et al., 2020e). The LN trends reports (Greyling & McKnight, 2017; Greyling, 2019; Greyling et al., 2020d), outlining our qualitative analyses of classroom observations of Level-1 to Level-3 educators' LN practices, offered a grounded-theory-based analysis (combining both initial and

axial labelling) to highlight the high-frequency strategies observed in their practices (Charmaz, 2014; Saldaña, 2013). As an example, the categories identified in the axial coding of the 2019/2020 data set were the following:

- Cat 1: Deliberate proactive lesson planning and pre-teaching choices of teaching strategies, methods and techniques
- Cat 2: The interactive accomplishment of lesson plans as intentional-learning conversations
- Cat 3: Deliberate teacher initiations to enact a lesson plan or initiation–response–evaluation sequence aimed at circumventing barriers in the interaction
- Cat 4: Deliberate and explicit references to LN embedding
- Cat 5: Prompting and encouraging teacher acts aimed at facilitating learner participation
- Cat 6: Strategically embedded teacher explanations to ensure learners develop appropriate modes of informed vocational reasoning
- Cat 7: Teacher prompts to raise learner awareness of vocational constructs and actions in relation to training tasks and experiences
- Cat 8: Teacher acts deriving from or promoting workplace and/or cultural values
- Cat 9: Matching LN demands of a programme and the LN needs of learners
- Cat 10: Designing learning experiences to promote learner autonomy
- Cat 11: Designing authentic tasks

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Background

Repertory grids have been used in a wide range of contexts, including psychology (Caputi et al., 2012; Fransella et al., 2004; Kelly, 1966/2003; Kelly, 1955), education (Pope, 2003; Salmon, 2003), organisational contexts (Brophy et al., 2003; Brophy, 2003), sports science (Savage, 2003), artificial intelligence (Adams-Webber, 2003), and many more. The burgeoning range of applications has been summarised in meticulous detail in Winter and Reed (2015).

Research questions and research tools

As stated earlier, two research questions were addressed within the main aim of outlining the findings of a repertory grid developed to review ten institutional LN compliance reports: How could the author-reviewer use a repertory grid to investigate his constructs as a reviewer and how these meaning-making lenses were interconnected? How could these repertory grid findings raise his and his team's awareness of hidden meanings in his construing as a reviewer?

To find answers to these questions, it was anticipated that constructs elicitation and a principal-components analysis (PCA), often used in repertory grid analysis (Fransella et al., 2004), would yield prompts for externalising hidden meanings in the review-directed construing. The sections that follow provide specific information about how constructs for the review were elicited and analysed.

The difference method

The difference method (Fransella et al., 2004) for eliciting constructs derives from Kelly's (1955) view that any person will compare experiences related to a specific domain to identify aspects of similarity and difference. For example, one may construe, say, experiences A and B from the targeted educational context to be different from C because A and B represent *solution-seeking change in LN practices* while C represents *compliance-seeking LN practices* as primary

goal. Although A and B are different from C, they are similar as all three refer to *LN practices* (Fransella et al., 2004; Kelly, 2003/1966; Kelly, 1955).

These constructs, Kelly (1955, 2003/1966) states, are bipolar templates for assigning meaning to one's experience – one may either have explicit knowledge of them or be unaware of their impact on one's meaning-making. Put differently, one may – or may not – have verbal labels for these constructs. If one is unaware of their impact, Kelly (1955, 2003/1966) states, they are unsymbolised, and implicit in one's experience. This study was an attempt to make the author-reviewer's constructs explicit, using a constructivist methodology that could be replicated by anyone wanting to raise their awareness of their construing.

Elements

To elicit bipolar constructs for a grid, one requires elements that relate to its focus of convenience. Random triads of these elements are then used to define bipolar constructs exhibiting aspects of similarity and difference. Researchers such as van Kan et al. (2010), and Wright (2008), followed in this research, illustrate the use of heterogeneous elements to elicit meanings relevant to the focus of convenience. In this study, both roles and scenarios were included as elements (Greyling et al., 2013; Greyling & Lingard, 2015; Greyling, 2016; Greyling & Waitai, 2016; Greyling & Rajendran, 2018). Elements were also formulated on the basis of the various strategy orientations outlined earlier, the focus of convenience of the grid and an initial review of the ten reports. These elements included the following:

- E1: Strategy as practice
- E2: Strategy as positioning
- E3: Compliance with funder policies and funding requirements
- E4: Strategy as transformation
- E5: Compliance with institutional policies and directives
- E6: Strategy as discursive management
- E7: LN practices as socially distributed practices
- E8: LN practices, learner progress and statistical measures of success
- E9: Strategy as responsiveness to a dynamic environment
- E10: Strategy and a professional growth model
- E11: Strategy as three horizons thinking
- E12: Strategy as external footprint

An example of a construct elicited by applying the difference method

Table 1 shows the bipolar constructs elicited in random triadic comparisons following the difference method (Fransella et al., 2004). To illustrate the elicitation procedure, an example of a triad and the elicitation process appears below. Verbal labels for the constructs were formulated and then crafted until the author-reviewer felt they best represented his construing.

Elements E1, E2 and E3, listed below, were compared as a triad and the following verbal labels were defined to represent Construct 1 – *Approved and enacted internal* versus extrinsically demanded and enforced *practices/processes*:

- E1: Strategy as practice
- E2: Strategy as positioning
- E3: Compliance with funder policies and funding requirements

The construing process evolved as follows: E1 and E2 were interpreted as similar because both strategies derived from *internally approved and enacted LN practices and processes* as the preferred pole. They differed from E3, which activated the external force of funder and funding requirements that specified the legal obligations that had to be met by the institute. The latter represented the contrast pole that referred to practices and processes viewed as externally demanded and enforced. From the author-reviewer's perspective, taking responsibility without relying on external demands elevated one's actions to a level where one accepted responsibility, showed agency, and exercised deliberate choice in response to challenges and opportunities that occurred while pursuing the LN-embedding agenda; hence, the choice of preferred pole. The commonality between these poles was the phrase *practices and processes*.

Twelve constructs

Table 1 lists the 12 constructs that were elicited from the randomly selected triads of elements. The 12 constructs included in the eventual grid are listed below, with the preferred poles italicised, and the triads of elements listed in brackets.

TABLE 1. CONSTRUCTS ELICITED FOR THE REVIEW OF TEN LN REPORTS (WITH TRIADS OF ELEMENTS IN BRACKETS).

Bipolar construct (C) (with preferred pole italicised and in front position)
C1: <i>Approved and enacted internal</i> versus extrinsically demanded and enforced practices/processes (E1, E2 and E3)
C2: <i>Positioning as solution-seeking change</i> versus positioning as compliance (E2, E8 and E12)
C3: <i>Discursive management as intentional and planned</i> versus spontaneous and emergent (E3, E9 and E11)
C4: <i>Strategy as proactive and integrated</i> versus moment-by-moment thinking and doing (E4, E6 and E9)
C5: <i>Strategy as nonlinear, flexible, moving towards a goal</i> versus a linear and directed approach (E3, E8 and E12)
C6: <i>Strategy as transformative</i> versus strategy as compliance (E4, E6 and E10)
C7: <i>Strategy as future directed</i> versus strategy as directed at compliance with funder requirements (E1, E6 and E11)
C8: <i>Strategy as contesting</i> versus strategy as complying (E8, E10 and E11)
C9: <i>Strategy as practice-directed critical reflection</i> versus strategy as uncritical acceptance (E8, E9 and E11)
C10: <i>Multi-dimensional</i> versus one-dimensional perspectives on LN processes at the institute (E1, E3 and E12)
C11: <i>Actively promoting diversification</i> versus avoiding diversification in LN approaches (E5, E11 and E12)
C12: <i>Intentional innovation in LN practices</i> versus incidental innovation in LN practices (E5, E6 and E12)

These polarities are not always mutually exclusive but, depending on context, may be placed within an integrative framework where both poles are relevant and have favourable implications (Fransella et al., 2004). In this study, selecting the preferred pole created a framework for not only judging the targeted reports but also identifying preferred future scenarios related to LN practices at the institute.

From design to ratings, analysis and construing

Once the constructs were formulated, standard ratings grid methodology was applied, which involved designing a 13-page grid that incorporated a 7-point rating scale and reversed polarities for half of the constructs. Once the ratings process was completed, the so-collected data were subjected to standard reverse coding, which included the conversion of the 7-point scale into values consistent with a -3 to +3 scale. Ratings on the preferred pole were processed as +3, +2 and +1, and the contrast pole as -3, -2 and -1. Ratings of 3 were viewed as *very strongly agree*, two as *strongly agree* and one as *agree*. The sign (+ or -) indicated the pole of the construct, either as the preferred (+) or the contrast (-) pole (Caputi et al., 2012; Fransella et al., 2004; Kelly, 1966/2003; Kelly 1955).

Repertory grid findings as a numbers-based narrative

Kelly (1955) states that the repertory grid is a numbers-based narrative that captures the meanings raters assign to the elements in a grid. Such analyses may reveal how a rater's constructs-based meanings are 'bunched together.' In this study, it was argued that a PCA would reveal meaningful 'bunches' or 'clusters' of closely located ratings (Caputi et al., 2012; Fransella et al., 2004). These principal components (PCs), when interpreted, would counter a fragmented view of the meanings derived from constructs, yielding a more holistic view of the interconnectedness of the constructs. These components could also serve as prompts to uncover new meanings and implications.

FINDINGS

In this section, the following findings are presented: descriptive statistics for the 12 constructs, an intercorrelation matrix for these constructs, and the components identified by a PCA. The descriptive statistics and correlation matrix appear in Tables 2 and 3 below:

TABLE 2. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR RATINGS BASED ON 12 CONSTRUCTS.

	Mean	SD
C1: <i>Approved and enacted internal</i> versus extrinsically demanded and enforced practices/processes	2.5	0.5
C2: <i>Positioning as solution-seeking change</i> versus positioning as compliance	2.0	0.4
C3: <i>Discursive management as intentional and planned</i> versus spontaneous and emergent	2.3	0.6
C4: <i>Strategy as proactive and integrated</i> versus moment-by-moment thinking and doing	1.9	0.3
C5: <i>Strategy as nonlinear, flexible, moving towards a goal</i> versus a linear and directed approach	1.2	0.4
C6: <i>Strategy as transformative</i> versus strategy as compliance	1.9	0.3
C7: <i>Strategy as future directed</i> versus strategy as directed at compliance with funder requirements	1.9	0.3
C8: <i>Strategy as contesting</i> versus strategy as complying	1.8	0.5
C9: <i>Strategy as practice-directed critical reflection</i> versus strategy as uncritical acceptance	2.4	0.5
C10: <i>Multi-dimensional</i> versus one-dimensional perspectives on LN processes at the institute	2.1	0.3
C11: <i>Actively promoting diversification</i> versus avoiding diversification in LN approaches	2.3	0.5
C12: <i>Intentional innovation</i> versus incidental innovation in LN practices	1.8	0.5

Note: In the ratings grid, 50% of the poles were reversed to avoid mindless marking of one side of the ratings scale. The 7-point scale was then converted to a -3 to +3 scale.

These results show that some of the ratings were clear-cut choices in favour of the preferred poles of the constructs. The means of the constructs were all located on the preferred poles of the constructs. They indicate the relative importance of the preferred poles in rating elements derived from the focus of convenience of the grid. The construct deemed most important was C1 ($M = 2.5$, $SD = 0.5$). This construct referred to the reports as documented evidence of approved and enacted internal processes and practices. Construct 9 ($M = 2.4$, $SD = 0.5$) reinforced the view of strategy as practice directed: all reports relate to LN activities outlined in TEC and institutional policies. C9 also includes a reference to critical reflection. The recommendations in these reports, it was argued, were the result of team-based reflective analysis. C3 ($M = 2.3$, $SD = 0.6$) emphasised the importance of the discursive practices followed in the reports: these reports followed specific guidelines, including LN-specific discourse and terminologies, replicable quantitative and qualitative methodologies, and standard institutional reporting formats. The reports also tracked how the LN team supported educators to diversify their practices (C11, $M = 2.3$, $SD = 0.5$); as stated in an earlier section, classroom observations were analysed to make these practices explicit. These became

the starting point for elaborating educator practices. A last example would be C10 ($M = 2.1$; $SD = 0.3$): this construct relates to multiple levels of dealing with LN practices in a whole-of-organisation perspective. The recommendations in the reports refer to various levels of management, LN capability development, learner support, LN practices, learners' LN performance and module success, as well as LNAT functionality.

Having dealt with the top five constructs is one way of looking at the means in Table 2. The question that could be asked is why the remaining means, although on the positive side, were not higher, or in future should not be assigned higher importance.

The next section is on correlations among the constructs in the grid. For all negative correlations reported in Table 3 the inverse relationship occurs on the positive side of the bipolar construct (i.e., this occurred for ratings varying between +3 and +1). Several high correlations (with + and - signs) appear in Table 3. For example, it was pointed out earlier that C11, relatively important in the review, was related to the LN team actively promoting diversification of LN approaches by elaborating educator practices based on their observed practices. The LN team deems this an important strategy as it acknowledges the educator as a worthy starting point for elaborating their approaches to LN. However, C11 and C12 are inversely related ($r = -0.82$, $p < 0.00$). C11 ($M = 2.3$, $SD = 0.5$) and C12 ($M = 1.8$, $SD = 0.5$) indicate the higher importance of C11 compared to C12. Thus, in the reports, intentional innovation did not appear to be as important as diversifying educators' LN practices. Diversifying LN practices and approaches, the author-reviewer argued, was aimed at familiarising educators with readily available techniques and well-established interactive strategies. The reports did not cover systematic small-scale innovation projects, albeit that classroom observations provided an avenue for escalating the number of innovation-directed interventions; hence, the lower yet positive ratings mean on C12.

TABLE 3. CORRELATIONS AMONG CONSTRUCTS USED TO RATE ELEMENTS IN THE GRID.

		C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C11	C12	
Correlations	C1	-0.41	0.14	-0.30	0.00	0.30	0.30	-0.19	0.17	0.30	0.35	-0.58	
	C2		0.34	0.00	0.00	-0.74	0.00	0.00	-0.41	0.00	-0.43	0.47	
	C3			0.13	-0.19	-0.38	0.13	-0.08	0.21	0.38	0.00	-0.08	
	C4				0.13	-0.09	-0.09	-0.17	-0.36	0.09	-0.43	0.52	
	C5					0.13	0.13	-0.26	-0.38	-0.13	0.16	0.26	
	C6							-0.09	-0.17	0.25	0.09	0.21	-0.17
	C7								0.52	0.25	0.09	0.21	-0.17
	C8									0.10	0.17	0.00	0.11
	C9										-0.25	0.48	-0.68
	C10											-0.21	0.17
	C11												-0.82
Significance levels	C1	0.09	0.33	0.17	0.50	0.17	0.17	0.27	0.30	0.17	0.13	0.02*	
	C2		0.14	0.50	0.50	0.00*	0.50	0.50	0.09	0.50	0.08	0.06	
	C3			0.35	0.28	0.11	0.35	0.40	0.25	0.11	0.50	0.40	
	C4				0.34	0.39	0.39	0.29	0.13	0.39	0.08	0.04*	
	C5					0.34	0.34	0.21	0.11	0.34	0.31	0.21	
	C6							0.39	0.29	0.21	0.39	0.25	0.29
	C7								0.04*	0.21	0.39	0.25	0.29
	C8									0.38	0.29	0.50	0.37
	C9										0.21	0.06	0.01*
	C10											0.25	0.29
	C11												0.00*

Statistically significant correlations: $p \leq 0.05^*$

Tables 4 and 5 report the findings of the PCA, specifically the number of components explaining the variability in the ratings (Table 4) and the rotated components matrix (Table 5) which captures the loadings between constructs and PCs, the primary focus of this paper.

TABLE 4. PRINCIPAL COMPONENTS ANALYSIS (PCA) – FIVE COMPONENTS.

Comp	Initial Eigen values			Extraction Sums of squared loadings			Rotation Sums of squared loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cum %	Total	% of Variance	Cum %	Total	% of Variance	Cum %
1	3.52	29.30	29.30	3.52	29.30	29.30	3.06	25.50	25.50
2	2.02	16.80	46.11	2.02	16.80	46.11	2.11	17.55	43.05
3	1.54	12.82	58.93	1.54	12.82	58.93	1.63	13.59	56.64
4	1.42	11.79	70.72	1.42	11.79	70.72	1.57	13.05	69.69
5	1.26	10.53	81.25	1.26	10.53	81.25	1.39	11.56	81.25
6	0.92	7.65	88.90						
7	0.54	4.47	93.37						
8	0.50	4.12	97.49						
9	0.17	1.43	98.92						
10	0.12	0.95	99.87						
11	0.02	0.13	100.00						
12	0.00	0.00	100.00						

Table 5 lists the five components that explain 81.3% of the variability in the ratings. Also, the first factor explains 29.3% of the variance in the ratings where the first factor is a measure of the coherence and intensity of constructs in the construct network (Hardison & Neimeyer, 2012). Table 5 reports the rotated components matrix, listing the loadings by component and their verbal labels.

TABLE 5. ROTATED COMPONENT MATRIX.

	1	2	3	4	5
C1	0.46	-0.30	0.66	-0.03	0.20
C2	-0.31	0.88	-0.08	0.01	0.05
C3	0.12	0.58	0.64	-0.12	-0.20
C4	-0.63	0.00	0.10	-0.17	0.08
C5	-0.11	-0.06	-0.09	-0.05	0.94
C6	0.09	-0.90	0.07	-0.11	0.05
C7	0.28	0.10	0.25	0.78	0.27
C8	-0.05	0.02	-0.09	0.92	-0.26
C9	0.74	-0.15	-0.02	0.08	-0.43
C10	-0.35	-0.10	0.81	0.18	-0.14
C11	0.84	-0.17	0.00	0.03	0.24
C12	-0.94	0.16	-0.14	0.09	0.12

The highest loading per row is identified followed by top loadings per column.

The findings of the PCA indicate that five components explain 81.3% of the variance in the ratings. The five PCs (with the variance in brackets and in descending order, with verbal labels for the PCs) were the following:

- Principal Component 1: Constructs 4, 9, 11 and 12 (29.3%) – *Deliberate innovation in LN practices*
- Principal Component 2: Constructs 2 and 6 (16.8%) – *Positioning as solution-centred practices*
- Principal Component 3: Constructs 1, 3 and 10 (12.8%) – *Deliberate evidence-based tracking of LN practices*
- Principal Component 4: Constructs 7 and 8 (11.8%) – *Contesting contentious LN practices*
- Principal Component 5: Construct 5 (10.5%) – *Flexible and responsive to unpredictable events*

DISCUSSION

Making one's construing explicit

The overall aim of this paper was to outline how a repertory grid was used to make the author-reviewer's construing explicit in reviewing ten institutional reports on LN practices for the period 2017 to 2020. The process unfolded on three levels: first, in the preceding text is illustrated how reviewer constructs based on contextually relevant elements in triadic comparisons were elicited; second, while performing constructs-based ratings, the author-reviewer sensed that this step prompted deliberate and reflective construing of the targeted elements within the focus of convenience; and, third, the interpretation of statistical findings from the grid analysis led to similar critical reflective reasoning. The discussion section focuses on the third level; specifically, how the PCA allowed hidden meanings to be derived from the underlying structure of each PC. These hidden meanings were not only relevant to reviewing the reports but also served as a point of orientation in the LN team's future planning.

Thematic focal points

Loadings were viewed as absolute values, which meant that positive and negative signs were ignored. The means in Table 2 show on which constructs high and low ratings were recorded. Given that all means (and individual ratings) occurred on the preferred pole of each construct, it was possible to identify the variable levels of positive ratings located on the preferred pole of the bipolar constructs (+3, +2 and +1). The inverse correlations in Table 3, therefore, indicate high and low levels of association of ratings on the preferred poles, as pointed out in an earlier example.

The PCA findings highlight, in priority order, the themes that emerged from the analysis. As a reductionist technique, PCA is aimed at identifying ratings that are closely related. These 'clusters of meaning' identify constructs and their meanings which co-occur in the ratings grid. These clusters were related to the following themes: (PC1) deliberate innovative practices; (PC2) solution-centred transformation; (PC3) deliberate evidence-based tracking; (PC4) contesting established gain algorithms; as well as (PC5) flexibility and responsiveness to unpredictable events.

Deliberate innovation in LN practices

PC1, with high loadings on C4 (-0.63), C9 (0.74), C11 (0.84) and C12 (-0.94), explained 29.3% of the variance in the ratings. The following preferred poles, in italics, appeared in this configuration of constructs:

- C4: *Strategy as proactive and integrated vs moment-by-moment thinking and doing*
- C9: *Strategy as practice-directed critical reflection vs uncritical acceptance*
- C11: *Actively promoting vs avoiding diversification in LN approaches*
- C12: *Intentional innovation vs incidental innovation in LN practices*

How could this cluster change our construing of the reports? This PC integrates several polarities into a multi-focal lens for construing the targeted reports. One way of interpreting the reports was to argue that these polarities

referred to LN team planning and practices as deliberate and proactive, while actively supporting educators to diversify their approaches with innovation in mind. The verbal label subsuming the four polarities was then formulated as *deliberate innovation in LN practices*.

The following discursive framework was then used as a prompt for planning team activities for 2022. To enhance innovation in LN practices (C12), we would place practice-directed critical reflection front of mind (C9), explicitly addressing innovation in proactive planning and integrated modes of being and doing in the LN domain (C4), and actively promoting diversification in LN approaches (C11).

For example, in the tutor training domain, the LN team intentionally pursued a group-based online delivery mode for candidates enrolled on the New Zealand Certificate in Adult Literacy and Numeracy Education (Vocational) who preferred this mode of support (C4). The supervisor tracked and reflected on participation and success (C9), with the author-reviewer interviewing candidates to obtain evidence-based feedback. The approach has been critical, reflective and practice directed (C9), proactively planned (C4) and aimed at diversifying one of the three modes of delivery listed in the curriculum document of the programme.

Positioning as solution-centred transformation

The second component, with high loadings on C2 (0.88) and C6 (-0.90), subsumed the following preferred poles (explaining 16.8% of the variance in the ratings):

- C2: *Positioning as solution-seeking change* vs positioning as compliance
- C6: *Strategy as transformative* vs compliance

The second component referred to LN team attitude, reminding us that a team should position itself as solution seeking (C2), an attribute closely associated with transformative practice. The example cited directly above was consistent with these two constructs: deliberate, targeted and explicit acts of change directed at LN challenges in vocational contexts in the institute. Other examples from the reports have been summarised in earlier sections, notably how the LNAT gain algorithm could be extended to include cross-tabulations to track progress, as well as recommendations for changing educator practices.

Deliberate evidence-based tracking of LN practices

This component, explaining 12.8% of the variance in the ratings, reminded the team that deliberate evidence-based tracking (C3) of all dimensions of LN practices (C10) had to be focused on approved annual LN action planning (C1).

- C1: *Approved and enacted internal* vs extrinsically demanded and enforced practices/processes
- C3: *Discursive management as intentional and planned* vs spontaneous and emergent
- C10: *Multi-dimensional* vs one-dimensional perspectives on LN processes at the institute

This is a recurrent theme in the reports. The LN team continued to deliberately pursue specific institutional goals in response to tertiary education policies (C1). Taking an organisational approach with multiple internal stakeholders involved (C10), the LN team followed a strict evidence-based approach, documenting its processes and actions (C3) to develop a whole-of-organisation approach.

An example is an emerging practice-based project to show how lesson plans and classroom observations are deliberately used (C1 and C3) to establish new sociocultural narratives of change that take multiple levels of meaning associated with diversity and culture (C10) into account.

Contesting contentious LN practices

Component 4 loadings were high on Constructs 7 (0.78) and 8 (0.92), explaining 11.8% of the variance in the ratings. This finding refers to the relevance of a PC that subsumed C7 (*Strategy as future directed vs strategy as directed at compliance with funder requirements*) and C8 (*Strategy as contesting vs strategy as complying*), which may be stated as: Contesting contentious officially sanctioned LN practices, based on iteratively collected data, was a deliberate choice on the part of the LN team anticipating future developments in the LN domain. This component is particularly relevant, given that in successive reports, the LN team have contested the current algorithm in the LNAT as underreporting LN progress achieved by vocational tutors and their students (C8). We have consistently argued in favour of cross-tabulations of targeted learners' initial and progress step scores as offering a more optimistic view of the educationally significant gains achieved – several reports cover this argument for future reference (C7).

Flexible and responsive to unpredictable events

The last component loaded high on C5: *Strategy should be viewed as nonlinear requiring flexible pursuit of goals vs a linear and directed approach*. This component was significant: strategy as action may be founded, for example, on holistic and integrative thinking, yielding SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) goals, milestones, deadlines and success criteria, but often, as the ancient Greeks suggested with their concept *metos* (Sloan, 2014), the reality of implementation is the best teacher when the rules and laws of thinking and doing come up against often unintended consequences of implementation. The metaphor that appeals to the LN team is the subtle dance versus the precision military march towards change. The subtle dance implies flexibility and a raised awareness of the opportunities that emerge as implementation occurs – its opposite, the military-march approach, is often a rigid and myopic pursuit of goals. This is similar to Maimone and Sinclair (2014), who use a musical metaphor to explore how emergent practices, unplanned, and unintended yet positive, may be integrated into business-as-usual actions in organisational settings, or Snowden and Boone's (2007) Cynefin framework, a meaning-making model that covers both anticipated and unanticipated outcomes in messy real-world contexts. Although linear and directed approaches create useful frames of reference, one could argue that the team would be best served if they adopted a nonlinear and flexible approach to pursue goals in the LN domain and solve unanticipated puzzles in the moment-by-moment pursuit of the LN agenda at the institute.

CONCLUSION

Multiple layers of reflection

In this study, the general aim was to outline how a grid-based approach could be used in a review of ten LN compliance reports in a tertiary vocational education context. It was argued that reflection occurred at various levels. The first level was related to identifying a focus of convenience for the grid, and eliciting constructs based on contextually relevant elements. The second level of reflection occurred when the author-reviewer rated each element in the grid from the vantage point of the bipolar constructs. The third level of reflection commenced when grid findings were analysed. The three levels have been summarised in the research methods and findings sections above. Using PCA, the author-reviewer identified five statistically significant PCs. These components, it is argued, allowed the author-reviewer to identify key meaning-making lenses, gain an awareness of their relative importance, and uncover the otherwise hidden connectedness of the constructs developed in the review process. These PCs allowed the author-reviewer and his team to reflect on the reports and use these components as a point of orientation in anticipating future LN action.

From implicit to explicit meaning-making lenses

Before embarking upon a grid-based approach to a review process, the author-reviewer was at best aware of some of the constructs he would use in the review. Making these explicit as constructs, as well as defining and

crafting them as verbal labels, was an important step in making them explicit. The ratings process, too, involved reflective construing, prompting him to refine the meanings associated with the review. Perhaps the most telling step was the PCA, which allowed the author-reviewer to uncover and externalise hidden meanings based on the interconnectedness of his constructs. His main recommendation to education managers and educators is the following: anyone performing a review or reflective activity could profitably use repertory grids to raise their awareness of hidden meanings in their construing.

The argument developed in this article refers to a limited selection of findings from the repertory grid analysis and data files. The argument scratches the surface: An array of complex meanings remains hidden in these findings. The interpretations and conclusions reported here represent a slice of the evidence; other research questions that could have been explored include how elements were construed. Transposing the data matrix allows one to analyse the interconnectedness of elements. One should add, too, that Kelly's (1955) notion of constructive alternativism is relevant: all interpretations of statistical findings, or findings from any other research orientation, can potentially be reinterpreted – it all depends on the constructs that researchers and consumers of such accounts are able to activate.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

ANOVA	Analysis of variance
C	Construct (C1, C2, C3, ...)
Cat	Category (Cat 1, Cat 2, Cat 3, ...)
E	Element (E1, E2, E3, ...)
LN	Literacy and numeracy
LNAT	Literacy and Numeracy Assessment Tool
PC	Principal component
PCA	Principal Components Analysis
TEC	Tertiary Education Commission

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CONVERTING RESEARCH TO OUTPUTS IN ONE WEEK: THE EFFICACY OF WRITING RETREATS

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Resilience in tertiary education



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ABSTRACT

Academic teaching staff are beset by a host of demands and responsibilities in these challenging times – for many, the onus of demonstrating that they are ‘research active’ and producing scholarly publications threatens to become the final straw. This presentation will outline one possible solution that some Te Pūkenga subsidiaries, including our own, have found highly effective. Since the 2016 inauguration of Toi Ohomai, the research office have been convening an annual, off-campus, week-long writers’ retreat for staff. We have also recently added a second event specifically for Māori researchers. Objectives include developing academic writing capability, achieving publications/research outputs, and progressing theses/dissertations. Feedback from the 4 to 12 participants at each event has been generally enthusiastic, and anecdotally there appears to have been a high rate of conversion of writing to publication. Further, the literature suggests that writing retreats offer additional benefits; coaching relationships, cross-disciplinary connections and collaborations, and a new or renewed engagement with research culture. Our research team decided that a more formal evaluation of retreat participant outcomes would be timely, and would potentially allow us to promote this initiative to Te Pūkenga’s research strategy development arm. Using a multi-method design, we reviewed survey feedback from the seven retreats held between 2017 and 2021, and verified research outputs registered with our institute’s research management system. We then developed and piloted interview questions, and met with nine past retreat attendees. This paper shares our emerging findings, including enablers and barriers to attendance and productivity, and suggested work-arounds. We believe that this approach to assisting staff to progress their publishing careers is easily transferable across other subsidiaries, and hope that colleagues, managers, and the teaching and learning teams who support them will find some of our learnings helpful.

KEYWORDS

Writing retreat, academic writing capability, academic publishing, Te Pūkenga staff

INTRODUCTION

The tertiary vocational sector in Aotearoa New Zealand – and how writing retreats fit in

Academics in tertiary institutions have multiple roles, tasks and responsibilities, and have many masters: their students, colleagues, managers, communities, the education sector and government agencies. This contextual complexity is particularly apparent in today’s Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITPs) charged with delivering student-centred vocational education in a range of trades and professions, to meet industry needs and deliver work-ready graduates. Alongside the core business of teaching and learning, there is the expectation – and requirement – that educators in degree and postgraduate programmes, and those that pathway directly into these, are research active. Herein lies a further tension; ITP staff often enter teaching positions directly from employment in their industry, trade or profession, and complete teaching qualifications on the job. They are valued for their industry knowledge but, for many, academic writing is a new challenge (Hamerton & Fraser, 2014). It is hardly surprising that publication outputs are often limited, despite the “escalating drive” to research and

publish embodied in employment agreements, qualification approval processes, programme/faculty/organisation reporting, and external funding generation (Kornhaber et al., 2016, p. 1210).

To meet these demands, say Stanley et al. (2017), organisations must build “the motivation and ability to write – efficiently, clearly and routinely” (p. 249). There is a growing literature that provides considerable evidence that allowing time and space for academic writing, creating a collaborative community and providing on-the-spot guidance and feedback can increase productivity (Elbow & Sorcinelli, 2006; Grant, 2006, 2008; Kornhaber et al., 2016; McGrail et al., 2006). Retreats can offer a scaffolded approach in assisting staff who are writing novices to start to develop an academic voice and move from *legitimate peripheral participation* into *full participation* (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Writing retreats take various forms, but for the purposes of this paper, the following two definitions offer a good description of the structure and ethos our own retreats attempt:

- [A] professional development intervention that provides a total immersion experience, writing support and mentoring, focused engagement in the writing experience and a community of practice and reflexivity. (Kornhaber et al., 2016, p. 1211)
- [A] prescribed period of time during which one geographically separates oneself from a typical or routine work environment for the distinct purpose of writing ... with other likeminded individuals with the same purpose. (Stanley et al., 2017, p. 250)

Studies such as Kornhaber et al.'s (2016) iterative review map the benefits and challenges of academic writing retreats comprehensively, but are almost entirely situated in university settings. We found comparatively few articles that investigate the value of writing retreats for staff in ITPs, and even fewer attempting to link staff writing for publication with other impacts to practice, such as a change in attitude to scholarship, or to teaching and learning pedagogy. Further, within our own organisation an additional gap can be identified in that we have conducted no formal review of the retreat events since a merger of two legacy ITPs (Bay of Plenty Polytechnic and Waiariki Institute of Technology) created Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology in 2016. For the research office, and the project team, the evaluation reported here therefore appeared well timed to reflect on our current practice, to identify areas for improvement and, potentially, to contribute to Te Pūkenga's future research strategy.

Our model

Between 2017 and 2021, the Toi Ohomai Research Office has held seven retreats: five were 'general' retreats, open to all academic staff who met the criteria, and subject to availability of places. In addition, in the past two years, we have also convened a Māori writers' retreat, designed to support our Māori staff who are engaged in research, and staff who are conducting research using Kaupapa Māori research methodology. For all retreats, our goals have been to develop participants' skills in writing for publication or to complete higher qualifications, and to assist them in publishing research outputs. Retreats are funded through the research office, and participants generally use their professional development leave to attend, as negotiated with their line manager.

On each occasion, the event is supported by an on-site facilitator, responsible for establishing the ethos and framework of the retreat, initiating group activities and individual writing feedback sessions, and co-ordinating peer review. The paper's first two authors have together, and individually, facilitated five of the seven events – with work beginning several months ahead of the retreat, managing applications and liaising with attendees, booking accommodation and catering. This often involves post-retreat support, including editing.

Our writing retreats are fully residential over four or five days, and have been held at either a coastal or lakeside location within roughly an hour's drive from each of our institution's two largest campuses. For the past several years we have booked apartments in a single complex or a lodge, to ensure participants have their own room and a choice of writing spaces to work individually or communally. We encourage attendees to take advantage of the

beach, harbour and bush environs for walking, running and cycling. For meals we have combined out-sourced catering with communal cooking.

Participants set their own writing goals prior to attending and we begin each retreat with a session where they share their goals with one another. Facilitators meet with each person individually at the beginning and again at the end of the retreat to monitor progress and help them to identify any further assistance needed. All participants read and review one another's work during the retreat; for many this is a first encounter with the concept of peer review. We also offer workshops on requested topics such as writing abstracts, selecting the appropriate journal for the manuscript, grammar and punctuation, and responding to journal reviewers' critique.

Following four of the retreats covered in this study, we obtained feedback from participants in the form of a brief online evaluation. We have also tracked research outcomes over time, noting that many participants do not complete their writing tasks at the retreat, but will usually continue writing afterwards. Publication of outcomes often takes much longer, so it is not unusual to find that a paper written at one of the retreats is finally published two or even three years later.

This study

Annual writing retreats account for a considerable investment by the organisation and by the attendees – in time, money and prioritisation of attendance over alternative professional development options. The purpose of this evaluation was to consider whether this annual event is achieving its objectives of growing research capacity and capability. We therefore sought to answer the following questions:

- How effective are Toi Ohomai annual writing retreats in developing academic writing capability?
- What are the benefits to participants, and how long is their impact felt?
- Are writing retreats an effective mechanism to increase research outputs?
- What barriers do participants encounter after the retreat that prevent or delay them from completing the original, or subsequent, writing tasks?

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

There is a strong body of scholarship related to academic writing retreats, and although as noted earlier almost all the literature assumes a university rather than vocational education context, there are many transferable observations.

First is the widespread recognition of the importance of 'getting away' and finding uninterrupted time (Bellacero, 2009) to focus on writing and overcome the internal and external barriers of academic life. These include a lack of momentum (McGrail et al., 2006), self-censorship, low confidence, lack of external motivation, and a lack of specific writing-related skills (Jackson, 2009). These authors all attest to the value of writing retreats in addressing such challenges.

A second observation noted across a number of studies is that in many organisations, a small number of individuals are often responsible for a larger proportion of publications (Hamerton & Fraser, 2014; McGrail et al., 2006). Writing retreats are viewed as a way of building both capability and capacity across a wider base of staff when those attending include a mix of novice and experienced writers, as well as a range of disciplines (Grant, 2006). Working alongside others can assist writers to improve and develop their quality of work, set new precedents and refine their writing strategies (Kornhaber et al., 2016). Grant (2006) says that in her study, the majority of women (25 of 31) reported that attending the retreats made a meaningful difference to their writing lives, and changed how they perceived themselves as academic writers. Nearly two thirds reported a significant difference to their writing output.

It is not just writing skills and strategies that retreat attendees learn from one another. Emotional and psychological support in the form of motivation, encouragement and informal mentoring has also been reported (Kornhaber et al., 2016). Writing together in retreats in a small community of like-minded colleagues can provide a sense of security and confidence, pleasure and achievement (Kent et al., 2017; Stanley et al., 2017). Encouragingly, these effects last beyond the duration of the retreat for many writers: Murray and Newton (2009) and Bell and Murray (2020) describe writers finding renewed pleasure, purpose and productivity in writing, which they retain; Grant (2006) and Lambert (2007) have noted ongoing and long-lasting collegial relationships from their women's and Māori postgraduate retreats.

A number of studies note the link between writing retreats and communities of practice, with common features including "shared vision, collegial support, mentorship and social interaction" (Kornhaber et al., 2016, p. 1217). Murray and Newton found that verbalising writing goals with peers helped to clarify and led to a "mutuality of engagement" (2009, p. 545).

Across the studies cited here, a range of personal, professional and organisational barriers to writing are identified, as are corresponding benefits to writers following retreat attendance. Several authors use the term 'legitimising writing' (e.g., Bell & Murray, 2020; Kornhaber et al., 2016) to describe the significance of retreats in demonstrating support for researchers and writers. This has certainly been our intention across the seven writing retreats covered in the present evaluation.

METHODOLOGY

Data sources

A multi-method approach to evaluation was taken, and utilised multiple sources of information: the first four listed below were existing institutional records (a, b, c) or data from a previous research project (d) that had included gathered information about writing retreats as part of a larger overview of ITPs' research office activities. The fifth source of information, and new to this project (e), was a series of open-ended interview questions developed and piloted with a past member of the Research Office (Appendix A). These questions were designed to act as prompts to encourage participants to tell their own stories of attendance and outcomes. The intention was to provide feedback about the retreats that had not necessarily been covered in the online surveys sent out after separate events. The findings reported in this paper, then, have been drawn from:

- a) ROMS (Research Output Management System) reports for all retreat attendees 2016–21, cross-referenced against the writing projects that they worked on during the retreat experience. ROMS is the software platform Toi Ohomai uses to record staff research outputs and contributions.
- b) Financial data – annual costs for the retreats (recognising different accommodation models, catering, staffing, incidentals) per individual attendee.
- c) Annual evaluations via an online survey from attendees of writing retreats 2016–2021
- d) Transcripts from scoping conversations (telephone) with 11 Research Managers from the 15 other ITPs undertaken in 2019–20 as part of research about incentives and rewards to increase staff research productivity, and institutional supports and resources available.
- e) Individual interviews with nine attendees

Research design

Two of the project team were facilitators of the 2017–21 retreats, and the other two team members were attendees. This enabled us to adopt a participatory research approach for the study. Participatory research is a well-documented and widely used approach in interpretive social science research (Denzin, 2009).

When members of an evaluation team are involved and embedded in the research itself, interrogating their own practice as well as that of others, there can be concerns about a possible loss of rigour, credibility, or relevance. However, as Denzin (2009) notes, the field of qualitative research is a broad one, and research concerned with human beings always involves an interference of some kind; so long as the researcher–participant relationship is overt, an ethos of trust and transparency can be maintained. In this case, the research team endeavoured to provide transparency by sharing each transcript with the individual interviewee, and subsequently the draft report, with all participants prior to any wider dissemination, to check the accuracy of contributions and the conclusions drawn.

Similarly, some of the research team are or have been retreat facilitators, and are clearly advocates of these events. We sought to mitigate our individual influence as much as possible by assigning interviews (again, where possible and practicable) to a member of the team who was not present at the particular retreat(s) the participant attended.

Survey and interview participants

Between 2017 and 2021, the Research Office has held seven retreats. Not all were followed with an online survey evaluation, but for those that were, 30 responses were received.

The potential participant pool for the interviews comprised all staff members who have attended one of the seven retreats during the past five years and are still employed at the organisation. In our ethics proposal (approval #TRC 2021.057, June 2021) we stated our intention to recruit 15–20 participants – by which time we expected that a ‘saturation’ of substantively different themes and insights would have been reached. In fact, as a team, we agreed that nine interviewees had provided rich and useful data, but that there was a strong element of repetition across multiple items. For this reason we finalised this phase of data collection at that point.

Standard ethical protocols were followed, including voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, the intended use of the information provided, and the opportunity to review data prior to dissemination. In addition, recognising that our participant population included Māori researchers, our research team was careful to ensure Kaupapa Māori principles were followed in arranging and conducting interviews. This included whakawhanaungatanga in taking time to acknowledge personal relationships and connections, and respect and care for participants demonstrated through facilitators actively listening to and valuing each person’s contributions. Manaakitanga was also an aspect of the interviews, which were conducted at a time and place of the participant’s choosing, with some including koha of morning tea and coffee, where time and access allowed. With such a small participant pool, no demographic information was collected, and there was no attempt to compare data from Māori and non-Māori participants. However, since the intention was to use the information gathered to improve the writing retreats in future, we did let everyone know that feedback from Māori participants about how the retreats could be improved or made more culturally appropriate for them would be used to improve the experience for future participants.

Data analysis

The first two sources of data, ROMS records and financial data, were tabulated and summarised. The three qualitative sources of data – survey feedback, interviews and scoping conversations – were analysed thematically. In particular, the survey evaluations and narratives provided by interviewees were collated and coded according to recurring themes that emerged from their accounts. Our overall approach aligns with grounded theory as we aimed to construct our ideas about key benefits, challenges and impacts of the Toi Ohomai writing retreats through analysis of the data – looking for repeated ideas and concepts, and tagging these with codes to identify the emerging themes (Breen et al., 2015). As noted earlier, many interviewees covered similar topics to those addressed by survey respondents and some may have been the same participants – since all online contributions were anonymous, researchers were unable to check overlap. It therefore made sense to combine both sources of primary retreat-participant data and report our findings thematically, rather than by data collection instrument.

Triangulation of multiple data sources will guide ongoing discussion and any arising recommendations for Toi Ohomai and Te Pūkenga regarding format changes for future writing retreats.

FINDINGS

Logistics from institutional data

Table 1 below summarises data related to the seven retreats convened between 2017 and 2021, including five all-staff retreats, and two Māori retreats. In one case no financial data was available, as funding was provided from a separate budget line. As noted previously, there can be a considerable delay between writing and output. Therefore, a tally of research outputs either achieved or pending (in review or in press) has only been completed for the years 2017–19. Of course, there may be further outputs from work undertaken at these retreats, with research often engendering multiple outputs, or leading to follow-up research drawing on original data and discussions. However, the role played by the original retreat attendance is likely more of a historical contribution than a primary enabler, and therefore outside the scope of this current evaluation.

It is also important to note that outputs have only been counted for staff who are still employed at Toi Ohomai, and therefore, 'in the system.' Over this period, three participants left before completing their writing projects, and one participant was from an external organisation and their publication is therefore not a Toi Ohomai output.

Differences in the number of staff who achieved ROMS outputs and the number of ROMS entries achieved is explained by participants who attended as a writing partnership and co-authored a single publication, and by participants who worked substantively on more than one writing project during the retreat. These observations apply to both all-staff and Māori retreat attendees.

TABLE 1. RETREAT DATA BY EVENT.

	No. of attendees	Accomm. type	Cost per person	Number of attendees who completed a ROMS output	Number of ROMS outputs from retreat
2017 All-staff	12	Beach houses	\$365	9	7
2018 All-staff	11	Beach houses	\$382	8, one pending	8, one pending
2019 All-staff	10	Apartments	\$487	7, 2 pending	6, 2 pending
2020 All-staff	9	Apartments	\$529		
2020 Māori	6	Lodge	No data		
2021 All-staff	13	Apartments	\$500		
2021 Māori	7	Lodge	\$418		

Note: ROMS = Research Output Management System. This repository records both higher qualifications with research components, and quality-assured publications, as outlined by PBRF guidelines.

If it is difficult to compare the seven Toi Ohomai events represented in Table 1 due to changing venues, attendee numbers, diversity of writing projects, individual and joint authorship, it is even more so to compare these retreats with those held by other ITP subsidiaries. An earlier (2019–20) inquiry led by the first author of this report had requested information about supports for research from the other 15 institutes in this sector, and received responses from 11 research office managers/directors of research. Three institutions held regular retreats at least once a year that conformed with the definitions mentioned earlier: off-site, residential, supported by an experienced facilitator/research mentor, and attended by small groups of academic staff, with a mix of individual and group time. Differences covered criteria and selection processes for attending, the number of spaces available,

duration, scheduling, funding sources and accountability/monitoring of output. There were two further ITPs who held retreats for special-interest groups, such as doctoral students, but these were run by different departments rather than the research office. One further ITP had held a retreat in the past and considered it successful, but the event had not been repeated due to budget constraints. Perhaps the most useful aspect of revisiting this data as part of the current project is to note that such efforts are largely unknown outside each organisation. The contribution this paper seeks to make is a published account of the efficacy of one institute's version of a writing retreat accompanied by some, albeit inexact, longitudinal data.

Perceived value – Academic writing skills; academic writing tasks

The survey asked participants how useful the retreat had been in developing academic writing skills, and in completing a piece of academic writing. Twenty-three of 30 survey respondents reported that they had found the retreat *“very useful”* for learning writing tradecraft, with additional comments outlining some of the areas in which they felt more confident:

“The ability to share experience and get writing tips from other academics is invaluable.”

“I came away enthused and inspired, with much more clarity about the outline and direction of the article on which I’m working.”

Seven respondents found the retreats *“somewhat useful”* for writing-skill development; not surprising given that on each occasion there were at least as many previously published writers as there were novices, and there were also participants who had attended retreats in past years. Comments here were still positive, for example:

“In terms of writing skills, there wasn’t much [but] was very useful to have someone else read my written work and provide constructive feedback.”

Participants were generally a little more reticent about whether they had managed to complete a writing project, with 18 rating the retreat as *“very useful”* and one as *“somewhat useful.”* Several did not provide a response on the provided scale, but added comments to indicate that while they hadn’t reached an endpoint, they were extremely pleased with their progress:

“Got a big chunk of my research started, left feeling accomplished.”

“I made great progress with my project and began my draft report ... The work will also contribute to an article for publication once the research is completed.”

We did not ask interviewees the same questions, but where comments related to these areas were included, there was a high level of congruency.

Goals, progress, plans for completion

The 30 survey responses following the four retreats where this information was collected were roughly in proportion to the remaining three retreats, which were not formally evaluated immediately upon conclusion. Half (15) of survey participants named an article for publication as their primary writing project. Most writers were targeting journals, although only one third of these mentioned a specific title, while two attendees were writing a book chapter, and one was writing for a volume of refereed conference proceedings. The next most common goal was meeting a milestone towards higher qualifications: three attendees were working on a master’s dissertation; five were writing chapters for a doctoral thesis. Another eight responses related to progressing or completing approved research projects: four were creating questionnaires and surveys, or working on literature reviews, and four were completing final reports for the sponsoring agency – either Toi Ohomai or an external funder. One attendee used the retreat to complete a proposal for our organisation’s research committee approval, and one

was writing an external submission. Eight attendees mentioned secondary projects they intended to work on dependent upon progress, or were working on concurrently.

Over two thirds of participants reported that they had achieved their goal and completed at least a draft of their primary task. Seven said that they were almost completed, and four gauged their project to be about halfway, but still a work in progress.

"I was attempting to complete an article that I had commenced three years ago, and did not have the space or time to factor it in. I am now in the last stages of editing and illustration prior to submitting."

Plans to complete unfinished work included consulting research team members and co-authors, and fact checking: *"More investigation in Māori Land Court and reading required to fill gaps"*; and time *"to finalise the rest of the paper I will do one day a week"*; and *"It was greatly advanced, and I'm ... continuing to do more work each week."*

This paper's titular claim that one-week retreats enable writers to realise a completed research output may be a bit optimistic, but they clearly get many attendees well on the way.

Positives, and comments related to structure, logistics, facilitation, support, etc.

When asked what participants enjoyed/valued most, and what they had found most helpful in progressing/ completing a piece of writing, responses were remarkably similar, with three recurring key themes: social interaction, the away-from-home environment, and the presence of a facilitator. As one participant put it: *"Time to write, camaraderie with work colleagues, feedback when asked for."* These responses were common across both survey respondents and interviewees.

Social interaction and social learning

All 30 responses to four post-retreat survey evaluations mentioned the social aspect of being away with others in a small group as a positive element of their experience. For some it was just about *"Getting to know others at Toi Ohomai"* and *"good company"* and *"learning about fellow colleagues."* It can be hard to quantify the value relationship-building brings to positive organisational culture, but participants certainly knew what they liked, including *"hearing stories from my peers – I liked the informal chats and found these most useful."*

However, some newer researchers were quite specific about what they felt they had gained from mixing with others who were further along on their research and publication journey:

"... the peer review was extremely confidence building."

"The peer review opportunity with someone far more experienced – a lucky match. The opportunity to read a proposal someone else was working on that gave me some ideas relating to data collection."

Senior researchers who attended also valued shared discussions and making new connections:

"I really enjoyed being able to talk about research with others who were also passionate about this."

"The ability to connect with other researchers from different disciplines."

Environment

The four retreats that were followed by an invitation to participants to complete a survey evaluation included two based in adjacent beach houses, and two where participants were allocated a two- or four-bedroom apartment in a single complex. Again, all 30 survey respondents alluded to some aspect of the environment as a highlight of the retreat experience. For some it was the beachside setting – *"the venue was uplifting"* – and being *"away from home"*

and work distractions.” For some, it was the cultural connection. One interviewee who had attended both the all-staff and the Māori writers’ retreats summarised the importance of the setting:

“And I also know how the place is important, even more now. The view from the lodge – the connection to the whenua, the roto, seeing the island [Mokoia]. Takes the experience to another level. The whenua is my whakapapa and wairua connection and the connection is important. Being near the beach was the same thing too. Being connected to the ocean, the smell, the sound, the view.”

For others, it was having a designated space, “[the] privacy of own room meant I was able to work early hours or late nights” and time: “completely clear periods of time in which to focus – which I don’t normally get.” At least half the respondents also referred to the catered lunches, which helped “to ensure less disruption to writing time.”

Three comments from both survey feedback and interviews indicate that whether for a first-timer or a regular attendee, the setting, venue and logistics are all critical, and appreciated:

“Having the organising details taken care of. Having a table to work at. Getting exercise on the beach and working hard. Healthy, fab food. Felt like a little bit of luxury – and this made me feel valued (which doesn’t happen much at work).”

“... tempting to do research next year just so I can go back!”

“I like the mix of workspace and personal space and time. All the setups have been good but I found I got most done when we were in apartments.”

On-site facilitator

This role was frequently mentioned (14 of 30 survey responses). Comments drawn from all survey questions traversed a range of details that participants appreciated having been taken care of. Some liked the “invitation approach” where members of the research office had either shoulder-tapped first-time attendees or ensured a personal email was sent, alerting them to the opportunity. Others enjoyed having the logistics sorted for them:

“... so organised that all I had to do was get up and get on with my study.”

For most, though, it was the academic writing activities and feedback that were most impactful:

“Really helped with blank spots/ issues finding the right words sometimes; clarity of formatting my article.”

“Connecting members of the group with one another where it was advantageous to us. Due to the facilitator, I was able to join another research project.”

Barriers to writing, and to attendance

Lack of time was a factor mentioned in 15 responses to the survey and several of the interviews, which either specifically mentioned “time” (six) or called for more writing retreats, such as the one they had just experienced, in order to have this time ring-fenced:

“... dedicated, uninterrupted writing time. I would just like to write, write, write but work gets in the way (and so I find it hard to make the clear ‘space’ in my head that I need to do this).”

“It will be really good if this event is allowed twice a year at least (once per semester).”

Another barrier that nine survey respondents and four of the interviewees mentioned was the difficulty in finding expert mentors and peers who could review their work and help develop their academic writing skills.

"I think having a key person/s to mentor me throughout my introduction to writing academic papers is really important – prior to the retreat I had struggled to find peers who had the time to review and/or advise me on how to enter the world of academic writing. Following the retreat, I feel I can contact [facilitator] and several other more experienced peers for advice/mentoring."

"I'd like to be able to finish a manuscript and give it to someone who does all the formatting to send off to journals ... it would be awesome if someone could triple-check the spelling. I get my colleagues to do that, but they're busy, too. To ask someone to read a 20-page paper with an editorial eye is a big ask."

Four interviewees said that their manager was not personally research-active, and as a consequence was not always supportive of safeguarding research workload allocation, or enabling attendance at retreats when there were conflicting expectations:

"... you need management support. We've had people from our team turned down to go because there was no one who could take over their teaching or site visits."

"Managers need to understand how research workload works – not piecemeal, and not taken over by other jobs. Writing time is different from other phases of research which CAN fit around daily roles. But to write well needs time and space, time and space away!"

Participant suggestions for improvement

The most popular answer for survey respondents when asked about ideas for improving future events, was "nothing" or a variation thereof (15). Four participants wanted tips or workshops about skills such as using databases, or about writing: *"I think there should also be a workshop on presentations or editing."* Two attendees from the 2017 retreat held in beachside houses requested wi-fi, and individual writing spaces, rather than a shared central room – however both these issues were addressed within the following year.

The interviews appeared to prompt more thinking about what attendees would like to see, or have provided. Two participants suggested that meeting up before the retreat would be useful, and perhaps inviting some past attendees to share what they found worked best for them. Another suggestion was for attendees to consider their own areas of expertise and what they could contribute to others:

"... thinking about the tuakana-teina model, we're all tūakana at some time, and we're all tēina. We could koha our own expertise into the retreat, e.g., I'm passionate about brain gym."

Another recommendation was that the retreats be opened up to other Te Pūkenga subsidiaries, as this would be an excellent way to foster a collaborating team to meet and work together, and to strengthen inter-institutional networks and communities of practice:

"We could look around the country at who would be interested in some joint writing exercises, not just who's in-house. There might be a community bigger than us where we could swap things in and out ..."

Most suggestions, however, tended to describe initiatives participants would like to see as additional institutional academic writing supports. First, continuing the theme of mentoring (or the lack of, identified earlier as a barrier), several interviewees said that they would like to see this option as a formal offering. One said they would like to be included and supported to be part of a research team to build their own capability; another thought that a more senior colleague would be able to assist with cross-team collaborations. For one participant, a previous university experience had provided access to a paid reader-reviewer prior to submission, and they found that this saved a lot of work. Other suggestions included a shared physical space that allowed for writing away from the team office, and writing groups meeting weekly or fortnightly, *"to share the misery."*

DISCUSSION AND FINAL THOUGHTS

This study aligns with the conclusions reported in writing retreat literature: that off-site academic writing retreats are a feasible, effective strategy to increase writing outputs and scholarship. Kornhaber et al.'s (2016) iterative review of significant evidence-based findings from 11 international studies, including from Aotearoa New Zealand, identifies five major themes that contribute to increased publication output: "Protected time and space, Community of practice, Development of academic writing competence, Intra-personal benefits and Organisational investment" (p. 1213). Each of these is readily identifiable in the findings and representative quotations shared above.

There are numerous permutations – within our own ITP sector, and within the literature. Some authors argue for workshop-style 'structured' retreats (Bell & Murray, 2020; Murray & Newton, 2009) and some advocate single-discipline retreats, such as Stanley et al.'s (2017) psychology and Bell and Murray's (2020) healthcare retreats, or Lambert's (2007) Māori postgraduate retreats. However, the findings above have affirmed for the evaluation team that our current approach to inter-disciplinary events, which emphasise autonomy alongside collegiality, is working for our attendees, in our current context.

The appreciation of this social interaction and social learning, which is a universal aspect of our participants' survey and interview responses, is also the answer to a common challenge for writing retreats – posed by outsiders. Why is it not sufficient to provide research workload allocation, such as ensuring eligible academic staff have four hours a week timetabled for non-teaching or associated tasks? For a start, say Stanley et al. (2017), "Humans have an innate need to belong ... which has been shown also to extend to work environments [and] it is likely that when colleagues feel more connected to one another, they have more successful work output" (p. 3). The authors postulate that social connectivity reduces stress and increases motivation – and also, group accountability. Certainly, our evaluation responses indicate high levels of motivation that align with the observations of all four authors, who have been facilitators and attendees, across all seven retreats reported here.

The intra-personal benefits, alongside developing academic writing competence, appear to be impacting our participants' sense of themselves as writers during and after the retreat. Many were able to articulate changes to their own practice, and even where these could not easily be sustained on return to campus, they now know what they need, and what gets in their way. Beyond tangible research outputs, attendees have gained a sense of what Stanley et al. (2017) describe as "the *culture* of writing" (p. 8). Connecting closely with other writers from different backgrounds, disciplines and levels of publishing experience has also served to broaden participants' understanding of research and writing conventions (Grant, 2006). A further, third benefit of the collegiality engendered by the retreats has been attendees' connections with other staff members who can assist in the future as writing mentors or peer reviewers.

A possible avenue for future inquiry might be an investigation into the longevity of such change compared to the impact of alternate funded professional-development initiatives. Budget considerations may cause management to question the cost of funding a residential retreat for a small group of staff, and our model of apartment/lodge accommodation is not cheap. However, if this investment-per-head is compared with that of other offerings, for example symposia attendance (in non-pandemic times), it might be that retreats compare highly favourably in terms of the personal, professional and organisational gains, as well as in the generation of scholarly output and dissemination of knowledge.

Both the literature and the evaluation findings, therefore, support the efficacy of writing retreats in developing academic voice, and legitimising writing as part of a professional identity. Creating protected time and space to write has worked well for several years for one ITP subsidiary. We hope that this paper will assist researchers, writers and retreat enthusiasts to make a case for continuation under the new Te Pūkenga entity.

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APPENDIX A. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS/PROMPTS

1	Please make a note – which team/department the participants came from and their role, i.e., ASM, SASM, manager, etc...
2	Confirmation: You attended in 20__ __, worked on ____, the outcomes were ____? Can you tell me about this experience – your satisfaction with the arrangements, support, results? At the time? With hindsight?
3	What led to your attendance? Was this a one-off or have you attended again? Are your motivations the same?
4	What were the key take-away learnings? Have they stood the test of time?
5	Did attendance alter your attitude to academic writing? Has there been an impact on your own practice? Your goals? (Is the discipline of setting aside writing time, progressing a task towards milestones in large allotments of time, rather than piecemeal around other duties – new? Does the retreat schedule perhaps model how to write?)
6	What, in your opinion, are the enablers to attending? Barriers? (organisational / structural / domestic, etc)
7	Did you encounter any barriers after the retreat which prevented or delayed you completing the original, or subsequent writing tasks?
8	Would you advocate attending to colleagues? What do you think their perceptions are?
9	How could retreats be improved in the future? (e.g., <i>more workshop sessions</i> ? For those who say more retreats: when we could hold these and for how long?)
10	What alternative types of academic writing support would you like to see? (Prompts: an assigned mentor, like the facilitator role, for feedback? Meetings to set up peer review / buddy partnerships?)

THE EMERGENCE OF TE HIHIMĀ: A BICULTURAL PHILOSOPHICAL FRAMEWORK FOR NURSING EDUCATION IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

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Nursing pedagogy and professional development



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ABSTRACT

The crafting of Te Hihimā (woven flax cloak) o Te Tohu Paetahi Tapuhi (Bachelor of Nursing) at Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology was developed from the connectivity of the collaborative learning relationships and experiences that student nurses encounter during their educational journey. The weaving of a student's individual Hihimā is a metaphorical representation of the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes, and protection as the student-nurse weaver integrates theory with practice, and fuses the art and science implicit within the nursing profession.

The concept of Te Hihimā emerged during the journey to develop a bicultural Bachelor of Nursing curriculum within a mainstream educational institution in the Waiariki rohe, Aotearoa New Zealand. Te Tohu Paetahi Tapuhi was accredited by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) and the Nursing Council of New Zealand (NCNZ) for teaching delivery commencing in 2015.

This article will deliberate the development of the philosophy, and analyse the weaving analogy, in the development of nursing graduates who carry the professionally protective mantle of Te Hihimā to sustain them during the journey into professional practice, and beyond.

KEYWORDS

Bicultural nursing education, Indigenous philosophy, professional practice

CONTEXT OF NURSING EDUCATION

In the 1980s, the nursing profession experienced a time of revolution; the transference in the 1970s of nursing education from hospital-based training into the tertiary educational sector (Carpenter, 1971; Workforce Development Group, 1988) required that health environments respond to a totally qualified nursing workforce. Concomitantly, Māori were asking non-Māori to honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi, The Treaty of Waitangi, and when the Waitangi Tribunal was established in 1975 (Waitangi Tribunal, 2014), a forum was afforded for Māori to voice historical grievances. The emergence of kawa whakaruruhau, or cultural safety, as a tangible phenomenon (Ramsden, 1992; Nursing Council of New Zealand, 2011) challenged health professions, and nursing in particular, to reflect upon the impact for Māori of entrenched values and traditional worldviews on Māori health and wellbeing (Ramsden & Spoonley, 1994; Ramsden, 2000, 2002).

The primary motivator, 36 years ago at Waiariki Polytechnic (now Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology), was the development of an innovative qualification that transformed and extended nursing practice, and connected nursing students to the authentic experience of individuals requiring support and care. Embedding an Indigenous framework to underpin the inaugural Diploma of Nursing curriculum at Waiariki was a first for Aotearoa New Zealand. The nursing faculty (Te Puna Whaiora) of this era sought the permission of Dr Rangimarie (Rose) Pere to adapt and integrate her holistic model of whānau (family) wellbeing and health, 'Te Wheke' (the octopus) (Pere, 1991; Potaka & Ngata, 1984) into the nursing curriculum. The application of an ancient thought process that has transpired through Māori epistemology was, for its time, a future-forward approach to undergraduate nursing education.

In this original curriculum, Te Wheke was positioned alongside the established nursing metaparadigm, the four key concepts espoused by Fawcett (1984) to be the embodiment of the profession of nursing (Fawcett & de Santo-Madeya, 2013). The nursing metaparadigm maintained that the study of nursing is understanding that the continuum of human beings' health and/or wellbeing is influenced by the environments within which they exist (Donaldson & Crowley, 1978). The first concept is therefore environment; this signifies any environment in which the practice of professional nursing care is provided, inclusive of acute healthcare environments, community settings and mental-health services. The second is people; representing individuals, families/whānau/communities who receive nursing care in any professional form and/or any arena of healthcare. Health follows – encompassing wellbeing in all manifestations of the concept – and, finally, nursing; defined in this context as the profession providing care (Fawcett, 1984).

The adaptation of Pere's (1984) articulation of Te Wheke to the nursing context provided a Māori framework that diverged from existing nursing theory. While some nursing theorists explored beyond the physical dimension (Alligood, 2017), this ancient articulation of health and wellbeing offered greater opportunity to examine individuals, families and communities' real-life health experiences within Aotearoa New Zealand. Consequently, Te Wheke broadened the one-dimensional, mono-cultural interpretation of an individual's reality that is afforded by the traditional biomedical model and, as Koch (1996) contended, is often adapted to nursing.

The nursing programme's adaptation of Te Wheke model of health and wellbeing (Pere, 1984, 1991; Waiariki Institute of Technology, 2014) for the nursing curriculum is as follows. The body and the eyes of the octopus represent individuals, whānau and community; the wekeweke (tentacles) represent dimensions of life that provide substance to the whole:

- Wairuatanga: the intangible element of humanness, spiritual growth and authenticity;
- Tuakiritanga (originally Mana Ake, modified in the latest rendition of the curriculum to Tuakiritanga): a concept in which each individual and/or collective of people creates a life philosophy that is unique, and encapsulates, honesty, integrity, truthfulness, the font of knowledge, leadership, humility, humanity and social justice;
- Te Mauri: the driving life-force as an innate inner strength that inspires the drive to reach optimal wellbeing; to motivate and be motivated, as an individual and/or collective of individuals;
- Tūrangawaewae: encompasses historical foundations, considers both tangible and intangible components that influence the present and the future (it needs to be noted that this is a deviation from Pere's original 'ha a koro ma a kui ma'; however, the breath of life is believed to transcend all wekeweke);
- Taha Tinana: internal and external physical characteristics;
- Whānau: social connectedness of being human; cultural and ethnic dynamics of community relationships; the whānau, hapū and iwi reality;
- Whatumanawa: the psychological, behavioural response and emotional reality;
- Hinengaro: the intellectual capacity and capability of individuals, whānau and community, and how thoughts are constructed and knowledge is shared and articulated.

The translation of such profound concepts has had challenges over the ensuing years of delivery in undergraduate nursing education, due mainly to the dearth of supportive literature within the health environment. The current interpretation elucidates the depth of the underpinning concepts, and endeavors to maintain the philosophical essence of Te Wheke.

BICULTURAL NURSING CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

The enactment of the Education Amendment Act in 1990 enabled technical institutes to confer degrees, and led to the evolution from a Diploma to a Bachelor of Nursing (BN) at Waiariki Institute of technology, supported by the Nursing Council of New Zealand (NCNZ), the regulatory authority for registration of nurses (2012; 2017). The BN was delivered at Waiariki Institute of Technology for the first time in 1995. The BN retained Te Wheke as an

assessment framework in the curriculum; however, due to consequences of changing health environments coupled with internal and external influences – such as staff turnover, lack of knowledge of the model and discomfort with teaching it – the essence of Te Wheke was subsumed by the dominant monocultural biomedical and nursing worldviews over ensuing years (Cook, 2009). Anecdotally, initial responses were a disregard of the inherent mana of te reo Māori and a one-dimensional approach to the interpretation of each of the concepts, remaining firmly within a Western ideology. This way of thinking is a consequence of colonisation and is embedded in the psyche of generations, now defined as a process of coloniality (Crampton, 2019).

The motivation to reinvigorate this philosophical framework was driven by the reconstruction of the nursing curriculum (Waiariki Institute of Technology, 2013). The primary writers of the new curriculum were nurse educators on the programme: one being Tangata Whenua with whakapapa connections to the rohe; and the other Tangata Tiriti who grew up in the rohe, with a career experience of working locally within a Kaupapa Māori health service. The vision of the 2015 Te Tohu Paetahi Tapuhi (BN) curriculum was to partner and collaborate with individuals, whānau, hapū and iwi, and to contribute to the fabric of the nursing profession in Aotearoa New Zealand. Through the application of competent professional nursing practice, graduates promote an environment that endorses and cultivates a holistic vision of wellbeing, by advocating autonomy and independence, and safeguarding individual and whānau-centric nursing practice (Waiariki Institute of Technology, 2013).

The bicultural lens, used within this curriculum, aligns to the 1840 contract between Māori and the British Crown, Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the Treaty of Waitangi. The Royal Commission on Social Policy (1988) provided guidelines on working with Māori within a Treaty of Waitangi framework using the principles of participation, partnership and protection. The interpretation of these principles, within a nursing context, has translated into a blueprint of concepts that apply to all peoples. In a previous rewrite (2009) of the BN curriculum, within a 15-credit Hauora Māori course, a Te Tiriti o Waitangi focus was introduced. BN students were transitioned from the 'principles' of the Treaty of Waitangi to terminology embedded within Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The success of this strategy was maximised in 2015, when the curriculum endeavoured to value and apply concepts: Kawanatanga, Tino Rangatiratanga, Oritetanga and Wairuatanga (oral article), derived from the wording of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Auckland Workers Education Association, 2006; Berghan et al., 2017; Health Promotion Forum, 2002; Potaka & Ngata, 1984). These concepts strive to align to the original intent of the implicit contract, from a nursing perspective. Kingi (2007) comments that entrenching intent of the Treaty of Waitangi into health practice (either the English or te reo Māori version), must result in equity for Māori in all determinants of health. Therefore, the embedding of the articles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi into the curriculum influences nursing-practice development, and empowers graduate nurses to be authentically responsive to Māori health interests and needs, as mandated by the NCNZ (2011, 2020).

With a bicultural mantle, Te Tohu Paetahi Tapuhi is committed to meeting the needs of two distinct groupings within Aotearoa New Zealand: Māori as Tangata Whenua, and all others as Tangata Tiriti. It is the grouping of Tangata Tiriti that facilitates the positioning of all students (and graduates), domestic and international, to understand and genuinely engage in the partnership required for provision of health equity by applying Te Tiriti o Waitangi articles to nursing practice (Waiariki Institute of Technology, 2013). The distinct framework resulted from the concept of weaving the sustainable Māori taonga, Te Wheke, through the four concepts of the nursing metaparadigm: Environment, People, Health and Nursing (Fawcett, 1984; Fawcett & De Santo-Madeya, 2013). In keeping with the bicultural focus, translations of the metaparadigm concepts in Te Reo Māori – Taio (environment), He Tangata (people), Hauora (health) and Tapuhi (nursing) – were necessary. The combination of all facets resulted in the weaving of Te Hihimā, a unique model of undergraduate nursing education, purposefully establishing a culturally compatible response to the health aspirations of whānau, hapū and iwi, within the Waiariki rohe.



Figure 1. Te Hihimā. Image: Sian Cox

While alignment of Te Wheke with the accepted nursing metaparadigm was established within the inaugural nursing curriculum (Waiariki Polytechnic, 1985), the concept of Te Hihimā rose from a desire to elucidate the transformative journey of the qualification. A korowai hihimā (woven cloak) is traditionally woven from muka, the fibrous tissue of the harakeke (flax) plant, and is usually unadorned and plain but for the undyed hukahuka 'tassels' emerging from the weave of the muka. In appearance it is natural, simple and humble, but requires mastery to weave. It provides safety from the elements by providing protection, shelter, warmth and waterproofing, and when worn, the movement of the natural fibres reflects sunlight, accentuating the sophistication of the weave and the beauty of the raw organic muka fibre. This visual effect is reflected in the term 'hihimā,' which literally means 'rays of light' (Tamarapa, 2011). The design of the physical iteration of Te Hihimā was inspired by Manukaroa, a korowai hihimā created by the late raranga whakairo (master weaver) Eddie Maxwell of Ngati Rangiwewehi, Te Arawa.

The metaphor of a traditional Māori cloak, or whatu kākahu, has been used as a representation for a variety of health and educational frameworks in recent history in Aotearoa. An example of this is "He Korowai Oranga," a guideline for working with Māori and whānau (Ministry of Health, 2002; Kara et al., 2011), which translates as 'the cloak of wellness.' This health strategy for Māori is symbolic of protection and mana o te tangata, therefore the korowai is envisaged as envelopment, support and cultivation of the partnership of whānau, hapū and iwi, health professionals, community workers, providers and hospitals, to support the achievement of best health outcomes for Māori. The weaving together of these diverse groupings creates the decorative korowai, in which the pattern varies according to the specific needs of the individual, whānau, hapū and iwi.

The framework established in *Tā Tātou Mahere Korowai: Guidelines to setting up rangatahi advisory groups for child and adolescent mental health, addiction or whanau ora services* (Te Rau Matatini, 2010) employs a kākahu analogy for the development of culturally appropriate advisory services for rangatahi mental health and wellness agencies. Concepts of warmth, protection, leadership, identity, honour, skill and beauty are represented as the essence of the culturally significant garment. *Tā Tātou Mahere Korowai* is augmented by tikanga, cultural values and practices; and a tuakana-teina educational pedagogy (Winitana, 2012) is realised by the productive collaboration of rangatahi groups on advisory panels for services. The acknowledgement that while the kākahu weaving process follows a traditional pattern, individuality of the weave of the completed garment provides scope for adaption of specific tikanga for different services.

The crafting of Te Hihimā o Te Tohu Paetahi Tapuhi developed as an exemplification of the collaborative teaching and learning relationships students encounter during their educational journey. The weaving of a student's individual Hihimā is a metaphor for the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes as the student integrates theory with practice, and melds the art and science implicit within the profession of nursing. Te tauira o te Tohu Paetahi Tapuhi (student nurses) weave their own unique body of nursing knowledge and practice, guided by an academically rigorous curriculum in which research, reflection and precision are key attributes. The tension of the muka fibres as they interweave is representational of the professional behaviours, communication styles and attitudes developed by the student-nurse weaver (Waiariki Institute of Technology, 2014) as they navigate their journey towards professional nursing practice.

The stole element of Te Hihimā is a tapa toru whatu (weave) in a triangular shape at the shoulders, and represents both Tinana me te Mahunga o te Wheke (the head and body of the octopus) and the clinical teaching model employed by the Bachelor of Nursing programme. The clinical model is fashioned from the triangulated interaction between clinical stakeholders, academic staff and student nurse. Te Poutama, or steps of progression to knowledge, is depicted within the whatu of the stole and is also representative of the Māori educational pedagogy of tuakana-teina (Winitana, 2012): within the curriculum this is the acknowledgement of the symbiotic relationship between faculty and student; clinical preceptor and student; support of other year cohorts throughout the programme; along with the intergenerational support of graduates with current students.

Whatu is a weaving style that creates balance and stability; this weave is a demonstration of the synthesis of knowledge through the tauira journey. The whenu, or warp (vertical) threads, of the body of Te Hihimā symbolise Te Wekeweke o te Wheke, the dimensions of life and wellbeing that are the pillar of the curriculum, thus embedding

the Māori philosophy within Te Tohu Paetahi Tapuhi. The aho, or weft (horizontal) threads, depict the nursing metaparadigm (taio, tangata, hauora and tapuhi), with a fifth horizontal band representing research (rangahau) and critical reflection (mahi whakapumahara rawa atu). The four partition whatu represent the four domains of competent nursing practice: professional practice, management of nursing care, interpersonal relationships, and inter-professional communication and quality improvement (Nursing Council of New Zealand, 2010). The hukahuka fibres that emerge from the weave epitomise the development of new knowledge and understanding as the concepts are integrated along the student nurse's journey.

As Moewaka Barnes and McCreanor (2019), and Harmsworth and Awatere (2013) affirm, health and wellbeing of people and the environment are synergetic, thus the weaving analogy complements the implicit Indigenous ideology. The following narrative will articulate the process of crafting Te Hihimā by the seamless interlacing of the nursing metaparadigm with Te Wheke, Te Ao Maori and NCNZ (2011) competencies for nursing practice. The fundamental concepts of this theory are considered in the following discussion and provide an overt connection to professional nursing practice. The concepts of the nursing metaparadigm are individually described using a contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand focus.

Taiao – Environment

The environment is the background within which health/sickness/dis-ease interactions are effected, and is inclusive of the natural environment, the contexts in which people live (social, cultural, spiritual, etc.), and/or the health-service environment. People as consumers of the environment rely first on natural capital to maintain primary health and wellbeing. The challenge, now and in the future, is to sustain a viable balance of human and environmental resilience. The human–environmental relationship is multi-dimensional and context dependent, and is reliant on the human ability to navigate the space of each unique encounter (Panelli & Tipa, 2007). The holistic connection that Māori have with the whenua is inherent in Te Ao Māori and is inseparable from past, present and future generations of human existence (Pere, 1991; Pulver et al., 2010). Health environments that aim to educate the consumer serve to support therapeutic relationships built within a framework of partnership, engender trust and encourage self-determination. A culturally safe environment ensures that the individual, whānau, iwi and/or community are the drivers of collaborative decision-making (Curtis et al., 2019). To work effectively with vulnerability, diversity and complexity of social need, student nurses must develop resilience and the capability to be comfortable in a space that may be uncomfortable for them (Nguyen & Velayutham, 2018).

Harakeke is representative of taiao and natural capital; the tikanga that underpins the process of nurturing the plant, to identification of harakeke suitable for the harvest – e.g., rito (child), awhi rito (parent), tupuna (grandparent) – ensures environmental resilience and sustainability of the future (Riley, 2004). Biculturalism provides the overarching framework for tauira (student nurses) to effectively weave the dual mantles of Te Ao Māori and Te Ao Tapuhi (the nursing profession) in the 21st century. The rituals of planting and nurturing, as well as the harvesting process and preparation for transformation of the harakeke, are representative of the tauira journey, as they develop skills and knowledge to navigate the education and healthcare environments. The muka that transpires from the processing of the raw harakeke is representative of the next stage of development, as tauira begin to co-design and formulate their templates for nursing practice, guided by tikanga and he tangata.

He tangata – People

People come from diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences; in addition, Tangata Tiriti have exploded exponentially, adding to the richness of diversity that exists in Aotearoa New Zealand today. Individual creativity and coping patterns are revealed by the ways in which each person constructs reality, sets personal goals and assigns meaning and interpretations to life's experience. In Aotearoa New Zealand, colonisation and the resultant intergenerational trauma have resulted in inequity and health disparities for tangata whenua today (Ajwani et al., 2003; Bécares et al., 2013; Pihama et al., 2014; Jackson, 2017). The social determinants of health influence the holistic resilience of individuals, whānau and communities (Clendon & Munns, 2019). Durie (1999) advocates that,

for Māori, the value of preserving and/or reconnecting with Te Ao Māori and the associated support networks (whanaungatanga) is essential.

The healthcare relationship that nurses establish and maintain with people is dependent on authentic implementation of the tenets of cultural safety, and advocates holism, autonomy and uniqueness (mana) of individuals, groups and communities (Nursing Council of New Zealand, 2011; 2020). Te Hihimā is fashioned by taura, as they establish authentic interpersonal and interprofessional relationships, guided by a team of health professionals within education and practice environments, and is underpinned by a tuakana–teina framework (Winitana, 2012). The fabric begins to manifest as taura respond to he tangata (person, whānau, hapū, iwi), and the voices of he tangata are positioned as the foundation of person-centric care, which weaves the art (care, compassion and communication) with the science (evidence-based practice, and precision in scientific application) of nursing knowledge (Vega & Hayes, 2019). The weaving analogy continues as the fount of hauora, or health, is defined by the people at the centre of nursing-care provision.

Hauora – Health

Health beliefs are informed by the past, present and future, and are reflective of the beliefs of each society. Therefore, the implications and experiences of health and wellbeing are different for individuals, whānau and communities (Wilson et al., 2021). Mark and Lyons (2010) comment that Māori spiritual healers acknowledge that ‘mind, body, spirit, family and land’ are synonymous for the maintenance of wellbeing. With this worldview of health as central, the negative impact of colonisation on Māori society in Aotearoa New Zealand has seen Māori driving the response to reshape the direction of health and wellbeing for whānau, hapū and iwi (Ministry of Health, 2002).

Health from a Māori perspective is symbolised through Pere’s framework of Te Wheke (1991), which highlights, and is central to, the curriculum. Metaphorically, te wheke, the octopus, is a serene creature that moves with rhythm and synergy through the sea, maintaining equilibrium, composure and position with its seemingly cumbersome tentacles. Pere (1991) considers dis-ease and dis-harmony to be reflective of disturbance to one or more of the dimensions of life, thereby creating imbalance in health and wellbeing. Durie (1998) surmises that wellbeing is related to temporal surety, tenacity and identity. For Māori to advance health and wellbeing, appropriate acknowledgement of an Indigenous worldview and suitable resources are required to provide the tools for modelling a future health direction.

Effective professional nursing care must align with individual, whānau/family, and community interpretations of health. Te Wheke wekeweke are represented within Te Hihimā as a vertical stylised pattern of whatu that are strategically positioned to create stability and strength in the garment. The taura are guided to embrace each wekeweke as they learn to weave links to Te Ao Māori with Te Ao Tapuhi, whilst ensuring that the unique holistic health experience of people is illuminated. Te Wheke guides taura to seek a holistic interpretation of hauora from an individual and/or whānau perspective. The application of Te Wheke framework enhances the nursing assessment methodology, as it provides the platform to extend beyond the physical, emotional, social and spiritual experiences of hauora.

Tapuhi – Nursing

Christensen’s (1990) theory of nursing purports that nurses work in partnership with individuals, whānau and communities, and utilise and evaluate professional judgment, research and skills to maximise health and minimise dis-ease. The nursing profession is therefore the culmination of professional, scientific and practice knowledge that encompasses reflective critical inquiry underpinned by evidence-based practice research (Nicoll, 2004; Fineout-Overholt et al., 2005; Fleiszer et al., 2016). In addition, nursing-care professionals are accountable for their response to the continuum of health needs across the lifespan of the people of our communities. While caring is a human trait, the professional nursing-care ethic traverses both intrinsic and extrinsic human factors. These have been debated by theorists as being either in conflict with nursing practice or a key attribute of professional nursing practice (McSherry et al., 2012).

Gadow (1988) writes that caring is an obligation to ease vulnerability for another, and involves person-to-person communication and interaction. Gadow comments further that underpinning the committed interpersonal relationship are the values and belief systems of the 'other.' This notion of 'othering' has been superseded within the Aotearoa New Zealand context by the application of cultural safety. This enhances the therapeutic relationship by developing partnerships with vulnerable individuals to whom the professional 'care' is given, by considering and acknowledging the power inherently embodied in the nurse (Christensen, 1990; Ramsden, 2002). The value of caring is akin to the value (uara) of manaakitanga (showing respect, generosity and care). Manaakitanga provides the basis for establishing, maintaining and concluding relationships within the context of a professional nursing relationship (Nursing Council of New Zealand, 2010; New Zealand Nurses Organisation, 2019).

Embedding Te Tiriti o Waitangi articles, rather than the principles of 'the Treaty of Waitangi' within the curriculum provides clearer guidance for nursing-practice development when working with, and for, Tangata Whenua. The recent Manatu Hauora (2020) expression of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in terms of mana (Mana Whakahaere, Mana Motuhake, Mana Tangata and Mana Māori) emphasises the prestige and power of Tangata Whenua in the Crown partnership implicit in Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Health for Māori is a treasure, and therefore health needs should be responded to appropriately as taonga. Anderson and Spray (2020) contend that health promotion, determined by Māori aspirations, provided to meet Māori cultural reality, should result in sustainability for Tangata Whenua. The new health era with the advent of a Māori Health Authority will support self-governing health services on many levels (marae, hapū, iwi, national) and promote collaborative alliances with culturally safe healthcare professionals (Curtis et al., 2019) To this end, graduate registered nurses who are politically informed and integrate social justice within care are culturally safe, competent and resilient, and will focus on the reduction of health inequities experienced by people in their care (Buettner-Schmidt & Lobo, 2011). Sustainability, from a nursing perspective and adapted from the Brundtland Commission (1997) definition, is meeting the needs of today's health consumer while growing a capable health- and wellness-focused future generation, with an aim to reshape health outcomes.

Tauira shape the context of their practice by the weaving of knowledge, reflecting in and on practice (Nicoll, 2004; Schon, 1987), employing critical thinking and evidence-based practice (Fineout-Overholt et al., 2005) and adapting practice with the aim to transform the holistic health needs of he tangata. The NCNZ (2011) competencies for practice are represented in the Hihimā as the whatu partitions bonding the nursing metaparadigm with Te Wheke, depicting the development of professional nursing practice. Hukahuka, twisted muka tassels, emerge from the fabric and represent tauira, who develop new knowledge from the fusion of all concepts during the navigation of their transformative journey to practice as registered nurses. This culminates in the creation of Te Hihimā.

CONCLUSION

Te Hihimā is an amalgamation of the established nursing metaparadigm (Taiao/Environment, He Tangata/People, Hauora/Health and Tapuhi/Nursing) with the Indigenous holistic framework Te Wheke, which has resulted in the development of a new model. Te Hihimā is a skilfully crafted philosophical framework that provides a bicultural lens for undergraduate nursing education and practice. In graduating with Te Tohu Paetahi Tapuhi, tauira have crafted their own mantle of professional nursing practice, Te Hihimā.

With the certainty of change related to the current development of a unified national undergraduate Bachelor of Nursing programme, there is an inevitable loss of metaphors and methodologies that have been developed to meet the distinctive need of the rohe. We had anticipated building on our own reflections through an evaluation project that canvasses students' experiences and responses to Te Hihimā, and an exploration of the methods nurse educators use to embed Te Hihimā into the teaching and learning space. It will be interesting to determine how a national model of biculturalism is framed in the new degree, and when this is revealed it will undoubtedly spark topics of inquiry for future research and reflection. Finally, while the future of Te Hihimā is uncertain, the philosophical positioning and intent of the framework has been crucial to embedding a Te Ao Māori epistemology within Aotearoa New Zealand nursing practice.

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AUTHORS

Denise Riini. I am a 1989 graduate of the Diploma of Nursing programme at Waiariki Polytechnic, where the architecture of the curriculum was designed and delivered based on each of the eight individual dimensions of health. This teaching methodology provided a concrete link to the nursing context without tutors needing to translate each dimension's unique Te Ao Māori construct. Furthermore, as a Māori taura, this learning approach and Te Wheke framework resonated with values and beliefs that were familiar to me; in essence it made the knowledge acquisition culturally relatable. However, the transference of this knowledge into a Westernised secondary healthcare system, which viewed health as one dimensional and marginalised the cultural sophistication of health, as articulated within a Māori worldview, was disempowering. As a Māori nurse I was not immune to this cultural context, and when I was privileged to be providing nursing care for Māori it was an opportunity to apply elements of Te Wheke framework. Today, as a Māori nurse-educator in the tertiary sector, I am in a position to authentically embed a Te Ao Māori worldview into curricula.

Shirley Lyford. I acknowledge that I hail from a privileged position in Aotearoa New Zealand, as a farmer's daughter in the Eastern Bay of Plenty. I am of settler 'stock'; my family disembarked in Nelson in 1842, therefore I view myself as a 'child of the Treaty.' I have been a nurse for 40 years; my primary nursing education was at the Tauranga School of Nursing, 1982–85. I have had experience working in a Kaupapa Māori service, which embedded holistic care including intersectoral support when working with tangata whaiora (Lyford & Cook, 2005). I transitioned to undergraduate nursing education in 2008. It is in this environment that catharsis, or even a rebirth, transpired. Working directly with Denise in the writing of the 2015 curriculum opened my eyes to my pervasive settler worldview, and subsequent involvement as a research analyst in Kaupapa Māori research studies has offered further insights. My challenge is to support Kaiako Māori in their mahi and to continue to debate the role of the settler in the dissemination of Indigenous knowledge within a nursing context, without cultural misappropriation.

Finally, we acknowledge our predecessors, who have persisted in ensuring the implementation of Te Ao Māori concepts of wellbeing within nursing since 1985. It is a legacy that is evolving as Māori narratives and literature continue to enrich our knowledge of Te Ao Māori.

EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF PROMOTING MENTAL HEALTH, ADDICTION, AND INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY NURSING AS A CAREER TO UNDERGRADUATE NURSES IN THEIR LAST YEAR OF STUDY

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Nursing pedagogy and professional development



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ABSTRACT

Specialist nursing practice in mental health, addiction and intellectual disability (MHAID) comprises a growing sector of public health demand, and yet this field is one of the least popular career pathways for student nurses (Happell et al., 2019a; Owen, 2021). International studies and personal observations by members of the research team as nurse educators suggest two key factors at play. First, student willingness to work in MHAID specialist roles is impacted by entrenched stigma and discrimination against people who experience mental distress, addictions and intellectual disabilities. Second, students have voiced their perceptions of specialist mental-health nursing as less important than general nursing. Working in MHAID is commonly seen as carrying little prestige, variety, challenge or opportunity for skill development; worse, such findings from surveys of final-year student nurses' employment preferences have remained relatively unchanged over the last 20 years, at least (Wilkinson et al., 2016). With employers desperate for specialist MHAID staff, and education providers charged with meeting industry needs, how can nursing programmes begin to combat this bias and bring about attitudinal change? This paper describes a pilot initiative with Year 3 undergraduate student nurses in one Te Pūkenga subsidiary, which we believe shows considerable promise for a wider roll-out across the tertiary healthcare-education sector. A hui supported by Whitireia's Community of Practice for Mental Health and Addiction within the School of Health and Social Services allowed students to interact with multiple industry stakeholders: District Health Board (DHB) partners; graduates working in the mental health and addictions sector, experts by experience; and the postgraduate New Entry to Specialist Practice in Mental Health teaching team. A subsequent survey evaluation confirmed the positive impact of the initiative regarding altering negative stereotypes of nursing roles within MHAID and increasing the number of students who may consider specialising in these areas, post-graduation.

KEYWORDS

Mental health, addiction and intellectual disability; student nurses; career preferences in healthcare

INTRODUCTION

Mental health, addiction, and intellectual disability (MHAID) are experienced by many New Zealanders either first hand or through a close contact or family member. According to the Ministry of Health (MOH)'s (2018) prevalence studies of mental health and addiction, between 50 and 80% of our population will experience either or both challenges in their lifetime; around one in five people will be impacted every year. Intellectual disability affects 5% of children under the age of 14, 3% of those aged 15–44, and 1% of the older adult population (IHC, 2017). Further difficulties arise as a consequence of injuries and trauma. Unfortunately, there has been limited research into the needs and experiences of people with intellectual disabilities in this country: "Often evidence put forward does not get beyond anecdotal. Differing definitions and missing robust baseline data add to the difficulties in benchmarking against the general population" (IHC, 2017, p. 3). Nonetheless, we do know that this is a rapidly growing area of need for specialisation. It is important for nursing students to encounter these conditions as part of their learning related to mental health and their wider understanding of the impact of both disability and neurodiversity, so we have chosen to group the three conditions, MHAID, in several areas of our curriculum. With the number of people

accessing MHAID services having grown over 73% in the past decade (Ministry of Health, 2018), there are significant consequences of this increasing need:

- Reduced quality of life, as well as life expectancy: an average reduction of 25 years for people with severe MHAID challenges.
- Continuing upward trends in rates of suicide.
- The \$1.5 billion cost per annum to the country of benefit recipients whose primary barrier to work is MHAID.
- Related housing, medication, hospital and healthcare costs (Ministry of Health, 2018).

Associated with the growing MHAID need is a worldwide concern that many of the individuals experiencing mental distress, addiction and intellectual disabilities are not getting the healthcare support they need. Slemon et al. (2019) say that, globally, nursing shortages are a key contributor to people not receiving adequate MHAID care and resources. Worse, in many Western countries, including our own, this effect will only be exacerbated as the MHAID specialist workforce ages, and we struggle to recruit and retain new nursing graduates in this field. Such a growing shortage of specialist nurses at a time when demand for health services is increasing presents a significant problem for workforce planning (Jamieson et al., 2015). The bottom line, widely acknowledged, is the need for nurse educators to understand and address nursing students' stereotyping of people who experience MHAID and the services designed to support them. Curricula and delivery need to provide a mechanism for "reflection, critique and change" (Happell et al., 2019b, p. 234).

The contribution this paper seeks to make is an account of one teaching and learning intervention which produced data evidencing a positive impact on the mindset of undergraduate nursing students related to MHAID nursing. The following section offers a brief overview of the literature related to these students' attitudes, and measures to bring about attitudinal change. We then outline our pilot study: the multi-stakeholder hui, the survey evaluation, data analysis and emerging themes. We conclude with suggestions for future iterations and transferability.

A SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE

New graduates' nursing career preferences

Students entering their undergraduate nursing degree commonly have a fixed idea of which specialty area they want to work in (McCann et al., 2010). Popular choices are child health, surgery, and emergency and acute care. Almost universally across multiple international studies, the least favoured options, with alternating bottom-of-the-ladder position, are aged healthcare/gerontology, and mental health and associated conditions (Happell et al., 2019b; Honeyfield et al., 2021; Matarese et al., 2019; Owen, 2021; Wareing et al., 2017; Wilkinson et al., 2016). Attempting to frame this issue more positively, McKenzie et al.'s (2021) UK study surveyed students and graduates about whether they would consider a career in mental health nursing: 29% said no, with the remainder undecided or tentatively in favour. Those who were receptive to this line of work, say the authors, were "people with a mental health difficulty and those who knew more about mental health" (p. 19).

The literature suggests a number of connected perceptions account for the persistent disinclination to specialise in this area. First is the widespread stigma and discrimination against people who experience mental distress, addictions and intellectual disabilities held by members of the public – and also many health practitioners (Calma et al., 2021; McCann et al., 2010; Ross & Golder, 2009). Preconceived beliefs about people who experience MHAID are influenced by multiple factors, not least of which are media and anecdotal accounts of patient violence and concerns relating to personal safety in the clinical setting (Slemon et al., 2019). Equally concerning is the perception that this field of nursing is "low status" and "technologically simple" (McCann et al., 2010, p. 31). Wilkinson et al. (2016) also note student nurses' concerns about working in areas like aged care and mental health, particularly in community-based agencies with their low-tech nature and lack of rigour, compared to hospital settings. Students in this study feared that their education and high-tech skills would be underutilised and potentially lost.

This fear comes from what Fisher (2018) calls the “dichotomy between the art and science of nursing” (p. 69): an artificial divide between the *art of nursing*, where caring and compassion generally sit and which is often viewed as low status, and the technical and medicalised *science of nursing*, in areas such as ICU, more usually perceived as high status in the nursing world. McCann et al. (2010) recognise a similar phenomenon when they discuss the “dominant lay image, reinforced through media and other representations” (p. 34) of nursing being conceived primarily as the care of adults, children and mothers having babies, by female nurses: a conceptualisation which brings to mind images of starched uniforms and hospital wards from a bygone era. Clearly these interpretations are not how we educate our students today (Owen, 2021), and not how they want to practice.

Student preferences for first-destination employment roles are also influenced by clinical learning experience during their programme of study. Hayes et al. (2006) suggest that where a curriculum focuses on a particular area, such as acute care, such emphasis affects students’ perceptions of the relative importance and professional value of that field. Other authors note that while a clinical placement in MHAID is relatively standard across undergraduate nursing programmes, the quality of that experience can vary considerably. McKenzie et al. (2021) found that many student participants cited the perceived stressful nature of the job as a barrier to working in mental health – which can almost certainly be extended to include the wider MHAID field. Students reported long working hours, low pay and concern about the impact on their own mental health. Some reported poor supervision and an apparent lack of opportunity for career progression and a clear career pathway. Slemon et al.’s (2019) Canadian study echoed the work of Happell and colleagues in Australia (Happell et al. 2013) and found that student nurses had widely variable experiences; some had enjoyed working with the patient population in modern units with open physical environments and a clearly structured range of freedoms. Others described “dark and dreary” (p. 166) spaces with institutionalised practices of containment, and witnessing nursing practices that seemed to them “unethical, nontherapeutic or unsafe” (p. 166).

In addition to the key factors impacting student nurses’ career preferences – discrimination and perceptions of status – and the compounding effect of a poor clinical learning experience, some studies have noted that peer pressure/esteem may also feature in decision making. Happell and Gaskin (2013), Happell et al. (2013) and Hunter et al. (2015) are among a number of sources who have reported on students fearing adverse reactions from others who learn of their interest in this specialty. Disappointingly, they say that it is not solely the opinions of classmates and significant others that students worry about, but also academics, clinicians and even their lecturers. The final recurring issue that student nurses acknowledge as contributing to their career intentions is a concern that they lack the skill and knowledge to provide quality MHAID care; this is frequently attributed to limited exposure to, and experience of, the specialist MHAID nurse role (Hooper et al., 2016; Hunt et al., 2020).

Strategies to prompt attitudinal change

Encouragingly, McCann et al. (2010) recognise that student nurses’ career preferences are not static, and it is possible to change negative perceptions. The authors caution that it takes a concerted and targeted effort, beginning with the need for curricula to address, “in a non-threatening way, misconceptions and stigma about particular patients and conditions” (McCann et al., 2010, p. 35). McKenzie et al. (2021) reiterate these findings and conclude that factors that influenced the pursuit of a career in mental health included any factor that gave participants a more informed view. In this UK study, students said that it was helpful when they were given more information about career roles, pathways and required qualifications. As well as learning about the breadth of the specialty roles available and opportunities for career progression in class, students noted the impact of volunteering and positive placements.

Clearly, positive clinical learning experiences are a major strategy for promoting MHAID as a worthwhile area of specialty practice. In fact, some authors advocate for multiple exposures in a range of mental-health settings to increase students’ awareness of the scope of practice (e.g., Happell et al., 2019a; Hunt, 2020; Patterson et al., 2017; Wareing et al., 2017). Therefore, the need for collaboration between nursing educational providers and industry partners to ensure positive clinical learning experiences is greater than ever (Hayes et al., 2006). Clinical learning is undeniably an essential element in any undergraduate nursing-education programme, but students still spend the

majority of their years of study on campus and in the classroom. As Bingham and O'Brian (2018) note, the quality, quantity and diversity of theoretical component can be highly effective in promoting this field as a career choice. Hunter et al. (2015) suggest that when such content is delivered by educators with a passion for MHAID nursing, they can influence students' preconceived notions and prompt a revision of assumptions and stereotyping – of both individuals who experience mental distress and the practice of caring for them. When students see the role as valued, the authors state, they are more likely to regard it as a legitimate and valuable career option and feel more confident in their decision to pursue this specialty.

Happell et al. (2019b) extend this platform and write about the benefits to students of learning from teaching staff positioned as experts by experience (EBE). In the multiple papers published by members of this international team of nurse educators, mental-health nursing is positioned as a field that benefits strongly from consumer-led teaching; that is, professionals with "personal experience of mental distress" and positive narratives of "recovery-oriented practice" (p. 235). The authors cite an 'embryonic' but growing literature that attests to the efficacy of consumer-led education in healthcare. In their 2019 study of students' responses to being taught by EBE, they found that students reacted positively, and particularly valued EBEs' storytelling as a powerful tool to aid their understanding. They felt they were challenged, in a positive way, to reflect on how their understanding of the mental-health system had been socialised. This new way of understanding, from exposure to lived experience, was found to be useful in encouraging "a more open, less reactionary, and more autonomous approach to mental-health nursing practice" (p. 239).

Opportunities to positively interact with people with lived experience of mental distress and exposure to positive stories of working with people with experience of mental distress, have consistently been shown to lead to change in attitudes and an increased interest in MHAID nursing. A recent study at Whitireia (Owen, 2021) supports the literature to this effect, where students' exposure to personal stories of positive recovery resulted in demonstrable improvements in their understanding of the experience of MHAID, and students' confidence and skills to respond to people in distress. In this programme, nurse educators are drawing from the literature, working with industry partners to ensure positive clinical experiences, and ensuring students hear directly from the population with a lived experience of distress. Aligned with Happell et al.'s (2019a; 2019b) findings, Owen's (2021) study attests to the power of changed mindsets, exposed stereotypes and reflective practice. Yet alongside the positive impact of anti-stigma and values-based teaching, there were still areas in which survey responses revealed some residual fears and mistrust about working with people who experience MHAID. The Whitireia teaching team responded by considering further initiatives that may offer transformational experiences as students develop their professional self-identity, which occurs "in the journey from student to nurse" (Owen, 2021, p. 17). The first of these initiatives was the hui (forum or meeting) described in the remainder of this paper.

THE INITIATIVE

In March 2021, Whitireia's Bachelor of Nursing programme hosted a hui to facilitate positive interactions between Year 3 student nurses (from both Bachelor of Nursing and Bachelor of Nursing Pacific programmes) and industry partners from the MHAID sector. Guests included Whitireia graduates working in a range of MHAID nursing roles, an EBE in the role of Service User Academic (a Whitireia role), the postgraduate New Entry to Specialist Practice (NESP) teaching team and representatives from the local DHB MHAID services. The initiative was supported by the Community of Practice for Mental Health and Addictions within the institute's School of Health and Social Services.

The aims of the hui were to:

- Promote collaboration between nursing-education providers and health-industry partners to promote students' positive attitudes towards mental-health nursing.
- Provide opportunities for final-year students to positively interact with people with lived experience of mental distress and have exposure to positive stories of working with people with experience of mental distress.
- Showcase and value the contribution of graduates with a passion for MHAID nursing.

- Provide information about the MHAID specialist nurse role, and address perceptions around opportunities for consolidation and loss of clinical skills, while profiling the diversity of career opportunities and promote information about diverse nursing careers.
- Provide information on NESP programme and support available for graduates in first year of practice.

The hui comprised a series of short presentations by sector representatives covering the MHAID field, as well as panel discussions and group work with visiting speakers rotating around the room. Feedback at the conclusion of the hui was positive and enthusiastic, and participants appeared to enjoy the opportunity. Teaching staff were keen to ascertain the longer-term efficacy of the initiative and decided to conduct a survey evaluation to gather evidence of the impact of the hui, not least to inform decision making about offering the event for future student-nurse cohorts.

THE RESEARCH

In July 2021, ethical approval for the evaluation was obtained from the Whitireia-WellTec Human Participants Ethics Committee (ref. RP293-2021). The aim of the research was to evaluate the impact of promoting MHAID as a career to undergraduate nurses in their last year of study, and examine how the promotion of information by registered nurses working in diverse clinical settings impacts on beginning nurses' decisions about preferred graduate destinations.

All students who had participated in the forum (n = 43) were invited to complete an online survey using Survey Monkey software. The students were asked for feedback on the format of the forum, about how the forum influenced their choice for the nine-week Preparation for Registration Clinical Learning Experience placement, and their decision regarding applying for New Entry to Specialist Practice in Mental Health after graduation. Over the next three weeks, 30 students completed the survey, a response rate of 70%. The survey was anonymous and no identifying demographic information was collected that might have made individual student identification possible – an important consideration given that students were still attending classes and completing assessments at the time of the research. The first ten questions used a five-point Likert Scale, asking participants to indicate a response to a statement by selecting a choice ranked from "Poor" to "Excellent," or from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree," for example: "Having the opportunity to talk to registered nurses working in different clinical settings gave me relevant information to make decisions about my future nursing career." The final two questions were related to NESP intentions, with a list of contributing factors (including a comments box for "Other"). All questions were compulsory and the survey was designed to be completed quickly, to encourage uptake.

RESULTS

Raising awareness and providing information

Encouragingly, 100% of the students who responded to the survey rated the hui format and experience as "Good" or "Very Good." As to the hui content and relevance of information, 95% found this good, or very good. Representative comments include:

"It was nice to know that there was such a diverse area within mental health and addictions."

"It was great to talk to healthcare professionals working in a variety of mental health settings."

"It was really good to see the range of diversity amongst mental-health practitioners. Also, it gave me some practical insight into the NESP programme."

When students were asked whether they had felt confident about future career decisions at the end of their second year, just 60% noted that they had felt positive. However, 94% agreed, or strongly agreed, that the hui during their

third year was useful in providing information about nursing careers in MHAID; 80% had a similar response to gaining confidence about working in this field. Supporting comments here include:

"Mental health was really sold as an awesome place to work. Lots of job satisfaction. Was also good to talk to actual current mental-health workers."

"It was very helpful and nice to see past students thriving in their jobs in mental health."

Most significantly, 74% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the hui had impacted on their decisions about their future nursing career:

"It opened a new understanding to the roles of nurses in the MHAIDs."

"This information forum helped me decide where I want to be after completing nursing."

"Mental health will be a great career, and I like that your therapeutic tool is yourself."

Impact on future study/career intentions

Following the hui, 82% of survey respondents agreed or agreed strongly that they now had the information to make decisions about Preparation for Registration (PFR) Clinical Learning Experience preferences. In fact, 52% said that they had selected MHAID nursing as one of the top three choices for PFR placement, although only 18% of this group were able to be placed in MHAID roles on this occasion.

Comment responses in this section of the survey include some dissatisfaction with the above outcome, and raise an important issue for the teaching team to consider in any future events of this nature:

"I was super bummed after all of this and the need in mental health not to get a mental-health placement for my 9 weeker [PFR], as I would have liked more exposure to mental-health nursing on the course as a whole. We had a one-month placement and mine was split in between two places, and I never felt any confidence gained from a more extensive mental-health placement."

"It was great to find out about all the different services like CADS and Community.... I would have liked these then to be something we could have third-year placements in. Some really interesting services, but we never hear about them for placements."

"I guess as this is the career I am aiming at, I would have liked to see more clinical exposure given the excellent amount of course content."

While the demand for clinical learning opportunities in MHAID services was not able to be satisfied on this occasion, respondents felt well prepared for longer-term planning following graduation. First, 88% of respondents agreed or agreed strongly that following the hui they had the information they needed to make decisions about Advanced Choice of Employment (ACE) applications. ACE is the national electronic matching process for recruiting graduate nurses into Aotearoa New Zealand's 20 DHBs. All 88% of respondents said they were likely or very likely to make an application for ACE. The remaining 12% did not comment.

Nursing graduates in their first year of work as registered nurses enter transition programmes, supported in the workplace with post-graduate study workload allocation. The pathway programme for those who enter MHAID roles is NESP (Mental Health). Forty-four percent of survey respondents indicated they intended to apply for NESP; 49% indicated they were still unsure. The research team felt that this was a higher level of interest in MHAID specialties than observed in previous cohorts, although confirmation would require comparing actual applications made at the end of 2021 with those of previous class groups. This was not possible at the time of writing, but may suggest a future research direction in 2022. In any case, hui attendees reported that the event, and positive clinical learning opportunities, had impacted on their career intentions at the time of the evaluation:

“My placements made me feel like mental health is where I am needed in the future.”

“I was interested to go to mental health. After the session, I got more idea about the NESP programme, how can I apply.”

Comments from those who were not intending to select this route immediately following graduation indicate that they had an open mind about working in MHAID nursing and might consider this in the future. Responses were in line with themes already noted in the literature discussion: that MHAID nursing is perceived as low-tech (Wilkinson et al., 2016) and perhaps more *art* than *science* (Fisher, 2018):

“I decided to keep my options to hospital wards for now to gain more experience with regards to hospital work and venture to MHAIDS in the future.”

“I am likely to choose a career in primary health for now though, as I do feel like if I enter mental health immediately then I’m effectively saying goodbye to any medical nursing, and I need to give it a chance. I definitely envisage working in mental health in five years or so.”

Finally, to close the loop, the survey asked participants to indicate key factors that had influenced their decision to apply for the NESP (Mental Health) programme. Table 1 shows the selections – they could choose more than one – made by these student nurses:

TABLE 1. FACTORS IMPACTING NESP APPLICATION INTENTION.

Factors impacting NESP application intention		Percentage	Number
Always dreamed of working in MHAID nursing		14%	4
Attracted by focus on relationship centred nursing		59%	17
Attracted by MHAID nursing careers promoted by forum		38%	11
Attracted by specific support offered to Māori and Pacific graduates		10%	3
Attracted by diversity of clinical settings promoted by forum		59%	17
Have a lived experience of MHAID		7%	2
Have a current or previous role in MHAID services		10%	3
Have a DHB MHAID Scholarship		3%	1
Attracted by theoretical teaching of MHAID during programme		21%	6
Attracted by Clinical Learning Experience in MHAID during programme		52%	15
Family and friends support and encouragement to work in MHAID services		17%	5
Attracted by Guarantee of 2-year employment/ job security		41%	12
Attracted by opportunities in NESP study (post graduate papers)		52%	15
Other (please specify)	Responses	7%	2

Some factors relate to the themes suggested in the literature discussed earlier (e.g., lived experience), some are in direct response to context and opportunity (e.g., scholarships), but others can be traced to hui content. Although there were no universal responses, four factors in particular were acknowledged as significant by over half the respondents. Two relate more specifically to both the MHAID theory and clinical opportunities offered to students during their three years of study: “attracted by clinical learning during the programme” and “the focus on relationship centred nursing,” while the other two factors identified by over half of participants relate more specifically to the hui content; “attracted by the diversity of roles promoted by the hui” and “attracted by opportunities in NESP study.”

DISCUSSION – AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF NURSING EDUCATION

The survey-evaluation data confirms for the research team their early impression of the positive impact of the hui on nursing students' career intentions, and perceptions of working in MHAID nursing careers. Key themes echo those noted in the literature, from Aotearoa New Zealand and overseas. Primary among these is the need to identify and address students' perceptions of different areas of healthcare practice earlier. Challenging stereotypes and supporting attitudinal shift through reflection and critique (Happell et al., 2019a; 2019b) can be assisted by exposure to positive stories of working with people with experience of mental distress, such as those provided by recent graduates now working in MHAID services. Further, ensuring that students have information about the diverse nursing careers available is important, and particularly memorable when this is delivered first-hand, by positive, enthusiastic and knowledgeable guest speakers from industry, who can counter the perception that such roles are comparatively low status (McCann et al., 2010).

Opportunities for clinical learning, such as the final PFR experience and earlier undergraduate clinical placements, are an important mechanism for building students' confidence in their knowledge and skills relating to MHAID practice. Two issues identified in this paper that have implications for future programme development and delivery relate to the quality and availability of placements in MHAID services. First, industry partners must be carefully selected to ensure students encounter user-friendly facilities where bold, positive and people-centred solutions are valued above conservative and outdated approaches (Honeyfield et al., 2021; Slemmon et al., 2019). Students need to positively interact with people with lived experience of MHAID, to be exposed to diversity, and to observe for themselves opportunities for career satisfaction and advancement (McKenzie et al., 2021). Second, once students' interest has been captured in events such as the hui described here, it is important to be able to meet the increased need for a range of MHAID clinical-learning opportunities.

In order to satisfy these requirements, the need for collaboration between nursing education providers and industry partners noted more than a decade ago (Hayes et al., 2006) is as important as ever. So much depends on regional networks, relationships and trust – all of which are vulnerable in an environment of constant political, economic, technological and structural change. The hui initiative and subsequent research evaluation recounted here are positioned as a pilot study, precisely because of the changes currently impacting the Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITP) sector. Like the other 15 ITPs, the host institute for this study is now a subsidiary of a single overarching organisation, Te Pūkenga – New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology, who are, at the time of writing, reviewing Bachelor of Nursing qualifications across providers and developing new curricula. We hope that within this curriculum the importance of challenging the entrenched stigma and discrimination against people who experience mental distress and addictions is addressed and embedded, and that MHAID nursing is valued and promoted as a legitimate and positive career choice.

Certainly, with the findings from this pilot study promoting MHAID as a positive career choice, we hope that there will be opportunities to repeat this event. We welcome inquiries and look forward to supporting colleagues across subsidiaries to fully integrate MHAID within the Bachelor of Nursing curriculum and develop their own initiatives promoting MHAID specialty nursing and then, perhaps, to share in future rollouts and reporting. Meanwhile, at a local level, we look forward to seeing our own graduates move into MHAID roles with confidence and contribute to the wellbeing of both people who experience MHAID and the transformation of Aotearoa New Zealand's healthcare system.

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TEACHING QUALITY IMPROVEMENT IN PRE-REGISTRATION NURSING EDUCATION: CHANGING THINKING, CHANGING PRACTICE

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Nursing pedagogy and professional development



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ABSTRACT

Quality care and improving health outcomes are cornerstones of healthcare provision, yet quality improvement (QI) preparation and assessment in health-professional education has been found to inadequately prepare graduates for their future roles (Robb et al., 2017). Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology's Bachelor of Nursing (BN) year three teaching team looked to address this by reviewing and improving QI teaching and assessment modules within a course in the programme. Alongside this redevelopment, research with students was undertaken to investigate the efficacy and outcomes of this work. This paper presents findings from reviews of QI assessment projects completed by BN students (n = 93), with particular attention to identifying student experiences and their approach to this project using a detailed content analysis (Krippendorff, 1989). Particular attention was paid to highlighting a shift in thinking from quality assurance (QA) approaches that prevailed in the prior teaching of this module, to QI. We found 41% of students selected and undertook projects that reflected QI concepts focused on improved patient outcomes, and 59% of students selected and undertook projects that were concerned with standards, auditing and compliance improvement, more in keeping with QA. In addition, seven student QI projects addressed enhancing te ao Māori (Māori worldview), including language activities through music and exercise, bilingual labelling, and culturally safe care for Māori residents. Key findings address the ongoing challenges of embedding QI concepts and engagement in practice and professional development needs; and policy, practice and procedural improvements and the need for more time to enact and evaluate QI projects. Recommendations from this study are: (1) enhancing te ao Māori and Te Tiriti o Waitangi responsiveness throughout the BN curriculum; (2) ongoing preparation for student-nurse educators to ensure they are confident to support student-led QI initiatives; (3) further shared professional development with agency staff prior to practice placements; and (4) replication of this research to identify longitudinal outcomes. This research reinforces the importance of education–practice partnerships to enhance effective QI education for preparing graduates to transition to their new roles in the workplace.

KEYWORDS

Quality improvement, learning and teaching, partnership, bicultural practice, undergraduate nursing education

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

Florence Nightingale, in her famous text *Notes on hospitals*, emphasised, “the very first requirement in a hospital that it should do the sick no harm” (Nightingale, 1863, p. iii). Yet for many health-service users, this is not the case. The New Zealand Health Quality and Safety Commission (2017) reports that 15% of people in acute-care settings experience an unexpected and often avoidable adverse event impacting their recovery. Quality improvement (QI) is essential healthcare business. According to Djukic et al. (2013), QI “is a range of formal approaches to analyse the quality of patient care and implementing systematic efforts to improve it” (p. 13). Optimising care delivery that is safe, timely, effective, efficient, equitable and cost effective (Huber, 2018) are key drivers for QI and thus essential for undergraduate nursing students to comprehend, requiring overt curricular responsiveness. Yet a national study in Aotearoa New Zealand of multiple health-professional preregistration education programmes identified teaching gaps in patient safety and the need to improve QI methods and tools (Robb et al., 2017). The study further

concluded that action to address these gaps is needed to assist graduates to successfully implement and sustain improvements when transferring to the workplace.

Nurse education

Nurse educators have strived to remove barriers to effectively embed QI into nursing curricula (James et al., 2016; Sherwood & Barnsteiner, 2012). Rather than a quality-assurance (QA) approach that focuses on meeting quality requirements, compliance with and comparing practice to standards, and remedying any variations from standards (Dixon & Pearce, 2011), contemporary QI theory and practice challenges the repositioning of the healthcare workforce and systems from managing and delivering outputs, to improving patient experiences and outcomes (New Zealand Health Quality and Safety Commission, 2017). According to Dixon and Pearce (2011, p. 4), "QI approaches provide systematic data-guided activities designed to bring about immediate, positive changes in the delivery of health care in particular settings, and the information produced is able to be translated into systematic improvements in healthcare practices."

Developing a broad understanding of the importance of QI in a Bachelor of Nursing (BN) is vital for nursing students to prepare them for their future roles in leading care, and in order to meet the requirements of professional competence (The Nursing Council of New Zealand, 2016; Ministry of Health, 2014; Ministry of Health, 2016). QI is committed to an evidenced-based and systematic improvement approach, focusing on health outcomes. These concepts are fundamental to the improvement of nursing practice rather than an after-the-fact audit and compliance approach.

New tools implemented

A useful QI tool called Plan–Do–Study–Act (PDSA) (Deming, 1986) provides an investigative, planning and action model to assist in creating an evidenced-based QI project in response to issues in practice (Sherwood & Barnsteiner, 2012). The Toi Ohomai BN teaching team adopted this model in teaching approaches using case studies and practice scenarios to model the creation of small-scale QI projects. These scenarios enable students to identify health-outcome improvements for individuals, communities and groups using problem-based activities and case studies in class. The PDSA model and language have been adopted by the New Zealand Health Quality and Safety Commission, who developed four e-learning modules called Improving Together as an introduction to QI in practice in healthcare. Students are expected to complete these four modules to support their understanding and application of PDSA before they commence practicum, and complete a QI project. We recognise that while utilisation of PDSA within QI practice is quite widespread, Taylor et al. (2013) caution that PDSA is not a catch-all solution, and we need to prepare students for the influential effect of local context. We also needed to undertake a formal evaluation of change outcomes in our own practice as educators, and in the work students have produced using this approach. Coles et al. (2017) concur, adding the importance of attention to the implementation strategies when using PDSA, to increase sustainability of change. QI studies unique to the bicultural context and nursing education in general appear absent, thus Toi Ohomai's BN third-year teaching team set out to investigate student experience and outcomes alongside our own practice experiences of implementing change.

The BN degree that provides the context for this study is underpinned by a bicultural educational vision and uara (values) based on the articles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, which guarantee Māori rights are enshrined in Aotearoa New Zealand legislation and public policy. The BN key Māori concepts of whakapono (honesty), whanaungatanga (inclusion/family), wairuatanga (spirituality), manaakitanga (caring and support), tūmanakotanga (aspirations), aroha (unconditional care) and mōhiotanga (lifelong learning) reflect this commitment in all of the papers in the BN curriculum.

The introduction of a QI assessment project in the final year of the BN occurred in consultation with the regional District Health Board nursing leadership and quality team, and aged residential care (ARC) facility managers and/or clinical nurse leader (CNL). Also considered were reviews of health-sector initiatives, current literature, and selecting

QI methodology and models. The learning, teaching and assessment model adopted followed four interlinking approaches identified as effective by Armstrong et al. (2012, p. 6), with our own developments including:

1. A combination of didactic and project-based work – we developed aligned learning, teaching and assessment using models reflected in practice and research.
2. Link with health-system improvement efforts – we used four online learning modules, models and approaches fostered by the New Zealand Health Quality and Safety Commission.
3. Assessing education outcomes – we ensured we provided clear explanations of project requirements, key practice staff support and a renewed marking rubric.
4. Role modelling QI in educational processes – we addressed role modelling by undertaking this research to gauge student learning and practice outcomes.

The PDSA cycle was included in a new project-based assessment requiring students to complete a small QI study during a four-week (96-hour) ARC practicum. Students are expected to work with a resident, after consent is confirmed, to complete a comprehensive health assessment. From this assessment the student engages with the resident and registered nursing staff to identify a QI project. This project is negotiated with the CNL at the facility and the allocated Student Nurse Educator (SNE) from the educational institution. It was persistently restated that the aim of the learning, teaching and QI assessment project was to assist the move from the QA (audit/compliance outputs) approaches of previous practice-based projects to QI and patient-focused outcomes. Excellent professional relationships with practice facilities were important to support students negotiating a QI project. Senior agency staff would approve and support investigation and implementation of PDSA aimed at solving a client-related issue. In addition, students could complete and record the professional competence entry-to-practice requirements, which include evidence of QI practice skills and applying Te Tiriti O Waitangi in working effectively with Māori (Nursing Council of New Zealand, 2016, Competency 1.2, *Demonstrates the ability to apply the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi Te Tiriti o Waitangi in nursing practice*; and Competency 4.3, *Participates in quality improvement activities to monitor and improve standards of nursing*).

DESIGN – METHODOLOGY

The aim of this research was to analyse and report third year nursing students' successful engagement in a QI assessment project leading to practice change. A detailed content analysis (Krippendorff, 1989) was used to discover a range of perspectives and insights from text reported by students in their QI assessment projects. The research design gained ethical approval from the Research and Ethics Committee at the regional Institute of Technology where the researchers were based.

Methods

Students' summative QI assessment projects were completed during a 96-hour practicum in an ARC facility. These projects were reviewed by the lead author, who constructed a data collection instrument using Excel to assist analysis. This instrument identified the selected QI topics and what the student aimed to achieve, their reports of enablers and challenges, links to policies in the care setting, and bicultural practices. This instrument was then moderated by the three researchers using a detailed content analysis (Krippendorff, 1989). We set out to identify language and practices students used that appeared to reflect an audit and compliance approach in their QI project; and language and practices that appeared to be QI and patient-outcomes based. We were deeply interested in what students reported within their projects on their engagement within a bicultural context and reflecting Te Tiriti o Waitangi, linked to both their competencies for practice, and as outcomes of the learning and teaching preparation for practice. The content analysis enabled categorisation of the students' QI projects by the research team as either QI – those focused on patient outcomes (regardless of whether the project was on care improvement such as diabetes management, wound care, nutrition, falls risk assessment, patient monitoring) – or

QA – where standards, audit or compliance improvement (such as infection prevention and control measures, e.g., hand washing; management of equipment and resources; policy and procedures development) was the focus.

In addition, using a content-analysis approach, text was further categorised and highlighted to capture reports of adoption and changes in practice. All three researchers reviewed the data-tracking tool for moderation of the categorisation and to reach agreement of findings.

FINDINGS

Of interest to researchers was the spread of topic areas selected by BN students. Table 1 captures the range of topics selected by students for their QI project that the research team identified as having a QA approach. This includes methods and strategies for intervention and reports of adoption leading to change. This table identifies that 59% (n = 55) of the students' projects were categorised as QA. In comparison, Table 2 captures projects analysed by the research team that took a QI patient-outcome focused approach (n = 38, 41%). While larger numbers of projects demonstrated QA and tools to support practice, the QI-outcome-focused projects led to the majority of student reports of discernible practice change.

TABLE 1. BN STUDENTS' QI PROJECTS ADDRESSING QA-RELATED TOPICS AND PRACTICE (N = 55).

Quality-assurance topics	Methods/strategies for QA intervention	Adopted/led to change
Infection prevention and control topics		
Hand hygiene reminders/processes (4)	Posters – PD sessions	7 moments hand-washing completed
Reduce contamination in sluice room	Posters, more resources	Created
Laundry bags for contaminated linen	Labelling	Implemented
Improved no-touch rubbish bins	Seek replacement	New equipment ordered
Check and restock trolley for PPE	Checklist	Equipment available when needed
Check and restock wound dressing trolley (3)	Checklist and photo	Equipment available when needed
Cleaning protocols for soiled chairs	PD – posters	Cleaning process established
Reduce cross-contamination with wound trolley	Create visual poster to remind and recording tool	Posters maintained
Safety and falls prevention		
Call bells and sensor mats available on admission/change of care plan (3)	More call bells and sensor mats requested	Unclear adoption
Falls awareness (6)	New hazard signs, signage and sensor lighting	Completed, including monthly fall review
High-risk falls identification (2)	Stickers on records/signage in room	Signs in place
Maintain security in dementia unit	Develop stop sign to remind visitors/residents families	Support from facility
Improve overall facilities safety, general care and emergency maintenance forms	Professional development for emergency equipment uses and ensure maintenance forms are correctly completed.	Adopted equipment retest date
Improved care planning/resources		
Records management/confidentiality (5)	Increased awareness/completing posters/colour coding	Implemented

Advanced care plan for every resident	Admission protocol for all residents	Implemented
Effective blood glucose management to follow policies (3)	PD poster for HCA's to follow	Implemented
Personal-effects management (2)	Labelling clothes	Completed, one resident
Client satisfaction monitoring	Checklist for feedback for all residents	Requested by agency
Diabetes awareness/food exchange for diet-controlled residents (3)	Updated checklist for all residents PD posters	Completed – management request
Constipation management awareness (3)	Bristol stool posters – updated charts for monitoring	Monitoring encouraged
Management of referrals to ear health nurse	Tracking tool	Created
Care plan review every two weeks Medical history update	Monitoring tool Easily accessible summary in file	Adopted – improved handover
Accurate wound-dressing resident summary	Update visual board	More accurate ordering of dressing products
Incontinence-product chart with all residents	Developed for day and night	Supported ordering
Carers (HCA) resident checklist (e.g., call bell, sensor mat, incontinence products restocked) (2)	PD and staff orientation	Follow policy for management call bell, Incontinence products and sensor mats
Carer time-management to reduce missed cares (2)	Tool for recording handover notes and care recording	Needed more evidence of cares misses/ issues
Improve palliative care – checklist	Tools to ensure all cares provided	Checklist created
Medication management (3)	Colour coding drugs/ trolleys	Colour coding reported
Review restraint practices	Review consents and restraints PD Update policies and procedures	Discussions occurred
Equipment maintenance		
Lifting equipment checks, cleaning and availability	Checklist for observation and cleaning – usage times	Recording tools in place
Orientation		
Student nurses and new staff orientation resources (9)	Update booklet – audit	Completed

TABLE 2. BN STUDENTS QI PROJECT THAT WERE LINKED TO QI CONCEPTS PATIENT OUTCOMES/ FOCUS (N = 38).

QI patient-outcome-focused projects	Methods/strategies used	Adopted/led to change
Improve skin integrity		
Improve manual handling – reduce skin tears	PD on one resident and improved planning techniques	Adopted
Skin assessment (3)	SKIN risk assessment PD Obtain and use more e-tools	Care plan changed
Pressure wound mismanagement	Turns chart and repository	Developed and implemented
Pressure area prevention	Heel protectors	Resources purchased and available
Improve skin integrity – mobility (3)	Mobility planning and monitoring in care plans	Adopted

Responding to mental health		
Improve cognitive functioning (2)	Poster for capturing interests and TV sport	Adopted
Reduce depression (3)	Developing reminiscing & memory boards/ books – one te reo Maori	Developed and used
Recognition and recording of delirium events	New recording template	Adopted by facility
Reduce social isolation (2)	Activity plan to engage with residents	Developed and used
Reduce stress with cognitive impaired	Visual resources for care planning/ instruction	Adopted by facility
Improved care planning/resources		
Management of shingles outbreak	PD good practice cares tool	Adopted
Improving nutrition (4)	Feeding chart plus 'blue plate' observation and recording chart	Developed
Improve nutritional intake	Feeding chart plus 'blue plate' observation and recording chart	Implemented, reported
Improving oral hygiene – need for regular dentist visits	Step-by-step tool for resident to follow – tracking tool for routine dental cares	Developed and adopted
Monitor and increase fluid intake (2)	Implement fluid balance charting more often	Established (as not routine practice) and adopted
Reducing medication errors (3)	Colour-coded trolleys along with a list of seven nursing strategies to reduce error	Adopted with high success
Improve person-centred wellbeing cares	Display daily activity plan PD to staff	Adopted
Reduce choke hazard	PD choke and dysphagia Warning sticker to chart	Adopted
Blood-sugar level monitoring (4)	Create new storage space for individual residents' own labelled auto-test device PD HCA BGL and insulin	14 RN reported benefit of new system
Topical cream documentation by HCA	Recording tool for improved management and monitoring	Adopted

The analysis of the BN students' QI project reports elicited much more compelling evidence of their engagement with QI leading to practice change. For example:

- investigating and planning interventions around poor nutritional intake;
- the need for closer monitoring for some residents with dementia, called a 'blue plate' project, signalling to all staff that they needed to assist feed, observe and record/report the nutrition intake of a resident using a blue plate.

Another project was an investigation to improve blood-glucose-level monitoring by enrolled nurses and healthcare assistants. This QI project used a professional development education strategy to meet a number of identified issues supported by the care facility: to improve equipment storage; provide clearer individual equipment labelling; carry out comprehensive blood-glucose monitoring in line with good practice to ensure accuracy of results, leading to subsequently more accurate insulin administration.

Students also produced a number of visual resources to personalise care needs; recorded favourite activity schedules (sports, TV, media coverage) for residents to be engaged in; and created additional staff and professional development tools (often QA in nature) including safe lifting and positioning information to reduce falls. Seven student QI projects addressed enhancing te ao Māori, including te reo language activities through music and exercise, bilingual labelling on key areas in the facility, and increasing culturally safe personal care with Māori residents (for example the use of specific mobile body washing resources). Fewer students selected this topic area than expected, given the core focus of the nursing curriculum and students' need to meet registered nurse competencies in this area.

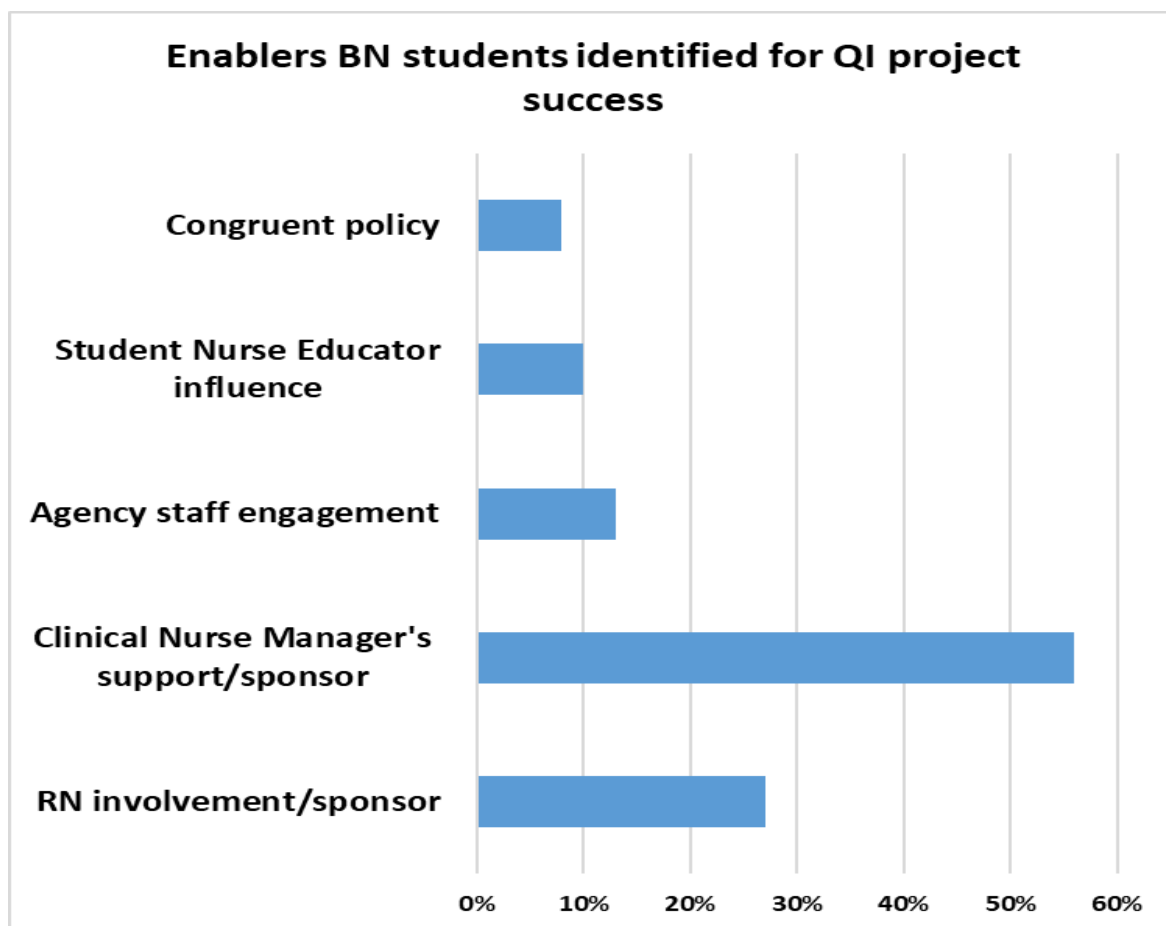


Figure 1. Enablers identified by BN students undertaking QI projects in practice (n = 80).

Enabling features for QI project adoption

Figure 1 records the enabling factors reported by BN students, with over half of the projects identifying the positive contribution of clinical nurse leaders/managers as a key support.

BN students described clinical nurse managers (CNM) supporting positive communication between team members, and other enabling activities such as:

“shared key policy and wanting to improve quality ... led process and shared accountability to complete ... CNM continue to monitor [after the conclusion of the clinical time] ... ran training modules ... developed policy creation and storage.”

Conversely, involvement with registered nurses (RN) in facilities during QI projects (Figure 1) was reported lower than expected (26%), with students reporting these staff as *“having heavy workloads”* and *“... lack of time...”* that impacted on their availability and ability to utilise them when enacting their QI project.

Less than 10% of BN students identified the impact of an agency’s policy to enable their project, and this finding is addressed further in their analysis of challenges.

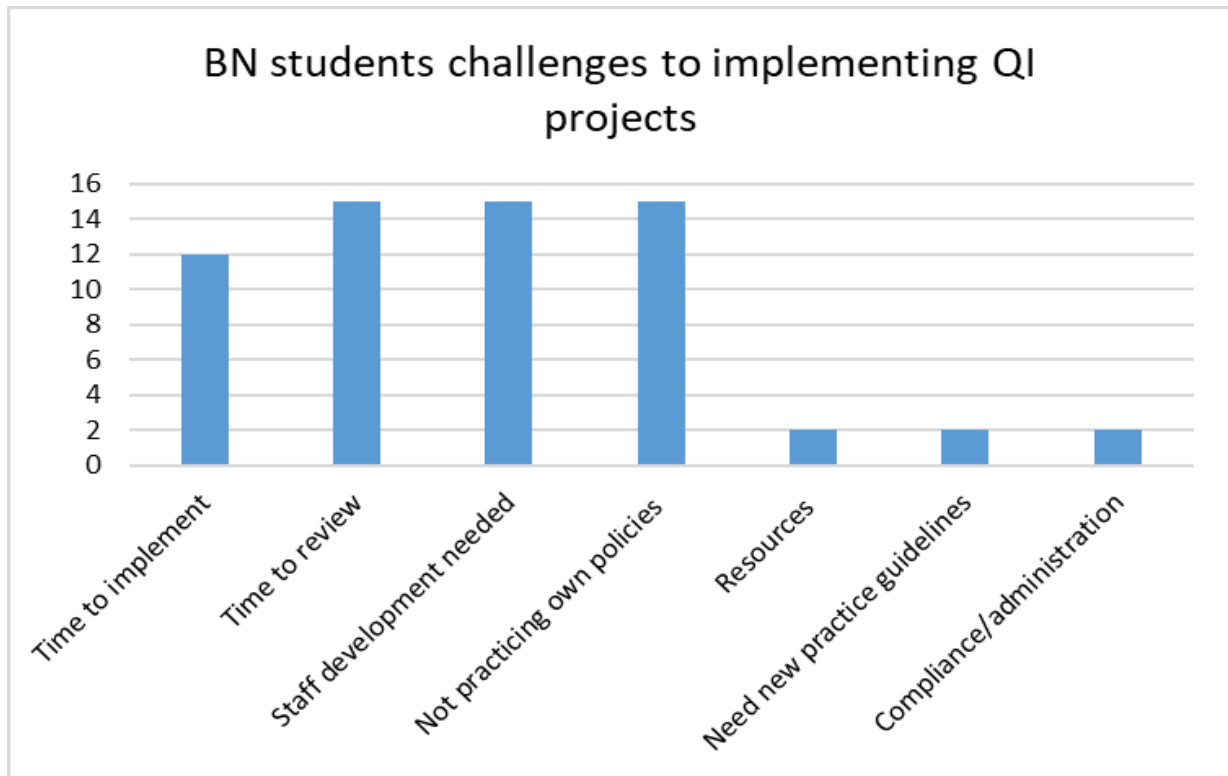


Figure 2. Challenges identified by BN students undertaking QI projects in practice (n = 60).

Challenges to QI project enactment and change

Figure 2 records the challenges reported by students in their project summaries. This data set appears under-reported as BN students in only 60 of the 93 projects identified barriers in their analysis.

Three key challenges identified by students were summarised from this data in Figure 2, including: time (43% of the projects needed more time both to implement and review); need for staff professional development (24%); and staff not practising within agency policies (24%). The need for updating procedures/new practice guidelines, resources, and compliance/administration were also reported with strong QA themes. The challenge of sufficient time to review and implement was found by other researchers (James et al., 2016) and was congruent with expectations given the four-week practice placement.

Another key area students identified was issues with getting their proposed QI project approved; some CNMs had to consult head office in some agencies, which also increased time challenges. The need for staff professional development across the range of topics, to improve quality and patient outcomes, was reported. The area of most concern was the 15 projects that identified staff were not practising within their own policies from a QI perspective. Comments from students confirmed these challenges and included:

“need ongoing PD to continue QI ... staff training ... information needs to be added to protocols”

Such comments reported by students identify the need for professional development, new practice guidelines, improved resources to improve staff engagement with QI, and changes to increase residents’ safety.

Another area identified for professional development was linked to te ao Māori and developing cultural competence in working with Māori residents. Students reported:

"Need to add cultural aspects for Māori residents, some dos and don'ts"

This comment reflects that policies may require certain practices, yet these were either not being adhered to or staff were unaware of the requirements.

DISCUSSION

This range of successful projects outlined in Tables 1 and 2 meant BN students experienced identifying, developing, enacting and evaluating responsive action that lead to some improvement in health outcomes with a resident in their care. Such positive engagement in some sustainable change projects increases the likelihood of students' ongoing engagement with QI and practice change, as they complete the BN, and when they enter the workforce as RNs.

The results presented identify that 59% of projects were QA in nature and 41% showed a pleasing shift in student thinking and practice adoption and change in QI. These findings highlighted to the teaching team the strength of challenges in introducing new theory and practice in learning and teaching, and the importance of initial and ongoing preparation with the facilities and clinical staff who support student practicum placements.

In a bicultural curriculum, seven student QI projects (7.5%) addressed enhancing te ao Māori including te reo language activities, which was surprising. One of the reasons for a low uptake of QI projects reflecting Te Tiriti o Waitangi and He Korowai Oranga (Ministry of Health, 2014) working with Māori residents, was perhaps a lack of visibility of te ao Māori and the importance of role modelling by all staff. This situation raises issues of lack of student preparation, support and access to Māori residents, and the need to increase efforts of role modelling in ARC facilities across our region.

While students positively reported the role of the CNM in enabling QI project implementation (55%), the number of students identifying the SNE as enabling (Figure 1) was only around 10%, signalling a need to ensure all SNEs receive clear information on QI project requirements. In reflecting on this low reported response, there may have been a misinterpretation of the assessment instructions, as these staff would not be expected to assist with implementation of a QI project. Similarly, students were required to identify barriers in their implementation analysis, yet only 60 of the 93 projects analysed addressed this. We are left wondering whether there were no barriers, or did the students feel that there were too many to report and reflect upon?

However, students' insights and developing understanding of QI needs to be further fostered by SNEs, RNs and CNMs, who have a large influence in determining how students relate to the need to embed QI into all aspects of their practice (James et al., 2016). Many agencies were practising from a QA model, which influenced student perception of, and engagement with, different QI practice solutions. The experience of redeveloping the QI component in the BN curriculum required the teaching team to take an active role to create authentic learning, education and assessment experiences with practice partners. We needed to be fully cognisant of the QI endeavours across the healthcare sector (Buerhaus, 2010), yet also aware of the challenges of workload, staffing and resource constraints in ARC facilities and the sector generally. We also needed to be prepared for a range of feedback from students and care facilities to ensure mutually beneficial academic-practice partnership outcomes (Sherwood & Drenkard, 2007), to help mitigate issues raised by BN students implementing PDSA in complex regulated settings and within a short time frame.

Our redevelopment of the QI learning and teaching component, reflecting Armstrong et al.'s (2012) four effective approaches discussed earlier in this paper, proved to be successful. Our approach to, and emphasis on, QI responds to the importance of new-graduate preparation for QI in professional practice (Djukic et al., 2013; Kovner et al., 2010; Robb et al., 2017; Sherwood & Drenkard, 2007). In addition, applying PDSA models is part of the New Zealand Health,

Quality and Safety Commission's initiatives; therefore, familiarisation with the language as well as experiences of undertaking these projects' mitigating issues identified in the literature (Coles et al., 2017; James et al., 2016; Reed & Card, 2015; Taylor et al., 2013) is important for BN students' work readiness.

This research confirms the need for real-life experiences of linking theory and practice, and a well-prepared practice setting for BN students to observe, investigate, plan, deliver and evaluate a small QI, PDSA-based project, yet there is more work to be done to improve this assessment and learning experience.

Recommendations for curricular improvement and further research

A range of insights was developed by the research team to enhance the educational delivery of QI learning, teaching and assessment. These include:

1. Te ao Māori cultural context and Te Tiriti o Waitangi responsiveness needs to be enhanced and embedded throughout the BN curriculum, as well as in all aspects of learning, teaching and assessment in QI practice.
2. Ongoing preparation for SNEs to ensure practice-based educators are confident to support student-led QI initiatives in practice.
3. Further shared professional development with agency staff prior to practice placements to provide explanatory notes on QI and PDSA concepts, and link to agency initiatives to improve student, client and agency outcomes.
4. Replication of this research to confirm and extend reporting student experiences and selected QI projects for longitudinal outcomes analysis that could be shared across the sector.

The unique BN curriculum and associated values mean the findings may not be generalisable to other programmes of nursing without modifications.

CONCLUSION

Investigating students' successful engagement in a QI project and their reported contribution to practice change was the focus of this evaluative qualitative research. Analysing projects using a QA or a QI approach enabled both insights into student experiences and the recognition that QA audit/compliance continued to be fostered in practice (59% of projects analysed), rather than client outcomes required of QI orientation (41% of projects analysed). This detailed project analysis enabled us to recommend further curricula and staff development improvements and deeper contributions to practice change, with some of the practice settings engaging in a partnership model. Ongoing challenges persist in maintaining practice development in busy care facilities, which have a range of competing obligations, with highly vulnerable residents. Recognising the importance of the multifaceted components of theory, the QI models and students' engagement with real-life outcome-focused assessment projects contributed to a range of student learning concerning safe practice and skills required for RNs to make effective change through QI. Optimism on the part of teaching and clinical support staff for the positive contribution of this research project to nursing and education reinforces that QI must be perceived as everyone's business.

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MANAGING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING IN AGED RESIDENTIAL CARE SETTINGS

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Nursing pedagogy and professional development



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ABSTRACT

This research focuses on the management of professional learning and development (PLD) for nursing staff in aged residential care settings from the perspective of clinical managers. The research question was: What strategies and barriers are present in the professional development of nurses in aged healthcare in Whakatū Nelson? This study uses an inductive constructivist strategy to explore this question. Semi-structured interviews were conducted from five participating organisations. All organisations were medium-sized aged-care services in the Nelson Tasman region. Inductive thematic analysis was used to organise and interpret the data to construct findings that provide insight into the experiences of the participating professional leaders. The strategies adopted by clinical managers were found to be PLD and performance management alongside the use of diverse tools to engage nurses in PLD. Shortage of time for managing PLD processes and lack of funding were found to be key barriers experienced by clinical managers in managing PLD for nurses. This paper contributes to the literature on leadership and management in aged-care settings by highlighting the experiences of a group of clinical managers in a small Aotearoa New Zealand city.

KEYWORDS

Aged residential care, professional learning, clinical managers, management

INTRODUCTION

The Nursing Council of New Zealand (NCNZ) requires that all registered nurses complete at least 60 hours of professional development within a three-year period in order to maintain certification (Nursing Council of New Zealand, 2021). Ongoing professional learning and development (PLD) for nurses is therefore essential because it ensures the continual development of skills and knowledge required for taking care of patients (Adams & Carryer, 2019; Oppert et al., 2018), and also contributes to the recertification process. This research explores strategies and barriers that clinical managers experience in providing PLD in a small study in Aotearoa New Zealand. This research adds to the body of knowledge currently available on clinical management of PLD in aged residential care (ARC) settings.

This research explores clinical managers' experiences of managing PLD for qualified nurses in ARC settings. According to the New Zealand Aged Care Association (McDougall, 2021), who account for 91% of ARC settings in Aotearoa New Zealand, there were 667 facilities as at 2019, amounting to 39,767 beds (McDougall, 2021). The sector is split between major group providers (49%) and minor individual providers (50%), with the remainder run by District Health Boards; there are 347 clinical managers and 3188 registered nurses in a workforce totalling 23,420 (McDougall, 2021). Registered nurses make up 19% of the care staff employed in ARC settings, and over the 2019–20 year experienced a massive 33% staff turnover; however, this is reduced from the last survey carried out in 2017, where turnover was 38% (McDougall, 2021).

Ongoing professional learning plays an essential role in ensuring nurses are continuously updated with the latest advances in treatment and care (Bowen et al., 2020). This professional learning supports nurses to develop the diverse skills required for nursing in the dynamic contexts in which they work (Rizany et al., 2018). Ongoing professional development of nurses contributes to the ongoing development of the general profession (Morin,

2020). This creates a need for those that manage nurses in healthcare settings to support that development for nurses in general (Morin, 2020), and ARC nurses in particular (Rizany et al., 2018). Aside from recertification, ongoing PLD is also associated with increased quality of care for patients in ARC settings (Fukada, 2018). A distinction is made here between role competency and professional competency. Role competency means the requirements of the job itself, as set out in the job description. Professional competency refers to the requirements placed on nurses to achieve registration and maintain certification.

Nurses in ARC usually work outside of public hospitals and often for private businesses (McDougall, 2021; Rizany et al., 2018). For this group, balancing work demands with the expectations of ongoing study has proven problematic in the past (Bindon, 2017). To this end, education and ongoing professional learning have been essential both in maintaining a skilled workforce (Bindon, 2017), and for increasing job satisfaction and reducing staff turnover (Pool et al., 2013). Aside from improvement of nursing practices, ongoing PLD has also been found to contribute to increased work engagement and security (Cox & Simpson, 2020; De Simone et al., 2018; Pool et al., 2013).

The present research seeks to understand how a particular group of clinical managers, in a small town in Aotearoa New Zealand, has experienced managing ongoing PLD for nurses in ARC settings. The research was carried out a year after the first Covid-19 lockdowns in Aotearoa New Zealand; however, the focus was not to gauge pandemic-related challenges explicitly. This line of inquiry was outside of the general scope of the present research but was implicit to the context in which it was carried out. Research like that of Oppert et al. (2018) has shown that even without a pandemic there are challenges for managing the PLD of nurses in the ARC sector that may act as barriers to effective practice. In Australia, Mills and Finnis (2020, p. 4) have noted that work-related professional learning in the aged-care sector has “been on the decline since 2012.” This present research explores clinical manager perspectives on their role in managing PLD for nurses, to gain a better understanding of what strategies are used to engage nurses and what barriers are experienced in PLD provision in an Aotearoa New Zealand context.

The research question used to focus this exploration is: What strategies and barriers are present in the professional development of nurses in aged healthcare in Whakatū Nelson?

LITERATURE REVIEW

This research is grounded in the discipline of human resource management (HRM) with a specific focus on ongoing professional development of nurses in ARC settings. HRM is a discipline in management that aims to help organisations access, develop and maintain employee engagement (Pak et al., 2019). HRM is often seen as an essential function of a large number of industries, such as hotels (Úbeda-García et al., 2021), construction (Unegbu et al., 2020) and retail (Sundström & Hjelm-Lidholm, 2020). Healthcare is no different, as the healthcare sector also seeks improvements in organisational performance (Moses & Sharma, 2020). For example, studies by Mousa and Othman (2020) and Greenfield et al. (2019) have concluded that HRM supports the ongoing professional learning of health-focused workforces.

Professional learning and development has been defined as the process of supporting the knowledge and skill development of employees to enable them to demonstrate ongoing competence in their role (Berragan, 2011; Green & Huntington, 2017). There is a professional requirement that nurses report to their professional body that they have met PLD competence requirements on an annual basis (Nursing Council of New Zealand, 2021). The focus of PLD is thus to enhance employees’ knowledge and skills as well as to maintain safe practices (Bindon, 2017; Coventry et al., 2015) in the context of ongoing professional attestation. In Aotearoa New Zealand, ongoing professional development is essential for the recertification of nurses via professional learning and recognition programmes to ensure registered nurses have engaged in 60 hours professional learning over a three-year period (Nursing Council of New Zealand, 2021). This means that managing PLD is of particular significance for registered nurses as it not only supports practice but also recertification.

It has been found that PLD for nurses plays an essential role in ARC settings as it helps develop their knowledge, skills and practices (Chavez et al., 2018, Ibrahim et al., 2017, Melkas et al., 2020, Xiao et al., 2020). The ongoing

development of aged-care nurses' skills and knowledge has been found to improve the quality of patient care by ensuring that nursing practice is up to date and aligned to current best practice (Page et al., 2021; Xiao et al., 2020), and is considered essential for addressing unique psychological, physiological, spiritual and cultural needs related to the care and ageing of older adults (New Zealand Nurses Organisation, 2018). Provision of quality care for patients is associated with nurses' ongoing development of their professional competencies in terms of behaviours, skills and practice (Morin, 2020). Nursing-role and professional competencies are essential for improving and assuring quality of care and safety for patients (Fukada, 2018; Wyman et al., 2019) and increasing patient satisfaction (Rizany et al., 2018). One key means of supporting the ongoing development of nursing competencies is through professional development tailored to the particular needs of both patients and the nurses themselves (Wolf et al., 2019).

The *New Zealand Care Workforce Survey 2019 Report* (Ravenswood et al., 2021) contains a section on professional learning and professional development that is relevant to this research as background sector-wide data. Of the 2110 respondents, 10% were nurses working in care settings, including aged care. As a group, nurses, when compared to care or support workers or managers, were least likely to not engage in PLD and more likely to engage in PLD outside of work time both paid and unpaid (Ravenswood et al., 2021). Fifty-one percent of nurses across the care sector claimed to be satisfied or totally satisfied with PLD provided by their workplace; there was no specific data given for the aged-care segment, but this data shows a potential gap between what is provided and what nurses perceive as their need. Ravenswood et al.'s (2021) research offers general insight into potential disparity but offers little in the way of exploration as to why this is the case.

In another New Zealand-based study on the value of PLD in ARC settings, a survey of 13 registered nurses who had undertaken PLD in the previous 12 months was undertaken (Page et al., 2020). That study found that participants felt ARC nursing is a specialist area, and that PLD was effective at supporting their nursing practice, also highlighting a recognition of good leadership as a valued skillset for nurses, but participants admitted they require more support in that area of practice. Participants identified the importance of a supportive organisational culture when it comes to effective provision of PLD, in the same vein as research carried out by Brekelmans et al. (2016). This study is significant in providing New Zealand-based evidence that good PLD is valued by registered nurses in ARC settings (Page et al., 2020).

While there are several approaches to supporting ongoing professional development, there are also several challenges faced by managers in the professional development of nurses in the healthcare industry. These include time issues, high costs of PLD, and lack of variety in programmes that are available (Ghiasipour et al., 2017; Oppert et al., 2018; Schneider & Good, 2018). Researchers have highlighted that the needs assessment for PLD, and updating learning resources, are time-consuming exercises that are a potential barrier for some managers (Price & Reichert, 2017). Furthermore, timely attention is required for improving workforce performance by making sophisticated plans for the PLD of nurses; it was recognised that lack of time creates difficulties in doing so (New Zealand College of Mental Health Nurses, 2014). For example, the research by Ghiasipour et al. (2017) in Iran shows that busy managerial workload and time limits mean managers do not have enough time for managing PLD for nursing staff.

In the United States, Schneider and Good (2018) found that high cost and lack of variety in programmes are challenges for managers. The extra-paid professional learning time for nurses comes as an expense for the healthcare sector, and creates a challenge for managers in providing professional development support within limited budgets (Bindon, 2017). Thus, lack of funds can limit the implementation of development and professional learning programmes in healthcare contexts (Ghiasipour et al., 2017). From another perspective, lack of variety in development and professional learning offerings creates a difficulty for managers in accessing relevant PLD to inspire a commitment to ongoing learning (Schneider & Good, 2018). Thus, nurses' perceptions of the usefulness of professional development may create difficulties for managers when seeking to enhance commitment to the PLD on offer (Page et al., 2020; Schneider & Good, 2018). Managers leaving an organisation is also a potential barrier to effective PLD provision in terms of distracting from the long-term orientation of ongoing PLD and continuous learning processes (Ghiasipour et al., 2017).

In Aotearoa New Zealand, clinical managers face several challenges in the professional development of nurses in the healthcare industry. These include funding constraints, unavailability of accurate data, and lack of flexibility in the working environment (New Zealand Nurses Organisation, 2018). It is recognised that in order to provide proper care for older patients, proper investment needs to be made in developing the professional learning of nurses (New Zealand Nurses Organisation, 2018). Learning within the professional context is recognised as being essential for enhancing employee problem-solving skills and providing quality care to older patients (Berragan, 2011). However, in Aotearoa New Zealand, managers often face funding constraints in providing targeted learning programmes to support nurses' professional development (Frey et al., 2015; 2017). Creating innovative solutions for nurses in challenging situations with minimum funds hinders nurses' access to PLD in New Zealand (New Zealand Nurses Organisation, 2018, New Zealand Nurses Organisation, 2020), often because of time requirements to do so.

The current research is a small-scale exploration of clinical manager experiences of managing PLD for nurses in ARC settings. Similar research carried out by Fitzpatrick et al. (2021) shows that targeted PLD in aged-healthcare services can increase assertiveness, build confidence and develop specialist knowledge and skills for nurses. A similar article by Egan et al. (2017) has also focused on the importance of ongoing professional development for nurses practising in the Aotearoa New Zealand context. This research is similar in scale to that carried out by Holmes et al. (2020), where it was found that good communication is essential for ensuring nurses are receiving types of professional development that are closely aligned to their learning needs, with an emphasis on developing a team-focused approach to PLD provision. The unique experiences of clinical managers and a specific focus on management processes complements current literature that takes a more nurse-centric approach to research (e.g., Page et al., 2020).

METHODS

This research uses a constructivist approach to qualitative research, where the phenomena under study are understood through the experiences of participants (Bannister-Tyrrell & Meiqari, 2020), as opposed to theory-testing or hypothesis-forming approaches. The approach taken herein is inductive and exploratory, seeking to understand the experiences of clinical managers, which privileges lived experiences (Rutberg & Bouikidis, 2018) and professional subjectivities as a means of constructing understanding. The study is small scale and therefore well suited to a qualitative inquiry strategy (Walker et al., 2019).

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, an approach commonly used in qualitative research (Adams, 2015) where the goal is understanding values and experiences. Core questions were prepared under supervision before the interviews. Ethical approval was granted by Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology (NMIT) under the code 2021-B01 on 10 March 2021. A total of eight open-ended core questions were prepared and used, these were piloted and minor changes were made as a result (Appendix A). Interviews took place in the workplaces of participants in April 2021, and lasted between 30 and 50 minutes.

Participants in this research were purposively selected based on their role as clinical managers in ARC facilities. The facilities were selected using a convenience approach. The researcher contacted the ten aged-care facilities closest to their place of residence, and of those ten, five responded positively and were included in this study. Six clinical managers were interviewed. The study met the participant recommended sample size of a semi-structured interview, which highlights selecting a minimum "sample size between 5 and 25" (Townsend, 2013, p. 6). Interviews were recorded and transcribed, and the transcriptions were verified with participants before analysis took place.

Transcripts were analysed using an inductive strategy of thematic analysis. This approach is consistent with other studies that have used semi-structured interviews to collect data (e.g., Poulos et al., 2020). The process used followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step process: familiarising; coding; developing initial themes; reviewing and revising themes; defining, refining and renaming themes; and writing it up. This was selected as a particularly New Zealand articulation of thematic analysis methods that fitted well with the context of this research. Data analysis began by familiarising with data (Lester et al., 2020); this happened through the process of transcribing, which was done manually, and rereading of transcripts. Initial codes were then developed from the data using colour

coding and annotations to organise key ideas and concepts (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Themes were developed in conversation with a research supervisor, which led to subthemes to account multiple codes, and then themes to account multiple subthemes, as is consistent with an inductive approach to thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Themes were then revised, reformed and written up, and reported in the findings section as per Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework.

FINDINGS

This section reports the findings in answer to the question about strategies for, and barriers to, the professional development of nurses in aged healthcare in Whakatū Nelson.

Strategies

Professional learning and development programmes were found to be key strategies used by professional managers for developing nurses' competency. All participants agreed. For example, Participant 3 stated:

... my strategies are to sit them down and talk it over with them [nursing staff] and direct them to Altura Learning.

Participant 2 used a different education programme:

... there are different courses, one way is to try courses that have a full recent care assessment, and we also have Interrai course.

Altura Learning is a private online training organisation specialising in supporting care workers and professionals, and Interrai is a government-funded not-for-profit organisation that provides education and training for professional nurses alongside other business support tools. In addition to externally provided professional learning programmes, some participants also had inhouse professional learning opportunities:

... there are a lot of hospice modules for offering to them ... and I think that's what's called a study, anyway and it's about resources and education. (Participant 3)

Courses were used to correct practices when needed:

We might say to someone who has made a medication error to do the medication safety, which is llearn tool, we encourage to do this. (Participant 1)

Further, two of the participants identified the importance of coaching and mentoring when it comes to the ongoing development of nursing staff:

... nurses work alongside a coach or a mentor who does a lot of clinical coaching. (Participant 2)

Performance management was another common strategy used by professional managers to support development in a more targeted way than general PLD programmes. Five out of six respondents favoured performance management as the strategy for supporting the professional growth of nurses. For example, Participant 6 stated:

... we go through the options of a performance improvement plan where we list specific things that we feel nurses need to improve on.

Participant 3 talked of performance management being a core component of the annual appraisal system:

... we do a performance appraisal and we need to do it every year. We have the performance appraisal but there's also a competency matrix.

Whereas Participant 5 emphasised using performance management only if there is any difficulty:

If there is a difficulty, we will have to involve management and put them on performance plan.

Participant 2 agreed, stating:

... we go through the options of a performance improvement plan where we list specific things that we feel nurses need to improve on.

Professional tools are the third finding, though with less agreement than professional learning and performance management (three out of six participants). For example, participants used message boards to communicate when professional development was needed:

If I notice that a particular nurse hasn't really done or followed up properly, I will either send her a message on the message board. (Participant 4)

Another used emails to inform nurses of PLD opportunities, others highlighted the use of online tools such as webinars when it comes to providing accessible PLD for nurses in their aged-care setting. There was also an agreed recognition by all participants that more emphasis on online learning tools would help nurses to access PLD that is relevant to them:

... there are internet courses that can help nurses with most of their learning needs. These are becoming more important to professional learning. (Participant 1)

Barriers

Lack of time to manage PLD processes was seen by all participants as a key barrier to effectively managing PLD needs of nursing staff. For example, Participant 1 stated:

There is not enough time for us to do all the care for older people, and then manage PD effectively.

Participant 5 agreed, and emphasised the importance of time management:

I think time management is one thing. It is not only important to manage time for doing clinical things on the floor, but also time is required for managing registered nurses.

On the topic of lack of time, Participant 4 made the point that

... there's just no time, because nurses are toileting or doing care or feeding.

This sentiment was summed up:

... a registered nurse is in charge of a lot of people and thus there is a lack [of] time for managing their development, managers are very busy too, so sometimes things like professional development gets overlooked (Participant 5).

This was a short-sighted view based on logistical barriers alone, given that the importance of PLD was also established by all participants.

Limited budget is the second major theme from the research. Budget means having money for professional development and is essential for providing support of professional growth to nurses. Four out of six participants agreed that having a limited budget stands as the challenge for them to provide effective support to nurses for professional growth. For example, Participant 2 stated that a lack of money creates barriers in reaching the number of staff that they want to with PLD:

Money is always a problem. So having the budget to spend on becomes the challenge.

Participant 6 identified limited budget as a barrier:

If cost was not a barrier, we would teach our nurses, not just to be a registered nurse, but also to be able to run a shift like a leader. It will make them able to speak up, be able to have courageous conversations with the caregivers.

Participant 3, however, gave the opinion that if cost was not a factor more courses could be provided to nurses:

I would get them to attend more courses ... then there could be leadership courses and more dementia education would be good. So, there are some good courses out there I would offer for nurses.

DISCUSSION

In this research, all six participants agreed with PLD as the primary strategy used to support professional growth for nurses in ARC settings. It was found that managers use professional learning programmes to develop nurses' competency – these were found to be both internal and external to the organisation – citing external products such as the "Interrai course" and the "Altura programme" as well as in-house "hospice modules" and "clinical coaching." The use of these tools suggests that clinical managers were focused on developing not only professional competencies, but also role-based competencies in the workplace. As reflected in the literature, clinical managers in this study utilise a variety of educational strategies to engage nurses in PLD. Managers also spoke of the need for leadership development to support nurses into team-leading roles as well as practice- and competency-based PLD. The literature highlights the central role of PLD in improving both the role and professional competencies of nurses (Holden et al., 2013; Pool et al., 2013). Morley and Cashell (2017) note that professional learning provided to nurses helps develop their skills and knowledge, which is essential for providing exceptional quality care to patients. The literature also emphasises that the development of nurses' skills through professional learning helps enhance their clinical knowledge, skills, and even their attitudes (Chavez et al., 2018; Frennert, 2020; Morin, 2020; Oprescu et al., 2017). Similarly, according to Charrette et al. (2019), competency-based professional learning improves nurses' skills and accelerates their performance.

The literature emphasises the role of performance management in enhancing the knowledge and skills of nurses throughout their careers (Price & Reichert, 2017). A direct link between nurses' performance management and professional development has been observed (Wyman et al., 2019). Plans for performance management are often developed by clinical managers with a focus on improving nurses' performance in their role, particularly when performance is not meeting the requirements of the job (New Zealand College of Mental Health Nurses, 2014). Brunt and Morris (2020) point out that performance management is used with nurses, helping them to cope with the ever-changing healthcare environment. In the present research, it was found that performance management helps improve the performance of nurses, for example in providing quality care. The research found that managers use performance management to guide nurses' professional growth in the direction of both personal and organisational need. For participants, tools such as a performance plan were developed to support this process. Often goals were developed as part of the annual appraisal, or on occasion in relation to an identified performance deficit. These findings echo Egan et al. (2017, p. 11) in their reminder that PLD is not an "optional extra" in nursing practice, it is core to the role and profession itself. The current research also highlights that a variety of tools is needed to engage nurses in programmes and potential courses, particularly in terms of engaging in online options to encourage a more targeted approach to PLD.

In the present research, five out of six participants responded that lack of time is a large challenge when providing for the professional growth of nurses. Time was referred to as a limited resource for these five participants, highlighting the need to have well developed time-management skills. Managers stated that the busyness of the aged care settings often eroded time for planning and organising supportive PLD. Lack of time to ensure ongoing professional growth is a key finding of this research, coupled with a perceived lack of time for busy nurses to

engage in their own development. Similarly, the literature identifies that having enough time to manage PLD needs among nursing staff is a key challenge that managers face. The concern regarding lack of time addresses the need to update resources and perform needs assessments for development and professional learning (Price & Reichert, 2017), as well as lack of time to develop professional learning programmes to support ongoing development (Ghiasipour et al., 2017). Schneider and Good (2018) emphasise that time is required for managers to make plans for developing relevant data on nurses' needs, as is necessary for their professional growth. The findings of this research also echo those of Ghiasipour et al. (2017), which establish time constraints as the main barrier for the management of PLD for nurses.

In this research, not only were there barriers to professional outcomes identified, but also barriers to leadership development for nurses moving into management positions. Budget constraints impacted not only the ability to access relevant PLD, but also the ability to cover shifts when nurses attend PLD opportunities. This was a double cost and therefore a double barrier. The literature also emphasises funding constraints as a challenge, as the high cost of the professional learning programmes creates a barrier to providing PLD for nurses (Ghiasipour et al., 2017; Schneider & Good, 2018). In Aotearoa New Zealand, lack of appropriate funding has also been shown to hinder nurses' engagement in ongoing learning programmes (New Zealand College of Mental Health Nurses, 2014). Moreover, the lack of a proper budget stands as a challenge for aged-healthcare managers to provide nurses with on-the-job learning (New Zealand Nurses Organisation, 2020). The findings of this research reiterate the same challenge. Four out of six participants mentioned funding constraints to be a key challenge faced by managers in supporting nurses' professional growth: "Money is always a problem. So having the budget to spend on becomes the challenge." Therefore, money, or lack of it, is a perennial barrier to the provision of quality ongoing professional learning experiences.

In relation to the research question (What strategies and barriers are present in the professional development of nurses in aged healthcare in Whakatū Nelson?) it was found that the provision of PLD programmes, alongside performance-management processes, were the key strategies for engaging nurses in PLD in aged-care settings, similar to the literature on the topic (Hwang et al., 2019; Morin, 2020). A variety of tools including face-to-face, mentoring and use of online resources, were found to be key for enlisting nurses in PLD opportunities. Most of the participants identified available time and budget shortages to be the barriers faced by participating managers. For example, one of the participants said: "Having the budget to spend on PLD is the challenge." This, too, confirmed research carried out in other countries (Ghiasipour et al., 2017), as well as the research-based understandings in the Aotearoa New Zealand context (New Zealand Nurses Organisation, 2020). Management perspectives on how PLD is conducted and led in ARC settings add to the nurse-focused literature on PLD (e.g., Page et al., 2020; Pool et al., 2013).

CONCLUSION

This research gives voice to clinical manager experiences when providing PLD to nurses in aged-care settings. The findings confirm trends that were identified in the literature from other countries, as well as information provided at a national level in Aotearoa New Zealand. Professional learning and development, alongside performance management and providing multiple tools for accessing PLD, were found to be the key engagement strategies. This finding is of particular interest because it shows that when considering ongoing learning, participants did not appear to distinguish between support for core-based skills for the job and ongoing support of professional competency. That PLD and performance management were used interchangeably provides insight into managers' needs to ensure the job itself is being done to the required standard, rather than solely supporting nurses to meet professional-competency requirements. Limited time for managers to engage in managing PLD processes, and budget constraints, were identified as the key barriers that clinical managers in aged-care settings experience when providing PLD to nurses. Given that this research was carried out a year into the Covid-19 pandemic, these constraints may have been amplified in a context requiring greater focus on health-and-safety management processes. This is an area that will require further research to explore the particular challenges involved in managing PLD for professional nurses in the time of a pandemic.

This was a small-scale qualitative study set in a small city in Aotearoa New Zealand. The small number of research participants, while acceptable within qualitative research in general, is a limitation of the study, given that a larger number of participants may have provided clearer insight into a wider set of experiences. That said, assumptions of generalisability were never part of this design; rather, the aim was to explore clinical manager experiences and make sense of those in relation to the literature on PLD provision in aged care and general nursing. Future research that explores the perspectives of nurses alongside those of clinical managers would allow for further triangulation of experiences (aside from the multi-site approach taken here), and a wider selection strategy including more services in the research design would similarly provide a broader perspective on strategies and barriers in providing PLD to nurses in aged-care settings.

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APPENDIX A. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

- Q.1. What is your focus when providing professional development to nurses?
- Q.2. What are the strategies you use for professional development of nurses?
- Q.3. How do you go about identifying PLD needs of nurses?
- Q.4. What challenges do you face when providing PLD to nurses?
- Q.5. What strategies do you use to overcome those challenges?
- Q.6. How have you developed your own understanding of how to use PLD to support staff development?
- Q.7. What has been the impact of providing PLD support to nurses in your setting?
- Q.8. If cost was not a barrier, what PLD would you like to provide to nurses in your organisation and why?

A LONGITUDINAL STUDY EXPLORING RESILIENCE AND WELLBEING OF STAFF FROM FIVE INSTITUTIONS ACROSS TE PŪKĒNGA NETWORK DURING THE 2020 COVID-19 LOCKDOWN AND SUBSEQUENT LIFTING OF SOCIAL RESTRICTIONS

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Resilience in the workplace and community



A Longitudinal Study Exploring Resilience and Wellbeing of Staff from Five Institutions Across Te Pūkenga Network During the 2020 Covid-19 Lockdown and Subsequent Lifting of Social Restrictions by Pippa McKelvie-Sebileau, Sally Baddock, Ella Iosua, Lee Smith, Lian Wu, Patrea Andersen, Suzanne Miller, Griffin Leonard, Carmel Haggerty, Kelli Te Maihāroa, Sharon Brownie, David Tipene-Leach is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License.

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ABSTRACT

The strict nationwide Covid-19 lockdown that began in March 2020 in Aotearoa New Zealand required staff from tertiary education institutions to immediately adapt and move their teaching and professional activities online, as well as maintain social contact remotely. The aim of our study was to explore the impact of the lockdown and restrictions on working life and personal wellbeing for staff at five Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITPs) across Te Pūkenga national network.

Participants were invited to complete an online survey at five time points, corresponding to different alert levels and decreasing social restrictions. They responded to questions about changes to work and personal life, activities to maintain wellbeing, adequacy and trustworthiness of information sources, and provided qualitative comment.

Overall, 2250 responses were collected from 1240 individuals over the five time points. They show that participants made higher levels of adjustments in their working lives than in their personal lives or their efforts to maintain social contact. Levels of adjustment decreased over time, despite an increase in alert level (increased social restrictions) in September 2020. Attention to wellbeing also dropped off over time, with an increasing proportion of staff becoming at risk of poor wellbeing (below the cut-off of the WHO-5 depression index). Qualitative comments show innovative and creative ways of maintaining wellbeing despite the requirements for considerable adjustments to participants' daily working and personal lives. Information from the employer was the only information source frequently accessed, considered highly adequate and highly trusted.

Study results have helped understand the longer-term impacts of social restrictions imposed during lockdown and subsequent alert levels, on work and personal life of staff at tertiary education institutions. Clearly, personal efforts to maintain wellbeing diminish over time, as does wellbeing itself, and this should stimulate institutions to plan robust future interventions to support staff in times of crisis. Learnings from this study have the potential to improve the work environment for staff, capture innovations, support their continuance and to improve staff wellbeing, which is ultimately connected to the learner experience.

KEYWORDS

Covid-19 lockdown, resilience, tertiary education staff, wellbeing

INTRODUCTION

In response to the emerging Covid-19 epidemic in 2020, the New Zealand Government implemented an 'elimination strategy' comprising four alert levels. The four alert levels specified the public health and social measures to be taken at each level of estimated disease risk in the community (New Zealand Government, 2020). In brief, Alert Level 1 corresponded to a low risk, and thus few restrictions. At Alert Level 2, the size of gatherings was limited, and social distancing and face coverings were required in some public settings. Alert Level 3 restricted travel between regions, and people were encouraged to stay at home in household 'bubbles' where possible. Alert Level 4 was considered complete 'lockdown,' requiring individuals to isolate in their household 'bubbles' at their current place of residence;

educational institutions and commercial enterprises were closed. This 'Go Hard, Go Early' strategy was amongst the most stringent measures in the developed world (Hale et al., 2020).

With an increase in Covid-19 cases in the country, in March 2020 Aotearoa New Zealand went into Level 4 lockdown (the highest level of social restrictions) with 48 hours' notice (New Zealand Government, 2020), and the personal lives and professional activities of New Zealanders were confined to the home. Some were able to seamlessly transition to working from home, but for others it involved considerable adjustment and juggling of work and personal commitments. For tertiary educators, classes were moved online overnight via video conferencing platforms.

When faced with a crisis situation such as the Covid-19 pandemic, there are positive outcomes as people look for creative solutions (e.g., images on our televisions of Italian citizens singing from their balconies to raise morale during social isolation), as well as negative impacts on health and wellbeing. Evidence from many disciplines stresses the benefits of positive mental health in dealing with adversity, and evidence has been collected from people responding to large-scale infectious disease outbreaks (Lau et al., 2006; Main et al., 2011). Perceived social support, trusted information and self-care strategies have been linked with wellbeing following a pandemic (Mak et al., 2009b). Mak et al. (2009b) used a model drawing on social cognitive theory of post-traumatic recovery (Benight & Bandura, 2004) to suggest that perceived social support may influence wellbeing through improving confidence in self-efficacy of self-care strategies such as relaxation and having a positive attitude to cope with the stress of a pandemic.

Worldwide, the Covid-19 pandemic was a unique event, and as Aotearoa New Zealand went into total lockdown in early 2020 little was known about the likely trajectory or the impact of Covid-19 on individuals or communities. In 2003 the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) was identified by the World Health Organization (WHO) as the first severe infectious disease of the 21st century to pose a serious threat to global health security (WHO, 2003a). As with Covid-19, SARS was caused by a coronavirus and was shown to be transmitted between countries, likely connected with international flight paths (WHO, 2003b). The literature from this epidemic provided evidence of possible short- and long-term effects on wellbeing. A study of over 800 Hong Kong residents interviewed by telephone reported that over 60% of respondents identified positive impacts on social and/or family support, mental-health awareness, and lifestyle changes as a result of the SARS epidemic (Lau et al., 2006). These factors reduced post-traumatic stress, perception of stress and other negative perceptions related to SARS (Lau et al., 2006). But in a graphic illustration of the negative impact on mental health, a survey of 90 Hong Kong residents who survived a SARS infection revealed a 30% prevalence of PTSD or depression three years after their infection. In the same study, healthcare workers who were not infected were also at greater risk of PTSD (41% diagnosed with PTSD one to two years later) (Mak et al., 2009a). Stress related to an infectious disease may be qualitatively distinct from the stress of other disasters, especially for healthcare workers, in part due to factors such as the associated social isolation and concern for oneself, as well as for potentially infecting family members (Maunder, 2009). Better understanding of how people react during national crises and social isolation will help us prepare for future global disease outbreaks (Taylor, 2019).

The aim of this study was thus to identify the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on behaviour and sense of wellbeing amongst a sample of tertiary education (ITP) staff in Aotearoa New Zealand. Specifically, this paper explores levels of adjustment made in working and professional lives, what types of activities people engaged in to maintain wellbeing, wellbeing over time, and sources of information about the pandemic utilised by staff.

METHODS

Study design

A longitudinal observational study using an online survey tool was developed to gather the data. Survey questions were developed in line with the research aim and were informed in part by the literature on the SARS epidemic of

2003. Consultation with the Otago Polytechnic Tumuaki Rakahau Māori (Director of Māori Research) identified the importance of developing culturally responsive survey questions. Māori researchers on the team shaped questions related to whānau (family), inclusion of wellbeing activities such as karakia (prayer) and the collection of ethnicity data.

Survey design and piloting

The survey included 35 base questions (with minor changes to reflect the alert level and two additional questions in the fifth survey), most of which required responses on a Likert scale and text boxes for qualitative comment. The following demographic information was collected: age in ten-year brackets (less than 20 years, 20–29 years, 30–39 years, etc., until 70+ years), gender (male, female, gender diverse) and ethnicity. Ethnicity was collected using the New Zealand Census question on ethnicity, which allows individuals to specify multiple ethnic groups.

Participants were asked to rate and comment on the level of adjustment they had made in their daily working life, personal activities and to maintain social contact “over the last week.” They were also asked about the level of innovation and creativity implemented in these areas and the level of attention they had focused on their personal wellbeing. Adjustment was rated from five options of increasing level of adjustment from “very little,” “some,” “quite a lot,” “considerable” or “major.”

Subjective wellbeing was measured using the standardised WHO-5 (World Health Organisation-5) Wellbeing index, which is widely used for this purpose (Topp et al., 2015). The WHO-5 scale consists of statements covering five dimensions of wellbeing and requires the participants to rate how each statement reflects how they have felt over the last week on a scale ranging from: 0 = “at no time,” 1 = “some of the time,” 2 = “less than half the time,” 3 = “more than half the time,” 4 = “most of the time,” to 5 = “all the time.” A score from 1–25 was ascertained, with higher scores indicative of better wellbeing. Scores of below 13 are used as a cut-off score for screening for depression.

Societal and family support was measured using a standardised Perceived Social Support (PSS) tool, previously used following the SARS epidemic (Lau et al., 2006). The tool includes five items that ask about changes in: support from friends and family members, sharing of feelings with other family members or with others, and about caring for the feelings of family members over the last week. Responses for each item were on a scale of “much increased,” “increased,” “same as before,” “decreased” and “much decreased.” A composite scale was derived by summing the scores of these five items (range 5–25), and this was described as the PSS scale. Higher points indicate that subjects were experiencing improved social and family support (Lau et al., 2006).

Participants also indicated which, in a list of activities, they had engaged in to maintain mental and physical wellbeing over the last week. The option of “other” was provided to record activities not listed. Finally, participants were asked which in a list of information sources they most commonly accessed, and the perceived adequacy and perceived trustworthiness of the information sources, with responses indicated on 5-point Likert scales (“poor,” “not bad,” “satisfactory,” “good,” “very good”).

The survey was piloted with ten participants who were not staff of a tertiary education institution and their feedback was incorporated. This resulted in the inclusion of a question about the impact of an essential worker in the household (someone who continued to work outside of the home during the lockdown, e.g., supermarket and healthcare workers). The survey took approximately 30 minutes to complete. The study design consisted of repeated cross-sectional studies and repeated measures for an individual. The WHO-5 and PSS are internationally validated scales for use with broad participant groups. As there were no other validated scales at the time of the study design to explore the specific questions of our research, we employed pilot testing, face validity and content validity.

Participants and recruitment

Five institutions across Te Pūkenga network agreed to collaborate on the research and to distribute the survey to all their staff. This included staff in leadership roles, service roles, teaching and non-teaching roles across the

institutions. The purpose of the survey was advertised on institutional intranets and in institutional newsletters. It was administered by the research office of participating institutions and survey administrators were not involved in any way in further aspects of the research. The survey was emailed, via the online survey platform Qualtrics, to each staff member of each educational institution with a personalised and anonymous link. The survey was open for seven days and a reminder to complete the survey was sent five days following the initial email. Participant information was presented on the front pages of the survey, followed by a statement about consent. Consent was implied if participants progressed to answer questions in the survey. Names or any other personal identifying details were not included.

Ethics approval

Ethics approval was gained from each of the five respective ethics committees: Otago Polytechnic Ethics Committee (15 April 2020. No. 855), Eastern Institute of Technology (EIT) Research Ethics and Approvals Committee (Ref 20/11), Wintec Human Ethics in Research Group (26 May 2020, RefWTLR21240520), Whitireia and WelTec Ethics and Research Committee (Ref RP236-2020), Unitec Research Ethics Committee (UREC, 8 June 2020). Prior consultation on how the research might impact Māori was addressed as appropriate at each institution.

Data collection

As the Covid-19 situation was changing rapidly, the first survey was rolled out to Otago Polytechnic staff only, and then to the other four participating polytechnics, as local Māori consultation and institutional ethics approval was gained. Subsequently, EIT joined Otago Polytechnic to roll out Survey 2, and a further three institutions – Whitireia/WelTec, Wintec and Unitec – joined for Surveys 3–5. Repeat surveys were emailed to staff monthly, which corresponded with each alert level (from Alert Level 4 to Alert Level 1), with a final survey when Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland returned to Alert Level 3 and the remainder of the country to Alert Level 2. This provided data on changes over time as well as the impact of different levels of social restrictions due to Covid-19. Participants were invited to answer any or all surveys. A unique identifier was applied by the survey administrator to enable tracking of responses over time.

Analysis

This study uses both qualitative and quantitative data analysis approaches. Where applicable in the results, the first paragraph refers to quantitative analysis and the second complements this information with qualitative thematic analysis. The longitudinal data was modelled with all data over time from all contributing institutions pooled for analysis. Generalised Linear Mixed Models (GLMM) were used to model the longitudinal data. This statistical approach accommodates the correlation inherent in longitudinal data through the incorporation of a random effect. With regard to qualitative analysis, text responses underwent thematic analysis using a general inductive approach (Thomas, 2006). The text comments were summarised and then key themes as they related to the aims of the study were identified and supporting quotes documented.

RESULTS

Participants

There were 2250 responses collected from 1240 individuals over the five time points. Not all participants completed each survey (Table 1). Of participants who responded to the demographic questions, 385 (67.1%) were female and 592 (55.3%) were over 50 years of age (Table 2).

TABLE 1. NUMBER OF RESPONSES FOR EACH SURVEY AND NUMBER RESPONDING TO MULTIPLE SURVEYS.

Survey iteration	N (%)
Level 4 (Survey 1)	215 (9.6)
Level 3 (Survey 2)	341 (15.2)
Level 2 (Survey 3)	717 (31.9)
Level 1 (Survey 4)	465 (20.7)
Level 2/3 (Survey 5)	512 (22.8)
Total responses	2250
Responded to all 5	33
Responded to 4	65
Responded to 3	187
Responded to 2	309
Responded to 1	646
Total individuals	1240

TABLE 2. PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS.

Participant characteristic	N (%)
Gender	
Female	385 (31.1)
Gender diverse	2 (0.2)
Male	187 (15.1)
Missing	666 (53.7)
Age in years	
20-29	53 (4.3)
30-39	156 (12.6)
40-49	270 (21.8)
50-59	332 (26.8)
60-69	237 (19.1)
70+	23 (1.9)
Missing	169 (13.6)
Ethnicity**	
Asian	92 (7.4)
European	829 (66.9)
Māori	154 (12.4)
Pasifika	42 (3.4)

MELAA*	13 (1.0)
Other	43 (3.5)
Missing	174 (14.0)

* MELAA = Middle Eastern, Latin American and African, ** Multiple ethnicities could be selected.

Levels of adjustment to personal life, work life and social contacts

Overall, levels of adjustments required for both work and personal life and to maintain social contact (Figure 1) decreased over time (even as alert levels went back up and social restrictions increased). In Alert Level 4 most people considered they were making “considerable” or “quite a lot” of adjustments to their working life (Mean score at Level 4: 3.4). Level of adjustment required for personal life was lower and also decreased over time (Mean score at Level 4: 3.2). Most people considered they were making “quite a lot” of effort to maintain social contact in Alert Level 4 (Mean score at Level 4: 2.9) but this dropped off over time. Note that despite alert levels increasing again in September 2020 (indicated by the Alert Levels 2 and 3, Survey 5 results), the level of adjustment required continued to decrease for professional and personal life. Preliminary analyses of the raw scores for participants living in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland under Alert Level 3 restrictions indicate that their levels of adjustment were higher than for participants living outside of Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland.

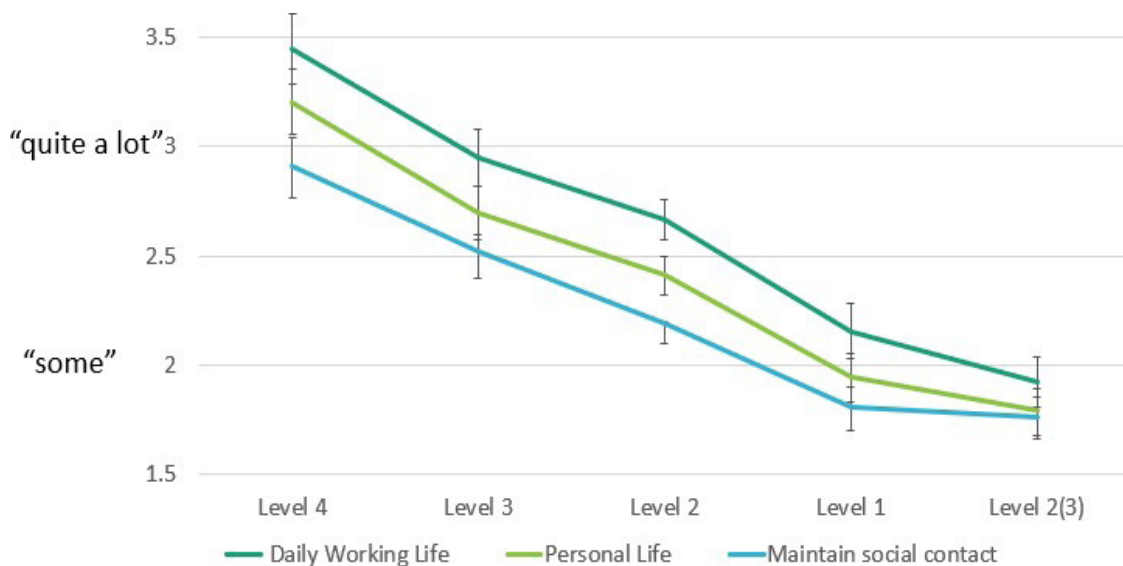


Figure 1: Levels of adjustment in daily working life, personal life and effort to maintain social contact as the alert levels changed over time (mean and 95% confidence intervals) (Likert scale 0-5).

Adjustments to working life – qualitative insights

Three key themes emerged when considering changes to daily working life in Alert Level 4 lockdown: working from home, challenges of transitioning to a digital world, and changes to ways of working. Logistics of new working arrangements were impacted and staff had to find a space to work at home. Some noted increased efficiency – without the daily commute or interruptions – but on the other hand participants missed chance/unscheduled meetings with co-workers. The following quotes from participants focus on working from home:

“Efficiency/productivity slight increase, less local travel for meetings.”

“Improved and more focused meetings.”

"Shifted to working out of my sleepout rather than my office on campus."

"Creating a usable work space at the kitchen table."

"No travel time – saving around an hour and a half each day :)"

When transitioning to a digital world, staff were challenged to be innovative, to learn new technologies and new ways of interacting with learners. For many, this led to an increased workload and stress when they were unable to physically meet with students in need.

The following quotes from participants highlight how they undertook the transition to the digital world:

"Learning new methods of interacting online."

"Becoming expert in three online platforms ... [having to] work out how to present a 3-hour workshop online/what has to be changed, adapted/done differently."

Participants reported that different ways of working were required. The number of hours worked in a day, or the time period over which they worked, changed. Some cited greater work flexibility was required to manage other commitments. Some introduced new working habits (such as being seated, rather than at a standing desk) or lacked access to resources found in their previous work location (e.g., printers/scanners). It was harder to separate work and home life, and having to work with others at home, particularly tamariki (children), was challenging. Participants worked with fewer resources compared to those available in the workplace and others had limited opportunity to work at all as they relied on the workplace resources.

The following quotes highlight the different ways of working:

"Trying to maintain a work/life balance, finding myself working into the evenings/weekends, etc. It's not as easy as leaving it at the office."

"I work more at night as difficult to work during the day with children at home."

"My partner is now in the house 24/7 as well, which is nice."

Adjustments to personal life – qualitative insights

Diminished face-to-face socialisation was a strong theme and this led to a feeling of isolation for some, while others found digital ways to maintain connections to community. In contrast, increased interaction within one's bubble was seen to hold opportunities and challenges, although the latter was more commonly mentioned. The following quotes highlight these responses:

"Not having the social interaction on a daily basis as I live by myself."

"Being isolated from whānau and friends."

"Increased contact (phone, email, text) with neighbours, we feel connected to our community."

"Childcare is closed, so I am providing full-time childcare (it's a labour of love)."

"Juggling children while at work."

"My flatmates and I have been cooking together and sharing dinners on a weekly basis. ... a lovely positive change brought on by the lockdown and something that we plan to continue on with afterwards."

Two types of specific activities were often cited as changing: exercise and cooking. Many respondents commented on the changed relationship with food and drink. Respondents discussed a number of exercise activities, including

swimming, cycling, weightlifting, social sports, yoga and walking. Some prioritised exercise and/or found new ways to exercise. Exercise that required travel away from urban areas or risked injury, such as mountain biking, or that had previously been social, such as team sports, were, by their very nature, prohibited under Alert Level 4. The following excerpts typify these responses:

"Used opportunity of working at home to look after my wellbeing by going for regular exercise."

"Less active – online meetings and prep has stolen the time I use to exercise."

"Exercise – no longer attend gym but attend classes via Zoom."

Maintaining social contact – qualitative insights

The majority of respondents cited increased communication with friends, family and work colleagues via digital platforms. The participants were more proactive in seeking interaction with others, as many prior sources of social activity were prevented. A number of respondents noted that social interaction was a source of support for themselves, while many also acknowledged the need to check in on others. For example:

"Arranging virtual meetups with friends and family."

"Set up a family Messenger group with daily posts."

"Enhanced use of phone to speak with whānau who are (over) 70."

"Driveway drinks with neighbours I have never meet before."

"Making sure I actively and consciously contact friends and peers."

"More deliberate about keeping in touch ... including with workmates."

"Consciously sharing items of humour with everyone."

"I try to make contact with people in solo bubbles most days."

Perceived social support over time

Perceived social support dropped off significantly after Alert Level 4, from 16.98 in Survey 1 to 15.92 in Survey 2 (difference: -1.06; 95%CI: -1.46, -0.66, $P < 0.001$). It plateaued at Survey 3 (Alert Level 2) and no further statistically different reductions were observed (Figure 2). This was the only one of the scale measures where we observed a difference only between Survey 1 and the other times; that is, change was rapid and not incremental over time.

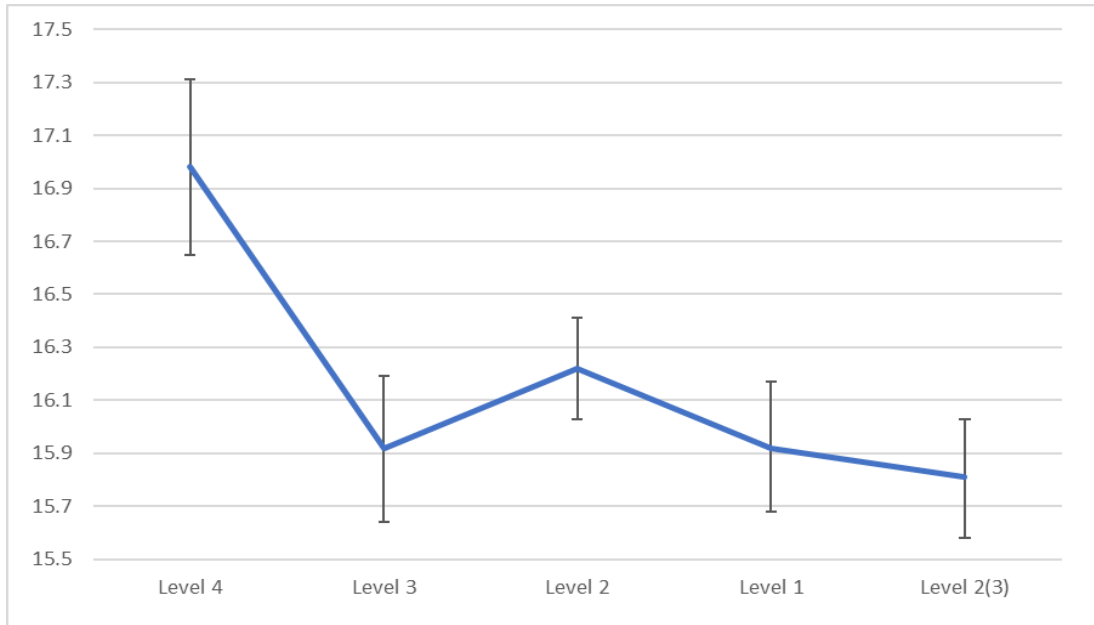


Figure 2. Perceived social support as the alert levels changed over time (mean and 95% confidence intervals).

Attention to wellbeing and level of innovation and creativity

Attention to personal wellbeing and levels of innovation and creativity reduced from “quite a lot” to “some attention” at Survey 5 (Figure 3). Participants explicitly noted increased awareness of the need to focus on wellbeing. For many this included activities/practices such as mindfulness, meditation, exercise, healthy eating and drinking, or simply maintaining normal routines. The excerpts cited illustrate the importance respondents placed on wellbeing.

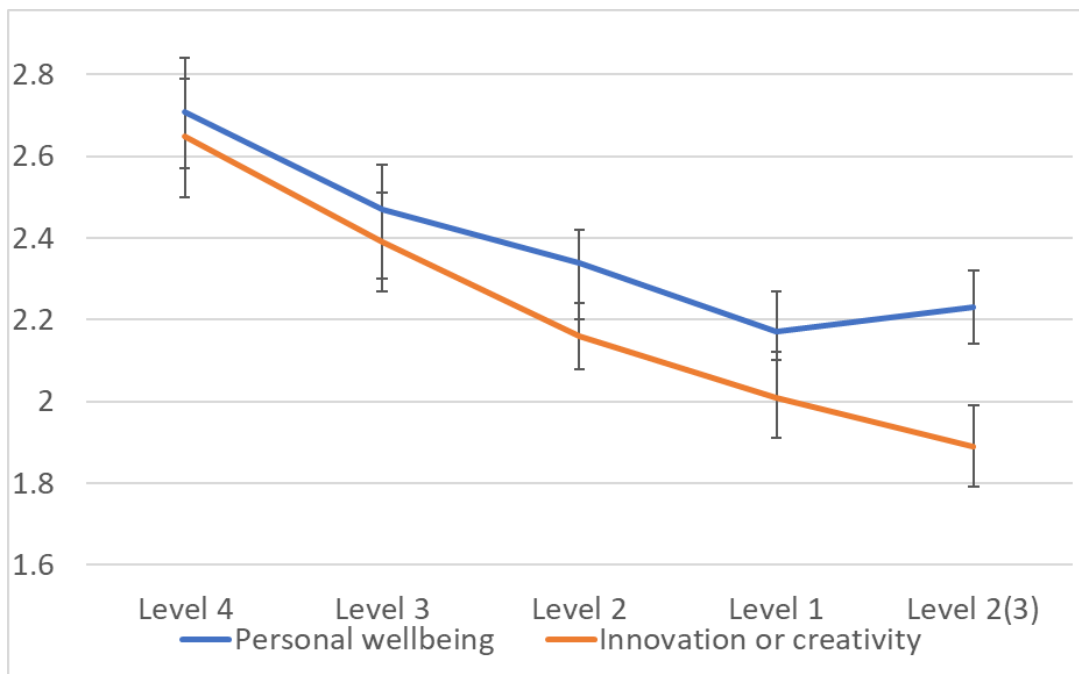


Figure 3. Attention to personal wellbeing and levels of innovation and creativity as the alert levels changed over time (mean and 95% confidence intervals) (Likert scale 0–5).

Quotes related to attention to wellbeing:

"More need to get outside as online can be difficult – have prioritised time each day for this."

"Taking more notice of little things."

"I'm placing all my attention on my personal wellbeing in order to make everything else work!"

"Reminders on phone and in calendar to take time to breathe, contact people, do something physical, do nothing at all and have that be okay."

"I have re-implemented a daily gratefulness practice. This has assisted in lessening the 'overwhelm/too much/lack of control' feelings that this lockdown situation has brought up."

"Not listening to the news. Apart from the first 15 minutes of the 1pm briefing. The volume of news, the awful position some people are in and the anxiety and concern this causes me (without being in a position to directly help) is overwhelming."

"Maintaining a sense of balance between the science and the hysteria of the situation."

The two clear sub-themes under innovation and creativity included developing effective teaching and learning, and maintaining social contact. New/increased use of technology was apparent, especially engaging with students in creative ways to enhance learning opportunities. The following quotes typify the respondents' creativity and innovation when teaching online and working from home.

"Developing ways to deliver a worthy online educational experience – includes learning to use new (to me) technology."

"Rethinking modes of delivery enables one to rethink teachability and learnability principles."

"Video calls for wine o'clock with friends."

"The creativity that has come from thinking of new ways to communicate and interact with my friends and family has been fun; some examples are online dinner parties, virtual drinks, online card games and movie nights."

"Changing normal routines to better suit children's needs."

Wellbeing over time

Mean WHO-5 scores were significantly reduced between Survey 1 and Survey 3 (GLM pairwise comparison of marginal linear predictions, contrast: -0.25 (95%CI: -0.43; -0.08, P<0.05) (Figure 4). With a score of below 13 indicating risk of depression, 31% of respondents at Survey 1 were at risk of depression compared to 38% at Survey 5. The odds of reduced wellbeing increased by 80% in September compared to April 2020 (OR: 1.81, 95%CI: 1.01 – 3.25). Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland-based staff (who had stricter restrictions placed on them during Survey 5) were more likely to experience reduced wellbeing at Survey 5 than those in the rest of the country (Alert Level 2) (49% vs rest of country 39%). Compellingly, the mean wellbeing score for Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland staff at Survey 5 (when Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland was back at Alert Level 3 partial lockdown, while the rest of the country was in the relatively free Alert Level 2), was 12.6, below the cut-off indicating potential risk of reduced wellbeing.

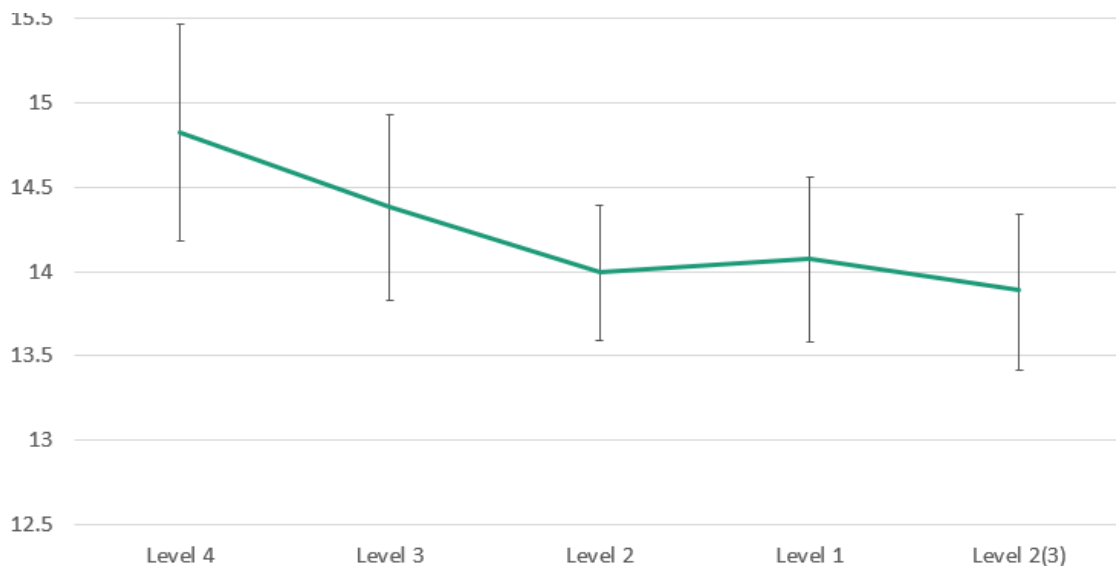


Figure 4. Levels of wellbeing (WHO-5) as the alert levels changed over time (mean).

Activities people engaged in for wellbeing

Participants reported engaging in various activities to maintain their mental and physical wellbeing (Table 3). Walking was overwhelmingly the most popular activity with between 47% and 67% reporting they used it as an activity to manage their wellbeing over time. Most activities gradually decreased, however the number of participants reporting that they participated in karakia, other spiritual practices, or gathering rongoā (traditional medicine) remained relatively stable.

Information sources – most commonly accessed, adequacy and trust

Television news was the most frequent source of information about Covid-19, with information from employers the second most frequent source, especially during lockdown (work at home) periods. Frequency of accessing information about Covid-19 decreased across all sources except for radio, which remained stable, with just over one quarter of participants most commonly accessing the radio for information about the pandemic at each survey time point (Table 3).

Government websites and employer information were ranked highest for adequacy of information (Table 3). While respondents accessed TV news and Facebook frequently (TV news was reported to be the most frequently accessed of all sources of information), the perceived adequacy of this information was low. Perceptions of adequacy of information dropped off over time, as did respondents' trust in sources of information.

Trust was highest for information provided by government, employers and colleagues, friends and whānau (see Table 3). Employer information was the only source of information about Covid-19 to be frequently accessed, highly trusted and considered highly adequate.

TABLE 3. ACTIVITIES FOR WELLBEING ENGAGED IN AND INFORMATION SOURCES ACCESSED AS THE ALERT LEVELS DECREASED OVER TIME.

Wellbeing Activity	Survey 1 N (%)	Survey 2 N (%)	Survey 3 N (%)	Survey 4 N (%)	Survey 5 N (%)
Walking	143 (67)	227 (67)	413 (58)	217 (47)	270 (53)
Yoga	41 (19)	51 (15)	86 (12)	45 (10)	65 (13)
Karakia	27 (13)	50 (15)	146 (20)	71 (15)	110 (21)

Other spiritual practices	21 (10)	31 (9)	92 (13)	52 (11)	59 (12)
Gathering Rongoā/Medicine	8 (4)	9 (3)	29 (4)	11 (2)	22 (4)
Visiting a special place	36 (17)	72 (21)	152 (21)	71 (15)	93 (18)
Other	89 (41)	121 (35)	220 (31)	131 (28)	154 (30)
Information sources					
TV news	137 (64)	200 (59)	406 (57)	220 (7)	275 (54)
Your employer	112 (52)	176 (52)	327 (46)	127 (27)	196 (38)
Newspaper (print or online)	100(47)	150 (44)	327 (46)	193 (42)	206 (40)
Government websites	90 (42)	132 (39)	264 (37)	114 (25)	166 (32)
Facebook	83 (39)	101 (30)	210 (29)	113 (24)	109 (21)
Colleagues/friends/whānau	62 (29)	80 (24)	190 (27)	85 (18)	90 (18)
Radio	57 (27)	80 (24)	199 (28)	115 (25)	157 (31)
Adequacy of information*					
Government websites	4.66	4.32	4.30	4.18	4.20
Your employer	4.40	4.29	4.09	4.10	4.06
Radio	4.29	4.14	4.04	3.98	3.90
TV news	4.23	3.97	3.91	3.63	3.58
Newspapers	3.95	3.79	3.75	3.55	3.58
Colleagues/friends/whānau	3.75	3.63	3.61	3.57	3.56
Facebook	3.43	3.19	3.22	2.95	2.86
Trust in information*					
Government websites	4.73	4.46	4.35	4.23	4.27
Your employer	4.53	4.42	4.24	4.14	4.14
Radio	4.23	4.15	4.04	4.00	3.83
TV news	4.14	3.88	3.76	3.56	3.56
Newspapers	3.77	3.65	3.56	3.35	3.46
Colleagues/friends/whānau	4.73	4.46	4.35	4.23	4.27
Facebook	2.84	2.65	2.60	2.37	2.37

* Average score on 5-point Likert scale (from 1 poor to 5 very good)

DISCUSSION

Tertiary education staff demonstrated ongoing commitment to learners in challenging circumstances and were able to transition quickly to deliver quality education in a rapidly changing environment (including meeting learners' pastoral needs). Overall, respondents made significant adjustments for both work and personal life and to maintain social contact in Alert Level 4. This decreased accordingly as social restrictions were reduced and went back up as they were subsequently increased.

The biggest change for staff was in their adjustment to their working life. In comparison to many other employed people across Aotearoa, most staff in tertiary education were able (and required) to transition their way of working to continue their employment in an online environment at home and then move to more mixed delivery as alert levels relaxed.

Working from home meant being creative and innovative to find suitable workspaces; meeting needs of others (children) at home; learning online packages; coping with fewer resources; working longer and more flexible hours; and attending more meetings to maintain social and team communication. The change to operating in a digital environment provided opportunities to maintain work and social contact, but also added stress because staff needed to upskill in a short timeframe. Many respondents reported working longer hours and found separating work and home life challenging, although others reported finding a 'silver lining,' as supported by Every-Palmer et al. (2020), appreciating the opportunity for more time with whānau and enjoying a quieter and calmer environment.

Participants initially focused "quite a lot" on personal wellbeing and this was mirrored by high levels of family and social support, as measured by the PSS scale, and high levels of wellbeing as measured by the WHO-5. This is consistent with the finding that wellbeing increased through March and April (Alert Level 4) in Aotearoa New Zealand (Morrison et al., 2021). Morrison et al. analysed Twitter tweets during this period and purport that this may have reflected the confidence people held that the government was taking appropriate action at the early stage of the pandemic. In the present study it may have reflected in part the confidence in institutional information, and the increased focus and attention on wellbeing activities.

Perceived social support was high in Alert Level 4, but dropped significantly over the alert levels, which is in contrast to survivors of the SARS epidemic who described ongoing positive impacts on social and family support, mental-health awareness and lifestyle changes (Lau et al., 2006). It may be that while Aotearoa New Zealand's lockdown had a significant impact on perceived social support, the relatively short duration of lockdown may not have led to an enduring impact on lifestyle and the requirement to reprioritise goals. Questions focusing on the respondents' view of the future were asked in the survey and the analysis of these (yet to be undertaken) may yield more understanding of the role of perceived social support.

As lockdown was gradually removed there was a decrease in attention to personal wellbeing and a decrease in reported wellbeing scores. The risk of depression increased from 31% of respondents to 38% and the odds of reduced wellbeing increased by 80% in September compared to April 2020. This rate of increase is similar to patterns reported by an online study of over 2000 New Zealanders during Alert Level 4 (Every-Palmer et al., 2020). As Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland returned to the higher restrictions of Alert Level 3 at Survey 5, staff were more likely to experience reduced wellbeing compared to the other respondents and the mean WHO-5 score reduced to below the threshold for increased risk of poor wellbeing. A similar pattern of decreasing wellbeing was reported from a survey of UK and US participants investigating the longitudinal effect of social distancing on negative mood (Zhang et al., 2021). While wellbeing (measured by negative moods) was initially high, it decreased as duration of social distancing wore on, as in our study. Zhang et al. suggest that the initial 'break' from work restraints and the increased time with family may have been responsible for the high wellbeing in the first few weeks of social distancing. They hypothesise that the increase in negative moods seen between 25 and 35 days and as time wore on, was due to long-term social distancing and perceived social isolation, which may lead to reduced wellbeing. The reduction in wellbeing seen in our study may also reflect this prolonged effect of social isolation and should be an area of future focus.

Activities that respondents engaged in to maintain their wellbeing clearly show that physical activities were more common than spiritual ones such as karakia, or visiting a special place. However, karakia, visiting a special place and gathering rongoā were maintained over time. As research shows a clear relationship between exercise and mental and physical wellbeing, support in encouraging staff to continue these activities will be important to help maintain wellbeing. This is particularly true in the face of continued stress due to the evolving pandemic situation in Aotearoa New Zealand as we exit the period of elimination strategy and Covid-19 becomes more widespread in our communities.

In addition, as Covid-19 becomes more widespread in some communities for the first time in Aotearoa New Zealand, trusting in and accessing adequate information about the disease takes on new importance. The role of the employer as an informer is essential. The results of this research highlight that employers are a source of information about Covid-19 and they were the only frequently accessed, highly trusted, and highly adequate source of information as perceived by the respondents.

A unique feature and strength of this study was the longitudinal design that enabled collection of data across all alert levels from the time of the initial lockdown in Alert Level 4. Collaboration across five tertiary education institutions provided a large sample from diverse areas across Aotearoa; however, results should be interpreted with some caution as data was only collected from one institution in Alert Level 4 and two in Alert Level 3. Statistical analysis adjusted for this, but required an assumption that the respondents from these two institutions would have responded in a similar way to those who participated later. A second limitation is that there are significant levels of missing information as not all respondents answered all questions and in addition the questions on gender were only available for the final two surveys. The results are not generalisable to the wider public as respondents were all employed in the tertiary education sector, the majority were female and respondents were older on average than the general population.

This data was collected in 2020, but as we continue to respond to new phases of the pandemic the research has relevant messages for institutions to consider the need to:

- find ways to maintain a focus on wellbeing for employees and activities to promote this over the long term to enable staff to thrive.
- support staff by acknowledging the multiple, conflicting roles of working from home, including finding ways to encourage a separation of work and home life.
- improve resources for working from home, upskilling in technology, and allowing flexibility of working.
- encourage and support creativity and innovation, particularly with a focus on wellbeing for the long term.
- continue providing frequent, reliable information on the changing pandemic as institutional information has an important role as a trusted source of information.

CONCLUSION

This study has documented some of the long-term impacts of social restrictions due to Covid-19 on tertiary education staff, and highlighted ways to support them as the pandemic evolves and as continued changes in working arrangements occur. As the results highlight, staff efforts to maintain wellbeing diminished over time. Therefore, there is a role for tertiary education institutions to plan robust future interventions to support staff in times of crisis. Learnings from this study have the potential to improve the work environment for staff, capture innovations and support their continuance, and improve staff wellbeing, which ultimately is connected to the learner experience.

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WORKING FROM HOME AND RESILIENCE AMONG WORKING PARENTS DURING COVID-19

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Resilience in the workplace and community



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ABSTRACT

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, working from home (WFH) was introduced wherever it was possible around the world. For working parents (employees with at least one dependent child), it was not simply WFH, but it also included challenges related to a new way of learning from home for their children. The pandemic changed the way people worked in organisations; we've all had to adjust our daily routines to cope with it and we are still learning how to do so. The aim of this study was to investigate the experiences of working parents and examine the factors that contributed to their resilience while working from home during New Zealand's first lockdown in March–April 2020. Ten in-depth, semi-structured interviews were undertaken with working parents (having at least one school-aged child) drawn from sectors such as banking, education and professional services in the Wellington region. Data was analysed using a thematic analysis approach. Study results highlight that WFH was effective in enabling business continuity facilitated by virtual tools. However, participants reported high levels of stress as a result of uncertainty due to the pandemic and balancing work–family life, which had a negative impact on their performance and productivity. The key implication for organisations is to be mindful of the unique needs and challenges that working parents face when working from home. They need to nurture a culture of empathy while providing the right work set-up, including the use of virtual tools to connect and collaborate for WFH effectiveness. The study provides insight into the experiences of working parents and possible factors that contribute to resilience during a pandemic.

KEYWORDS

Working parents, working from home, resilience, Covid-19, pandemic

INTRODUCTION

The ongoing Covid-19 outbreak and subsequent lockdowns have rapidly altered how people work. In fact, the world of work as we knew it prior to the emergence of Covid-19 has turned upside down – we are changing where we sit to complete our tasks, how we conduct meetings, and set up routines to get things done. Working from home (WFH) was adopted on a large scale for the first time as an emergency response to the pandemic both in New Zealand and around the world. The first Covid-19 case was reported in New Zealand on 28 February, 2020. To stop the spread of Covid-19, the New Zealand Government implemented a four-tiered Alert Level system in March 2020. The country first moved to Alert Level 4 on March 25, 2020 (New Zealand Government, 2021) (see Appendix 1, Table 1 for a timeline on the first nationwide lockdown in New Zealand). At this level, people were asked to stay at home within their bubble (a family or house-sharing group), workplaces were closed and employees were encouraged to work from home, where possible.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Working from home pre- and post-pandemic

WFH began in the United States in early the 1970s (Katz, 1987) and has been known by other names such as 'telework,' 'telecommuting,' 'remote working,' 'e-work' and 'virtual work' (Sullivan, 2003). It became more popular

as a result of developments in information technology, and firms who believe that it increases the healthy work–life balance by allowing employees to work flexible hours (Hilbrecht et al., 2013; Sia et al., 2004). During the Covid-19 lockdown period, WFH became the norm with employees carrying out their work duties from their homes with the use of technology (Choudhary & Jain, 2021). Stats NZ (2020) reported that more than 40% of employed people in New Zealand completed at least some of their work from home during Covid-19 Alert Levels 4 and 3 in April and May 2020 (see Appendix 1, Table 1: Timeline of alert levels during Covid-19 in New Zealand). This pandemic has reignited interest in WFH since millions of people have been compelled to isolate and stay in their bubbles in order to stop the virus from spreading. However, in addition to government-imposed lockdowns and other control techniques, the compulsory adoption of remote working was a major challenge for the workforce (Tokarchuk et al., 2021).

Research on the benefits of telework prior to the pandemic focused on finding outcomes that are important to both organisations and individuals, such as job satisfaction, performance, turnover intention, role stress, or perceived career prospects (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Greer & Payne, 2014). Gajendran and Harrison (2007) report that telework is positively associated with satisfaction – increased telecommuting leads to better work–life balance and positively affects job satisfaction. Martin and MacDonnell (2012) found a positive relationship between telework and work performance and productivity, and report that if telework is an option then commitment to an organisation is positive among younger participants in their study. Harris (2003) conducted a qualitative study on a team’s and their line manager’s WFH experiences over the course of one year. They concluded that people’s perceptions of full-scale home-based working needs more investigation. Some researchers claim that removing the workplace from the main office to work remotely has detrimental consequences for employees. Employees may miss out on assistance from their co-workers due to a lack of face-to-face communication. Yusof and Rahmat (2020) contend that workplace communications help employees and employers form bonds. Their findings reveal that both verbal and non-verbal workplace communications had a significant part in ensuring seamless operations.

Kniffin et al. (2020) maintain that findings related to WFH prior to Covid-19 are difficult to generalise when discussing the forced nature of remote employment. The International Labour Organization (2020) reports some drawbacks of telework, such as extended working hours and increased work during nights and weekends, especially for employees who have children or dependents at home. Rimias (2021) concludes that individual (i.e., home/family and job-related) factors are important for the successful adjustment to telework during Covid-19, and a good telework environment is a significant component that leads to positive work outcomes.

Working parents and working from home

The World Health Organization (WHO) designated the new coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak a pandemic on 11 March 2020, and many workers were forced to work from home, at least temporarily (Timberg et al., 2020). The closure of schools and childcare facilities forced many working parents to assume full-time responsibility for their children’s care and their home learning, while also adjusting to a new ‘smart working’ lifestyle and daily structure. This increased the likelihood of parents experiencing personal distress, potentially jeopardising their own wellbeing and, as a result, the wellbeing of their children (Spinelli et al., 2020; Marchetti et al., 2020; Politzer, 2021; Ettman et al., 2020; Dang et al., 2020).

Many parents either chose to leave their jobs or were advised to take a break because it became difficult to juggle work and caring for their children during Covid-19 (Karpman et al., 2020; GlobeNewswire, 2021). Some working parents were concerned about their family’s physical, mental and financial wellbeing; challenges related to their children’s home schooling, resulting in social isolation from peers and teachers; and their ability to provide reassuring and age-appropriate information about Covid-19 to their children. Despite the challenges, the current situation of pandemic-induced WFH may have some advantages for working parents, such as the ability to spend more time with their family and children or reduced travel time (Spinelli et al., 2020).

Working parents, pandemic and resilience

Bonanno and Mancini (2008) found that some people adapted to potentially stressful events by having mild or moderate reactions that do not interfere with their functional abilities. Some early research (Rutter, 1987; Werner & Smith, 1992) defines resilience as the ability to thrive in the face of adversity. Recent studies (Crowe et al., 2016; Shrivastava & Desousa, 2016) define resilience as an individual's ability to cope with stress, adapt to change, respond to adversity and seek help when needed. Scoloveno (2017) defines resilience as a dynamic process that is reliant on the interaction of internal and environmental risk and protective variables. According to Chen and Bonanno (2020), resilience is the ability of humans to sustain their psychological, social and physical wellbeing through the quality of their interactions with the environment.

North (2016) found that most people can be resilient and eventually recover to their prior level of functioning despite surviving trauma and poor psychological reactions. Horesh and Brown (2020) found differing effects of display of resilience in the context of Covid-19-in their study; many parents exhibited resilience in the face of obstacles connected with Covid-19, but for others, the prolonged lockdown and potential lack of support increased existing vulnerabilities and led to the onset of new stress-related diseases. Gruber et al. (2020) in fact found challenges to promoting resilience in the context of pandemic, as infection-prevention strategies hamper traditional mechanisms that promote psychological resilience.

Existing knowledge on WFH, telework or remote working has mostly been generated in the context of a voluntary (Harris, 2003; Greer & Payne, 2014; Gajendra & Harrison, 2007) or occasional (Martin & MacDonnell 2012; Golden & Veiga, 2008) work arrangement. The Covid-19 pandemic has posed new challenges to previously held notions of WFH, which is now seen to occur for extended periods of national lockdowns amidst heightened feelings of anxiety and stress. Additionally, there were unique sets of challenges for working parents that involved combining work and childcare with lack of available support systems. Nevertheless, there is now an opportunity to chart a new path for the world of work to address the changing demands of a flexible workforce and employees' expectations when working from home. Covid-19 and the flexible working arrangements put in place have sparked business conversations about the new ways of working and accommodating the requirements of people working from home, while also moving towards a more sustainable future (Choudhary & Jain, 2021). Organisations must embrace the diversity of experiences and ways of working to positively transform work practices in a post-Covid-19 world. WFH provided incredible flexibility to allow workers who struggled to participate in nine-to-five jobs, and broke down the barriers to include carers, parents, people with disability or who are geographically dispersed in the workforce (Couch et al., 2021). It is also seen that working parents face unique challenges working from home for extended periods, such as that posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, and the ability of organisations to examine and build resilience for this group of employees needs to be a prime consideration.

RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This study focused on working parents, who had been working from home for at least half of the work week during the Covid-19 crisis. Working parents with school-aged children had to ensure that their children were in a safe learning setting while they were working from home. Working parents dealt with three key challenges during the pandemic: supporting their family financially; providing a healthy and safe environment; and supporting their children with home learning (Adams & Todd, 2020). The overall objective of the study was to investigate working parents' experiences and perceptions of WFH during the first lockdown in New Zealand in March–April 2020. The study aimed to explore the impact that WFH during lockdown had on the participants' relationships with employers or colleagues, work–life balance, job performance, and health and wellbeing. A further objective was to investigate perspectives for the future of WFH.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a qualitative methodology, as we wanted to explore the experience, meaning and perspective of individuals from their own viewpoint (Hammerberg et al., 2016). Ten participants were selected using criterion/purposive sampling and a snowballing technique. Criterion sampling fostered the collection of comprehensive and detailed data from a relatively small sample size (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2010). Inclusion criteria were that participants had to be working parents from the knowledge industry who had worked from home during lockdown 2020, for more than half a week, and had one or more children. Six open-ended questions were designed to capture participants' thoughts about their experience of WFH during different alert levels in New Zealand. These questions related to feelings of connectedness with supervisors and co-workers, work-life balance, work performance, health and stress while working from home, and change of views toward WFH over the course of lockdown. The interviews were audio recorded, transcribed and a member-check was conducted with participants. Data were analysed using NVivo software supplemented with manual analysis, resulting in the emergence of key themes.

Researchers referred to Braun & Clarke's (2006) six-phase guide – a useful framework for conducting thematic analysis. The first stage involved getting familiar with the data through reading the transcripts and making notes. The transcripts were uploaded into NVivo software to initiate the process of coding – a process to capture something interesting about the data based on our research question, and resulting in a long list of codes across the data set. The codes were checked with coded data for correctness. The codes were then examined for patterns and organised into broader themes, again linking with the research question. In the next stage the existing themes were reviewed, refined and defined using clear names. The last stage was to write the thematic analyses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 (see Appendix 2) provides demographic details of participants. Three key themes emerged in the analysis, including: 1) Connections and collaborations fostered through virtual tools; 2) Challenges of work-life balance amidst valuing WFH; 3) Appreciating and opting for flexibility of WFH. These are discussed under the following subheadings

Connections and collaborations fostered through virtual tools

This theme noted the perspectives shared by the majority of participants, who stated that virtual tools enabled them to connect and collaborate with work colleagues, though there was a learning curve involved for most respondents.

Participants reported that the frequency of virtual team meetings and the level of connections increased during the Covid-induced lockdown in comparison to pre-Covid-19. In fact, technology not only enabled connecting about work matters but also connecting at a personal level. As it was a new way of working for most of the people, organisations realised that virtual catch-ups can be used to have informal chats to reduce pandemic-caused anxiety. Most of the participants agreed that these virtual catch-ups helped them to know each other better and keep the team connected, as illustrated in the two quotes below:

[B]ecause our team is spread out anyway – we realised the significance of meeting together regularly so we set up a weekly Teams video call so all of us – 20–25 of us or how many could – would join that weekly call and we basically gave an update on how the work was going, how it was changing, either increasing or decreasing for people, how they were finding things at home, how things were on the family front for them. We connected more during Covid than we had prior It had a nice side effect of actually bringing people together quite significantly, just understanding each other's situations a little bit more. People would talk about "My husband's business has completely dried up" and they felt the challenges of that. We learnt a lot about each other. (Participant 10)

I think our team managed to feel really connected right throughout because we were talking to each other every day through Microsoft Teams. If I had a team member working on something and they had a question, they would just give me

a video call on Microsoft Teams, so we were regularly talking to each other about matters, and from an office managing-partner perspective we were also having a call each day with all the other office managing partners. Our CEO, HR team and our IT team were on that call every day talking about issues, how things were going. I think we were as connected as we could be. (Participant 6)

Others expressed the steep learning curve associated with using technology on this scale. The sudden shift to WFH in response to Covid-19 required lot of adjustment and familiarity with the use of technology, which not everyone was prepared for, as illustrated in the two quotes below:

People were still learning how to use the technology and there were so many people using [it]. It's quite hard when you've got 40 people on a call to try and have a productive meeting. It was a steep learning curve for us. (Participant 6)

We had a catch-up meeting every morning for 15 minutes, but after that I was left alone. I was shy to connect to them by Teams – suddenly we had to work with Teams, which I had never worked with before – and I know it took me a while. (Participant 5)

It was evident from the interviews that formal or informal virtual catch-ups usually included a mix of video/ audio calls and text messaging. Some of these tactics were previously used in conjunction with face-to-face team communication. However, the Covid-19-induced lockdown made these the primary means of connecting with peers. The number of online meetings and catch-ups depended on the type of team, the size of the team, and the nature of the job. Wasson (2004) speculated that it is possible that employees may find it harder to stay engaged in long virtual meetings compared to in-person meetings. Some participants highlighted personality, individual factors and adequate working environment as the elements that determine whether WFH is easy or not.

Challenges of work–life balance amidst valuing working from home

This theme highlights that work–life imbalance was reported by most respondents, and working with children during lockdown WFH adversely affected work performance and productivity. The imbalance also led to stress and had a negative impact on health. Many participants, however, valued the benefits of less travel time, more time with family and flexibility in scheduling work hours.

Participants reported that it was difficult to balance childcare and additional schooling responsibilities with full- and part-time work. This was because there were no clear boundaries, and they experienced constant interruptions from children while working, as expressed in the four quotes that follow:

The trickiest thing was trying to manage all the schooling and work. (Participant 9)

I have my professional role with my work and responsibilities, and I have two kids and there are responsibilities from there as well. It wasn't like splitting my day, so I'll do my professional work for four hours then father mode for four hours. It wasn't like that, there are no boundaries. (Participant 8)

Like I said, I really struggled. I don't work full time, I work a 32-hour week and my husband is ... a full-time worker and at that time we had two young kids, my son was four and my daughter had just turned one from memory. So that was really tough because we had these children that require attention. (Participant 2)

Being in the same house as them they wanted to come in and check with me, or they just wanted to be around me, so I had sort of locked myself in a room – we've got a spare room, luckily – and was working from there. But there were constant interruptions throughout the whole time. I couldn't go an hour without being interrupted. (Participant 3)

Participants experienced adverse effects on performance and productivity while working from home during lockdown period. Respondents highlighted that in addition to balancing job responsibilities in a new virtual world they had to cope with various chores such as providing child care and educational services to children at home, which affected their productivity negatively, as evident from the below quote:

I always felt that, while I did the number of hours, my productivity was probably affected. (Participant 3)

For me, I was that much more inefficient because my mind was very rarely fully on the work, I was always keeping an eye on what the children were doing. (Participant 7)

Some research has reported increased productivity due to the flexibility that comes with WFH, convenience of anytime anywhere work, and no distraction during WFH; hence working from home increased an employee's performance (Abdullah et al., 2020). In their meta-analysis of empirical research, Martin and MacDonnell (2012) found a positive relationship between telework and work performance and productivity. However, in the present study it was reported that the blurring of boundaries between work and home led to a decrease in productivity as employees were working long hours, while simultaneously managing children.

Participants also reported stress and health issues arising from pandemic-caused stress, balancing work and children, working long hours, and adjusting to pandemic-imposed WFH. For example:

It was completely out the door. I was not in a good place physically, mentally or emotionally. I think I probably really struggled with anxiety and perhaps even a little bit of depression. All I can remember from that whole time was that it is something I don't want to do again, and if I had to do it again, I would do it differently, but coming out of it, my boss saw that I was affected. My stress levels were not good, my anxiety levels were not good Everything dropped and you just don't care, I guess. I really struggled and I felt that I struggled a lot more than my husband did. I think it had to do with the whole trying to balance the kids and work. (Participant 3)

During lockdown I was mentally quite stressed because of the insecurity of the changes of my job and the family surroundings, having a kid at home, and feeling sorry for him. Physically, we did do some bike rides and stuff like that so that was better. Emotionally I was stressed and that was relieved by getting different equipment, having the kid at school, and also the whole situation in the European summer got relaxed. I was relieved to know my family [was] fine. That eased a lot of the mental stress as well. (Participant 5)

Parental stress is a negative psychological reaction to parental responsibilities: caring for children while simultaneously worrying about not having enough resources to meet their requirements was a heavy burden for parents (Crnic & Low, 2002; Holly et al., 2019). Spinelli et al. (2020) report that working parents were forced to take on full-time responsibility for their children's care and home education as schools and childcare centres closed due to the pandemic, while simultaneously adapting to a new 'smart working' lifestyle and daily structure. This situation increased the risk of personal discomfort among parents, potentially jeopardising their own wellbeing and, as a result, the wellbeing of their children. Although many parents will show resilience in the face of the challenges associated with Covid-19, for many others, the prolonged lockdown and lack of support will likely exacerbate existing vulnerabilities and contribute to the onset of new stress-related disorders (Horesh & Brown, 2020).

Participants appreciated the ease of WFH, and upsides such as reclaiming unproductive commute time, pursuing valued activities such as walks or yoga, being able to spend more quality time with family than otherwise possible. Also, the support received from employers was valued. These thoughts are illustrated in the two quotes below:

I spent a lot of time with the family, which was good. The kids were home and work was very good in terms of "If you've got young kids at home you don't need to work a full day, just take it as you can." (Participant 4)

We obviously didn't have any travel time. You could just get up and have your breakfast, and then you're able to start working. You just walk down the hallway, sit at your desk, and start working. From that perspective it was nice. I got to spend more quality time with the family. It was important to go and have a walk and get outside so we'd go for a walk as a family which we wouldn't ordinarily do. (Participant 6)

Studies by Troup and Rose (2014), Craig (2006), and Bianchi and Milkie (2010) found that WFH enabled working parents spend more than 40 hours per week with their children. The ability to work from home allowed participants

to schedule their work hours/days more freely or reduce their work hours to balance the demands of home and work life, as illustrated in the two quotes below:

Normally I work four full days and have one day off, so what I had talked to my manager about was that I work six days, but five hours every day, and I split it into two-hour lots just to get the hours done, and once I had come to that agreement things were a lot more manageable, because I could look after the kids and my husband could do his work, and it was only a few hours. (Participant 2)

I was parenting, so I had 25 hours that I was working and I spread those hours over five days, which was generally about five hours a day, and I tried doing a couple of hours in the morning from 7–9am and then supporting my kids a little bit on and off, and then a couple of hours in the afternoon. (Participant 3)

Hill et al. (2010) found that WFH and perceived schedule flexibility are generally related to less work–life conflict. The benefit of WFH is increased when combined with schedule flexibility and is beneficial both to individuals (in the form of reduced work–life conflict) and to business (in the form of capacity for longer work hours).

Appreciating and opting for flexibility of working from home

This theme highlights the positive outlook for WFH, with more acceptability of WFH gained now and a way for business continuity in crisis situations; also hybrid working is now a preferred approach to work arrangements.

Participants reported that stigma associated with WFH has diminished after the pandemic, and it is acceptable to work from home if one is unwell. The reasons for this change could be the investments made by organisations to make WFH feasible for its employees, fear of mingling with a sick person, or the acceptance of this global experiment. Previously, people would come into office (even when sick) as presence in the office was considered important. These thoughts are illustrated in the below quote:

I think it's more acceptable to work from home, definitely if you're not well. If I'm sick I don't go into the office, even if I've got a little tickle in my throat. That's acknowledged and accepted, and it's not something that is frowned upon. I think it's taken a lot to get to that space. Prior to Covid, people would come in. Even if you're not well you would still come in. But now it has been drilled into us if you're sick don't come in, and they are accepting of that. (Participant 2)

Participants acknowledged that pandemic-induced WFH proved the capability of organisations to conduct work from home effectively, despite more flexibility and freedom translating into less organisational control. It was the first time WFH was tested on a large scale and participants felt more prepared for WFH in crisis situations in future. The below quote illustrates these ideas.

I think I had concerns about people's ability to work remotely with more flexibility and freedom, but I was pleasantly surprised that we can still operate in a crisis situation, or under ordinary circumstances as well, from home. Not that I didn't know that, but it was something that wasn't tested on a large scale. If Wellington was hit by an earthquake or something like that, and we're not able to operate from the city here, then people should be able to work from their home and be able to make the system move. (Participant 1)

Hybrid working was mainly identified as a future employment choice that allows a perfect mix of WFH and working in an office. WFH provides flexibility to manage work and family, and means that it's easier to combine work with other appointments or choice of scheduling one's day. Working from an office, on the other hand, helps to build social bonds, as illustrated in the quotes below:

It has absolutely changed my view of working from home, seeing its benefits, seeing its downside – like connectedness – and I feel that a hybrid situation is working best where you've got times in the office and times working at home. (Participant 5)

I feel like this is about the right level for me, having one or two days a week at home. I do like getting out of the house and seeing people in person, so I think this is about right. (Participant 9)

Employees also expressed that they liked to have the option of WFH, and also employers are encouraging this option for work teams. For instance:

I always liked the idea of being able to do it, even though I didn't do it It's nice to have it there as a backup if I need it but I'm certainly not one of the people in the office who has a set day at home a week. (Participant 7)

I am encouraging my team to actually think about working from home, and as a group we have said that our team will work from the office on Mondays and Fridays, and between Tuesday and Thursday they can take two days off, working from home, so we're providing that option for the team as well. We're all about digital public service and we need to test that as well. (Participant 1)

Businesses could operate as a hybrid model to have the best of both worlds (Bloom, 2021; Cook et al., 2020). Bloom et al. (2015) carried out a qualitative study on 249 call-centre employees and discovered that WFH offers more benefits than drawbacks, is valid, and is most effective if employees are given the option to select whether or not they prefer WFH.

A representation on nurturing resilience during a crisis situation through the interplay of six key factors

Based on participants' responses, Figure 1 presents six key factors that contributed to working parents' resilience in juggling work and family during the crisis.

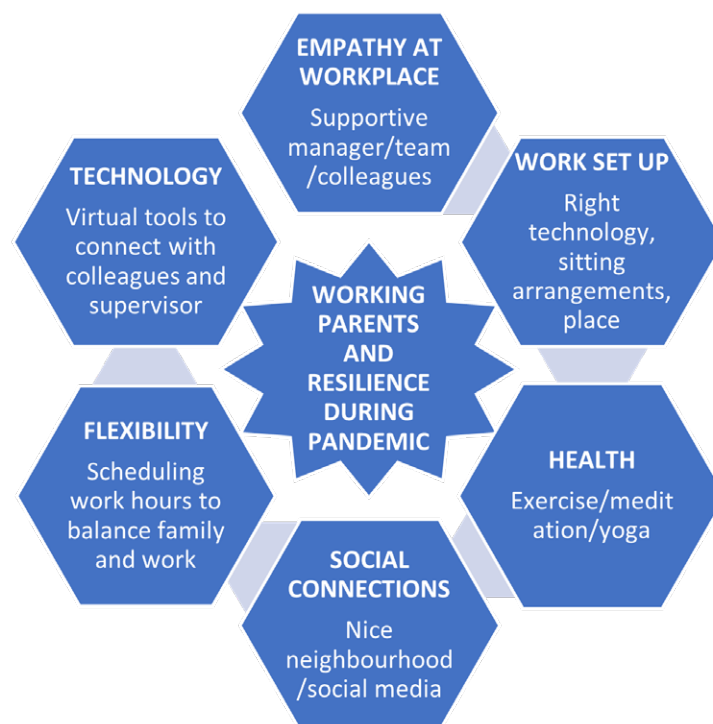


Figure 1. Working parents and resilience during the pandemic.

Empathy in the workplace: Empathetic approach by a manager was of paramount importance for WFH effectiveness during the pandemic-induced lockdown. Participants described how managers who helped with rescheduling work hours/days, reached out to assist to relieve employee stress, or altered productivity expectations, played a key role in creating a belief about the availability of support.

Work set-up: WFH is different from working in an office, so the right work set-up and physical space had an important role and were considered key to productive and effective WFH. This not only included the physical work set-up, but also psychological factors like having the right mindset and practices.

Health: WFH enabled more time to pursue activities such as exercise, meditation and yoga, which are known to have beneficial effects on health. Time saved from a lack of work commute was used for pursuing activities which aid health and wellbeing. The lockdown-induced a slowing down of life, which enabled more quality time with immediate family, having better nutrition, and pursuing shared valued activities that had positive effects on health.

Social connections: The background of pandemic-induced anxiety and uncertainty was stressful, but social connections helped to relieve some of this stress. The role of a supportive neighbourhood and engaging with community through in-person means and social media fostered social connections and overall wellbeing.

Flexibility: The flexibility in terms of rescheduling one's hours of work/work days, scaling down hours or rearranging work hours to fit with family demands was appreciated by the participants. It fostered the participants' inner strength and motivation to cope with the pandemic-induced anxiety and stress.

Technology: Regular virtual catch-ups with colleagues, supervisors and the wider office network, geared towards professional work and personal wellbeing, played a key role in connecting and collaborating during lockdown-induced WFH. Participants were able to adapt to the unique environment due to the availability of appropriate tools and the usage of technology.

CONCLUSION

The Covid-19 pandemic imposed WFH for businesses around the world. This study explores the experiences and perceptions of a sample of working parents while working from home, and possible factors that contribute to resilience during a pandemic. A sense of belonging and team participation increased during the pandemic, and virtual catch-ups helped in keeping people connected, which reduced stress to some extent. However, the participants faced considerable challenges related to long work hours and blurring of work-life boundaries amidst the additional burden of childcare and schooling, against the backdrop of pandemic-related stress and anxiety. This impacted on their performance and productivity, especially in the initial period of lockdown. Participants also mentioned pandemic-related stress – managing work and children, working long hours, and adjusting to pandemic-imposed WFH as sources of stress and health difficulties.

Study results show that the participants – and, by implication, many working parents – appreciated the flexibility of WFH as a way to manage work and family demands, and they increasingly desire it as a future work option. Organisations can learn from the pandemic, and need to implement interventions that encourage resilience, particularly for employees who have dependents at home, and veer towards a hybrid model, combining face-to-face and virtual practice. There needs to be a shift in the research, focusing on understanding how to maximise the benefits of remote working, as the question of whether or not to implement telework is a topic of the past. The key implication for organisations is to be mindful of the unique needs and challenges that working parents face when working from home, and to nurture a culture of empathy while providing the right work set-up, including the use of virtual tools to connect and collaborate for WFH effectiveness. WFH brings flexibility in managing work and family; however, more research is needed to determine how to overcome challenges such as decreased productivity and high stress levels working parents experience when working from home.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

A timeline of alert level changes, dates of key events and the duration of the State of National Emergency. (A State of National Emergency was declared due to Covid-19. It was in force between 12:21pm on 25 March 2020 and 12:21pm on Wednesday 13 May 2020.)

TABLE 1. TIMELINE OF ALERT LEVELS DURING COVID-19 IN NEW ZEALAND. SOURCE: UNITE AGAINST COVID-19, 2020.

History of the Covid-19 Alert System in NZ (First nationwide lockdown)
28 February 2020
First Covid-19 case reported in New Zealand.
14 March 2020
The Government announces anyone entering New Zealand must self-isolate for 14 days, except those arriving from the Pacific.
19 March 2020
All indoor gatherings of more than 100 people are to be cancelled. Borders close to all but New Zealand citizens and permanent residents.
21 March 2020
The Government introduces the 4-tiered alert level system to help combat COVID-19. The Prime Minister announces that New Zealand is at Alert Level 2.
23 March 2020
At 1:30pm the Prime Minister announces New Zealand has moved to Alert Level 3, effective immediately. In 48 hours, New Zealand will move to Alert Level 4.
25 March 2020
At 11:59pm, New Zealand moves to Alert Level 4, and the entire nation goes into self-isolation. A State of National Emergency is declared at 12:21pm.
29 March 2020
New Zealand reports its first Covid-19-related death.
31 March 2020
The State of National Emergency is extended at 9:27am.
20 April 2020
The Prime Minister announces New Zealand will remain at Alert Level 4 for an additional 5 days. New Zealand will remain at Alert Level 3 for 2 weeks, before the status is reviewed.
27 April 2020
New Zealand moves to Alert Level 3 at 11:59pm.
4 May 2020
No new cases of Covid-19 are reported in New Zealand.
11 May 2020
The Prime Minister outlines the plan to move to Alert Level 2.
13 May 2020

New Zealand moves to Alert Level 2 at 11:59pm. The State of National Emergency expires at 12:21pm.
8 June 2020
The Ministry of Health reports that there are no more active cases of Covid-19 in New Zealand. At 11:59pm, New Zealand moves to Alert Level 1.

Appendix 2

TABLE 2: PARTICIPANTS' DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS.

Participant ID	Gender	Age range	Role/ Position	Yrs. of experience (current org)	Total work experience	Lockdown bubble
P1	M	36-45	Manager	1yr	23yrs	Wife and two children (intermediate and high school)
P2	F	25-35	Finance business partner	10 yrs	11 yrs	Husband and two children (pre-school and primary)
P3	F	36-45	Instructional designer	2.5 years	20 years	Husband, two children (primary school)
P4	F	46-55	Design head	9 years	25 years	Husband and two children (primary and high school)
P5	F	46-55	HR co-ordinator	2.5 yrs	17 yrs	Husband, one child (primary school)
P6	M	36-45	Business partner	10 yrs	17 yrs	Wife and three children (pre-school, primary and intermediate)
P7	F	36-45	Sr. associate	2.5 yrs	10 yrs	Husband and two children (pre-school)
P8	M	36-45	Associate professor	5 yrs	16 yrs	Wife and two children (pre-school and intermediate)
P9	F	46-55	Practice manager	4 yrs	25 yrs	Husband, two children (primary school)
P10	F	36-45	Practice manager	2.5 yrs	12 yrs	Husband, three children (primary, intermediate and high school)

MARAE ORA, KĀINGA ORA: A MARAE-LED RESPONSE TO COVID-19

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Resilience in the workplace and community



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ABSTRACT

Marae Ora, Kāinga Ora (MOKO) is a marae-led community development and wellbeing research project. Lee-Morgan et al. (2021) explain this three-year research project, stating: “MOKO investigates the potential of five marae to strengthen their provision of kāinga (village, settlement) in the contemporary urban context of South Auckland” (p. 2). Using a Kaupapa Māori (KM) approach to Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR), this project explores the ancient Indigenous innovation of marae (both a spiritual and physical location with a socio-cultural setting for Māori to be immersed in a cultural context) and kāinga to understand and co-create new culturally based initiatives and support the activation of community development and wellbeing initiatives.

While marae are highly valued by Māori communities as being critical to cultural sustainability and are recognised by government agencies as important community providers, there is a dearth of research about how contemporary urban marae operate and how they can work with, and for, communities (Kawharu, 2014; Tapsell, 2002; Thornley et al., 2015). The MOKO research aim is to enable marae to explore their potential role within their communities, to develop their own interpretation and opportunities for kāinga. These insights influence opportunities to partner with external agencies and services to achieve greater outcomes and collaborative advantages for whānau (family group) and community wellbeing, alongside marae. In brief, the MOKO project is focused on the intergenerational sustainability of the knowledge systems and replenishment of resources inherent within marae, our natural environment and kāinga ora.

Enabling marae, communities and stakeholders to be an active part of developing the solutions and co-production of new knowledge and dissemination activities is a key part of this Kaupapa Māori research project and seen as critical if the research is to have maximum impact. Community participation is a prerequisite to understanding and enhancing community wellbeing and kāinga. In the MOKO project, the Marae Research Co-ordinators (nominated by the marae themselves) are pivotal members of the MOKO research team, and have become a strength and feature of the project.

When Covid-19 hit Aotearoa New Zealand, forcing a national lockdown in March 2020, the MOKO research was already halfway through the environmental scanning phase of, and with, the five marae and their surrounding communities of South Auckland. During the lockdown, the research tasks of the Marae Research Co-ordinators (MRC) to engage whānau and identify their aspirations would prove to be challenging; however, they were ideally positioned to observe the approaches of each marae in responding to their local communities.

This article will share insights to the resilience of the five marae throughout the adversity of Covid-19, showcasing the diversity of support provided to whānau in meeting the needs of their distinct communities, further demonstrating the adaptability of marae and some of the sustainable solutions in enhancing the wellbeing of marae and kāinga.

KEYWORDS

Marae Ora, Kāinga Ora; community development; Kaupapa Māori research; Covid-19 resilience; community wellbeing

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND: MARAE ORA, KĀINGA ORA RESEARCH PROJECT

Marae Ora, Kāinga Ora (MOKO) was initiated following a research project titled 'Te Manaaki o te Marae' with Te Puea Memorial Marae and their support to homeless whānau in 2016 (Lee-Morgan et al., 2017; 2018). Through this work, MOKO was premised on the agency of urban marae to provide their own formalised response to the housing crisis in their distinct communities. This crisis is not independent of a number of social, economic and environmental determinants, and the experience with Te Puea Marae has guided Ngā Wai ā Te Tūi (NWATT) to ensure that the approach for MOKO is both future focused and strength based. MOKO seeks to identify the aspirations for marae and generate development opportunities to increase whole-of-community wellbeing.

The research aims are to invite collective marae perspectives including engaged marae members, whānau who are estranged from any involvement with the marae, relational stakeholders to the marae, and the surrounding marae community. The reconstitution of kāinga that has traditionally serviced marae will be the confronting inquest for research participants attempting to reimagine this possibility in the urban space of South Auckland. The project's intent is to investigate the insights of these contributing groups and enable each marae to delve into the potential advancement marae envisage in the provision of housing for sustainable marae communities. MOKO is designed to reveal opportunities for greater alignment with other agencies and community service providers to formulate collective solutions and co-produce shared approaches, strategies and activities through the production of new knowledge. Ultimately the desire is to enhance marae to provide whānau and community wellbeing.

Marae are the centre of the kāinga and thriving Māori communities (Salmond, 1972). Traditionally the kāinga was the 'village-like' community that sustained the marae and that interacted with the land and the natural environment, and where the people lived collectively as whānau and hapū (kinship group), guided by tikanga (customary lore and protocols) and kawa (rules, practices and protocols). Urban marae are a phenomenon from the 1960s established to retain cultural connectivity for whānau Māori who had relocated to the urban environment for employment. Marae is a cultural archetype that was reconstructed in the urban setting, and represented a cultural icon to provide a sense of belonging, identity and place to continue to practice Māori ways of being and living in the city (Walker, 1990).

It is reported by Te Puni Kōkiri (2018) that South Auckland is the home to over 38 marae, which are there to serve the needs of approximately 80% of the total Auckland Māori population. Hoskins et al. (2019) argue that despite South Auckland being an area where the highest proportion of Māori live in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, the ideal of kāinga as the sustenance for marae is a difficult prospect within communities that have been constructed without consideration of this type of cultural lens to their planning.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, it took over 140 years before state planning legally identified the unique relationship between Māori people and their ancestral land as an important consideration in the planning decision-making process. (Henry, 2021, p. 115)

Marae in the contemporary setting are located in a number of different reconstituted images of the traditional marae. For example, schools and tertiary marae service the learning space (Lee, 2012), and marae based with health and social-service institutions assist holistic healing and wellbeing (George, 2010; Hall, 2012; Mead, 2003). Furthermore, marae are still societal constructs of historical and archaeological intrigue in museums and art galleries; marae are found overseas in foreign lands; armed forces and government organisations erect marae to represent commitment to partnership obligations and an aspiration of cultural inclusivity.

In the MOKO project there are five marae, in three distinct categories: mana whenua, mataawaka, and taurāhere marae. Mana whenua are tribal marae who whakapapa to the whenua; mataawaka marae are pan-tribal marae; and taurāhere marae are satellite outposts of tribal marae in the urban setting. The marae in the MOKO project are: Makaurau Marae, Mataatua Marae, Papatūānuku Kōkiri Marae, Papakura Marae and Manurewa Marae.

The Covid-19 pandemic arrived the shores of Aotearoa in 2020. which coincided with the very early stages of the MOKO research project being activated. In hindsight, this event created some opportunities to observe marae

perform at their best, and highlighted the diversity and unique nature of the five marae, consequently adding value to the research findings.

MOKO RESEARCH METHODS

The MOKO project methodologies, Kaupapa Māori and Community Based Participatory Research (KM and CBPR), have determined a collaborative approach that seeks to work in partnership with each of the five marae involved. As part of this approach, the leadership of each marae (Board, Chief Executive, rangatira [chief], kaumatua [elder]) participated in a formal signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with Ngā Wai a Te Tūi. As articulated in an earlier article, “This project is a mixed-methods study (both qualitative and quantitative) exploring the ancient Indigenous innovation of marae and kāinga to understand and co-create new, culturally based initiatives to activate community development and wellbeing” (Lee-Morgan et al., 2021, p. 11). The methods applied have been centred on how best to respectfully complement the weaving together of skill sets and the various relationships and experience required to carry out this community-based research project.

The multiple research methods include pūrākau (case-study-type narrative inquiry) with each marae; co-created marae feasibility studies; statistical data analysis of national and local data; individual and focus-group interviews; and a survey of whānau and other households in South Auckland in relation to their perceived connectedness to the local marae. At the time of writing, the authors are still in the process of analysing quantitative and qualitative data.

Marae Research Co-ordinators

An integral part of the research project is the Marae Research Co-ordinator (MRC), nominated and appointed by each respective marae. This role is essential to bring together the contributions of relevant marae relational stakeholders both internal and external to their marae. The MRC became the ‘eyes and ears’ of the marae, representing the founders, drivers and influencers who have led and sustained the marae. They are the connectors bringing the historical and present-day context of their marae to the research. These positions were, interestingly, assigned to women across all five marae. These women named themselves collectively as Ngā Puna o Ngā Marae (NPoNM) – The Springs of Knowledge for each marae. This role has involved the MRC delivering on a research work programme that has included the collation of local data, the interviewing of research participants, the design of conference presentations and input to journal articles. Not only were the expectations of the research project for them to have a sound local knowledge and understanding of the culture and socioeconomic profile of the surrounding communities of their marae, they have also been responsible for leading MOKO on the ground as community-based researchers. This dual accountability has involved a weekly hui with members of the MOKO research team to maintain a whānau/peer-support base and a safe space to reflect, share, problem solve and grow research capability. The research benefits of working collaboratively with marae-based researchers has been profound for the project and, more importantly, advantageous beyond expectation for each marae to activate their development plans, and expand their network of research expertise to support each stage of progress into the future.

Whakawhanaungatanga (the process of establishing relationships) has been an essential practice to keep NPoNM connected, communicating, motivated and collectively supported through the work programme of the project. Bishop and Glynn (1999) articulate whanaungatanga as a reciprocal, mutual relationship where power is shared and negotiated.

Through whakawhanaungatanga, each marae has had the opportunity to host the MOKO research team and showcase their role in their local communities across South Auckland. This coming together has helped the marae to remain up to date with the research progress and has meant the wider MOKO research team who are not physically located in Tāmaki Makaurau have been able to deepen their understanding of each marae and contextualise the community environment.

While the authors are not ready to comment on the benefits of the presence of MRCs to whānau and hapū yet, this might become the subject of a future evaluative research investigation.

Pūrākau

Another method that has given voice to the people of each marae community is the medium of pūrākau. Lee (2009) champions this medium as a decolonising practice that enables Māori to assist the intergenerational transmission of histories, events and tikanga. As part of this Kaupapa Māori project, the methods applied have been selected to bring forward the opportunity, time and place for Māori to tell their lived experience and share their insights, filtered through a diverse Māori lens and worldview. These are the threads of pūrākau that weave together the marae connections to the whenua (the environmental scan), the histories of the people (the interviewing of whānau), the experience of the current inhabitants (the quantitative survey) and interests of the investors (stakeholder perspectives); all relative to the marae-scape.

A pikitia (picture) series has captured the experience of each marae in action over the Covid-19 lockdowns. This is another creative method to express the important story of each marae's interaction with their communities during Covid-19. Through an animated series, the narrative from each marae is illustrated. The pūrākau is told through imagery, symbolism and a whakatauki/whakatauākī (proverb) or a statement that captures a snapshot of each marae and their activity in the pandemic of 2020–21. The process involved each marae determining their story, identifying visual messages of the marae setting during the past two years and highlighting their marae's response to their communities. It has involved several hui among the marae whānau to achieve collective agreement around the messaging. It has also required onsite observation from the artist and a synthesising of key discussion points, recognition of important icons for the marae and inclusion of symbolism in the imagery, characters, activity and statement from each marae.



Figure 1. *Mataatua Tawharautia* [drawing] is an example of the artwork drawn by R. Tinana as part of the MOKO research pikitia series [UREC 2020-1040].

Interviews

The qualitative research method of interviewing and the quantitative survey are the final methods discussed. Interviewing would prove to be a very challenging activity, with fluctuating access to interviewees due to lockdowns and the level of anxiety connected to social-distancing restrictions. Despite this, the majority of the interviews were able to be conducted in person, and face-to-face; a very important cultural consideration for Kaupapa Māori research projects.

Quantitative survey

The quantitative survey was designed to engage the surrounding communities of the five marae to contribute to the MOKO research. The demographics in each of the suburbs where the marae are located bring a diverse perspective that is essential to understand the perception of the role of marae in this multi-ethnic urban environment. Interestingly, the quantitative survey online would have a greater uptake than originally anticipated, potentially because of increased online activity and engagement, although the survey launch itself was also delayed due to Covid-19 interruptions.

Ngā Wai ā Te Tūi anticipate the findings from these intertwined and interdependent research methods will be invaluable for whānau and the development of each marae community, once the analysis phase of the data collected is complete in June 2022.

MARAE COVID-19 RESPONSE METHODS

The methods employed by each marae to respond to the needs of their whānau first and foremost, and then the wider community, during Covid-19 have varied from marae to marae according to their niche in the community, their capacity and their capability to divert their energies into crisis-intervention mode. What follow are the main methods, and how these were implemented during the lockdown periods.

Communication

For Māori, marae are central hubs of the community where community cultural events and activities occur; however, marae in general have become more known to the wider public through opening their doors to communities in crisis, with the likes of natural disasters (Phibbs et al., 2015) in particular and in more recent years offering shelter to homeless individuals and families (Lee-Morgan et al., 2018; Dennis, 2019). Marae are increasingly involved in community responses to crisis situations and emergencies as key sites of information and communication.

In the Covid-19 2020 pandemic the marae social-media platforms became the digital kūmara vine (localised version of the grapevine) of information dissemination. Notices about what services and supplies were available came via text and social media; up-to-date information about care and protection protocols were circulated regularly; promotion of specialist agency support services for various needs was made available; locations and times of how communities could access kai (food) were also shared.

Additional to this was the priority of communication with kaumātua, which required a different strategy. Concern for their social isolation and loneliness meant that contactless visits with rongoā (traditional herbal/healing modalities) and/or the provision of cooked meals became a way in which to support them but also a much-needed means of communication. The lack of confidence with digital communication means, and/or limited access to this technology, was definitely realised as a limitation for many kaumātua at this time. Their interest in upskilling when the opportunity arose, post the pandemic isolation phase, would be tested by each marae. The focus on kaumātua as a priority was seen as a Covid-19 response for Māori (Pihama & Lipsham, 2020; Pihama et al., 2020).

Te Kotahi ā Tāmaki, a network of 36 marae across the wider Tāmaki Makaurau isthmus, was also identified as playing a significant communication role. During the lockdowns this forum co-ordinated the relevant messaging for marae

and broke down the government communications to be user friendly and applicable for whānau Māori and South Auckland communities to follow. The network has been one of the lifelines for marae in Tāmaki Makaurau to filter the abundance of information being channelled to communities. This central point of communication assisted marae to get on with the frontline duties and built confidence that up-to-date information would continue to be received for each marae.

Sharing of resources

As a result of the research methodological approach that centres on Kaupapa Māori, a positive and open sharing of knowledge and resources occurred between the five MOKO marae. It was informal, supportive and effective. For instance, two of the five marae – Manurewa and Papakura – became recognised sites for Covid-19 testing and Covid-19 vaccinations. Recognised as successful health providers, both marae have existing hauora (health) clinics contracted by Counties Manukau District Health Board. Setting up testing and vaccinations (not a straightforward operation) was a significant achievement. Papakura Marae became the first drive-through vaccination service in Aotearoa (Mayron, 2021).

The response of Papatūānuku Kōkiri Marae, known for their work with organic kai and food security, to the community was to receive provisions from food suppliers and to set up a drive-through fresh-produce distribution service. Their whole philosophy is to teach people how to grow their own kai and develop sustainable-living know-how; therefore, their distribution of fresh produce enhanced the notion of a foodbank service and came with the opportunity to propagate seedlings and be given recipes to learn how to cook different vegetables.

Makaurau and Mataatua Marae whānau continued to work with traditional Māori healing modalities on site. Both these marae were able to reciprocate the provision of kai supplies that were shared from the other marae, with rongoā Māori.

Super service hubs

While highlighting, above, some of the many specific service activities of each marae, every marae found it necessary to move out of 'business as usual' to respond accordingly to the needs of their communities during Covid-19. All five MOKO marae extended themselves to host different services on site. Importantly, each marae became a food outlet, and worked collaboratively with government and other community agencies, to review their modus operandi and to redeploy their workforce to frontline essential-worker duties.

The MRC weekly forum served as a unique space for each to share their experiences, to reflect on their respective marae capabilities in their Covid-19 responsiveness to their communities, and deliberate on their commonalities. This has fostered a strong solution-seeking culture that has grown in the collective as the need to work together across South Auckland has become increasingly necessary and beneficial for each marae. The diversity of responses from each marae over this period has illustrated the versatility of marae as community hubs that have been led by their intrinsic role to look after the wellbeing of people, to lean into the space of support, relief and assistance, unlike many mainstream services that simply closed their doors to protect their employees. The methods each marae employed have been cultural responses within their capability. When approached by external organisations with collaboration options and resources, marae have usually taken up the challenge and modelled their ability to adapt, co-operate and override any risk aversity on the part of these organisations (Durie, 2001).

DISCUSSION – PAKARI

Resilience can be measured by the ability for a socio-economic system to function in crises and adapt to change without major structural collapse, as articulated by Kawharu et al. (2015). The MOKO marae are exemplars of adaptation and self-organisation and therefore, in relation to this definition, resilient. Penehira et al. (2014) provide a critique of the notion of resilience through a Kaupapa Māori lens that offers a definition that Māori communities can

resonate with, and shape what resilience can look like to them in reconciling the response of places like marae to times of ongoing adversity in their communities:

We seek a concept of resilience that emerges from our own realities, that speaks to our individual and collective selves, that recognises colonisation as a constant adversity, and that supports acts of resistance in order to dismantle colonialism and re-establish Māori and Indigenous self-determination. (p. 108)

The mātaawaka marae of South Auckland in this project (Manurewa, Papatūānuku and Papakura Marae) are products of urbanisation, as part of the colonisation process. Alongside these urban marae are the mana whenua marae that have been the original inhabitants and kaitiaki for hundreds of years. When we examine the idea of resilience in this landscape, we must look to the past to understand the extent of change that has impacted the marae and kāinga in South Auckland.

Of the five marae involved in MOKO, Makaurau is the only mana whenua marae. The people of this whenua are Ngāti Mahuta, Te Ahiwaru and Te Waiohua. Ihumātao is the oldest continuously occupied papakāinga (original homebase, communal Māori land) in Tāmaki Makaurau (McKibbin, 2019). The city has grown up around this site and urbanisation has encroached on the kāinga with intensive industrial activity and the establishment of Auckland International Airport. The waste disposal that saw the development of sewerage treatment in Ihumātao in the 1950s, and air pollutants from the close proximity to the airport and motorway, has had a serious impact on the traditional food sources and quality of water that sustained many generations at Ihumātao. The land where Makaurau Marae is situated once provided acres of maara (gardens) that supplied both hapū and early settlers in Auckland (Stone, 2001).

The resilience factor for this community is that they still exist. There are approximately 87 homes that remain as part of the papakāinga and 80% of the residents have whakapapa (lineage, genealogical) connection to the land and the marae (Ngā Wai a Te Tūi, 2020). Their history pre-dates that of the other four marae in the MOKO research project, and they have the lived experience of defending their land, protecting their natural resources and building a future of hope for their mokopuna (grandchildren, descendants). They have relationships with all the other marae in South Auckland as mana whenua and have been subjected to the various pressures directly related to the government's land development and housing policies. They have had to accommodate the cultural demands of the surge of Māori population to the city, to adapt and acclimatise to built environmental changes, and to extend their manaakitanga (generosity) to the manuhiri (guest, visitor) marae in their local vicinity.

At the same time, there is the phenomenon of the *rapidly* increasing population of Māori in South Auckland communities who have left behind the safety and stability of their iwi roots, encountering a whole new conglomeration of economic, social and cultural disconnection. Subjected to assimilation schemes like 'pepper-potting,' in which affordable or social housing is distributed among privately owned dwellings, Māori have suffered cultural dislocation and been driven to re-create spaces to live, socialise and cohabit as Māori (Haami, 2018).

Durie (2011) best describes pepper-potting as a housing policy that in effect sprinkled Māori families amongst Pākehā families in the urban centres as a way to disperse Māori families and assist full integration and actively discourage tribal organisation. Hence, the resolve for Māori to urgently and purposefully seek out the development of marae in the urban environment:

Disruption of communities shifting away from the papakāinga due to internal and external forces led to adaptation. The Urbanised Māori were forced to examine what they needed to do to survive this disruption. This self-examination led to innovation and the growth of a strong resilience; they survived by re-creating a cultural paradigm for living in new urban environments. (Haami, p. 244)

The five MOKO marae are testimony to the level of conviction that their forebears had to endure to assure the survival of their descendants in this urban environment. Their resolve to reassign the marae as a known infrastructure and cultural bastion of Māori resistance and endurance has served to support the progress of future generations in this setting. In order to create communities of resilience, a response is needed to combat the

detrimental effects of urbanisation, which has isolated kāinga and communities from their marae, subsequently constraining the ability for marae to enable Māori to fully 'live as Māori' (Durie, 2001). Māori communities traditionally cohered around the marae and the notion of kāinga ora as the basis for wellbeing.

This research has highlighted that during 2020–21, the role of these marae in servicing whole communities during Covid-19 has been no mean feat, and indisputably a demonstration of resilience. Covid-19 has inadvertently provided a spotlight on just how versatile, adaptive, agile and capable marae are in providing relief and support in so many different ways, for the masses. Kukutai et al. (2020) reiterate the long experience that marae and their well-established networks have in dealing with impacts of natural disasters, pandemics and ongoing impacts of colonialism.

Reflecting on the stance of resilience for Indigenous peoples by Penehira et al. (2014), the learning for government agents and agencies has been huge and immediate as a result of working in collaboration with Māori communities responding to the pandemic. The government's need to draw from the strengths in communities to mobilise and protect themselves has provided innovative, proactive and practical solutions to their usual decision-making protocols. Initial findings suggest that this experience has challenged government services to do things differently, and support effective and resourceful approaches to protect whole communities from adverse health outcomes.

Some of the other initial positive themes emerging at this stage in the project, particularly from the stakeholder interviews, concern:

- A recognition of the reach of marae to the most marginalised and vulnerable people in their communities
- A new appreciation and acknowledgement of the capacity of each marae to mobilise a workforce
- An easy sharing of power to achieve the same outcomes
- More meaningful understanding of how to collaborate with shared leadership
- Exercising a model of higher trust and relinquishing of needing to be in control
- Learning to do things differently
- A genuine desire to work together more proactively with marae in the future

For the marae whānau themselves their experiences has led to:

- Becoming more strategic in how to access resources
- Collaborating with other services to be effective in their communities
- Working to strengths and working within their specialised niche
- Recognising a priority role has been to provide cultural stability – tangihanga (protocols for caring for their loved ones passing during lockdown), māuiui (in poor health, or ailing), karakia (spiritual guidance and protection), wairuatanga (spiritual wellbeing)
- Manaaki tangata (care for people) is whatever it takes – kai, care, communication, employment, education, advocacy, transport, rongoā (traditional modes of healing)
- Keeping lines of communication open from marae to marae
- Being available and responsive to the highest needs – kaumātua (elderly), whānau with children, those experiencing loss of income, those without a fixed abode
- Having ultimate confidence and assurance that the marae is the place to seek help
- The opportunity to review the marae's continuity policies on maintaining tikanga to support whānau, e.g., tangihanga and hui (gatherings)

The analysis is ongoing for MOKO and the emergence of common themes will enrich the accounts of how the five particular marae in South Auckland have featured positively in the pandemic support and recovery reflections.

RESULTS

The initial results discussed here relate to the experience and response of the five marae during Covid-19 in the early stages of 2020, to the latest experience of the Delta lockdown in the final months of 2021. A report due later in 2022 will present the full results of the research.

The MOKO research project has been in a prime position to have an overview of these developments, and to be able to give a commentary of observations at many levels for the five marae in this pandemic response space.

Firstly, the increased collaboration with government agencies, not-for-profit community-sector organisations and services has demonstrated for all parties the fruits of working closely together with a shared kaupapa (purpose). For the marae it has brought the opportunity to not only be recognised, but resourced accordingly as community hubs, and enabled a Kaupapa Māori approach to wellbeing to be actualised, and recognised by their non-Māori partners (Pihama et al., 2020). In contrast to the conventional and risk-averse nature of contracting with government agencies, whereby marae are accustomed to a very formalised, transactional contracting relationship, the urgency and enormity of the task to provide relief and service provision to huge populations on the ground in South Auckland has deemed it necessary to relax some contracting formalities and demonstrate an increase in trust. In discussion with one of the MRCs (H. Ropati, personal communication, June 10, 2020), it was suggested that this has impacted positively in removing the competitive nature of marae needing to prove their benefit and reach in order to resource their community activities, not only in comparison to other marae, but also with other local community-service providers.

Secondly, marae have had to become more strategic in order to operate within their capacity. Some have expanded their specialist roles, as previously stated, resulting in hauora/health clinics and services in Manurewa and Papakura Marae becoming sites for Covid-19 testing and vaccination.

Papatūanuku Kōkiri Marae diversified with their provision of fresh vegetables, fruit and fish supplies, and increased the promotion of cooked meals being prepared at the marae and offered out through a social media notice and collection system. Today they are receiving an increased number of donations from food suppliers and businesses on a weekly basis, and therefore have needed to become an organised distribution point. They have also maintained a meals-on-wheels type service for kaumātua and disabled community members. Manurewa Marae retained their foodbank facilities, which were initially a temporary Covid-19 relief initiative in 2020, and now operate with volunteers and paid staff as a result of learning that the demand in their community for food security needs to have more long-term investment. Papakura Marae have streamlined their kai distribution to a contact, korero (discuss) and drive-through-and-collect system. Their wraparound services for whānau have also increased due to demand. Mataatua Marae's experience from 2020 was centred around looking after the kaumātua – providing someone to talk to, doing shopping and runs for medication or doctors' appointments, as well as delivering cooked meals. The experiences of Mataatua Marae highlighted the limited access and knowledge that many of the kaumātua have around digital technologies, and the socially isolating factors that Covid-19 presented. They found that kaumātua were not receiving information as regularly as everyone else, for example health and safety notices, nor did they have access to services. There was a grieving, too amongst kaumātua for the loss of contact with their whānau, their peers and, in particular, contact with mokopuna.

Mataatua Marae knew from the first Covid-19 lockdown that kaumātua needed help to be digitally connected to reduce their social isolation. Utilising their strong working relationship with Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, the marae was able to be proactive in hosting a programme called Kanorau Digital, specifically designed to help kaumātua become confident and familiar with their digital devices and in using the internet. This programme was brought to the marae, and kaumātua were supported to attend; they learned to increase their use of digital technology as a strategy to keep them connected to their whānau. Increased online communication has become a reality for all five marae, to keep their whānau safe and connected.

Makaurau Marae do not consider themselves to be a service-provider marae. The marae happened to be closed during the first lockdown in 2020 for car-park renovations, therefore the support extended to their papakāinga was

generated at a whānau level. Whānau mobilised to keep close communications using social media and they drew on support from whanaunga/relatives' marae to supply hygiene packs and kai supplies. Their focus was on:

- Keeping their maara and seed banks attended to
- Production of rongoā Māori
- Providing online entertainment and outdoor activities for tamariki (children) wellbeing
- Sharing skills and advice around property maintenance
- Kaitiaki responsibilities on the whenua
- Recognising the entrepreneurial skill-sets that were harnessed and developed to create self-employment
- Strategic planning that resulted in designating project teams to get moving on hapū development projects

For many whānau of Makaurau Marae, in particular those that live within the papakāinga of Ihumātao, their time was productively utilised in reflection, re-setting, and building future plans as a hapū.

In this longest and most recent lockdown in 2021, Makaurau Marae were actively prepared to respond to their whānau needs and had the good fortune of observing the kind of interventions other marae had taken on to support their local communities. Compared to the first Covid-19 lockdown, Makaurau Marae have felt more prepared in the second Covid-19 wave of the Delta variant. According to the whānau, the marae infrastructure has been more co-ordinated, with pandemic policies put in place. This, alongside strengthened stakeholder relationships, has resulted in improved communication across the papakāinga and the provision of wraparound support for whānau.

CONCLUSION

He toka tū moana

As durable as a rock pounded by the sea

Respected Kaupapa Māori academic Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith encourages us to appreciate the role of researchers during a pandemic; in our case, the privileged position that the MOKO research project has had as being both 'insiders' and 'outsiders' in this time of change. Smith argues that the role of researchers is to think, observe, reflect, and observe some more. It involves stepping back a bit and documenting what is happening, and looking at what is not happening. She says the Covid-19 incident "throws up a range of issues that researchers will be drawn into" (Knowledge in Indigenous Networks, 2020). It is with this insight that we have been able to reflect on the experience of our marae partners in the MOKO project, and observe their proficiency in taking care of their communities, in their own way, in a time of worldwide pandemic.

The wellbeing of South Auckland communities has been a huge responsibility for community leaders, in mobilising services while engaging government for resourcing and being open to the natural convergence of a collaboration roll-out (Knowledge in Indigenous Networks, 2020). Marae have had a key role in the Covid-19 response for communities, as illustrated through the five MOKO marae. The interaction and alliance of community services across communities and with government agencies has been a shared response. Within the MOKO project we have witnessed that the existence of open lines of communication, shared resources, co-operative action, and pooling together intelligence and expertise within communities and alongside marae, has set a new and healthy precedent for community-led development.

However, the disparity between local council and government resourcing of community services and the level of funding allocated to marae still exists and is one example of the issues that continue to plague marae development. Another is the hardship, poverty, increased domestic violence, loneliness, confinement and stress, and many whānau struggling to keep their heads above the waterline in South Auckland. The five marae have come to witness this first hand.

Ultimately, the efforts of many marae whānau contributing to the manaakitanga of other whānau is a phenomenon observed by the MOKO researchers, with mahi aroha (provision of food, healthcare and social connectivity) providing relief for those in need. Cram (2020) argues that in these Covid-19 times a vital indicator of Māori capacity to participate in mahi aroha has been affordable housing, providing a secure home base. She attributes the ability to reach out and support others to people having a sense of tūrangawaewae (place of belonging) by way of their housing circumstances. Without financial burden or health worries due to insecure housing circumstances, whānau Māori are more actively engaged in mahi aroha (volunteering) and the uplifting of others. We have seen the outcomes of this mahi aroha through the MOKO project.

The whakataukī (proverb) above is a testimony of the resilience each community has demonstrated and, in South Auckland, how the concept of marae and all it stands for has been the rock.

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RESILIENCE IN DAILY ROUTINES FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

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Resilience in the workplace and community



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ABSTRACT

Resilience for children with special needs is often discussed in terms of the families concerned rather than the children themselves. This article reports on a current study that aims to analyse sections of daily routines for children with autism, and to find subsequent examples of resilience that the children show. Under a qualitative research framework, the data is derived from a case study supported by a literature review. The literature review was conducted first to find out existing information that might be useful by parents and teachers to understand resilience of tamariki with autism. Relevant journal articles available in the EBESCO database within the time frame of 2000–2021 were looked at. An integrative review process was applied to navigate answers aligned with the research question. For the case study, the data were anecdotal records, of a child diagnosed with severe autism at the age of three. Anecdotes were from three years after the diagnosis, experienced by the author. The daily routine was divided into regular activities during the periods of morning, afternoon and night, both at home and in an early-childhood setting. The literature review revealed that meal time, toileting, play and transition are the aspects of daily routine that have been studied. However, the findings of these studies were very limited in terms of usefulness to teachers and parents due to their quantitative nature. The case study highlights common trends of resilience in the aspects of a day for a child with autism, while acknowledging differences that prevail. Strands of Te Whāriki, the Aotearoa New Zealand early-childhood curriculum, were used as a framework to analyse data for scaffolding the thoughts and mahi (work) of the early-childhood kaiako (teachers). The study proposes an extended version to include other cases, using social media networks.

KEYWORDS

Children with special needs, children with autism, early-childhood education, daily routines

BACKGROUND

Understanding resilience

The term resilience ('aumangea' in te reo Māori) has been used in many different academic disciplines, including economics, health, psychology and education. The definition of resilience can thus be varied. However, the common understanding is that resilience is the positive adoption of circumstances by individuals, especially when faced with adversity (Herrman et al., 2011). The term resilience can also be discussed from the root of Latin words *resiliere*, *resalire* or *resilio*, which refer to jumping, bouncing back and restarting (Stanciu, 2021). From the medical or mental-health perspective, the term resilience often relates to trauma, stress or adverse situations, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, and studies discuss how individuals or groups bounce back or regain strength to cope and continue with their lives (Cénat et al., 2020; Long et al., 2007; Stanciu, 2021). Resilience is the ability to bounce back when faced with crisis or adversity (Bonanno et al., 2011). Resilience is thus focused on positives, and working towards positive outcomes amidst negative circumstances. Resilience, in psychological studies, is often seen as a construct to deal with stressors and an individual's efforts to resist the harmful effects of those stressors (Winders, 2014).

Within the early-childhood education context, the author's exposure to the term resilience is rather positive, and it is associated with efforts, persistence and success. It is a learning disposition that early-childhood educators observe

and document for tamariki (children). Learning dispositions listed in Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 2017), the Aotearoa New Zealand early-childhood curriculum, are: courage and curiosity, trust and playfulness, perseverance, confidence and responsibility, reciprocity, creativity, imagination and resilience. Therefore, resilience is linked to the five strands of learning that are defined by Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 2017). This curriculum document, Te Whāriki, in its original version, acknowledges and represents the acceptance of languages (Ministry of Education, 1996). The newer version recognises diversity and encourages kaiako to include all tamariki (the term 'diversity' is used 15 times across the 68-page publication). Te Whāriki states:

This curriculum acknowledges that all children have rights to protection and promotion of their health and wellbeing, to equitable access to learning opportunities, to recognition of their language, culture and identity and, increasingly, to agency in their own lives. These rights align closely with the concept of mana. (Ministry of Education, 2017, p. 12)

A fundamental expectation is that the delivery of the curriculum recognises these rights and enables the active participation of all children, including those who may need additional learning support. This study explores the term resilience for tamariki as such, and analyses the concept to understand resilience of tamariki who are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD)

ASD is a neurodevelopmental disorder that comes with qualitative social impairment and presence of repetitive and/or restrictive behaviour (Anckarsäter et al., 2006). This childhood-onset disorder can cause delay, partial achievement or non-achievement of functions such as communication, empathy, social behaviour and learning (Agarwal, 2008). Its complexity and various associated needs can be placed on a broad spectrum from mild, to moderate, to severe. A global average of 1 out of 100 children diagnosed with autism is noted by recent research (Zeidan et al., 2022). Only 20% of adults diagnosed with autism live independently (Marsack-Topolewski, 2022). Others live with parents or under the care of caregivers. These statistics can confirm autism as a condition for which most individuals need special care, at least in their tamarikitanga (childhood). The care needed may reduce with time, depending on the independence level of the individual. Among all special learning needs, autism can take a unique place: it is difficult to know what stage the child is at, what type of sensory profile the child has, and how to help the frustrations that may rise from their inability to communicate, while also thinking of positive guidance strategies for challenging behaviours.

METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study is to understand resilience in tamariki who are diagnosed with severe autism, so that parents and educators can explore some ideas in practice. Under a socio-cultural framework, a literature review has been conducted with the following two questions:

1. What characteristics are identified within the literature in relation to resilience and autism?
2. What information can be retrieved that would help parents and educators to identify resilience strategies that a child with autism uses throughout the day?

The case study was explored with the following questions:

1. What strategies are used by the child to cope with day-to-day experiences?
2. What can kaiako and parents do when they identify a resilience strategy used by the child?

ETHICS

Literature reviews are secondary data for which no ethical consent is required. For the case study, the author did not obtain approval from any organisation as the experiences are her own. The case is a child for whom the author herself has the authority to consent. However, the author understands that this might be a sensitive issue for the child himself, and wonders if the child would give consent if he could. Ethics has been seen as a sensitive topic for other research involving children; for example, researchers of a longitudinal study who looked at tracking infants at risk for autism (TIARA) have shared their concerns on the ways researchers return the findings to the families and children, and the effects that may have on them (Vanaken et al., 2021). Another study pointed out how many of the researchers need training for understanding the ethical aspects of involving children in research from a human rights perspective (Taplin et al., 2022). This author, therefore, would like to state that sharing her own experiences with the child is aimed at helping members of the community who are personally or professionally interested in this area. If the research helps any other child, family or teaching team, it would be a great achievement for the author, and that is the motivation behind presenting the case study. A pseudonym is used to preserve the privacy of the child.

FINDINGS FROM THE LITERATURE REVIEW

An integrated literature review was used to find patterns in existing research and to collate information that might be useful for teaching and parenting purposes. Using Unitec's library facilities for the EBESCO database, the three keywords 'resilience,' 'autism' and 'children' were used, with the limit of peer-reviewed journal articles available as full text. A limit was also set for the period of 2001 to 2021. One hundred and seventy-one results were found as at October 2021. All articles were looked at to see what information could be found that was useful for teachers and parents to understand the resilience of tamariki with autism. The following five characteristics emerged from the partial review:

- **99% of reviewed studies were conducted by professionals from the disciplines of health, medicine and psychology.** For example, a study was conducted to find the correlation between EI (emotional intelligence) and resilience (McCrimmon et al., 2018). Fifty-four neurodiverse and 18 neurotypical children completed the Resilience Scale for Children and Adolescents, and the BarOn Emotional Quotient Inventory. While no correlation was established, the research found clinical traits specific to the groups of ASD (autism spectrum disorder) and ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder). Another study (Schertz & Odom, 2007) shows the benefit of intervention programmes using the Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (M-CHAT) in improving joint attention of toddlers. The study showed with specific intervention, some of the participating toddlers shared common interest with others for a longer period of time.
- **96% of the reviewed studies are quantitative, and/or outcomes of clinical trials.** For example, a study was conducted to assess the relationship quality between mother and child, and its effect on children with autism, based on 14 daily questionnaires from online measures of global constructs (Timmons et al., 2016). The authors found a negative correlation, which indicates intervention is needed to improve a mother's mental health and partner support on a daily basis.
- **The majority of the research (93%) is linked to family stress and family resilience, and very little to examining a child's own resilience.** For example, studies show raising a child with ASD has significant implications for parents' mental and physical health (Celia et al., 2020). In particular, high levels of stress are often caused by the process of accommodating and adjusting constantly to have experiences preferred by the child (O'Nions et al., 2020). There are studies that also looked into this within the circumstances of Covid-19, and shows a higher level of stress associated with this time (Rabbani et al., 2021; Tokatly Latzer et al., 2021).
- **The majority of the research (78%) that was conducted on children's resilience involved children who have mild or moderate autism and may be labelled as 'high functioning.'** In many of these studies, the level is not indicated, but shows participant involvement with complex abilities. For example, in one such study, 30 segments of silent cartoons were used to find out how the neurodiverse and neurotypical groups of

children made meaning out of them (O’Nions et al., 2014). The study was medically examined with the use of brain scanning and oxygen-level analysis that showed different patterns of theory of mind for the two different groups.

- **Little research (3%) was conducted using the concepts of daily routines, such as play therapy, transition, toileting and meal time.** However, many of these studies are also quantitative and have little information on actual happenings. A parent or a teacher can relate more to easily to qualitative sets of data. An example of a qualitative study that was conducted to find the nature of meal times reveals a set of words such as “hectic,” “stressful,” “calming,” “chaos,” “miscellaneous,” “togetherness,” “debriefing,” “conversation,” “bonding,” “perspective,” “instilling manners and values,” “warmth,” “home-cooked,” “laid-back,” “fun” and “carefree” (Curtiss & Ebata, 2019).

The implications of these findings are that there is a need for research around children with autism by teachers or professionals from the education discipline. While all the reviewed studies are a good source of information for health professionals (who diagnose or provide therapies), the quantitative nature of the studies may not be very useful for teachers and parents, who are the fieldworkers for children. It is important to have qualitative studies that could reveal information that is helpful for parenting or teaching. Furthermore, children with severe autism also need to be considered by the researchers, as well as those who are on the mild or moderate side of the spectrum.

FINDINGS FROM THE CASE STUDY

Background information for the case was gathered. At the time of the study, the child was six years old. The child, with the pseudonym of Thomas, is a boy who was diagnosed with severe autism at the age of three. His score was 38.5 in the CARS (Childhood Autism Rating Scale) test. CARS is a test that has measures from 15 to 60+ on a scale that identifies a score over 36 to be severe. Thomas was born in Aoteroa New Zealand, and is the only child in an immigrant family. The family has a stable income and healthy cohesion. Thomas began attending early-childhood settings from the age of six months, and went on to experience five different early-childhood settings (one of these settings he attended for one day only). At the time of the study, Thomas was semi-verbal, but not functional. He had achieved several gross-motor skills, with a few lacking (for example, he was yet to learn hopping). His fine-motor skills had a few more lacking (for example, he was yet to learn spitting, rinsing, twisting laces and threading). He needed a significant amount of parental support to carry out day-to-day activities at home. Within the educational settings, he required that support from the educators, sometimes throughout the day.

Carrying out daily tasks comes with demands, and that seemed to be a source of anxiety for Thomas. His case is examined further by the researcher to understand the coping mechanisms used by the child throughout the day. For this study, three main time-periods of the day, morning, afternoon and night, are categorised and discussed in terms of tasks that a child regularly accomplishes with support. Resilience strategies undertaken by the child were closely examined for the three periods of the day. The table below shows the tasks in the three periods that were selected by the author. Both home and early-childhood education contexts were considered in identifying resilience strategies for carrying out the tasks in the following three segments:

TABLE 1: DAILY ROUTINE AS DISCUSSED IN THIS STUDY.

Morning	Afternoon	Night
Freshen up	Play	Going to bed
Nappy changing/toileting	Meal time	Sleeping
Travel to early childhood/school	Community visits	
Entry routine		

Observed and identified strategies that Thomas used were as follows:

Morning

- **Freshen up.** Thomas used a strategy of biting his toothbrush, which might be linked to his sensory needs. Thomas liked to have pressure on his body, and he also liked to put pressure on certain objects. Thomas showed preference for clothes that were loose and at the same time wanted to have an inner layer that could create pressure.
- **Nappy change and toilet training.** Thomas was yet to find a strategy to cope with toileting. His stress or anxiety around this was expressed by behaviour as such refusing to have his nappy changed or using a space for this where it was not allowed to (for example on the bed). He showed a tendency of evolving into attention-seeking behaviour when he failed to find a strategy to cope.
- **Travel to day care or school.** Thomas frequently took longer than the usual time to get dressed, go to the car, sit in the car seat, and be buckled in. It seemed that he tried to lengthen the travel in any way he could. Spending time and taking pauses was noted commonly when travelling to places, including day care and school.
- **Entry routine for early-childhood education setting.** The only successful entry routine was the one that Thomas picked up by himself. In many of the ECE settings that Thomas attended, the centre manager and teachers tried to provide him with routines that would suit children with autism as per their understanding, and according to the advice of the early-intervention teacher. However, the teachers in those settings struggled to settle him. At the last setting that Thomas attended, teachers were more interested in observing him and letting him find his own way to settle. That was the only place he could settle, by introducing a routine of going to the centre manager's room and getting her to come with him into the setting. This setting had very little struggle with Thomas and celebrated him much more than the other settings did.

Afternoon

- **Meal time.** Thomas usually made a mess when eating. He made a bigger mess if the caring adults were upset about it. When he was not able to argue (due to limited vocabulary), Thomas protested via actions. He co-operated with gentle pressure to be seated, and to eat using one hand only.
- **Play.** Thomas usually preferred sensory items to have repetitive play. He enjoyed imaginary play if played by others or caring adults. The child often attempted to persist in repetitive play, but co-operated with finishing if a warning/reminder system was used, for example counting from five to one. He enjoyed playing with others, but only activities that require gross-motor skills, such as running and dancing. Thomas showed little interest in play that required fine-motor skills.
- **Community visits.** Thomas used singing/music to minimise excitement on the bus. Music was observed to be used when stressed. Thomas needed time to get out of the vehicle and sometimes refused to come out at all if a place was new. In the playground, he showed an ongoing interest in joining in peers' play, but mostly failed. He usually ignored (or pretended to ignore) any comments made to him by bystanders or other children in the playground (for example, "Is he okay?" or "Listen to your mum" or "Get off me"). He laughed/giggled and then spent quiet time and continued to play with carer adults if rejected or criticised by others.

Night

- **Going to bed.** Thomas often hit the caring adult, especially the primary carer, before sleeping, if he had had a stressful day. He also often repeated the acts of dressing and undressing many times before settling down to sleep.

- **Sleeping.** Thomas showed a preference for sleeping under lights (even bright lights). He woke up at night regularly (once a week on average) and remained awake for hours. Thomas could put himself to sleep with sensory play on most nights.

In summary, Thomas was noted to use the following strategies to cope with day-to-day anxiety and to be resilient:

- Challenging behaviours such as hitting and messy eating
- Expressing preferences and choices
- Repeating actions/phrases that had impact on him
- Using self-selected tools (time, sensory items and music) or routines
- Ignoring

DISCUSSION

The case study reveals data that might be useful for teachers for purposeful reflection. The limitation of this study is that the validity can be questioned, as the case study represents one child only, and also the relationship between the child and the author might influence the findings. A more reliable study might involve several parents sharing their experiences, where the children are not in close relationship with the researcher. Willing researchers could obtain access using social media networks, approaching groups for parents and carers of children with autism.

This study is an attempt to stimulate the thoughts of early childhood teachers. For children with autism, resilience can be an important factor in every single part of the daily routines, as explained previously. While on many occasions the child acts and implements the resilience strategies, people, places and things in early childhood settings and in the home play an important role in supporting these tamariki who may need additional support. Early-childhood teachers/kaiako have responsibilities to ensure the strands of learning are protected and supported for every child, including those with autism. The following table presents an example of how kaiako can reflect on their practice to understand and support resilience in children with autism.

STRANDS OF LEARNING	WHAT CAN KAIAKO DO TO PROMOTE THE STRAND FOR A CHILD WITH AUTISM?
Mana atua Wellbeing	Understand that the child may be dealing with several stressors. If possible, observe and identify the stressors.
Mana whenua Belonging	Celebrate the child. Unlike others, this child may have very limited opportunities where they are celebrated. Every success may be an outcome of a huge amount of resilience.
Mana tangata Contribution	Let the child find their own way and pick up their own routine in the setting.
Mana reo Communication	Know that the child may use challenging behaviour as a strategy for resilience. Try responding to challenging behaviour from that thought process.
Mana autūroa Exploration	Offer a range of sensory explorations regardless of the age. Keep providing a range, as only few of them might be used by the child.

To conclude, every child is unique and so as every child with autism. The educational setting that was successful in managing and celebrating Thomas spent a lot of time observing him first before imposing anything from the known literature. This may be a more efficient strategy for adults who need to care for children with autism. Furthermore, a child with autism, especially if they are on the severe end of the scale, needs to find ways to cope with multiple stressors and anxiety. In addition to the frustration they have due to limited abilities of communication, they also need to find ways to cope with social rejection, and (sometimes) with frustrated adults around them. Resilience may not seem evident in their play or learning, but it is embedded in their survival. This quality needs to be respected and celebrated with the child.

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NAVIGATING TENSIONS IN THE SECULAR WORKPLACE BY CHRISTIANS IN THE SOCIAL SERVICES: FINDINGS FROM AN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND STUDY

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Resilience in the workplace and community



Navigating Tensions in the Secular Workplace by Christians in the Social Services: Findings from an Aotearoa New Zealand Study by Dr Rachel Tallon and Dr Joey Domdom is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License.

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ABSTRACT

The social services are a value-laden field of employment as work involves frequent ethical decision-making around issues that relate to values, such as end of life, sexuality and so forth. Tensions can exist between individual practitioners, their employment agency and society, concerning ethics and values. This paper presents partial findings from a qualitative study that explored the tensions or issues faced by 16 Christian social-service practitioners working in non-faith-based settings by asking the question, “What tensions do Christian practitioners face in secular organisations?” In particular, we present themes from the findings that show utilisation of Indigenous cultural and/or spiritual practices to strengthen faith and work. The context is Aotearoa New Zealand, where there are unique relationships between religions (both from colonial settlers and Indigenous people), spirituality, secularism and the provision of social services. How these various aspects intersect and affect the Christian practitioner was of interest to this study. This paper may contribute to further research concerning the use of Indigenous practices in modern social services and healthcare.

KEYWORDS

Social-service practitioners, Christian social-service practitioners, social work, spirituality, secularism

INTRODUCTION

The social services are a value-laden field of employment as the work centres around ethical decision-making and interpersonal relationships. Tensions can exist between individual practitioners, their employment agency and society, concerning ethics and values in general. In this paper we present partial findings from a qualitative study that explored the tensions or issues faced by 16 Christian social-service practitioners working in non-faith-based settings. Our context is Aotearoa New Zealand, where there are unique relationships between religions (both from colonial settlers and Indigenous people), spirituality, secularism and the provision of social services. How these various aspects intersect and affect the Christian practitioner was of interest to this study. Paying attention to a social service worker’s internal religion and/or spirituality is important as it does affect their outward behaviour (Oxhandler et al., 2015).

For this paper we present two themes from our studies. Firstly, that utilisation and appreciation of Indigenous spiritual and/or cultural practices can strengthen both faith and work for the Christian practitioner. Secondly, that religion, possibly under the umbrella of Indigenous religious practices may be making a comeback in the secular context of social services. This paper raises questions about the relationship between these aspects from the perspective of the Christian social-service practitioner.

As this paper goes forward for consideration, Aotearoa New Zealand’s Labour Government is managing the Covid-19 pandemic using various methods. One of these is a mandate for health and education workers to be vaccinated. Such mandates are not always received positively by all people and a small minority has resisted government efforts. In this instance different value systems and beliefs are thrown into the limelight, whereas previously they might not have been questioned or exposed. The vaccination mandate is but one example whereby a social-service practitioner’s values or life choices may conflict with those of their employer, or their clients, their professional association and even general society, or legal frameworks. Decisions around the use of ‘alternative’

medicines, counselling techniques, foster care, the right to terminate life and other such social and health issues are part of everyday work for those in the 'helping professions'.

The Christian social-service practitioner, like any other person, negotiates their values with their role and life in society. Christians are not uniform in their faith practice and there are a multitude of denominations that create a diverse following. With such diversity, for Christians at work there is also no unity around their approach to the intersection of their faith and their occupation, as Kreiger (1994, p. 17) states:

Virtually all Christians in the workplace relate faith and work explicitly or indirectly, with certainty or with doubt, passionately or lifelessly, with strong integration or no integration. For some, faith and work is a seamless web, richly and creatively connected. For others, they seem like awkward fits or even contradictions, distant and miles apart.

In the literature on spirituality and religion in the workplace (SRW), the terms are often described as binary opposites (Harris et al., 2018; Lips-Wiersma & Mills, 2002; Paul Victor & Treschuk, 2019). Religion as a set of beliefs, practices and rituals may be seen as more ordered and communal than spirituality, which is often framed as less organised and more individual. Both operate within an ontology that is beyond the 'what we can see' in that they consider life to exist in the 'supernatural' or 'transcendent' sense. Paul Victor and Treschuk (2019), in reviewing the literature, found that spirituality is presented more as an abstract and subjective term that has multiple layers of meaning. This means spirituality can function within a religion and without, as well as within a "blending of different religions and philosophical traditions" (p. 2).

BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH STUDY

As educators in the vocational sector, teaching in the social services, our interest is in the intersection between practitioners who hold to a Christian faith and their practice in secular workplaces. We also acknowledge increasing discussions and questions by our students during the 2020 referenda held by the Labour Government. The referenda concerned legalising marijuana and the right to terminate life. Both issues were of interest to our students, many of whom come from Christian backgrounds. Bearing the questions of our students in mind, we found that there was little in the literature concerning religion, spirituality and faith that was easily accessible for our students. There was also little concerning the Aotearoa New Zealand context, except around the incorporation of Māori spirituality and rituals.

One exception to this was Stirling's (2008) research on New Zealand social workers' perspectives on spirituality at work. He found that there were differences in acceptance of faith and religion between those that worked in faith-based organisations and those that worked in state organisations. State organisations are secular in that Aotearoa New Zealand has no state, official or established religion, and that the church and state institutions are separate. We discuss later, however, that the history of social services in this country is strongly linked to faith-based institutions. Although Aotearoa New Zealand is a secular country there is a degree of recognition and acknowledgement of public practices such as Christmas, Easter and more recently Matariki (Māori New Year in June). Māori spiritual beliefs derived from the country's Christian heritage and Māori culture are increasingly supported by government (Human Rights Commission, 2014).

In our study, the web of connections between faith, work and the individual included Te Ao Māori, which can be thought of as the ways of being, or the epistemology, of the Indigenous culture of Aotearoa New Zealand which has a strong spiritual element. Within Aotearoa New Zealand's unique context of a settler society and religious pluralism under a secular state, it is important to explore how practitioners who adhere to a certain faith work within this environment. Our study was interested in how Christian social-service practitioners work within this context in secular organisations. Our research question was: "What tensions do Christian practitioners face in secular organisations?" We were careful not to proscribe specific tensions, such as around ethical issues, or the nature of their tensions. The word 'tension' itself carries with it some fraught connotations, so we were intent on giving our participants the freedom to outline what this meant for them in their contexts. In our research methodology we did not direct the participants to consider Indigenous religion or spirituality.

This paper proceeds to provide some background to the Aotearoa New Zealand context before going on to discuss the role of Indigenous spirituality in the social-services sector and in our study.

Secularism in Aotearoa New Zealand

Settled by Polynesians in the 1300s, Aotearoa New Zealand was occupied for at least 600 years by these settlers, now called Māori, who extended their Pacific ontology as they adapted to their new land. This included detailed creation stories and a form of polytheism and animism that was duly recorded as such by early European colonists in the 19th century (Best, 1900). Prior to colonisation by the European, Māori did not distinguish the sacred from the secular – there was no ‘secular.’ For the Māori, their ontology, Te Ao Māori, was that the world was alive with mystery. Upon arrival of the colonisers, as with most Indigenous communities, they found the idea and rituals of an organised religion were as foreign to them as the colonisers were (Nongbri, 2015). Religion for the colonisers “was born out of a mix of Christian disputes about truth, European colonial exploits, and the formation of nation-states” (p. 154).

The colonisation of the country by European settlers began with a Christian inflection, which by the late 1800s was waning as the settlers sought to separate the church from the government in all but ceremonial form (Lineham, 2020; Pratt, 2016). During the 19th century, this ongoing separation of church from state reflected growing European disenchantment with religion, despite poet Thomas Bracken referring to New Zealand as ‘God’s own country.’ After World War One, there was a continued growth in positive attitudes towards secular thought, with free-thinking associations and decreasing church attendance. The church’s decline in influence that began in the mid-1800s was accelerating by the late 20th century and today Aotearoa New Zealand has one of the highest percentages of secular adherence in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (47% in the 2018 census ticked ‘no religion,’ Stats NZ, 2018). The state is slowly extricating itself from its more conservative Christian roots, with the passing of several liberal social laws in the past two decades and a move towards pluralism as befits a more diverse populace (Carlyon & Morrow, 2013; Crothers, 2020; Pratt, 2016; Raymond, 2017; Troughton & Lange, 2016). To Nongbri (2015), however, such movement towards a pluralistic, ‘more cross-culturally valid’ religious expression is simplistic and misguided in relation to engaging with the Indigenous communities. Towards a productive understanding, it is necessary to critically consider who defines religion, the sacred or the secular, and the importance of adherence to it (Nongbri, 2015).

While the ontological roots of this country are arguably in the metaphysical realm, in terms of Indigenous Māori spirituality or Christianity there has been a shift away from this towards secularity (Lineham, 2020). According to Wood (1996, p. 470) the secular state can be defined as “one in which government is limited to the saeculum or temporal realm.” In this situation, the state is independent of religion and religion is independent of the state. Since the late 1800s, as the state has slowly moved towards a more secular form, social structures and institutions that might have been infused with Christianity at their inception have become more and more secular, a process sociologists have termed ‘religious differentiation’ (Phillips, 2004). There is a temptation to consider a secular state as a religious vacuum, and Adhar (2013) cautions against this, arguing that we should consider secularism as a presence, as an ideology in its own right. Amongst ancient peoples, however, there were no life compartmentalisations such as ‘religious’ or ‘secular or non-religious’ (Nongbri, 2015). As could be deduced from this debate, such religious differentiation as experienced by the Indigenous people of this country and in various other countries is a recent conceptual development that has significant implications, including ‘living in two separate worlds’ (Kim et al., 2011, p. 203).

Background of social-service provision

The provision of social services in Aotearoa New Zealand has a long association with the Christian church as part of the European settlers’ Christian heritage (Phillips, 2014). The founding document between the early settlers and the Indigenous Māori people, the Treaty of Waitangi, signed in 1840, acknowledges Māori spiritual values and requests these be honoured and kept safe in the new partnership. The Treaty was not respected by the colonisers, Māori

spiritual practices were not preserved in law and the early history is one of repression, despite the early settlers' nominal inclusivity towards all religions in the government space (Lineham, 2020; Stephens, 2001). From the 1970s, with a national renaissance in Indigenous culture, and a political change towards honouring the Treaty of Waitangi, there was a move to be more inclusive at the level of government policy (Stanley-Clarke et al., 2021).

This change to honouring the Treaty can be noticed at the level of policy in the social-services sector, as there is now inclusion of spirituality as part of understandings of wellbeing (Durie, 2001). Spirituality is no longer viewed as a separate part of people's lives and is often viewed communally. The notion of faith or spirituality as being a private affair is a legacy of the increasing secularity of the country in the 20th century (Lineham, 2020). This division was not necessarily embraced by Māori following more traditional practices. For many Māori, spirituality could not be separated out from themselves and their connections to the land and their communities; their place in the world was always bound by the spiritual, which was always present (Ruwhiu, 2001).

Adhar (2004) argues that Māori spirituality has received greater state acceptance than other religions as part of this turn towards honouring the Treaty. The recognition of Indigenous cultural practices that may call upon spiritual ideas and mandate them as part of good practice has been an interesting development as part of this process. According to Adhar (2004) this has led to the situation that many modern Māori may not ascribe to the traditional pre-European religion, while many non-Māori Christians have begun to add traditional Māori spiritual ideas and rituals into their own spirituality and religious practices (Phillips, 2014).

Examples of these ideas or rituals include Māori protocols for formal gatherings or the eating of food (tikanga Māori) that may have a spiritual or a cultural basis to them. These might include prayers or songs that may have their primary function as being a ritual to demarcate a time and place, and to honour the local iwi (tribe) or the Treaty. Consequently, any actual spiritual intent, such as for personal renewal, reverence or conversion, may be subsumed for their practical usage. These rituals can be used or appropriated by non-Māori and the non-religious for purposes other than their original intent. Within the workplace this may increase the risk of appearing tokenistic or losing the spiritual or cultural significance as such aspects are subsumed into the practical. Knowledge, reverence and practice may become unevenly yoked.

The social-services sector in Aotearoa New Zealand sets out policies and codes of practice that are enacted by professional associations and practitioners. Key diagnostic and counselling tools across the social services, mandated by the state, now include Māori models of health and wellbeing which often have a spiritual element to them. Examples include Durie's Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie, 1982) and Te Pae Mahutanga (Durie, 1999) as well as Pere's Te Wheke model (Love, 2004). The state encourages conversations around the spiritual dimension/taha wairua of people's wellbeing, as they have not been prioritised in the past and they are deemed necessary for a holistic approach (Ministry of Health, 2015; Nelson-Becker & Moeke-Maxwell, 2020).

In sum, since the 1970s, there has been, within the 'secular' state system, a turn towards incorporating a spiritual element, despite increasing secularity in the population as recorded by the census. Adhar (2013) argues that there was a deinstitutionalisation of religion as it was slowly removed from state entities. Could it be claimed that the secular state has paid more attention to the non-secular spiritual realm in the move to honour contractual arrangements vis-à-vis the Treaty of Waitangi? Stirling (2008) argues that "challenges to incorporate spirituality as a legitimate area of concern for social work in New Zealand have come most strongly from tangata whenua [Māori]" (p. 162). Thus, it could be claimed that there has been a *re*-institutionalisation of religion in the public sector, with the positive inclusion of Māori religious and cultural practices. How these changes concern the Christian social-services practitioner at work in a nominally secular setting is of interest to us as researchers and educators. In this paper we have a view towards initiating discourse and further research that can aid current and future social-service professionals in their practice. The remainder of this paper presents findings from our study that identified this issue of incorporating Māori cultural and spiritual practices in the secular setting.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study presented here set out to explore what tensions faith-based practitioners encounter working in secular contexts. Three research questions guided the study:

- What do faith-based social service practitioners working in non-faith-based/secular organisations identify as challenges or tensions between their faith and their work?
- How do these professionals navigate these tensions?
- In terms of their own identity, how do they see these two areas of their lives, as both practitioner and Christian, working out?

The study began with a comprehensive literature review which then informed the stage of data collection. This second stage used a qualitative methodology as we were interested in participants' direct experiences of the phenomenon of faith at work and we wanted to leave space open for them to share what was significant for them. Qualitative methodology aids in providing a better understanding of a certain phenomenon as experienced directly by individuals, drawing on their own background, perspectives and worldview (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). This study therefore aligned with a social constructivist approach that Creswell (2014) argues is important for understanding how meanings are formed through interaction with others and with society.

Ethics approval was granted by the WelTec and Whitireia Research Committee (REF 279-2020) in December 2020 for 16 participants to be interviewed by two research assistants. A snowball recruitment process followed as invitations were distributed. A total of 16 interviews were conducted by two research assistants over three months, May to July 2021. As one interview was with a professional couple who both worked as trauma counsellors, the total number of participants was 17. Each semi-structured interview lasted between 30 to 90 minutes, and most were conducted over the Zoom platform. Each participant met the criteria of being a professional practitioner in social services in Aotearoa New Zealand, working in a non-faith-based organisation. They each identified as affiliated to and/or a practising member of a Christian faith group.

The 16 participants (the couple is counted as one) were spread from around the country and from many professions. Specific demographic data (such as age, ethnicity) was not collected from each person, but some general characteristics of the participants can be presented. These include that there were nine women and eight men interviewed (splitting the couple in this case, $n = 17$), and of these, five identified as Catholic, three as Baptist, three as Presbyterian, one Christadelphian, one Pentecostal and for the remaining three it was a mixture of many Christian affiliations. Of the 16, six were social workers, four were counsellors, three were nurses (one of whom worked in youth mental health), one was a health-centre administrator, one an educational psychologist and one a teacher. The participants were not asked to identify their ethnicity, so it is unknown if any of them identified specifically as Māori. Approximately half worked in the private sector and the others for state organisations, or indirectly for the state.

Each interview generated a transcript which the participants were able to check, as part of the consent process. The transcripts were then analysed separately by the two researchers, who identified various themes. These separate analyses were then brought together in a process of cross-tabulating themes of significance, found separately by both researchers. Thematic analysis involves a reiterative process of reading, coding and identification of themes from the transcribed interviews. After this initial creation of various themes, the process was then refined as the researchers reread the transcripts with the aim of reviewing the themes. This second review then resulted in more defining of the central themes and a clearer picture of the overall findings from the transcripts. This reiterative process is part of what Braun and Clarke (2006) describe as important to ensure rigour in sorting through the data. As part of the process, the researchers discussed and identified any potential hunches or preconceived ideas that they may have gained from their observation or the literature (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

FINDINGS

In this paper we present two themes identified in the study. Our first is that the use of Indigenous Māori spiritual or cultural practices (henceforth referred to as tikanga Māori) in social service settings can strengthen the Christian practitioner's faith and work, but that the reception of tikanga Māori can be diverse. Our second theme is that religion, vis-à-vis Indigenous religious practices, may be more acceptable in the secular place of social services than it has previously been. As the participants were asked to describe any tensions, these were grouped under various thematic headings in our analysis. In this paper we are presenting our analysis of discussion concerning the theme of tikanga Māori.

These results are not conclusive, nor can any generalisations be made from them; they are partial findings from our wider study. We present them as interesting and unexpected findings that we hope will encourage further research. Reference to tikanga Māori was identified as a minor theme by both researchers separately. Only four of the 16 participants mentioned tikanga Māori and so these results are just part of the findings from this study. The interviewers did not specifically ask questions concerning tikanga Māori or Indigenous practice, thus the meanings the participants gave to these concepts are unprompted. Although these results are few in number, for us they 'ring true' in that they support our personal observations and anecdotal findings from our own teaching.

Theme 1a: Benefit to daily practice

The first finding is that all four participants who mentioned tikanga Māori found the use of it to be beneficial to their daily practice. This was manifested in two ways: firstly, in setting aside time to reflect and consider the spiritual space in their work through prayers or karakia and waiata (Māori prayers and songs); secondly, in the more communal act of bringing colleagues together in terms of rituals and practices. Tikanga Māori may involve learning te Reo (many organisations encourage learning the Māori language), presenting one's pepeha (family history and connections to place), and other cultural behaviours and rituals that are not necessarily seen as having an overt spiritual component. State organisations encourage the saying of karakia, or a mihi whakatau (proverb or saying) at the start and close of formal meetings, and it is rare for a government official to introduce themselves in a formal setting without giving their pepeha. Many state organisations (and others) have begun a process of engaging with Māori, learning more about the Treaty of Waitangi and implementing tikanga Māori in daily practice and custom (The Treaty Resource Centre is one example of an education provider that works with organisations). This inclusion has particularly grown since the establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal in 1975, which was commissioned to inquire into Māori claims on the application of the Treaty principles (Waitangi Tribunal, 2014).

In our findings, rituals associated with tikanga Māori brought in a spiritual aspect to an otherwise secular environment, as this response illustrates:

So, I've felt very connected in that regard and understood in most of the spaces that I've been in over the past kind of year, and year or two years. I think, so you know, like an example of that is we will do prayer and karakia most mornings at the start of work. Most people in my office, whether Christian or have another belief have a sense and understanding of that spirituality. We have conversations about faith all the time. We look at cases from a holistic point of view. (Participant 12)

For this participant, the practice of doing karakia in their workplace is perceived to be in a similar realm as performing rituals, for Christian and other religions. Along with their colleagues, they have not only accepted this practice, but it has developed in them a sense and understanding of the spiritual. Our original research question asked participants to identify any tensions. However, it can be seen here that the participant can see a positive aspect of tikanga in the workplace, allowing spiritual conversations, whereas that may not have been the case without the tikanga.

Theme 1b: Diverse reception

The four participants saw tikanga Māori as similar to their own Christian faith and were positive concerning its use in their place of work. However, another finding is that not all practitioners are 'on board' with tikanga Māori. As this participant explains, his colleague was only going to engage to a level that they were happy with:

Then they professed to being an atheist ... So, I guess that comes up early on, and I guess we're going on a Te Ao Māori journey, our organisation, understanding tikanga, protocol too, and they essentially have said, "That's all well and good. But actually I'm only going to engage to a point." (Participant 6)

This participant's account indicates the diverse reception of tikanga Māori as a spiritual practice within a secular work environment. It is notable, however, that for this participant's colleague it could be culturally reasonable to have tikanga Māori in the secular space, but full acceptance of the rituals as spiritual practices is perceived to be external to what is required of them. In some manner, they have adopted the practice at a nominal level. This nominal acceptance of religious practice or custom is also reported elsewhere in the SRW literature (Casey, 1999; Darrell, 2017; Furman et al, 2004; Lips-Wiersma et al, 2009). This is a clear example of tension being expressed by a colleague who felt that the tikanga and protocol was agreeable only up to a point.

Theme 2: Acceptance and usage by secular workplaces

The second finding is that the participants reported that the use of state-endorsed models of health and wellbeing that are from a Māori perspective enhanced their practice. Being able to *legitimately* include spirituality in discussions and even assessments was appreciated and welcomed. The following excerpt is from a participant who suggests being aware of spirituality at work and further explains the advantages of using Durie's Te Whare Tapa Whā model:

So one of the things that is starting to form more in my work is to be aware of the spiritual component of the work. Te Whare Tapa Whā model, the Māori model of health, involves spirituality as one of the four walls of the whare [house]. And I'm becoming more and more inclined to ask a client, "So, do you have any spirituality, worldview, philosophy, religion that might be relevant to your issue or to our discussion?" I think that comes from the awareness that there is a spiritual component to people's lives that maybe a lot of counsellors don't necessarily go to or feel comfortable with. And so, I think that means that the work can be more holistic, more complete. (Participant 11)

Since the 1980s, training in the social services has included Māori health models and they are often well known in general discourse. Specific education on spirituality, and in this case Te Whare Tapa Whā's taha wairua (spiritual aspect), presents a gap in training social-service practitioners in Aotearoa New Zealand, as shown by the narrative above. There is a growing attention to this gap, however, as shown in evidence on non-Māori social-work students' application of spirituality to their practice as social workers (Phillips, 2014). Our research was interested in any tensions, and in the above extract the participant identifies that many counsellors do not feel comfortable with exploring the spiritual component of a client's life.

In the following extract, the participant, a counsellor, finds that Te Whare Tapa Whā model helps her with conducting a more holistic assessment of her client. This experience, however, is reflective of the inherent tension, considering that the majority of her clients identified or made reference to Te Whare Tapa Whā without explicitly identifying with a particular religion, except for three of them.

I would probably say ... so, I have 24 client sessions a week and three of them have identified themselves to me as Christian. The rest of them, spirituality and faith has come up in conversations with most of them because Te Whare Tapa Whā, I often use when I'm starting out with people, I used that as a model to measure where they're at with self-care and what areas we might need to strengthen, so that when we start doing the therapeutic work, that's like putting scaffolding up around the house first to make sure that the house is strengthened before we start kind of pulling that stuff apart, and I use that as a metaphor with them as well, and so we always look at the spiritual wall as well. (Participant 1)

In this extract we can see that, despite the obvious tension within the participant experiences, there is sense of gratitude for the model as it legitimises the bringing in of the spiritual dimension to the counselling session. However, directly after mentioning this, the participant then goes on to reveal that the mention of the spiritual aspect is a surprise to some clients, which in itself can be an experience of tension in how to respond to them:

And a lot of times people will just kind of look at me almost terrified like, oh my goodness, you're going to make me have a religion, and most of them will say, "Or do you mean like religion or something? I'm not religious." And so, I just talked about how, you know, for some people, it is religion. Some people, it's a faith that's not connected with a religion, but for other people it's about connecting in with nature or playing with their kids, or grandkids, or it's whatever feeds that in an energy, that is ourselves. And they all relax and go, "Oh yeah, okay, I like going for a walk with my dogs or whatever." There is always an element of spirituality in our discussions at some point, but most of my clients aren't Christian and none of my clients have talked about praying in sessions. It's not something that I overtly put out there. (Participant 1)

As a Christian counsellor in a secular practice Participant 1 is able to bring an element of spirituality into her practice, but she has a broad sense of the spiritual – as something not necessarily connected to a specific religion. Thus, the incorporation of the spiritual aspect vis-à-vis a Māori health model is her way of including spirituality without proselytising. It is a legitimising of her ontology at her secular workplace. This legitimising – and the conscious expression of it, is recognition of the tensions that are faced by these participants as they reflect on their Christian identity in the workplace.

DISCUSSION

The participants' descriptions of tikanga Māori as a positive aspect to their practice was an interesting discovery in this research and prompted more consideration of the place of religious or cultural practice in the state social-services sector. As the study's findings reveal, religious or spiritual rituals and practices are being mandated and, in most cases, welcomed as part of the participants' workplace culture. It became apparent to us, however, through these narratives, that the secularity of the state was not as clear-cut as it might profess to be. Adhar (2013, p. 415) argues that secularism is a political philosophy – "a set of beliefs about the nature and basis of the state and its right ordering with regard to religion." In this sense, Adhar argues, the state cannot be neutral and therefore it cannot be fair to all (or no) religions. He goes on to say that in many situations, secular liberal states cannot avoid "taking sides between the religious citizens and the atheistic and rationalist communities" (p. 416). Dismissing religious or cultural artefacts will offend the religious who cherish them; retaining them may alienate people from other faiths or people who hold to no belief system. Therefore, as supported by our findings, further investigation into how secularism is politically and socio-culturally understood and practised within the context of Aotearoa New Zealand is warranted.

Based on our partial findings we would argue that there has been a re-institutionalisation of religion in the public sphere, namely the inclusion of Māori religious and cultural practices as part of the political process to honour the Treaty of Waitangi. This proposition is based on the participants' shared experiences in secular social services of being encouraged and affirmed in the use of state-endorsed models that are strongly linked with legitimised discussions, rituals and practices of religion and spirituality. In this manner, the spiritual aspect, or the 'transcendent' epistemology of a person, is acknowledged in the institutional policies and practices. The participants presented here acknowledged the state's approval of spirituality in practice via the lens of tikanga Māori. As Christians they saw this as aligned with their own worldviews and greeted it positively. This inclusion can be a form of benevolent secularism (Adhar, 2013). This may begin as secularism that tolerates or makes space for religion but, over time, the inclusion is less tokenistic and may become privileged and hegemonic.

Religious practices may be subsumed into the everyday so that they become naturalised. Starting the workday with a karakia or some other form of prayer, or suggesting to a client to consider their spiritual health, has become the norm in some secular spaces. This situation was advantageous for the Christians in this study, but this may not be the case for people of other faiths or no faith at all. Further research is warranted as to whether such practices are

viewed positively by others. There is, from time to time, comment in general media that expresses concerns over the religious ritual, or spiritual practice or acknowledgement becoming hegemonic (Gourley, 2022).

As these findings are small, they give rise to more questions for future research. In terms of the use of models of health that include a spiritual aspect, there needs to be more research as to whether the spiritual component is open enough to accommodate other religions and other forms of spirituality as well as the non-spiritual. A spirituality-infused language may be off-putting for some people, and yet welcomed by others. As Aotearoa New Zealand is a pluralistic society, whereby all religions (and no religion) are treated equally, we wondered how this worked in reality with honouring Te Tiriti. As the state moves to honour Te Tiriti, Te Ao Māori may become an ontological basis for health and social services. The participants in this study are thoughtful professionals who recognise that the spiritual or religious aspects of life with which they were familiar could be a legitimate part of their practice with clients. The participants also saw tensions of usage, such as tokenism and proselytising, and are careful in their work, placing the clients' best interests at heart. The comments of these practitioners show that within the pluralist state, awareness and careful consideration of competing and complementary ontologies are necessary. Adhar's (2013) concerns that this balancing act is difficult for the pluralist state can be responded to – in that the educated and deliberate professional is able to balance these competing aspects.

CONCLUSION

The findings presented here are part of a wider study. They are interesting and provide context for further areas of investigation. They indicate the need for further discussion on the ontological and epistemological foundations of tikanga Māori as spiritual and religious expressions within the social-services environment. Furthermore, these findings support the need for further clarity on the role and practice of spirituality and religion in social services specifically within the Aotearoa New Zealand context. This conclusion aligns with the call to encourage research in spirituality and religion in the public health and secular arenas (Egan & Timmins, 2019). We have presented evidence of both acceptance and caution towards the *re-institutionalisation* of spirituality in the public sphere (Crisp, 2018). The role of spirituality in social-services and public-health research remains marginal and we trust that this paper stimulates more research.

GLOSSARY

karakia	prayer
pepeha	family history and connections to place
Te Ao Māori	the Māori world or epistemology
Te Whare Tapa Whā	a Māori health model developed by Mason Durie, consisting of four walls of health: physical, spiritual, mental and family wellbeing
tikanga Māori	practices and customs associated with Māori culture
waiata	song

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UNFETTERED RESILIENCE OF SCHOOL ARCHIVISTS IN MAINTAINING THE VALUE OF RECORDS TO SUPPORT THE NEW ZEALAND SCHOOL CURRICULUM

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Resilience in the workplace and community



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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore the key function of school archives and to highlight the important roles school archivists play in maintaining the value of records to support the curriculum. Although school archives play an important role in the school, little has been researched in New Zealand about the challenges school archivists face and their unfettered resilience to push through those obstacles to maintain the value of school records to support the curriculum. This article is part of a study in progress that employs an interpretive qualitative approach to understand the perspectives of school archivists on their purpose. The perspectives of seven school archivists from four regions of New Zealand are presented. The findings reveal the core functions of the school archive as a source of information for researchers, family members of past students, and corporate entities. The archive supports teaching and learning by providing teachers with useful and unique teaching aids from the collection. It also serves to preserve the identity and memory of the school. Specific tasks of the school archivist include collecting items for the archive, organising the collection, reporting, and displaying the materials for easy access and use by those who need them. Certain resources enable the archivist to achieve their purposes, but their passion is a key enabler. The main challenges school archivists face relate to issues with training and skills development, resourcing, recognition and awareness, inadequate facilities and collaboration. The study has useful implications for archival research in New Zealand as it discusses an area that has not been explored before. This article is limited to the perspectives of only seven school archivists, meaning it can be difficult to form a generalisation of school archivists in the whole of New Zealand. However, the study is still in progress and the author hopes to gather more perspectives in order to make a comprehensive generalisation.

KEYWORDS

School archives, archivists, school records, archival research, information management

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is twofold. Firstly, to explore the key functions of the school archive and the main challenges school archivists face in performing their role. Secondly, to highlight the unfettered resilience of New Zealand school archivists to effectively maintain the value of school records and relevant school heritage materials despite the many challenges they face. The term 'resilience' has been applied in many disciplines and it has been defined as people's capacity to maintain psychological and physical wellbeing in the face of adversities (Zhao et al., 2021). In this study, 'unfettered resilience' is defined as the unrestrained capabilities of people to push through obstacles and difficulties to achieve their purpose and value. In this context, school archivists' resistance to challenges as they maintain the value of school records is examined.

One of the key industry areas of interest to Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITPs) in New Zealand is information management. The information management industry comprises galleries, libraries, archives, museums, and information and records management (GLAMiR). A key component of information management is archives and records management. Analysis of relevant literature suggests that the archivist's role is central to information management functions within the GLAMiR sector, yet it is one of the least recognised by key stakeholders and is inadequately resourced (Chawner, 2015; Corbett, 2019). For example, it has been emphasised that the limited permitted exceptions for archives in the Copyright Act 1994 are an obstacle to archives and museums

attaining efficient information management (Corbett, 2019). Also, it has been found that courses in archives and recordkeeping qualifications have traditionally too few student numbers to justify separate programmes for bachelor and master degrees (Chawner, 2015, p. 18). The inadequate attention received by the archives sector, and the challenges archivists face in New Zealand, affect all types of archives. But it appears the school archives sector is the most hard-hit. Thus, because of the interest shown by the ITPs in information management, this author is motivated to share some of the issues affecting school archives management with the ITP community. The school archives aspect of the whole archives and records management field appears to have received little attention in the New Zealand archives and records management literature. This study is an attempt to fill that gap.

Schools produce rich historical records such as yearbooks; photographs of past school events; letters; school magazines and newspapers; and sports, drama and other cultural paraphernalia. The records that have archival value are kept and maintained in the school archives. The records in the school archives are different from the schools' official records, such as students' personal information, admission and enrolment records, progress records, results and staff records (details on the different types of school records are provided in the literature review section). School archives not only document the history and culture of the school, but sometimes also reflect the history of the community in which the school is located, the region, and the nation. Experts in school archives identify that learning about school records and archives can benefit students in many ways and can have a direct connection to their lives (Tilley, 2008). Teachers can also understand how to effectively use some of the materials in the archives as teaching aids; however, school archivists do not appear to receive the necessary recognition and aren't well supported to effectively maintain these records. The literature discussing the state of archives in New Zealand examines many types of archives but fails to mention school archives (Sanderson, 2014), which indicates that even archival researchers may have forgotten about them. That is one reason why this study is important – to create awareness of the importance of the functions of school archives and the role of the school archivist in maintaining the value of the school's historical records to support the delivery of the curriculum. Initial engagement with school archivist groups reveals some of the challenges they face. For instance, some do not receive much support from key stakeholders, including principals and tumuaki, boards, and proprietors of training and professional-development courses. Most school archivists are not given full-time positions because their roles are usually not considered as important as others in the school. This study seeks to examine the key roles archives play in maintaining the value of school records, and how their function supports the school's activities, including curriculum delivery. The overarching aim of this study is to highlight the importance of the school archives and the usefulness of the role of the school archivist. A key objective is to emphasise that the school archives and the role the archivists play in the school can be harnessed to support the effective delivery of the curriculum. This paper is part of research in progress that explores the perspectives of archivists on the key challenges they are facing in the performance of their task. The study is guided by the following research questions:

- What are the core functions of the school archive?
- What are the main challenges school archivists face in performing their roles?
- What enables a school archivist to be resilient to achieve their purpose?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature analysis in this paper hinges on two key concepts – school archives and resilience. As indicated in the introductory section, there do not appear to be any studies discussing the functions of school archives, the roles of the school archivist, and the issues they face in New Zealand. The Society of American Archivists identifies seven specific types:

- College and university archives preserve the materials relating to a specific university or college and make the materials accessible to the institution, its alumni, and the public.

- Corporate archives are an archival department within a company or corporate body. They preserve the records of the business of the company and materials of archival value in that corporation. They usually exist to serve the needs of staff. The level of public access depends on the type of corporation.
- Government archives are repositories that collect materials relating to local, state, or national government entities. Examples of this group of archives include the National Archives, City Archives, etc.
- Religious archives are collections relating to the traditions or institutions of a major faith, denomination within a faith, or individual places of worship. Depending on the type of religious group, the materials kept in such archives may or may not be available to the public.
- Special collections consist of materials from or about specific individuals, families and organisations deemed to have significant historical value.
- Museums are a type of archive that collects items of historical significance with greater emphasis on exhibiting those items. Such collections are usually diverse artefacts or artworks rather than books and paper records, etc. (Society of American Archivists, 2021).

The main resource of archival literature in New Zealand is *Informing New Zealand*, published by the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand, in which experts discuss several information management topics, including archival concepts and issues. One of the main chapters is dedicated to discussing the different types of archival organisations in New Zealand (Sanderson, 2014). The specific types of archives identified by Sanderson include:

- Local authority archives, including archives of the central government, which are usually associated with the local councils of various cities. They are regulated by the Public Records Act (2005).
- Collecting archives which largely house private archives accessible to the New Zealand public. Specific examples of this type of archives in New Zealand include the Alexander Turnbull Library, Hocken Library, and other university archives.
- Religious archives, similar to what is defined in the list of the Society of American archivist, specific examples of this type of archives in New Zealand include the Society of Mary archive, the Home of Compassion in Wellington, Sisters of Mercy in Auckland, the archives of the Methodist Church, the archives of the Presbyterian Church, the archives of the Salvation Army, New Zealand Jewish Archives and the Rātana Archives.
- Business archives in New Zealand are similar to what the Society of American Archivists identifies as corporate archives. Specific examples in New Zealand include the Fletcher Trust Archive, Challenge Corporation Limited, Tasman Pulp and Paper Company Limited, etc.
- Media-specific archives are a type of archive established in New Zealand to deal with records created in formats that require specific care. Specific examples include the New Zealand Sound Archives, the New Zealand Film Archive, etc.
- Iwi archives focus on Māori documents (Sanderson, 2014).

As can be observed from the examples above, there are detailed descriptions of several types of archives except school archives. This study, therefore, seeks to focus on school archives and highlight the importance of the school archivist's role not only to the schools they serve but also to the communities and regions the schools are located.

School archives

The Ministry of Education Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga provides schools with guidelines to learn about the management of school records and access. Under those guidelines, administration staff, librarians, archivists, principals, tumuaki, boards and proprietors are all required to learn about the archiving and disposing of school records under the Public Records Act 2005 (Ministry of Education, 2022a). The Public Records Act 2005 does not specifically make provision for the management of school records, but it allows Archives New Zealand to actively care for documents that are identified as important for New Zealand history, covering all records, which also include school records. Under this provision, every public office and the local authority must create and maintain full and

accurate records of its affairs, in accordance with normal, prudent business practices, including the records of any matter that is contracted out to an independent contractor (Public Records Act, 2005). Based on this provision, the Ministry of Education has developed an information pack for schools to guide them on the types of records they must create, maintain and archive. This record schedule comprises six record categories:

- *Student records.* Includes enrolment records, attendance records, admission and withdrawal records, progress records relating to individual students, punishment records, and students' work.
- *Governance.* Board minutes and agenda, charters, strategic plans and goals documents, annual reports, school policies, Board of Trustee (BOT) election administration records, and Board of Trustees (BOT) correspondence.
- *Personnel.* Personnel records of staff and principals, payroll, salaries, leave, staff attendance, staff grievances and disputes, general recruitment administration, training, and development correspondence, and accident register.
- *Finance.* Routine accounting records, loans and investments, budgeting and financial reporting, funding, insurance policies, claims, audit records, and records of fraud and theft.
- *Property and administration.* Land ownership, leases, occupancy licenses, equipment leases, building plans, property maintenance, disposal of major capital assets, stores, supplies, asset register, vehicle records, contracts, tender reports and documentation, routine administration, and teaching materials.
- *Historical.* Photographs, major school publications, newsletters and circulars, newspaper clippings, documentation of significant school events, former Department of Education filmstrips, memorabilia, and records related to a school's special character (integrated schools) or designated character (schools established under Section 156 of the Education Act 1989) (Ministry of Education, 2022b).

Although not all schools may create or keep records in all the categories above, and the examples provided may not be exhaustive, schools should still be able to fit their records into a relevant category. The Ministry of Education's School Records Fact Sheet defines a clear process and authority on how long these types of records can be kept, why they have to be kept, and what needs to happen to them when they are of no further use to the school. The records that are of long-term value are identified and kept as the school's archives (Ministry of Education, 2016). Records that are considered to have broader archival value (particularly examples from the first five categories) are eventually required to be sent to Archives New Zealand to be kept for the long term. A careful look at the Ministry of Education Fact Sheet on school records retention and disposal schedule reveals:

1. Admission and withdrawal registers, punishment records, minutes and agenda of the BOT meetings, strategic plans, annual reports, significant school policies, national or internal awards, accident forms, etc., are sent to Archives New Zealand after they are kept in the school for a period between 10–25 years.
2. Other records such as enrolment records, daily attendance registers, student progress records, students' work, operational correspondence, lease agreements, occupancy licenses, equipment leases, and all other staff personnel records, including payrolls, salaries, leave, etc., can be destroyed by the school after a period between 7–12 years.
3. The school's historical records including; photographs of classes, staff, sports teams, cadets, educational activities, class trips, social events, musical/staged productions, reunions, annual yearbooks, magazines, newsletters, recorded oral histories, ceremonial occasions, routine correspondence, advertising, ministry circular/gazettes, training brochures, etc., are kept by the school for as long as needed (Ministry of Education, 2022b).

This distinction between records retention and disposal shows that establishing a school archive is different from keeping and maintaining official school records. The materials kept in the school archives basically comprise those in the third category. A school archive is, therefore, the historical collection of the school and its associated backstories. According to Tilley (2008), the primary purposes of a school archive can be defined as:

- A repository for the collection and preservation of historically valuable documents relating to the history of the school or the community, which otherwise would be lost.
- Constituting an element of a programme for teaching research-related skills to students.

The core function of the archive is to collect and maintain records of enduring value (Society of American Archivists, 2022). Thus, obtaining records of value to the school, and preserving them for as long as needed by the school, is its key function. Fernekes and Rosenberg emphasise that collecting and documenting school history helps to build an important memory programme, however highlighting and promoting the importance and functions of the archives to the school's community can be a daunting challenge (2008, p. 154). The school archives provide tangible evidence that can exist for a long time to demonstrate memories and meanings of significant events in the lives of participants, especially alumni (Mackey, 2012). Human tendency to project emotions onto artifacts as a means of managing inexpressible feelings and triggered memories offers some explanation for reactions to such objects (Mackey, 2012). School archives reveal how an institution's legacy is cultivated and preserved and how all the 'stuff' the school collects over time can reveal the culture of the place (St Germain, 2016).

Resilience

There are numerous studies on the demonstration or application of resilience, in various disciplines including psychology (Knutson et al., 2021; D'Costa et al., 2021;), healthcare (Fu et al., 2021; Giri & Maurya, 2021), social and community groups (West et al., 2021; Shikimoto, et al., 2021; Shevell & Denov, 2021) and library and information studies (Swanson, 2021). A common element in these studies is that a significant change presented critical challenges that the professionals in the situations discussed did not shrink from. Instead they rose to the challenges, adapted to the changes, and their capacity to adapt at different levels within a system enabled them to maintain high-quality care and make significant differences. School archivists in New Zealand appear to be making similar adaptations to the challenges they face. That may explain why they show unfettered resilience and achieve progress in their role of maintaining the value of records to support the curriculum. The study seeks a deeper understanding of this resilience.

APPROACH

An interpretive qualitative approach is employed for this study because little is known about the role of school archivists and the issues they are facing – a deeper understanding of the issues is required – thus a qualitative approach is suitable. The main concern of a qualitative approach is to find ways of making sense of a context and its subjective meanings (Walsham, 2006, p. 320). Such methods are exploratory, and researchers use them to explore a topic about which little is known (Creswell 2003, p. 74). They are helpful in leading to a specific outcome (Kaplan & Maxwell 2005, p. 33). The population for the study is school archivists. Data is collected through semi-structured interviews to gather perspectives from a sample of school archivists from high schools and colleges in various regions of New Zealand, including Wellington, Waikato, Christchurch and Auckland (Appendix 1).

Initial contacts with school archivists in the Wellington region were established and a snowball sampling technique was used to identify other interviewees, with the hope of achieving saturation after the 20th interview. The study is still in progress and seven interviews have been conducted to date. A thematic analysis technique is used to identify key ideas. All interviews are recorded using a digital voice-recorder and transcribed for ease of analysis. Emerging concepts and key ideas are grouped into relevant themes to fully understand the role of school archives and the issues school archivists are facing. (Interviewees are currently labelled Participant 1 to Participant 7.)

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

The findings presented (from the seven interviews conducted at the time of writing) for the conference proceedings are preliminary and therefore limited, but nevertheless necessary, to create awareness of this study and to attract

more interviewees. Future interviews may shed further light on these preliminary findings and reveal new themes that may more strongly represent the general perspectives of school archivists in New Zealand.

Types of records

Most of the records found in the school archives in this study are memorabilia of the schools' past, collected in an attempt to preserve heritage. These materials include photographs of major sports events; awards; visits from famous former staff and students; class photos; reunions; jerseys of past students playing in national sports teams; old school uniforms showing how they have changed over time, to mention just a few. Records relating to governance, personnel, finance and students' information were not found in the archives. Interviewees explained that these records are usually destroyed by the school administration when the scheduled disposal is due. For instance Participant 3 and Participant 2 described their perspectives as:

The school archivist is usually not involved in the decision to keep or destroy such records. They are not kept here. The administrators have a separate room to keep [these]. I only look after the materials you see here [pointing to some memorabilia of the school history]. (Participant 3)

When I [started working here], everything was scattered here [pointing to the historical materials]. I think they just dumped any material they are no longer using. But as you can see, I am arranging them gradually. There are other documents, but the administrators keep them in a separate room. I do not see those materials. The old magazines and newsletters are all kept here. The principal recently gave me some old correspondence, which I think are of good archival value. I've asked [the principal] to buy me more boxes to arrange those, and he has agreed, which is good. Then I'll use the glass cabinets for the trophies. I saw a colleague does that in their school and I'm trying to do something similar here. (Participant 2)

In other words, not every record of enduring value is kept in the school archive. Also, school archivists do not have much authority to determine what type of record goes in the school archive, although the Ministry of Education Fact Sheet mandates school archivists to collect and maintain all school records in accordance with the Public Records Act (2005) of New Zealand.

CORE FUNCTIONS OF THE ARCHIVES

Perspectives of the seven archivists engaged so far in this study reveal certain key functions archives perform in the school system, including those described in this section.

Sources of information

The school archive is an important source for researchers wanting information about the history of the school. According to the interviewees, such researchers are usually old students wanting some memories of their time in school to share. Sometimes families of old students, who have passed on, contact the archivist for information about the school life of their loved ones. There are also times when family members pull information from the school to surprise their loved ones on special events such as birthdays. For instance, Participant 5 explained that their archive had one major project recently where a mother was putting a book together with a professional photographer for her son's 50th birthday celebration. *"That was a lot of work for me. But I enjoyed it and felt fulfilled for helping them this way"* (Participant 5). The interview comments further reveal that the school archive is also a source of useful information for corporate entities who require certain facts about past staff members, particularly if they have gone on to great things. In this regard: *"One time, I was contacted by the literary executor of... [a named estate]. One of our teachers used to work with him and continued correspondence. But, alas, we don't hold the letters"* (Participant 6). Thus, the information provided by the school archives is useful not only to members of the school community but also to families and other entities external to the school.

Supporting teaching

When it comes to the school community, the archives support curriculum delivery by providing useful information for teachers to use in class. Some of the materials in the archives are used by teachers as teaching aids. Such teaching materials help students to understand some of the historical events of the school or the community where the school is located. This can assist their learning. Where necessary, some of the teachers invite the archivists into the classroom to talk about the backstories associated with the materials and the histories of the school. The interview comments reveal that this way of teaching history does not mean that archives can fully support the delivery of the new history curriculum for New Zealand schools. The New Zealand school history curriculum is a different form of history, with a broader narrative that goes beyond the history of the school. The history curriculum includes the narrative of the community and the whole country, but the history of the school focuses only on the narrative of the school. Participant 1, for instance, described this function of the archives:

Whereas I would love to think that the archivist would be involved in the new school history curriculum, I do sort of wonder in real terms. I guess it will be different for all schools. Yes, I do 'teach' the school history unit at ... [name of school] to Year 7s, but that is more to inculcate them into the ... [school] environment, traditions and history, than the school's place in New Zealand's history or local community – and [the person this school is named after] himself is/was a very complicated character for 11-year-olds to deal with. However, this is not a reason not to promote school archives.

In other words, even though the archives support teaching with materials in their collection, including the teaching of history, it can effectively only support the teaching of the history of the school, not the history of the whole country, as the narratives of history can be different from school to school and community to community.

Preserving identity and memory

Another function of the archives that came through in the participant interviews is the preservation of the schools' identity and memory for the future. The uniqueness of the school and its distinctive character, values and principles can be maintained over the year through the memorabilia, records and artefacts that are kept in the archives to remind students, staff and all stakeholders of what the school stands for. This helps the school to improve cherished values and do away with principles that are no longer relevant because of changes in their community. The archives, therefore, perform several tasks and roles to ensure that materials and their backstories are preserved for as long as needed.

KEY TASKS OF THE SCHOOL ARCHIVIST

The engagement with archivists reveals several specific tasks they perform, including both archive-related and non-archive-related tasks. Analysis of the comments shows the following archive-related tasks:

Collecting

The archivists collect materials and information relating to the school and after assessing their archival value, process them for long-term keeping. The materials can be anything that the school regards to have heritage significance, including those listed in the Ministry of Education's School Records Fact Sheet (discussed in Literature Review). These materials come in both physical and digital forms. The ability of the archivist to collect and retain any of these forms of archival materials depends on their skills and interest in the use of specific technologies. Participant 3, for instance, described the extent he goes to sometimes to collect archival information from some of the past students. He identifies elderly former students, preferably in their 70s, 80s and 90s, then he travels to their homes to listen to their stories about life in the school during their time as students. He will record these stories on video and keep them on the school's websites and social media platforms as digital archives. Other archivists stated that they do not trust digital platforms. They prefer print material, converting materials that come in digital forms

into print form for safe keeping. In describing some of the processes they follow to collect materials for the archives, Participant 4 said:

I take a proactive approach to history. That is a great deal of collecting items, particularly as I am trying to print some items like Covid emails. I don't trust the Cloud. We accession donations only now. But this is in a Word document, so they are searchable, and I am also creating finding aids for collection items and research I have done to date, so easy to check if we hold anything. Work in progress!

In other words, the archivist's discretion is instrumental in the collecting of items, and the form of the materials depends on their interest in specific types of technologies used in collecting and keeping the archive.

Organising

The archivists follow various processes to organise and maintain the collections of their schools. They apply different forms of cataloguing, listings, indexing processes, and techniques for adding metadata to order the school's historical information. These processes enable easy access and use of the collection by those who need it. Because of their level of skills and training, not all archivists can follow these tasks effectively under standard archival practices. But they find their own ways to ensure that materials are well organised and made as easily accessible as possible. Participant 7, for instance, was amazed other archivists find time to catalogue the materials in their collection:

I only try to keep up with filling and running a database, which means uploading all the photographs and adding metadata each year. But also trying to get previously digitised materials as well as historical items that have been scanned or are new donations. Big job.

Thus, organising archival materials improves access as it enables the archivist to provide swift and effective responses to requests. But school archivists do not follow the same pattern of organisational processes because of differences in their skill levels and knowledge of archive management.

Reporting

A key task performed by the school archivist is to write reports in various forms about their work and activities for different stakeholders including school heads and principals. Apart from writing formal reports to update principals and boards on the activities and the state of the archives, the archivists also write articles for school magazines, yearbooks and the school newsletters. These articles help students, staff, and other members of the school community as well as stakeholders to understand the nature and purpose of the archives, and the importance of keeping the materials for the school's heritage and memory. These reports and articles are important ways for the archivist to create awareness of the archives in the school community.

Displaying

Another key task of archivists is to create awareness of the archives in the school through displays. The archivists periodically display materials to the school community and the public. Most of the archivists interviewed explain that they plan to continue mounting such exhibitions as they not only remind the school community of the existence of the archives but also help people to know what they can request from the archives, how they can search for those materials, and how the information can be of importance to them. The displays also help the archivists to understand which of the materials are most popular and how best they can be preserved for as long as possible.

ENABLERS

The interview data revealed certain elements that enable archivists to perform their tasks and help the archive to achieve its functions. Some of the enablers identified include key resources provided to the archivists by their schools. The resources include tablets and computers to help perform not only their archival work, but also other necessary work that the school sometimes calls upon them to do when needed. Most archivists are also provided with comfortable workstations and storage spaces. Although some of these spaces are challenging to work in, they still enable the archivists to achieve their purpose.

Most of the schools have specific pages on their websites that are dedicated to their online archives. Such online spaces help with the display of some of the archival materials and provide a useful opportunity to share information about the archives and the work the archivists do. In addition to the websites, most of the schools have dedicated social media platforms which also enable connections between the archivist and users of the archives. Such social media platforms, mostly Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter, are used by the archivists to initiate discussions about some of the materials in the archives and attract contributions of ideas from users and stakeholders on their value and how to preserve them. Furthermore, some of the archives receive support in terms of funds and aid from past students' associations to augment what the archivist receives from their schools. The archivists also explained that communities such as archivist groups, student associations and school boards have been very instrumental in enabling them to achieve progress in their management of the archives. Above all, the passion of the archivists has been the key enabler to pushing them through all the challenging situations they face in maintaining the archives.

CHALLENGES

From the perspectives of archivists interviewed in this study, the main challenges they face in the performance of their tasks relate to expertise, or lack of professional training and skills development, resourcing, time, space, recognition, and the lack of awareness of the existence of the archives on the part of key stakeholders. These issues affect the effective maintenance and preservation of the collection.

Training and skills development

Most of the archivists in this study do not have professional qualifications in archives administration. There is a serious lack of skilled archivists in the school sector. According to the interviewees, most of the schools they know shared the same professional archivist for a while, who used to visit to offer advice. Most school archivists learn archiving skills on the job by taking advantage of training opportunities through professional-development workshops and conferences to develop their knowledge. In describing how they receive training and skills development Participant 1 said:

I have attended several ARANZ conferences, especially when they dealt with education matters ... used to be every second year ... I am not a member. I have also attended several workshops days up in Auckland with the school archivist there and I learned a lot. But somehow, the archiving of school history has been subsumed into school records management and the last Auckland session was totally on that ... the retention and disposal schedule. The line between the role of school administration and archiving is not always a clear one.

Thus, school archivists need to be supported with resources to develop their skills and expertise to enable them to effectively manage their archives.

Resourcing

Resources are key to the success of any venture, and they came in many different forms including time, space, funds and collaboration. The archivists reveal that they can see a lot of training opportunities but require financial support from the school. However, not every school has enough finances to support its archivists to attend professional-

development programmes. The archivists emphasised that funding is one of the major issues, as most schools are expected to pay their archivists from the schools' operational grants. Participant 4, for instance, stated:

Having also been a school librarian for many years, I know that funds for the archives have been one that has been cut back significantly in schools' operational grants. Some schools get support from the pupils' associations. But not all schools have wealthy past pupils' associations to make up the difference, and there will always be the issue of succession planning, which continues to affect funding.

Other archivists also commented that their principals have explained that the school budget is inadequate to fully cover maintaining the archives. They receive promises every year that the school archives would be included in the following year's budget, but it never happens. Due to limited support, some archivists use their own resources to attend training workshops and conferences to develop skills in managing the archives. Using personal funds to support training and development is a gesture that needs to be recognised and commended. Archivists believe they have issues with how their efforts are recognised in the school community.

Recognition

The archivists interviewed in this study perceive that they need recognition for the task they are performing. Most of them complain that they are usually not involved in decision-making processes by the school, especially when it comes to what records to keep in the archive, or to destroy. This issue also affects the collecting of materials and their value for the archives. In some schools, the administrators or other staff members keep what they want in separate places. The archivist only looks after school memorabilia that has been given to them, and does not have access to other forms of records, which they could collect for the archive. Participant 2, for instance, stated:

Without my two volunteers, it would be a lonely job since there is not a great deal of engagement and appreciation from the school. Nobody recognises that we are here. Fortunately, I get some support from the Old Boys' Association. They come here most of the time for different types of information to enable the organisation of their events. Apart from them, it does not look like other people in the school know that we are here. Things may change with a new Headmaster.

Another archivist indicated that when they started their job, everything was scattered. The staff of the school found an unused space in the attic and dumped material they were no longer using there, without telling the archivist. It took the archivist a lot of time to arrange the materials as the dumping continues. The staff did not seem to recognise that a lot of work was being done to put some order in the arrangement of the materials.

In other words, not every record of enduring value in the school finds its way into the archives because some schools do not recognise the importance of involving the archivist in the effective collecting of materials. Also, archivists do not have much authority in the school to determine what type of record goes into the archive, although the Ministry of Education Fact Sheet mandates school archivists to collect and maintain all school records, following the Public Records Act (2005) of New Zealand.

Inadequate facilities

Because the majority of the materials in the archives are memorabilia that do not require strict conservation conditions, most archivists believe that they do not require sophisticated facilities to maintain their collections. Yet the facilities available are mostly woefully inadequate. There are inadequate storage rooms and spaces, limited or no storage cabinets, poor temperature control and poor storage conditions, causing the fast deterioration of the materials. Most of the schools visited have had their archival storage constantly moved from various rooms, chambers, parts of buildings, disused toilet/bathroom spaces – none of which are conducive for keeping archives.

Inadequate collaboration

Working together with other key stakeholders is essential for archivists as most of them are new to the archiving profession. Some of those that archivists want to collaborate with include teachers, school administration staff, school librarians, principals, tumuaki, board members, proprietors, and other archivists' groups. But most stakeholders do not even know that their schools have an archive to think of collaborating with. Most of the archivists engaged so far are working in secondary schools. Some of them were not sure whether other levels – primary and intermediate schools – had archives. They collaborate best with archivists from other secondary schools because they understand the issues they face. Some of the archivists indicated that they have attended workshops where the presenters were archivists from other school levels; the issues discussed were completely different from what they are facing in the secondary school and it was difficult for them to understand.

Lack of awareness of the archivist role

From the perspectives of the archivists interviewed so far, there is a lack of awareness on the part of stakeholders about the importance of the role of the archives in school. Archivists believe their work is very significant in supporting the successful delivery of the curriculum. This belief stems from seeing some teachers making use of archival material to support teaching and learning in the classroom. However they observe that most school stakeholders do not appear to rate the importance of the archives; some school leaders believe that anybody can manage the school archives and do not see the need to spend more resources to equip the archivist. Because the archives are not considered very important, school leaders are not willing to give them a lot of working time. Most archivists are allocated four hours twice a week. The Ministry of Education Fact Sheet stipulates that it is at the discretion of the archivist to determine which materials should be stored in the archive. It is not appropriate for other staff members to decide what should and should not be kept. But in most schools, the archivist is just given a list of what records to keep and what not to keep. In most cases, the school leader decides or delegates other staff such as ICT staff, librarians, or school administrators to make that decision, not the school archivist. School archivists believe that they should at least be contacted for their opinion or be involved in the decision making. Sometimes archivists arrive at work to find materials have been dumped at random. When they ask, they are told a teacher or staff member came to drop off the materials; sometimes it is difficult to locate who brought them or to find out their backstories.

DISCUSSION

School archives perform useful core functions that support the delivery of the curriculum; interview data has also revealed key tasks school archivists perform to help them achieve their functions. At the start of this study, the impression was that school archives can play an important role in the delivery of the recently developed school history curriculum in New Zealand. But the perspectives coming through the interview data suggest that this will be difficult; interviewees revealed that the history of the school is different from the history that will be taught in the new curriculum (see Participant 1's comment in the subsection 'Supporting Teaching').

This revelation in the findings has significant implications for discussions of cultural narratives of the ways of archiving in the school context. This is because schools have different histories of their own, and subcultures within their social system. Such school cultures are not only different from school to school, but they may be different from the history and cultural narrative of the community in which they are located. Within the wider community and national discussion on archives, it may be easier to discuss Māori narratives of the different ways of archiving, but in the context of school archives, it can be difficult if the culture does not centre on Māori cultural narratives. Nevertheless, an effective understanding of the school's culture and history is likely to position the students and prepare them for an in-depth understanding of the history curriculum. Although the schools in this study were observed to be making efforts to apply certain bicultural principles in their activities, Māori cultural narratives on the different ways of archiving the school history did not seem to be considered by the archivist. As this study is

still in progress, efforts will be made to keep exploring Māori cultural narratives of archiving the past in the school context.

The findings also revealed enablers and challenges. However, notwithstanding the challenges, most school archivists show great resilience in maintaining the value of school records. Most of them use their own resources to attend workshops and training programmes for self-development. They pay for workshops, training materials, and sometimes buy boxes to organise the materials, from their own funds. School archivists who have been interviewed in this study explained that they believe supporting the school archives this way is the best contribution they can make to keeping the heritage and memory of their school, and adding to the narrative of the community's heritage stories. The school archivists' resilience in effectively maintaining the value of records to support the school's activities was shown in various ways. Because of the fulfillment school archivists get from their work they are not daunted by the challenges they face.

A key enabler of their resilience is their passion. But their passion is more about their school than the archival work – which they see as a thankless task – and about their belief in the important role its history can play in the identity and image of the school. When you are passionate about something, you set clear goals to achieve progress in it. Once your goals are clear, it does not matter how few resources you have or how huge the challenge is, you will surely achieve the progress you need. I believe that where there is a will, there is a way, and that is what is motivating most school archivists. School archivists believe that without passion they wouldn't have the resilience required to make the difference they have been making in the schools through the functions of the archive.

CONCLUSION

The core functions of the school archives are to preserve the school's history and future memory through proper maintenance of the heritage materials and artefacts that define the identity and culture of the school. The school archive also supports teaching and learning and other relevant activities of the school. When records in the school archive are properly maintained they reflect the historical narrative of the school and that can help prepare students to fully understand the narrative of the history of the community in which the school is located. School archivists are also a useful source of information for researchers, families of former students, and corporate bodies who want information about key members of the school. The archives also play a significant role in ensuring materials of archival value to the school are effectively kept for as long as the school needs them. They ensure that the materials are effectively and ethically collected, properly arranged, and well described for easy access. The archivists also develop effective access procedures to the materials for teachers to use as teaching aids and reference purposes; preserve and protect the materials from deterioration; promote the archives to the students, staff, and school authorities; and develop useful programmes to enable students and alumni to enjoy the history of their school. The school archives and the backstories of the materials can help with the effective delivery of curriculum in schools.

Despite the important functions of the archives and the useful roles of the school archivists, most of them are not usually supported by key stakeholders to mitigate the challenges they face. Although most of them receive their training on the job, school budgets do not usually cater to their needs such as training support through workshops and conferences. Where budgetary needs are met, some secondary-school archivists are able to effectively collaborate with other school archivist groups. There is a lack of awareness and recognition of the archivist's role in the school system and they often have inadequate storage facilities and resources to enable them to effectively preserve the materials. Even though these challenges can be overwhelming for any archivist group, the passion and belief of the school archivist enables them to exhibit unfettered resilience in the face of all these issues. They adapt to the challenges and achieve their purpose of maintaining the value of school records to support the effective delivery of the school's curriculum. They have their will, and the way is opening for them to achieve their purposes for the school archives. This is the key resilience factor that drives most school archivists interviewed in this study. Nevertheless, as mentioned previously, interviewees emphasised that their passion is more for their schools than the archiving, which they see as a thankless task.

When school archivists are well supported, and given attention by school principals and key stakeholders, they will be fully equipped to maintain the value of the records. School archivists interviewed believe that they can be more effective if school authorities and other staff support them to attend workshops, and conferences and take up training opportunities both online and through other means. They also believe that being involved in school decision-making processes would provide useful perspectives that could contribute to the effective development of the school. This study encourages school archivists in the work they are doing and initiates a conversation that will bring all New Zealand school archivists together and inspire a collaboration between them and their stakeholders to address issues of common interest. The study is still in progress.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Participant	Description
Participant 1	The archivist at a private secondary school of about 500 students established over 200 years ago in the Wellington region. The school has an online display of some of its archival materials.
Participant 2	The archivist at a college in the Wellington region. The college was established nearly 200 years ago and currently has almost 2,000 students. The school has digitised some of its archival materials and made them available on their website.
Participant 3	The archivist at a high school within the greater Wellington region. This school has nearly 200 years of history with a current student roll of about 1,500. There is a specific space in the school for its archival materials, a dedicated website for the school archive, and a place on the school's website to share some of its history and heritage materials.
Participant 4	The archivist at a high school in the Waikato region, founded in the 1950s with over 2,000 students. The school has an excellent physical archive with an effective dedicated website.
Participant 5	The archivist at a college in the greater Wellington region founded in the early 1900s with a current student roll of about 1,000. The school has an effective archive with a dedicated website.
Participant 6	The archivist of a mission college in the Christchurch region. The college has a little over 100 years of history. The current student population stands around 1,600. It has a good collection of historical materials, with some of these displayed on the school's website.
Participant 7	The archivist at a college in the Auckland region. The college was founded in the 1940s with a current student population of nearly 2,700. It has a good collection of historical materials although there is no dedicated website for its archives.

A MĀORI MODERN LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: KO TE AKĀ PŪKAEA KIA ITA, KO TE AKĀ PŪKAEA KIA EKE!

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Resilience in the workplace and community



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ABSTRACT

This Kaupapa Māori research project investigates the ways that two Māori-medium pathways (bilingual and immersion) work together in a newly built Flexible Learning Space (FLS) to progress te reo Māori and the aspirations of whānau. This paper introduces the project that proposes the notion of the Māori Modern Learning Environment (MMLE). Funded by Teaching Learning Research Initiative (TLRI), this two-year project is still in progress with the project only being at an early stage. The researchers are currently exploring how 'space' is understood and utilised by Māori teachers, students and whānau of two Māori-medium pathways, within the wider English-medium primary-school context. This pūrākau (case-study) project takes a strengths-based approach, and is based on the experiences, pedagogies and potential of Te Akā Pūkaea, at Newton Central School. The two whānau groups and Māori-medium pathways at the centre of the study are: Te Uru Karaka (immersion) and Te Awahou (bilingual). This research is intended to respond to the call from Stewart and Benade (2020) to 'spatial biculturalism' as we theorise 'space' from a Kaupapa Māori lens. Hence, the project is titled "A Māori Modern Learning Environment: Ko te Akā Pūkaea Kia Ita, Ko te Akā Pūkaea Kia Eke!".

KEYWORDS

Kaupapa Māori research, Flexible Learning Space, Māori Modern Learning Environment, te reo Māori learning, bilingual language learning, immersion language learning

INTRODUCTION

More than ever before there is a growing appreciation of Māori language in Aotearoa (Nelson, 2018; Olsen-Reeder, 2017; Haar et al., 2019; Rewi & Rewi, 2015). Māori language classes for adults are oversubscribed (Māori Television, 2018; Roy, 2018), as Māori and non-Māori alike want to learn te reo as part of our national cultural heritage (Lee-Morgan et al., 2019). In the schooling sector, the normalisation of te reo has seen what Higgins and Rewi (2014) have termed a 'right shift'. The ZePA model uses the term right-shifting to describe the progression of language use towards normalisation, and highlights levels of awareness and different stages of language use (from left to right) that progress between zero use, passive use and active use (Higgins & Rewi, 2014).

This (right) shift is evident in the marked increase in the number of schools teaching, and students learning, te reo Māori (Murphy et al., 2019). We note that Māori student learning of te reo has increased to 21% over the past decade (2008 to 2018), while non-Māori students learning the language in the same time period was more than double that, at 47% (Murphy et al., 2019, p. 29). An increased shift towards learning te reo Māori is further exemplified in the small but growing number of predominantly Pākehā schools (including private schools) making te reo Māori a compulsory part of their curriculum, i.e., King's College, Auckland; Christ's College, Christchurch; and Wellington Girls' College (Lee-Morgan et al., 2019). While the uptake of Māori language is positive and a purposeful part of the Crown's Maihi Karauna, Māori Language Revitalisation Strategy (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2019), an increase in interest was further exemplified in the number of organisations celebrating Te Wiki o Te Reo Māori in 2021. This article asks: What is the response of schools to address the growing numbers wanting to learn te reo Māori? Given we are in the first phase of our two-year research project, we discuss here the 'shifts' in education that provide context to this research, and help locate and frame the project's research question: How does a Māori Modern Learning

Environment successfully facilitate dual Māori-medium (immersion and bilingual) pathways that respond to learner and whānau aspirations in an English-medium primary school?

Schooling is also experiencing what Benade (2019) describes as a 'spatial turn,' as the Ministry of Education (MoE) builds new (non-traditional) facilities, referred to as Innovative Learning Environments (ILEs), Flexible Learning Spaces (FLSs), Modern Learning Environments (MLEs), and more recently described as Quality Learning Spaces (QLSs) (Stewart & Benade, 2020). In 2011, the Ministry of Education, following international trends, issued the directive that all newly built schools (and classrooms) be designed as ILEs with FLS (Bradbeer et al., 2017). Accordingly, 'space' is seen to play an important role in teaching and learning. Principals and teachers want 'space' to "embody their pedagogical beliefs in the day-to-day practices of schools" (Bradbeer et al., 2017, p. 1). What does this mean for Māori learners, and their whānau? How do Modern Learning Environments support Māori educational aspirations? What do Modern Learning Environments mean spatially for Māori-medium learners in English-medium schools?

This paper introduces the two-year research project in progress, funded by Teaching Learning Research Initiative (TLRI), titled "A Māori Modern Learning Environment: Ko te Akā Pūkaea Kia Ita, Ko te Akā Pūkaea Kia Eke!" and based in an MLE within Newton Central School, an English-medium school in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. Our research project is specifically interested in the implications of these 'shifts' for Māori-medium pathways in English-medium schools. Notably, the focus of this project is concerned with Māori-medium education (Levels 1 and 2) situated within a mainstream schooling setting.

With an emphasis on 'right shift' also having the potential to further normalise te reo Māori in educational settings, the term 'spatial turn' also accentuates the growing demand for creating te reo Māori spaces in schooling. As this research project is located within the context of a Modern Learning Environment, this article explores, at the initial stage of the project, the intersection of these two movements: Māori language normalisation and the Modern Learning Environments. We therefore suggest an extension to the notion of the Modern Learning Environment to what we have called a Māori Modern Learning Environment (MMLE).

METHODOLOGY: KAUPAPA MĀORI RESEARCH

Kaupapa Māori research is clearly located as part of the wider struggle by Māori communities to seek ways in which to contribute to transformative change in the wider framework of self-determination, decolonisation and social justice (Pihama, 2015, 2010; Smith, 2012; Smith, 2015). The history of te reo Māori and education is characterised by colonial oppression, Māori resistance and, importantly, the struggle for 'space,' thus resulting in Kaupapa Māori educational initiatives that emerged in the early 1980s, beginning with the movement of Te Kōhanga Reo (Nepe, 1991; Pihama, 2015; Smith, 2004, 1997; Smith, 2012). With this said, it is therefore pragmatic that Kaupapa Māori methodology is applied in this study, in acknowledging the legacy of transformational change that has accumulated over several decades in making Māori 'space' in education settings.

Kaupapa Māori research centres not only on te reo, tikanga and mātauranga Māori, but on Māori aspirations and experiences that are cognisant of our diverse realities (Bishop, 2005; Pihama, 2015; Smith, 2012). In foregrounding Māori epistemological and ontological constructs in research, Kaupapa Māori methodology is inherently political, and often referred to as the decolonising dimension of the research. In this regard, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) reiterates, "Decolonization ... is about centring our concerns and world views and then coming to know and understand theory and research from our own perspectives and for our own purposes" (p. 39). In this study, Kaupapa Māori methodology offers a new way to investigate, analyse and contribute to the discussion about Modern Learning Environments for Māori, or to what we refer to as Māori Modern Learning Environments (MMLEs).

Kaupapa Māori frames and structures our thinking and approaches to research; it affects all dimensions from the research question to the analysis. This includes the ways in which the whānau, kura and community will engage with and participate in this research. In our project, working collaboratively with the whānau and kura is critical if Kaupapa Māori research is to successfully contribute to transformative outcomes for our Māori learners, whānau and

communities. This research approach also draws on a community-based participatory research (CBPR) approach (Ferreira & Grendron, 2011), whereby the whānau, kura and community are all part of the research process.

This inclusive dimension of the research also adheres to the TLRI approach that “researcher–practitioner partnerships should be integral to the design of the project” (Teaching and Learning Research Initiative, 2020, p. 2). Acknowledging the process of ako (Lee, 2008), and the knowledge, expertise and mātauranga that each of the groups and people will bring to the project as we learn from each other, this research will actively engage learners, whānau and the kura in the research process. For example, wānanga (Smith et al., 2019) will be used as one of the methods that enables co-creation opportunities across the groups to participate in research activities, including the analysis.

Similarly, as Kaupapa Māori researchers we expect to teach and learn from each other throughout the research process. As Māori we are cognisant of the whānau, hapū and iwi connections between us that strengthen our relationships together and with whānau of the kura. Each of the researchers has a particular set of knowledge, skills and experience that come together in this project. While each member of the research team is a competent te reo Māori speaker, critical to this research is the appointment of teacher Ruia Aperahama (school-based researcher) to the research team. Ruia brings a high level of te reo and tikanga expertise, and a wealth of mātauranga Māori to this project. Together, our team can confidently enact and implement practices that uphold mana tāngata, mana o te reo and mātauranga Māori in all aspects of this project. Acutely aware of the ethics inherent in Kaupapa Māori work, we also understand our cultural roles and responsibilities (as mātua, whaea, tuākana, tēina, wāhine, tāne, etc.), as well as the nature of the knowledge itself, and to whom it belongs. In this research, the whānau and kura have agreed and are proud to be named as the ‘case’ and tell their stories. Similarly, individual participants will have the choice whether to be named or have anonymity.

This Kaupapa Māori project takes a strengths-based approach and is premised on the idea that “te reo Māori has been revitalised” (Higgins & Rewi, 2014, p. 30) as te reo Māori continues to be utilised inter- and intra-generationally within whānau, hapū, iwi and communities throughout Aotearoa today. Positioning our research in this way is aligned to the aforementioned ZePA theory of language change (Higgins & Rewi, 2014), and rejects a deficit approach. Rather, this Kaupapa Māori case-study-type research seeks to interrogate what Lightfoot (1983) refers to as the ‘good’ story (or school). Such an approach understands and accepts that inherent in any ‘goodness’ are always weaknesses; the ‘story,’ however, focuses more on how a school and its community responds, solves and rises to these challenges. This case-study project (Stake, 2005), based on Te Akā Pūkaea, at Newton Central School, will therefore relay a deeply contextual story that highlights the complexities as well as revealing the success and strategies of this Māori Modern Learning Environment.

A pūrākau method

Pūrākau is a Kaupapa Māori approach to narrative inquiry that foregrounds the pedagogical intent of stories, while supporting Māori cultural norms and worldviews. This Kaupapa Māori research project will utilise a pūrākau methodological approach to investigate and analyse the Māori Modern Learning Environment of Te Akā Pūkaea, at Newton Central School. In this project, a pūrākau method (Lee, 2008; Lee-Morgan, 2019) directly relates to the objective of providing an in-depth pūrākau (case-study) of Te Akā Pūkaea as a Māori Modern Learning Environment that facilitates dual Māori-medium pathways. As well as assisting with developing success indicators within a Māori Modern Learning Environment, the project will further identify key Māori pedagogies that enhance Māori language and educational development for all learners (in both pathways).

Here a pūrākau method will be utilised in a similar way to case-study inquiry. While Te Akā Pūkaea constitutes the ‘case’ (Stake, 2005), a pūrākau methodology acknowledges the multiplicity of stories amongst the various groups involved in Te Akā Pūkaea, as well as the diversity of stories within the groups themselves. Within a pūrākau approach, these stories represent the range of experiences and lived realities of our contemporary Māori lives, and a much richer and real case from which to understand the success and potential of a Māori Modern Learning Environment. The pūrākau, like a case study, will reveal the greater socio-historical and political schooling context

in which Te Akā Pūkaea is located, as well as the way in which it operates and is experienced by teachers, learners and their whānau, and the broader school community of Te Akā Pūkaea today. At its heart, this pūrākau gives voice to Māori learner, teacher and whānau experiences, harnessing their respective ideas and aspirations in culturally relevant and responsive ways. In doing so, the pūrākau will document and analyse the stories of Te Akā Pūkaea as a Māori Modern Learning Environment that resonates with Māori learners, whānau and community.

Interviews

This qualitative project involves individual and focus-group interviews with learners, whānau, teachers, the Principal, the Board of Trustees (BoT) and the wider school (n = 40). Haawera and Herewini (2020) point out the importance of student voice in this under-researched area where it is considered that tamariki (and learners) are at the centre of the whānau and success. The participants will include learners, teachers, Principal and senior management, whānau members, Board of Trustees and key community stakeholders. As previously stated, it will be important to gather the stories, perspectives and insights of a range of people who are involved with Te Akā Pūkaea to create a rich and layered pedagogical depiction of the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of Māori-medium pathways in this Māori Modern Learning Environment.

Wānanga

Wānanga is another method that is used in the research context as a 'thought space' (Smith et al., 2019) to discuss, analyse and in this case co-create the pūrākau, and contribute to the analysis. Several wānanga will be held with participants and stakeholders, i.e., learners, whānau, teachers and staff, to think deeply into the initial findings, to co-create pūrākau and contribute to the analysis. Wānanga enables an active participation in the research process in culturally appropriate ways and will be structured according to the themes that arise.

Analysis and writing

Alongside the wānanga, the research team will regularly come together to collectively analyse data to identify, craft and develop the pūrākau and other findings. The expertise of each of the research members will ensure the findings are academically and practically grounded and, most importantly, serve the whānau of Te Akā Pūkaea and Newton Central School.

Literature review

An important part of building the foundation of the research project is the completion of an in-depth literature review that situates the experience of immersion and bilingual programmes in an English-medium school. In terms of how teachers negotiate and use space in teaching, the literature discusses Māori notions of space, place and time as distinctive from Western concepts of space (Wilson, 2013; Paewai, 2013). Emphasis for this study is both about the physical environment and its impact on teaching and learning and student experiences; as well as a shift from traditional Western learning and teaching practices to a more facilitated, co-constructive teaching and learning style. In creating indigenous spaces (Kiddle et al., 2018) within education, this study recognises that all too often Māori realities remain situated in colonised spaces (Pihama et al., 2002; Wilson, 2013; Paewai, 2013).

The literature review found that there is a distinct lack of research on the involvement and participation of Māori in Modern Learning Environments (Edmonds, 2021; Hunia et al., 2018), thus further reinforcing the dire need for research specific to the experiences of students, kura staff, whānau and communities within Māori Modern Learning Environments. A lack of expediency on the part of the Ministry of Education in catering for the growth of Māori-medium pathways is further indicated in the literature. Despite recommendations made by the Waitangi Tribunal for specific targets to retain ākonga in Māori-medium education and to improve the quality of Māori-medium education to bolster whānau confidence in choosing MME pathways for their tamariki (Waitangi Tribunal, 2011, cited Hunia et al., 2018, p. 8), government inaction is cited as a key barrier. While the government had stated its intent

to strengthen and grow the Māori-medium sector (Ministry of Education, 2010) this inaction inhibited the growth of MME so that Māori medium has not been accessible to many whānau (Hunia et al., 2018, p. 8). Hunia et al. (2018) report there to have been little research done in relation to Māori pedagogy and other education innovations in MME. Despite the lack of research and literature on the impact of MME, Edmonds (2021) found that the research that has been undertaken indicates that MMEs are successful learning environments.

The scarcity of literature specific to MMLE and FLS in Māori-medium settings is a key reflection of the lack of research in these developments. As we explore the literature, we are reminded of the struggle that Māori face, in not only creating spaces where culture, language and identity count (Nepe, 1991; Smith, 1997; Smith, 2012; Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Pihama et al), but furthermore in the decolonising of educational settings (Hutchings et al., 2012).

DISCUSSION

Given we are in the first phase of this research, we discuss here the 'shifts' in education that provide context to this research, and help locate and frame the research question: How does a Māori Modern Learning Environment successfully facilitate dual Māori-medium (immersion and bilingual) pathways that respond to learner and whānau aspirations in an English-medium primary school?

Māori language in English-medium schools

It is widely recognised that Kaupapa Māori education has played a critical role in the revitalisation of Māori language in Aotearoa (Trinick et al., 2020). Kōhanga Reo, Kura Kaupapa Māori and Wharekura have been at the forefront of this movement since the first Kōhanga Reo opened with much success in 1982 (Martin, 2012, 2014; McKinley, 2000; Ministry of Education, 2010; Poutu, 2007; Tocker, 2002). However, Māori language remains in a critical and threatened state for many whānau, hapū, iwi and communities (Ministry for Social Development, 2016; Trinick et al., 2020). With 97% of Māori learners in English-medium schools (Stats NZ, 2017), we remain reliant on Māori-language teaching and Māori-medium pathways to provide access and opportunities to our students. Murphy et al. (2019) emphasise that Māori language in English-medium schools is vitally important and highly dependent on school leadership, teachers, resources and language programmes. While their evaluation of 11 English-medium schools found that these schools are making a "critical contribution to the revitalisation of Māori language" (Murphy et al., 2019, p. 7), bilingual or rumaki units within English-medium schools were out of scope. Despite the continued call by Māori whānau, hapū, iwi and communities for better access to Māori language (and culture) in schools over many decades (Hutchings et al., 2012), there is still a dearth of research about Māori-medium pathways in English-medium schools.

Māori-medium education and Modern Learning Environments (MLEs)

In our initial literature-scoping search, we only found two articles directly related to Māori and Modern Learning Environments. The first, titled "Teacher inquiry in a Māori-medium Modern Learning Environment" (Haawera & Herewini, 2020), focuses on a very small teacher-led inquiry approach to pāngarau (maths) in a Māori-medium learning setting within a Modern Learning Environment, or what is referred to as Puna Mātauranga Kiritoa (PMT). The study reports that kaiako in these spaces became more collaborative in their planning, pedagogy and assessment practices than they had been in single-cell classrooms, and that ākonga enjoyed having more choice and more collaboration as peers (in mixed-ability groups). Haawera and Herewini conclude: "Continued research in this area is essential if we are sincere about a PMT approach. PMT is one such example of a [Māori-medium] kura growing and evolving. Research needs to continue to capture future iterations" (p. 47).

The second article, by Stewart and Benade (2020), argues that, notwithstanding the equity discourse with a focus on student outcomes in terms of Modern Learning Environments (which can easily become assimilatory), there are no Māori-centred perspectives related to the Modern Learning Environment reforms. To this end, they suggest the term 'spatial biculturalism' is a way to highlight the responsibilities of education to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the rights of Māori, to ensure Modern Learning Environments take account of Māori ways of teaching, learning and living. They

state, “Current school building policy in Aotearoa NZ presents opportunities to work towards realising the goals of educational biculturalism, as part of Māori political aspirations for Māori futures more generally. These are matters of intense interest and significance for education researchers” (p. 129). The only research they cite as an example of research related to Māori culture and school buildings in English-medium schools is the TLRI research previously led by the Principal Investigator of this project, Jenny Lee-Morgan, about marae-a-kura (school marae). This project also builds on the work about school marae (Lee & Selwyn, 2010; Lee, 2012; Lee-Morgan, 2016) as an ancient innovation and flexible teaching space introduced into English-medium schools in the late 1970s.

Modern Learning Environments (MLEs)

There is a small but growing body of literature about Modern Learning Environments in Aotearoa (Benade, 2019; Bradbeer et al., 2017; Wall, 2014), including the perspectives of students and teachers (Mackey et al., 2017; Pratt & Trewern, 2011), and the ongoing debate about whether Modern Learning Environments facilitate the most effective learning and teaching conditions (Abiss, 2015). From 2013 to 2017, the Ministry of Education spent \$747.7 million to build, and in some cases maintain, 19 new Innovative Learning Environment schools (Gathey, 2018). In the local Kahui Ako area where the research (and research team) is located, each of the English-medium schools with Māori-medium pathways have opened new Modern Learning Environment buildings in the past two years: 2018, Te Akā Pūkaea, Newton Central Primary School; 2020, Waititiko, Pasadena Intermediate; and 2020, Waiōrea, Western Springs College.

Despite the Flexible Learning Space builds and the growing literature about Modern Learning Environments in Aotearoa, the lack of research and policy about Māori engagement with and participation in Modern Learning Environments stands out. One related Ministry of Education report, “Modern learning environments to support priority learners” (Wall, 2014) makes the following point in relation to Māori language:

Where Te Reo Māori or Pasifika languages are offered within a particular learning space, the location of this space signals the value accorded to the language. It is important, therefore, that consideration is given to integrating the space with other learning spaces, and of adorning the space to demonstrate the value placed on language. While existing schools will have space restrictions on their sites, a Māori or Pasifika learning space should be placed in a location that reflects the mana of the language. (p. 31)

Integrating ‘language space’ presents inherent challenges for Māori-medium (immersion) education in an English-medium school when the space is shared with other programmes or classes. Furthermore, the ‘mana of the language’ in a Modern Learning Environment must mean more than just the adornment and location of the space. The Ministry of Education report “Maui whakakau kura whakakau: The impact of physical design on Māori and Pasifika outcomes” (Wall, 2016) that followed two years later did not extend this idea any further but acknowledged that the current guidelines for Flexible Learning Spaces “will not themselves be sufficient to create a physical environment that fully meets the principles laid out in Te Aho Matua [the founding document for Kura Kaupapa Māori]. Likewise, these guidelines will not fully address the special character of Kura ā-Iwi” (p. 12). The lack of guidelines and/or understanding as it relates to Māori, let alone Māori-medium pathways in English-medium schools, is clear.

Te Akā Pūkaea, Newton Central School

Te Akā Pūkaea, opened in 2018, is the new Flexible Learning Space that features both the reo rumaki unit, Te Uru Karaka (established in 1997), and the bilingual unit, Te Awahou (established in 2005), at Newton Central School in central Auckland. Te Akā Pūkaea is indicative, too, of the growing interest and acceptance of te reo Māori in wider society. Te Akā Pūkaea brings together two Māori-medium teaching pathways and represents a new pathway for Māori-medium education in English-medium schools. This Māori Modern Learning Environment pathway has not been previously researched and offers new possibilities for English-medium schools. Newton Central School recognises the unique opportunity, and celebrated the opportunity at the opening:

Both Te Awahou unit and Te Uru Karaka unit continue to operate well-attended programmes at Newton School, but at the beginning of 2018 we have the opportunity to create a new pedagogy that honours and reflects Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Mana Whenua, Ngā Mātāwaka, and the diverse community of Newton Central. This opportunity stems from the provision of a new Māori-medium building that will accommodate both Te Awahou and Te Uru Karaka units. (2018)

There are currently 95 students within the dual Māori-medium pathways of Te Akā Pūkaea: 46 students from Years 1 to 6 in Te Awahou (the bilingual pathway), and 49 students in Te Uru Karaka (the immersion pathway). There are six to nine Te Akā Pūkaea staff in total; Erina Henare is the lead teacher of Te Akā Pūkaea.

CONCLUSION

Research that better understands and supports the development, practice and potential of Māori Modern Learning Environments (MMLE) is critical. It is timely and important that this research not only responds to Māori teachers and learners but promotes access to te reo and tikanga Māori in schooling. This is evident from the initial literature about Modern Learning Environments that gives context to this study, which states that although the built environment may be fundamentally different, the quality of Modern Learning Environment will be determined by the people (especially the teachers) who use the space. While, ultimately, the aspiration is that Flexible Learning Spaces will facilitate 'new' pedagogies to enhance better teaching and learning, Hattie et al. (2015) argue that "changing the shape of the buildings does not lead to teachers teaching differently" (quoted in Page & Davis, 2016, p. 9). Accordingly, Benade (2019) argues that "FLS offers pedagogical opportunities and innovative practices not (easily) possible in a single-cell space" (p. 59). He further suggests these spaces afford more opportunities for student agency, personalised learning, innovative and integrated curriculum practices, inquiry-based approaches and new assessment strategies (Benade, 2019).

Given Māori have historically not been served well in traditional classroom settings, due to both structural and cultural constraints embedded in the education and schooling system (Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Marks, 1984; McFarlane, 2004; Smith, 1997), if little else changes beyond the physical space, this will be a wasted opportunity. The Ministry of Education (Wall, 2014) points out: "The physical environment can only support cultural inclusivity to the extent to which this is also reflected in effective teacher–student relationships and culturally responsive pedagogies" (p. 5). To this end, Māori Modern Learning Environments are interested in the ways Māori understand both space and pedagogies in schools. Stewart and Benade (2020) are pertinent in asking: "How do schools with Māori identities use FLS to support tikanga, and how can FLS in Māori schools honour the local environment and Indigenous knowledge with educational practice? How might the experiences of Māori schools inform learning environments theory and practice more generally?" (p. 131).

A Kaupapa Māori project of this kind is long overdue, as whānau and schools continue to grapple with the best pathways to support Māori-language learning in mainstream schools. Due to a lack of information and research available, each whānau and school often struggles to get it 'right' – often at huge cost to whānau and school, and sometimes impacting on student experiences and outcomes. In a society that is now more accepting and encouraging of te reo Māori, and a schooling context that is focused on building Flexible Learning Spaces, it is critical that these sorts of research projects are undertaken. Therefore, it is intended that this research project will not only be of benefit to the whānau of Newton Central School, but also to the local Kāhui Ako. The Kāhui Ako o Waitematā includes six Māori-medium pathways in English-medium schools, called Te Reo o te Matā – made up of Newton Central School, Pasadena Intermediate, Westmere Primary, Waiōrea Western Springs College, Freemans Bay Primary, and Kōwhai Intermediate. This research will contribute to Māori-medium education, both locally and nationally. With close involvement with Te Reo o te Matā, Ruia Aperahama notes in Auckland alone there are approximately 3000 students enrolled in Māori-medium schooling pathways, and of this number approximately two thirds (2000) of students are in rumaki or reo rua units within English-medium schools. However, there is currently no formal representation or collective nationwide voice of reo rumaki and reo rua in English-medium schools. To this end, a group called Ngā Herenga Reo, representing all rumaki units in the Auckland region, has

recently been formed. According to Ruia Aperahama and the Principal of Newton Central School, Riki Teteina, this research will make a valuable contribution to this rōpū.

With the lack of research in this area, and the need to contribute to the two broad drivers that contextualise this project (Māori-language learning and MLEs), this Kaupapa Māori study is primarily concerned with understanding and contributing to the theories and pedagogies that have developed in this Māori Modern Learning Environment to support Māori-medium pathways. We are less concerned with the measurement of language acquisition per se, but rather with the ways in which MMLEs can respond to and fulfil the aspirations of Māori learners and their whānau. While Māori-language policy and planning issues are important in any language-learning endeavour and will be a part of the research, they are not the key foci here.

In storying pūrākau case studies across all participant voices, this research will provide a rich narrative in the context of Te Akā Pūkāea whānau, capturing the specificities related to the experiences of whānau, kaiako, management, boards of trustees and students. These pūrākau will provide insights involving both successes and barriers to establishing Māori-medium pathways within mainstream education settings that will be relevant to other schools with MLEs who are looking to be more culturally responsive to Māori. Such an approach does not aim to provide research generalisability as such, but seeks to portray and acknowledge the particularities of the case, and is conscious, too, of the expression of tino rangatiratanga by whānau. The intention is that the pūrākau will provide a case study or exemplar for others to engage with and determine the best approach for themselves in their specific context and circumstances. Finally, this research is intended to respond to the call from Stewart and Benade (2020) to 'spatial biculturalism' as we theorise 'space' from a Kaupapa Māori lens. Hence, the project's title: "A Māori Modern Learning Environment: Ko te Akā Pūkāea Kia Ita, Ko te Akā Pūkāea Kia Eke!".

GLOSSARY

ako	to learn
ākonga	learner/s
iwi	tribe
kaiako	teacher
Kaupapa Māori	Māori approach
kura	school, place of learning
mana	prestige, power, authority
mana tangata	power and status accrued through personal leadership, mana of people
mana whenua	land authority, kin group that has held continuous occupation of lands
Māori	Indigenous people of Aotearoa
matauranga	knowledge
matua	parent/s
matāwaka	kin groups, tribe, clan, race

pūrākau	story, storytelling
tāne	man
teina	younger sibling/peer
Te Kohanga Reo	The Language Nest, Māori-led early childhood settings
te reo Māori	the Māori language
Te Tiriti o Waitangi	The Treaty of Waitangi
tikanga	cultural protocols, lore
tuakana	older sibling/peer
wahine	woman
wānanga	place of learning
whānau	family

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SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW OF PERSPECTIVE- TAKING IN SOCIAL EXCHANGES: IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

BY GERSON FRANCIS TUAZON

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Organisational behaviour and culture



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ABSTRACT

Contemporary research in the area of perspective-taking in the workplace has begun to challenge our view of how it is currently conceptualised and measured. Whereas individual-level perspective-taking was initially assumed to be a predominantly cognitive process, recent empirical work has documented the complexity of perspective-taking and scholars are starting to acknowledge that perspective-taking should not be considered in subjective isolation but in conjunction with sociocultural, affective, and organisational practices. As such, this paper provides an extensive look at perspective-taking within the context of social-exchange theory through a systematic review methodology. Three core research themes are found within perspective-taking literature: (a) emotional reconfiguration; (b) cognitive reconstitution; and (c) social and organisational familiarisation. These research themes are linked with arguments derived from leader–member exchange (LMX) theory to advance a framework of how perspective-taking may affect social-exchange relationships and consequent organisational outcomes.

KEYWORDS

Perspective-taking, LMX, social exchange, social-exchange relationships, leader–member relationships, team performance

INTRODUCTION

The fundamental construct of perspective-taking (PT) is a well-established and significant area of study in social psychology, organisational behaviour, and leadership studies. Following Davis's (1980; 1983) seminal work on empathy and PT, developing attention to PT in other fields such as anthropology, information sciences and sociology has culminated in a substantial body of literature verifying the complex antecedents, moderators, mechanisms and outcomes of PT at the individual, team and organisational levels (Ku et al., 2015; Litchfield & Gentry, 2010; Longmire & Harrison, 2018). Perspective-taking – which can be defined as perceiving a situation or understanding a concept from alternative points of view – has been linked to favourable relationship outcomes at work (Grant & Berry, 2011; Ng et al., 2021), increased team creativity through co-operation (Hoever et al., 2012), increased citizenship behaviours at work (Parker & Axtell, 2001; Pohl et al., 2015) and enhanced mental and physical wellbeing (Arnold & Walsh, 2015). Although prior studies have traditionally emphasised the more subjective and individual-level aspects of PT, recent evidence suggests more wide-ranging outcomes and mechanisms of PT as distilled in Ku et al.'s definition:

perspective-taking helps individuals effectively navigate a world filled with mixed-motive social interactions. As a result of facing situations filled with mixed-motives, effective social navigation involves cooperation that helps create and preserve social bonds, as well as protection from being exploited by the competitive intention of others. (2015, p. 95)

This emergent definition emphasises the socio-cultural nature of PT and is a focal lens of how it will be understood in this paper, particularly in its application for leadership development and organisational behaviour. Although our understanding of PT has advanced in recent years (Longmire & Harrison, 2018; Ng et al., 2021), current research can be described as fragmented, having a propensity towards individual-level antecedents, and incomplete in differentiating between understanding other's perspectives (PT efficacy) and actually engaging in PT (PT

as process). Empirical work on PT and different outcome domains related to team- and organisational-level consequences (e.g., negotiations, team creativity) has progressed independently, and there has been little attempt to integrate findings from other disciplines (Ku et al., 2015). Thus, a systematic review that integrates prior findings with current research on PT can inform both theoretical and managerial practice regarding how this complex phenomenon functions. The objectives of this paper are to provide an integrated review of PT that consolidates established organisational-psychology studies with the broader PT literature and to offer recommendations for future research on PT in organisations.

Social-exchange theory and perspective-taking

In this paper, social-exchange theory (SET) was chosen as an important theoretical lens in examining the nature of PT in organisations. SET supposes that actors operate from two distinct yet overlapping properties of self-interest and interdependence (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Settoon et al., 1996). Furthermore, SET suggests that actors unconsciously evaluate the advantages (as well as the risks) that coexist in entering or leaving a relationship. As such, this paper builds on Ku et al.'s (2015) research on PT as a socio-emotional resource that helps individuals navigate a world of mixed-motive social interactions. Moreover, Ku et al. (2015) argue that PT is more than just a personality trait, an ability, a process and an outcome, but is also a core socio-emotional resource that creates and conveys emotional displays of either co-operation, competition, or co-opetition (co-operative competition).

Following this line of reasoning, PT can then be understood as an archetypal theory of socio-emotional competency with prior established theoretical connections to anthropology, biology and sociology. Within leadership and management studies, PT has also been extensively studied particularly in its relevance, although not necessarily explicitly stated, to social exchanges embedded during times of crisis (Glăveanu & de Saint Laurent, 2018; Tuazon et al., 2021). Consider, for example, how important PT is for healthcare professionals in dealing with the current Covid-19 pandemic, to the point that most were willing to sacrifice emotional and physical wellbeing in order to mitigate the impact of the pandemic (Barello & Graffigna, 2020). Such expressions of sacrifice by healthcare professionals demonstrate their strong ability to sense the emotions of people in distress whilst concurrently regulating their own emotional distress in order to function optimally in their roles. The principal idea underpinning this account is that crisis in organisations, whether brought about by macro-level disruptions such as the pandemic or micro-level challenges such as interpersonal conflict, grievances and incivility, stir up potent affective processes and emotions (such as anxiety and frustration, and distress in extreme cases) that consequently impact social exchanges (Cortez & Johnston, 2020; Yu et al., 2008). While research to date remains limited, there is growing evidence linking how PT processes are likely to emerge out of affectively tinged and emotionally laden interactions between individuals at work (Cropanzano et al., 2017). This line of inquiry suggests that social exchanges serve as feedback events that shape the quality of potential and future exchanges through which socio-emotional competencies such as empathy and PT develop over time (Ashkanasy et al., 2017).

AIMS OF THE STUDY

In this paper, I explore the complexity of PT through the lens of SET to construct a novel theoretical framework that consolidates current empirical PT studies from other disciplines. In sum and grounded on the interdisciplinary body of work on PT, it can be theorised as being both a multilevel (operating at individual, team and organisational levels) and multidimensional construct. Furthermore, current research supports three dimensions of PT that orient towards the cognitive, affective and behavioural aspects (Ku et al., 2015; Longmire & Harrison, 2018). Additionally, preliminary findings from the review suggest that rather than PT emerging as an independent intrapersonal ability, it operates through an analogous threefold process that implicates the importance of socio-cultural, affective and organisational practices. Essentially, experiencing this process provides an important purpose: it engenders individuals to make, or not make, social-exchange investments that would be critical for the socio-emotional development of PT. Over the course of the threefold process, individuals at work are then able to acquire as well as manage a broad range of information – social cues, task requirements and work interdependencies – to make sense of the complex nuances embedded in a social-exchange investment decision. Moreover, the threefold process

assists them to make an ongoing narrative that restructures the intrinsic risks and rewards associated with a mixed-motive social-exchange investment – in turn facilitating individuals to corroborate their decision regarding the interaction.

METHOD

In order to explore leadership and management research on PT, I conducted a search in EBSCOHOST, PsycINFO, and Business Source Complete for all articles mentioning PT from 1975 to 2020. The year 1975 was chosen as this was the year Johnson's (1975) watershed study on co-operativeness and social PT was published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. To ensure a comprehensive reporting of the key Organizational Behaviour/ Human Resource Management (OB/HRM) research base on PT, I also searched top-ranking journals identified by the 2019 Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC) Journal Quality List. A total of 521 articles was found as a result of this search. The criteria for inclusion consisted of: (a) using adults as participants (or student samples but with a distinctive organisational and management aim); (b) utilising quantitative or qualitative methods; and (c) adequately conceptualising PT. Journal articles that intended to measure sympathy or other-oriented empathy (e.g., organisational citizenship behaviour) were omitted from the review. On the basis of my systematic review of the articles, I identified three core research themes within the broader PT literature: (a) emotional reconfiguration; (b) cognitive reconstitution; and (c) social and organisational familiarisation. In the following sections, I delineate the main findings of the themes by linking them with theoretical arguments derived from leader-member exchange (LMX) theory. I also advance a novel theoretical framework that integrates the themes to offer recommendations on future PT research.

TABLE 1. SUMMARY OF EXEMPLAR STUDIES IN THE SYSTEMATIC REVIEW.

Author(s) and Title of Study	Conceptualisation of PT	Key Findings and Implications
Brown-Schmidt, S. (2009). The role of executive function in perspective taking during online language comprehension.	"anticipating reference to a shared object" (p. 893)	"models of the use of perspective information in language processing explains why perspective information sometimes does and sometimes does not appear to constrain online interpretation. Difficulties in inhibiting the perspective-inappropriate information can account for some PT failures." (p. 898)
Cole, G. G., & Millett, A. C. (2019). The closing of the theory of mind: A critique of perspective-taking.	"Assuming another person's perspective requires neurological mechanisms that represents sensory processes associated with others' perspectives." (p. 1793)	"To take another person's perspective has to mean computation of how this kind of stimulus will change as a person's position in space changes, otherwise it is not a perspective." (p. 1793)
Flinchbaugh, C., Li, P., Luth, M. T., & Chadwick, C. (2016). Team-level high involvement work practices: Investigating the role of knowledge sharing and perspective taking.	Ability to view a situation from another's viewpoint	"Enhanced levels of employee PT serves in conjunction with high involvement work practices to drive increased levels of knowledge sharing and team service climate." (p. 145)
Gasiorek, J., & Ebesu Hubbard, A. S. (2017). Perspectives on perspective-taking in communication research.	"perspective-taking was variously treated as (a) an action or process, (b) a capacity or ability, and (c) a tendency or a trait with individual differences." (p. 94)	"An action or process conceptualisation positions perspective-taking as an activity that people (consciously) engage in or undertake; the emphasis in this treatment is on the series of mental actions (i.e., cognitive processes) an individual takes to arrive at a representation of another person's experience. ³⁹ A capacity or ability conceptualisation focuses on the extent to which a person is psychologically capable of engaging in perspective-taking, irrespective of whether they actually do it in a given set of circumstances. Lastly, a trait or tendency treatment emphasizes the likelihood that one spontaneously and regularly engages in perspective-taking, but does not necessarily speak to whether or not it occurs in a particular situation." (p. 94)

Gehlbach, H. (2004). A new perspective on perspective taking: A multidimensional approach to conceptualizing an aptitude.	"the ability to understand how a situation appears to another person and how that person is reacting cognitively and emotionally to the situation." (p. 209)	Perspective-taking develops via two pathways: commitment pathway and performance pathway. The commitment pathway refers to how individuals "assemble their motivational resources which energizes their efforts to work on and complete tasks while the performance pathway refers to how individuals use cognitive resources to accomplish tasks in given situations." (p. 214)
Grant, A. M., & Berry, J. W. (2011). The necessity of others is the mother of invention: Intrinsic and prosocial motivations, perspective taking, and creativity.	"an intrapsychic or internal psychological process of adopting another's viewpoint." (p. 83)	Perspective-taking, generated by prosocial motivation, strengthens the association between intrinsic motivation (behaviour driven by internal rewards) and creativity. PT can directly enhance creativity by providing access to new ideas as well as increasing the usefulness of idea generation.
Gregory, B. T., Moates, K. N., & Gregory, S. T. (2011). An exploration of perspective taking as an antecedent of transformational leadership behavior.	"the mental act of perceiving a situation from another individual's point of view." (p. 809)	There is a positive relationship between a leader's dyad-specific perspective-taking and a subordinate's perception of that leader's transformational leadership which is consistent with the conceptualisation of transformational leaders as those who influence the perspective of their followers.
Gunalp, P., Chrastil, E. R., & Hegarty, M. (2021). Directionality eclipses agency: How both directional and social cues improve spatial perspective taking.	"Spatial PT is the process of imagining how an object or scene would appear from a viewpoint other than one's current physical perspective." (p. 1289)	"The present work aimed to examine the mechanisms that underlie the benefit in perspective taking when to-be imagined perspectives are based on a human figure." (p. 1299)
Li, C. R. (2016). The role of top-team diversity and perspective taking in mastering organisational ambidexterity.	"perspective taking as a cognitive process that entails attempting to clarify or consider the thoughts, motives, or feelings of others in relation to an object or topic, as well as why they think or feel the way they do." (p. 772)	"Perspective taking helps teams with a dual-way mental frame to resolve conflicting interests because it engenders a comprehensive evaluation of various ideas and facilitates integrating diverse perspectives." (p. 785)
Parker, S. K., & Axtell, C. M. (2001). Seeing another viewpoint: Antecedents and outcomes of employee perspective taking.	"reported empathy for the target (i.e. understanding target's problems and feelings) and positive attributions about a target's behaviour." (p. 1087)	Two immediate manifestations of PT have been widely documented: empathy towards the target and positive attributions about the target's behavior. The study's findings suggest the value of considering PT as a determinant of contextual performance.
Rupp, D. E., Silke McCance, A., Spencer, S., & Sonntag, K. (2008). Customer (in) justice and emotional labor: The role of perspective taking, anger, and emotional regulation.	"defined as the cognitive skill to consider and understand another person's psychological point of view." (p. 907)	"Individuals high in PT seem to be uniquely qualified to handle difficult customers with emotional finesse. These individuals may also show a heightened resistance to the stressors associated with these types of situations. Organisations in the service industry might therefore consider validating PT as a potential selection criterion." (p. 919)
Russell, C. J., & Kuhnert, K. W. (1992). Integrating skill acquisition and perspective taking capacity in the development of leaders.	"stepping back from the leader-follower exchange to obtain a perspective on the basic values underlying the exchange." (p. 340)	Perspective-taking requires both general and specific cognitive skills which have both distal motivational processes (PT capacity) and proximal motivational processes (ongoing application of PT capacity). Furthermore, PT also comprises of three phases of skill acquisition (knowledge acquisition, knowledge compilation, and procedural knowledge).
Škerlavaj, M., Connelly, C. E., Cerne, M., & Dysvik, A. (2018). Tell me if you can: Time pressure, prosocial motivation, perspective taking, and knowledge hiding.	"having a broader scope of what is important for the total organization and needed for prioritizing others' needs." (p. 1495)	"Perspective-taking may be encouraged by providing employees with the opportunity to discover some personal information about coworkers such as accomplishments and personal interests. Frequent social interactions increase familiarity amongst employees, which encourages PT, and which would, in turn, reduce knowledge hiding." (p. 1503)
Wolgast, A., Tandler, N., Harrison, L., & Umlauft, S. (2020). Adults' dispositional and situational perspective-taking: A systematic review.	"PT is a cognitive capacity related to mentalizing that helps individuals regulate their emotions and make appropriate responses in a social situation." (p. 377)	"moving into a position with a similar visuo-spatial perspective like a target person's perspective may facilitate situational social PT compared to staying in front of that person." (p. 378)

RESULTS

Given the broadness of the three categorical research themes, this section is shaped around journal articles that I consider to be a direct progression from previous ground-breaking studies regarding PT. Firstly, and to outline the development of this systematic review, it was necessary to find pioneering but distinct bodies of research. This includes the emotional reconfiguration theme developed from works such as Johnson (1975) and Leith and Baumeister (1998). For Johnson (1975), one's ability to co-operate with others is significantly related to one's capability in affective PT. However, the limitations of this study indicate that there is no sufficient evidence to provide the general direction of the relationship between variables. In Leith and Baumeister's (1998) work, the trait of guilt-proneness (a facet of conscientiousness and knowing when one has violated a rule or principle) was found to lead to greater PT. These previous studies have paved the way in understanding the multifarious causes underpinning PT, particularly shedding light on how it is strongly associated with empathy and prosocial behaviour, and acts as a function that overlaps with other emotional modalities such as emotional regulation.

Secondly, the cognitive reconstitution theme stems from Marsh et al.'s (1981) study and Davis's (1980) seminal work which suggests that PT can also be understood from individual and meso-level theory approaches. Marsh et al. (1981) observe that social and affective dimensions of PT are strongly correlated with how individuals solve abstract/conceptual problems, interpersonal issues and role-taking tasks. Perspective-taking assists us to relate to strangers (unfamiliar individuals) by acknowledging that our own characteristics (self-descriptors) can also be applied in understanding unfamiliar individuals. Consequently, this brings about a greater overlap (familiarity) between how we cognitively represent ourselves as well as others. In summary, the cognitive-reconstitution stream implies that PT acts as heuristic and problem-solving reconfiguration. These reconfigurations can also be further understood by taking into consideration PT's association with sense-making and meaning-making.

Lastly, social and organisational familiarisation is based on the pioneering work of Boland and Tenkasi (1995), who argued that language and communication within the sphere of complex social systems contribute to how PT and perspective-making (PM) occur in knowledge-intensive firms. This approach is a consolidation of extant research on PT that emphasises its operationalisation as an inherent social process and a socio-linguistic practice. Moreover, this research stream accounts for the diversity of theories within management science and social psychology. The three theories within this research stream contain Freeman's (1999) Stakeholder Theory (emphasising the importance of stakeholders and their perspectives on ethics, values, goals and needs), Tajfel and Turner's (1986) Social Identity Theory (emphasising how self-concept developed from social membership shapes our perspectives, which in turn influence intergroup behaviours), and lastly Cohen and Levinthal's (1990) Model of Absorptive Capacity (emphasising how firms learn from new information through assimilation, integration and application). Cohen and Levinthal's model was utilised by Litchfield and Gentry (2010), who promoted the term 'organisational perspective-taking' and defined it as a crucial aspect of absorptive capacity.

All in all, the three categorical research themes contribute to a unique grasp of PT. On one hand, it can be viewed as being relatively consistent and stable and may be directly tied to the individual's 'personality,' which encompasses values, work experiences, relational experiences, rituals, skillsets and memories. On the other hand, it can also be viewed as dynamic, modified by the external environment, market reality, conflicting individual personalities within the firm, and other various workplace constraints. Although the studies illustrated above are far from exhaustive, they are sufficiently comprehensive in identifying important intersections that emphasise a common ground that runs across all three templates – how PT processes shape cognition, emotion and interpersonal/social capabilities within firms. While the three thematic templates are consistent and represent independent fields of research, it is also quintessential to understand their key overlaps as well as opposing viewpoints in order to build a rigorous, integrative and original framework that will be theoretically sound.

Emotional reconfiguration

The first theme, emotional reconfiguration, calls into mind that PT is not just a cognitive process but also an emotional one. In this regard, individual differences associated with emotions and emotional capacity can shape PT.

I identify three constructs that are related to this theme: emotional contagion, emotional regulation and empathic accuracy. Emotional contagion is defined as the phenomenon of having a person's emotions elicit similar emotional responses in other people (Hatfield et al., 1993). In management literature, the construct of emotional contagion has been investigated in terms of how employees' display of emotion directly influences customer affect (Pugh, 2001) and also how managers/leaders can impact the mood of their group members (Sy et al., 2005). Pugh's (2001) study specifically focused on the antecedents as well as consequences of displayed emotion in organisations. The results suggest that personality characteristics of employees, combined with situational factors, are excellent predictors of displayed emotions as well as customers' affective responses. In a similar vein, Sy et al. (2005) found that leaders who consistently displayed positive affect and mood elicited greater team co-ordination and spent less on resources compared to groups with leaders who had negative mood. In sum, Hatfield et al. (2014, p. 171), in their review of classic and contemporary research on emotional contagion, assert the clear evidence that if participants are attentive, emotional stimuli can spark "mimicry, feedback and contagion."

The second construct, emotional regulation, refers to one's ability to regulate one's emotions in response to negative and positive experiences in such a way that consequent behaviours are socially tolerable, flexible and acceptable (Coté, 2005). Evidence has shown, in the organisation context, that the emotional regulation of leaders and members are distinct (Bono et al., 2007); that emotional regulation expends resources, especially when the work role requires the display of positive expressions; and that roles that expose individuals (physicians, police, nurses, emergency workers, counsellors) to people experiencing pain may elicit inhibiting emotional regulatory mechanisms to buffer against adverse consequences of frequent exposure to pain (burnout, compassion fatigue, etc.) (Decety et al., 2010). Overall findings from studies of emotional regulation establish that it has a strong relationship with PT, ostensibly due to how emotional regulation can either prevent PT, such as being in a job that dulls one's sensitivity to pain (the healthcare industry), or inhibit it through roles that demand continuous and strenuous emotional labour (customer service, call centres, collection officers, retail, service industry, etc.).

The last construct, empathic accuracy, refers to one's skill in accurately recognising, processing and evaluating different emotional states within oneself and also in others (Ickes, 1993). Investigations of empathic accuracy have generally studied how different types of communication may influence levels of empathic accuracy (Kraus, 2017); how cognitive deficits (or cognitive surplus) affect empathic accuracy (Bartz et al., 2010); and how situational factors constrain an individual's affective resources, which may also inadvertently decrease empathic accuracy (Bartz et al., 2010). In sum, the relevance of all three constructs related to the theme of emotional reconfiguration assert the strong affective dimension that subsists within PT. Emotional reconfiguration, to reiterate, simply means that moods, emotions and affect have a direct and robust linkage with PT, particularly as different 'affective states' may be more beneficial in inducing it than others – positive affect that increases oxytocin may increase likelihood of genuine empathic concern. The emotional-reconfiguration theme also contains a massive body of literature and I highlight only some studies here to show current findings that can help provide context for PT.

Cognitive reconstitution

The second theme, cognitive reconstitution, refers to the overall cognitive constructs that are associated with PT. Similar to the theme of emotional reconfiguration, this draws from an immense stream of literature – although the majority of the studies have been quantitative rather than qualitative. Cognitive reconstitution literally means the act of rebuilding cognition after an event. When an individual engages in PT, they are essentially rebuilding cognitive processes from prior elements or from new elements. This is similar to Aaron Beck's concept of 'cognitive restructuring,' whose main goal is to teach individuals how to identify maladaptive thoughts and transform them into more productive and positive ones (Beck, 1991). Cognitive reconstitution, nevertheless, represents a broader dimension as it incorporates the fundamental ability of the individual in 'reconstituting' cognition simply by putting them in positions different from their own. I discuss three constructs within the cognitive reconstitution theme: cognitive complexity, cognitive closeness and cognitive capacity.

The first construct, cognitive complexity, refers to an individual's "ability to perceive, differentiate and integrate information" (Ku et al., 2015, p. 83), and further, from an organisational viewpoint, cognitive complexity also refers

to how employees see their role in the context of the greater goals of the organisation. Other organisational scholars such as Van Hiel and Mervielde (2003, p. 781) define cognitive complexity as the careful assessment of “all the relevant perspectives on an issue and then [integrating] them into a coherent position.” Their definition, however, highlights a more pragmatic approach as one’s ability to use various theories in order to make sense of information. Current research on cognitive complexity has found its strong relationship with a similar psychological construct, integrative complexity, which is defined as the degree an individual identifies and integrates multiple perspectives, possibilities, contingencies, interdependencies, conflicts and frameworks (Graf-Vlachy et al., 2017; Moore & Tenbrunsel, 2014; Park & DeShon, 2018). Current research into cognitive complexity has also shown that simply more ‘complexity’ does not necessarily mean better outcomes. For instance, Moore and Tenbrunsel (2014) call into question the adage that ‘more thinking’ necessarily leads to better ethical choices. Across three experiments, the authors found that a curvilinear pattern exists in the relationship between cognitive complexity and decision outcomes. Utilising two distinct moral decisions while measuring levels of cognitive complexity, the authors observed that both low and high levels produced decisions that were less moral compared to reasoning within average levels of cognitive complexity. Simply put, overthinking a particular problem may produce greater undesirable outcomes, such as missing the right time to solve an organisational issue, or possibly failing to come to a decision in regard to an ethical dilemma. In a practical study of cognitive complexity from a leadership perspective, Graf-Vlachy and colleagues (2017) investigated the cognitive complexity of chief executive officers and argued that cognitive complexity should also be conceptualised as a ‘quasi-trait,’ particularly as it involves high substantial intra-individual variances and partial persistence, dependent on contextual factors. The authors have found that as executive job pressures increase, CEOs tend to cognitively simplify (Graf-Vlachy et al., 2017). The implications of their study suggest that overwhelming complex information, with numerous details, may sometimes lead to oversimplification, inadvertently drawing conclusions which are overgeneralised. Langley (1995) likens this to ‘analysis by paralysis,’ which is defined by an unhealthy obsession to rule-based thinking and logical analyses. Langley (1995) would also agree with Moore and Tenbrunsel (2014) that in order to keep a fine balance between too much thinking and not enough thinking, adequate consideration must be given to equipping the organisation with checks and balances in order to achieve rational and efficient decision-making.

The second construct, cognitive closeness, refers to a sense of psychological intimacy that results from a perception of closeness to another (romantic partner, close friend, family, etc.), which may also accompany feelings of being understood, accepted and cared for (Mashek & Aron, 2004). Consequently, high levels of cognitive closeness predict greater likelihood of being understood and accepted, while low levels of cognitive closeness predict high likelihood of being misunderstood and rejected (Polimeni et al., 2002). Cognitive closeness has also been examined from a cultural grounding perspective (Adams et al., 2004). Cognitive closeness, from a cultural grounding perspective, states that there are dual etic and emic definitions that one must be aware of. The etic definition refers to more general, non-structural and objective aspects of closeness. For instance, Andersen’s Cognitive Valence Theory (CVT) – which describes the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ of intimacy exchanges between couples, family members, close friends and acquaintances – ascribes an etic approach to closeness as the theoretical framework assuming that intimacy exchanges are by and large global, categorical and identifiable (Andersen, 1998). On the other hand, an emic definition refers to a more local, context-specific and subjective trait. Applied to cognitive closeness, an emic approach assumes that cultural dynamics play an integral part in closeness. In Asian and African cultural settings, the concept of closeness may indicate stronger familial connections compared to a Western conceptualisation. Thus, “a cultural perspective suggests that the prominent concern with closeness and intimacy is ultimately grounded (rather than at odds with) in independent constructions of the self” (Adams et al., 2004, p. 331).

The last construct, cognitive capacity, refers to the general capacity (amount) the mind can retain at any given moment (Chiesi et al., 2011; Reinhard & Sporer, 2008). It is assumed to be finite as it is influenced by constraints such as age, gender and level of education. The importance of cognitive capacity and its relationship to PT hinges on the idea that PT requires basic cognitive processes such as attention and memory. Without these, individuals would be unable to assess what type of social information should be paid attention to and what should be discarded. When individuals are ‘overloaded’ with different information, their PT can be affected as they may be unable to see others’ perspective. Furthermore, when cognitive capacity is overloaded, learning may become obstructed.

In this case, cognitive load refers to the total amount of cognitive and mental resources utilised by one's working memory (part of short-term memory responsible for immediate conscious perceptual and linguistic processing) in order to complete various tasks. Reinhard and Sporer (2008) investigated cognitive capacity by demonstrating the usefulness of dual-process models in the attribution of credibility. In the dual-process model, it was hypothesised that only high-task involvement and high-cognitive capacity lead to intensive processing of both verbal and nonverbal information (Reinhard & Sporer, 2008). The authors found that low-task involvement predicted the influence of nonverbal behaviour while high-task involvement predicted the usage of verbal information. This implies that levels of cognitive capacity, whether high or low, can influence the type of information chosen. That is, individuals who demonstrate high-cognitive capacity were able to utilise verbal information (a more complex form of information) in contrast to individuals with low-cognitive capacity who preferred to use nonverbal information.

In sum, the cognitive reconstitution theme within PT is commonly encountered (cf. Ku et al., 2015; Litchfield & Gentry, 2010). The availability of empirical evidence within this theme confirms the role of the cognitive dimension of PT. While there may be other related constructs of cognition important to PT, I specifically outline three here which are salient and well represented in PT literature: cognitive complexity, cognitive closeness, and cognitive capacity, identified as important to PT due to their validity, and their function in shaping and giving it meaning. Empirical studies investigating these constructs are consistent with the theory that PT is dependent on: (a) an individual's ability to perceive, differentiate and integrate information; (b) an individual's perception of social closeness to others; and (c) an individual's mental capacity to hold information at any given moment. Taken together, these studies provide a solid foundation in understanding PT from a cognitive approach.

Social and organisational familiarisation

The social and organisational familiarisation theme envisions the idea that PT is comprised of linguistic, social-practice and communication capabilities that operate as a coherent system that affects organisational decision-making and collective processes. Based on the work of Boland and Tenkasi (1995, p. 6), the theme of social and organisational familiarisation presents PT as dependent on "models of language, communication and cognition" that are portrayed as linguistic games among individual agents and passed through conduits within the organisational system. Three constructs were identified as relevant in shaping this particular research stream: interpersonal influence, role-taking, and role-making.

First, the construct of interpersonal influence refers to an individual's implicit understanding of beliefs related to oneself (self-concept, self-esteem, etc.) and how these beliefs affect others (Ames et al., 2012; Stern & Westphal, 2010). This type of influence is then utilised to either reinforce (encourage) or punish (discourage) social behaviours. This construct is of particular importance to PT as it illustrates the fundamental social aspect of taking others' perspectives and whether or not these will be socially advantageous or disadvantageous for the perspective-taker. Simply put, PT is not just an intrapsychic cognitive process but rather an intra- and interpersonal process that develops over time and over social experiences. For instance, early work on the effects of interpersonal influence found that differences in group communication (inclusive vs exclusive) demonstrated different reactions to disagreement. In an inclusive group, dissenters are able to argue for their perspectives but are still considered to be a part of the group. On the other hand, communication with dissenters in an exclusive group diminishes, which leads to further ostracism (Schachter, 1951). Schachter's work was further refined and developed by Selman and Johnson in 1975. To Selman (1975, p. 36), the phenomenon of PT should also be understood as a function of basic social-cognitive processes that give "rise of reflective modes of emotional sentiments" and are "a function of the emerging cognitive construction of the nature and relation of self and other." In short, "a reflective self comes about through the separation of views of self and other and this in turn leads to new forms of empathic understanding" (Selman, 1975, p. 36). Johnson's (1975) work also echoes this understanding, particularly as his study found that a strong relationship exists between one's co-operative predisposition and one's ability to take others' emotional perspectives (feel what others are feeling). Co-operativeness also implies knowing that one's behaviour can be misconstrued by others and, through co-operation, subsequent behaviours may be tailored to minimise conflict. Leith and Baumeister (1998) built on this work and examined how guilt – an emotion that occurs

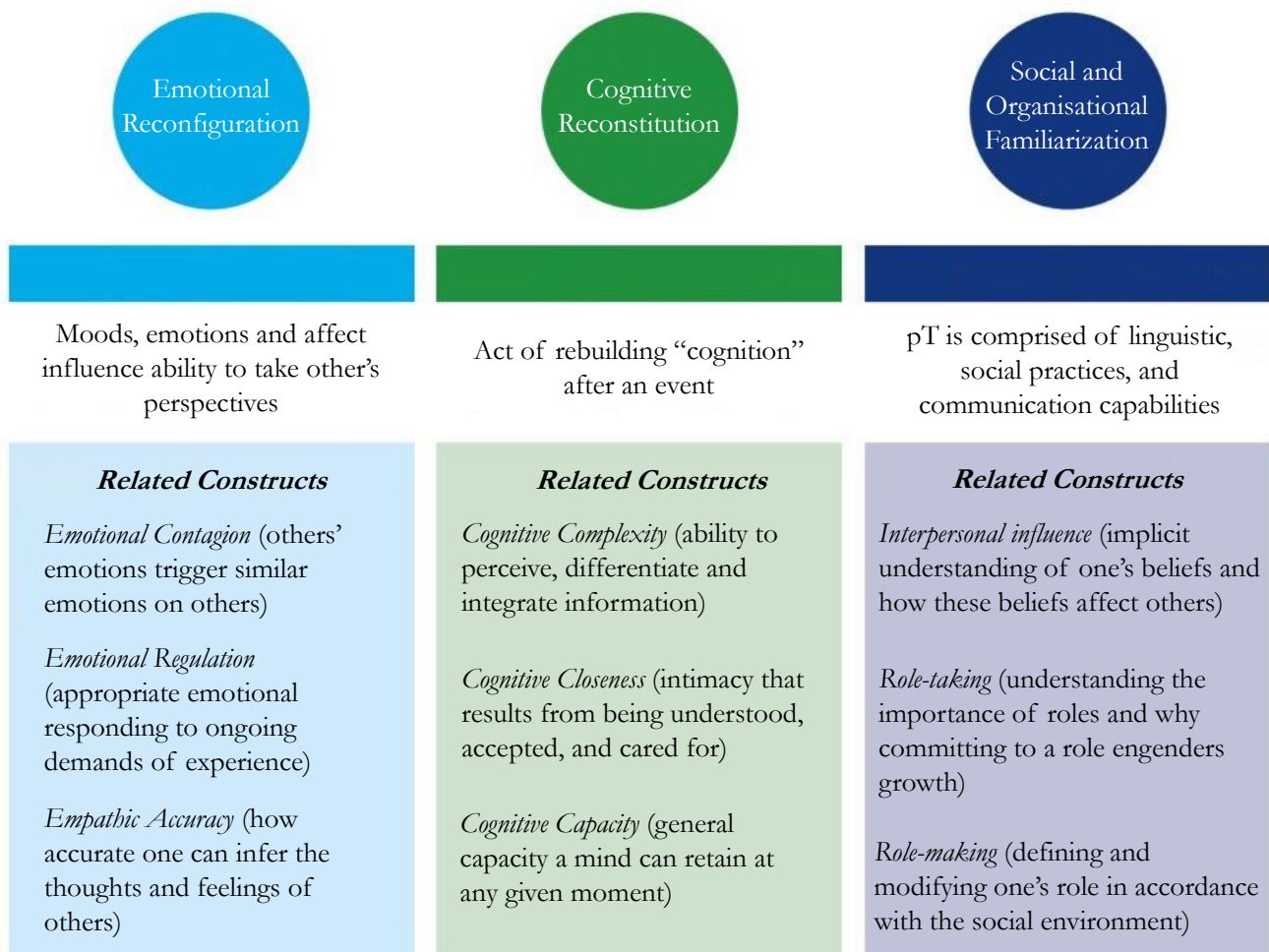


Figure 1. Theoretical framework of organisational perspective-taking.

when a person feels that they have violated a moral and social standard – affected interpersonal relationships. Their experimental studies found that while shame can harm relationship outcomes, guilt can actually improve interpersonal relationships because it implies an awareness that one's behaviour has affected others. In view of all that has been mentioned thus far, the construct of interpersonal influence illustrates the important social aspect of PT and why it is integral to study in the context of relationships, since the inclusion of oneself within a dyad, group and organisation is based on interpersonal processes.

The second and third constructs, role-taking and role-making, are also important for PT. It is no coincidence that both these constructs are important phases (stages) in LMX theory. While these phases are well established in LMX literature (Graen & Scandura, 1987; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), I further delineate each construct in the context of PT and socialisation. Fundamentally, roles refer to a cluster of rights, obligations, protocols, responsibilities and duties that are intrinsic within a specific social position (e.g., neurosurgeon, criminal lawyer, federal judge) (Morrison, 1994; Selman & Damon, 1975). In role-taking, individuals are assumed to 'take on others' perspectives' in part due to general cognitive growth as well as a growing realisation that others' perspectives may vary greatly from one's own (cf. Selman, 1980; Selman & Byrne, 1974). For example, children's ability to understand the roles of their parents (as father, mother, job roles, etc.) may be somewhat limited due to immature cognitive growth. Nevertheless, with time and experience, children, if given proper social support, may grow to understand others' cognition and emotions as they switch to different roles of being a son or daughter, a student, an employee, a friend, or mentor. Selman's role-taking has also been categorised into different stages: (a) egocentric role-taking; (b) subjective role-taking; (c) self-reflective role-taking; (d) mutual role-taking; and (e) societal role-taking. These stages have had a great influence on the phases of leader-member exchange, particularly as both stages (LMX and Selman's role-taking theory) describe

how individuals, or relationships, develop due to congruencies in values, socio-cognitive competencies and socio-emotional resources.

In role-making, individuals are assumed to be in the process of defining and modifying one's role in accordance to social, contextual, relational and organisational cues (Sluss et al., 2010). Furthermore, it can be postulated that role-making is also a self-conscious activity. That is, an individual becomes aware that a role exists (outside of his/her awareness) and that this role may require specific mental, behavioural and emotional processes they may choose to engage in. Role-making is strongly associated with PT, as taking on others' perspectives requires an awareness that specific roles exist that require mental and emotional transformations. For instance, Bal and Veltkamp (2013) examined how the act of reading fiction elicits changes in empathy and PT among readers. In this regard, reading fiction puts the reader in a 'role-making' mindset that consequently shapes levels of empathy for the reader. In a similar vein and from an organisational viewpoint, Sluss et al. (2010, p. 517) explain that role-making "takes shape as individuals form perceptions of their work role based on role preference, role ability, and expectations of others – with an ongoing assessment and subsequent modifications occurring as social cues and individual inclinations converge (or diverge)." As a theme, social and organisational familiarisation has made substantial strides in improving our understanding of PT as well as PM. It is apparent that behaviours associated with PT are composed of linguistic, social and communication practices that directly link it with relationships. While I acknowledge that there may be other constructs that are not included here, three key constructs (interpersonal influence, role-taking and role-making) emerge as salient elements that transpire in the literature.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This systematic review is not meant to be exhaustive and therefore has some limitations. I acknowledge that the theoretical framework proposed shares the individual-level assumptions of relationships at work – that individuals interact with each other from a stance of reciprocity, in contrast to the reality of organisational roles comprising of unequal levels of power. Applied in organisations, reciprocity may not always be a given due to differing cultural dynamics and prior embedded organisational practices. Consequently, it is beyond the scope of this article to forecast meso-level to macro-level outcomes associated with PT. While it may seem intuitive that more organisational PT would be generally better for leaders, employees, and to some extent customers, PT comes with affective, cognitive and essential psycho-physiological costs that may only be temporarily optimal. The focus of my review is on organisational PT as a dynamic process and includes both basic and applied research conducted in a range of disciplines. In order to keep the scope of the review manageable, I have chosen to focus on the key themes of the organisational perspective-taking (OPT) process rather than including its numerable outcomes such as organisational citizenship behaviour and job performance (individual level, team level, and firm level). For this reason, studies examining OCB and job performance were intentionally left out as they would fall outside the scope of the systematic review.

The other side of the coin, according to this systematic review, is the need for PT's theoretically underexamined equal: PM. Boland and Tenkasi (1995, p. 351) view PM as PT's important equal: "communication that strengthens the unique knowledge of a community" and requires a nurturing of communities' unique characteristics, in-depth knowledge, and distinctive specialties. Future research can more rigorously scrutinise the nature of PM. For instance, how can knowledge creation within organisations be utilised as strategic dynamic capabilities required for integrating what transpires from experientially-based organisational practices to knowledge-oriented practices, and vice versa? Furthermore, scholars can also explore the fundamental relationship between PT and PM, especially in understanding the dual effects of these constructs on the individual, on the team, and on the organisation as a whole (Boland & Tenkasi, 1995). When does an organisation know when to engage in PM or in PT? In follow-up to the question "How do leaders model and develop both capabilities while maintaining positive relational and organisational goals?", future research can also investigate whether relying on PT or PM by individuals is an important factor for knowledge management in organisations, and whether exploring the extent PT or PM facilitates or hinders the experiential learning process that occurs in organisations. I theorise that organisations who prioritise experiential learning processes are better able to balance PT and PM organisational practices and thus

better able to respond to dynamic volatile environments. Finally, this paper can provide guidance to organisations by emphasising the relevance of PT to knowledge management and organisational learning. The findings of this systematic review show both tangible and intangible benefits from engaging in PT, especially in facilitating interaction between departments, divisions, cross-functional teams, and stakeholder groups.

CONCLUSION

This systematic review advances important insights to social-exchange theory. Specifically, it offers a better understanding of the complexity of PT and its relationship to social-exchange theory. The implications for organisations are salient because every employee, leader, supervisor and actor within the organisation is intrinsically engaged in an ongoing social-exchange relationship. Although PT has been extensively studied in social psychology and in leadership studies (Ku et al., 2015; Litchfield & Gentry, 2010; Longmire & Harrison, 2018), its relationship to the content and form of social-exchange relationships has not been examined in much detail. The three themes found here illustrate the foundational concepts within PT literature from an SET approach, and understand it not just as an intra-individual resource but also as a fundamental social practice. This outlook is consistent with prior theoretical models which indicate that engaging in PT facilitates reciprocity in social relationships, meaning that actors within the relationship are able to reduce disadvantages stemming from competition and increase benefits derived from collaboration (Cortez & Johnston, 2020; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Settoon et al., 1996). Furthermore, this review advances social-exchange theory by calling attention to the socio-emotional dimensions of PT as an underexamined influence on processes undergirding it. In exploring how PT may influence organisational performance, researchers have traditionally focused on the individual-level features of PT within organisational contexts, such as team creativity (Hoever et al., 2012) and business negotiations (Trötschel et al., 2011). This systematic review complements these approaches by accentuating the significance of affective cues, cognitive processes, and socio-organisational practices that trigger PT in shaping consequent work performance.

Essentially, PT can be comprehended as an archetypal theory of socio-emotional competency that has far-ranging applications for organisations and management. As such, organisations will need to look beyond traditional strategies for leadership development and talent management in order to empower all organisational-level actors; leaders, members, and other stakeholders, in moving the company forward. Simply put, callous and unempathetic leaders are expensive, costing companies millions of dollars yearly both directly and indirectly. Remarkably, these managers make up at least 45–50% of today's management pool (Litchfield & Gentry, 2010) due to the strong propensity of organisations to value cost-containment strategies in contrast to relational-investment strategies, which differ dramatically in terms of priorities and focus. With such high and important stakes, particularly in light of the new normal, it is imperative that HR professionals as well as organisational leaders consider pursuing avenues for leadership development. Perspective-taking is one of these legitimate avenues and is unexpectedly fundamental yet remains partly untapped.

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MANAGING EMPLOYEE-BASED BRAND EQUITY AND FIRM PERFORMANCE IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY: THE ROLE OF AN EMPLOYER'S SYMBOLIC BRAND IMAGE AND WORK ENVIRONMENT

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Organisational behaviour and culture



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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the effect of an employer's symbolic brand image on employee-based brand equity (EBBE) and firm performance. Drawing upon theories of Field and Equity, it hypothesises that EBBE mediates the relationship between the employer's symbolic brand image and firm performance, and the work environment acts as a moderating variable. The study has two sampling frames: senior managers to provide firm-performance perception; and cross-sectional employees to provide symbolic brand image, workplace environment and EBBE data. Data for the proposed model was regressed using SPSS Macro PROCESS Model 58 (Hayes, 2018). Results validate the proposed model except for the role of a moderating variable on the EBBE and firm-performance relationship.

KEYWORDS

Employer's symbolic brand image, employee-based brand equity, work environment, firm performance, staff retention

INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry is often unfairly stereotyped as a low-wage and low-skill industry. Hence, it is not surprising that the employee retention rate for the industry is relatively low compared to other industries worldwide (Sciukauske, 2020). The industry relies heavily on young employees (Frye et al., 2020), and young employees see a career in the hospitality industry as short term (Chang & Busser, 2019), fuelled by the perception that the industry does not offer many career prospects (Dickerson, 2009). Given this scenario, one wonders what else the industry could do to increase the retention rate. On the other end of the spectrum, corporate branding to employees, termed employer branding, is widely acknowledged in internal marketing literature. Employer brand-image is a base to attract a pool of quality new employees, and enhance employee engagement and commitment (Barrow & Mosley, 2005; Hoppe, 2018; Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). The impact of corporate brands on customers and employees is arguably similar; therefore, it is critical to examine the role of employer branding and what it means to internal customers (Davies et al., 2018; Hoppe, 2018). Unlike the abundant evidence of employer instrumental brand image that could attract and influence new employees (Ahmad et al., 2020; Sutherland et al., 2002), the study of the effect of employer symbolic brand image on existing employees is comparatively deficient (Davies et al., 2018; Theurer et al., 2016). Davies et al. (2018) have observed how the employer's brand image could aid employees' satisfaction and engagement. Similarly, Hoppe (2018) has found a link between employer's branding and employees' brand attitudes and behaviour. However, do employee satisfaction, employee engagement and employee brand attitude translate into brand allegiance, brand endorsement and consistent behaviour that will eventually enhance the firm's performance?

Therefore, the general aim of this study is to examine how the employer's symbolic brand image affects employee-based brand equity (EBBE) and firm performance. More specifically, the study addresses the following three research questions:

1. To what extent does an employer's symbolic brand image influence employee-based brand equity and firm performance?

2. Does employee-based brand equity mediate the relationship between the employer's brand image and firm performance?
3. Does the work environment moderate the relationship between the employer's symbolic brand image and employee-based brand equity, and employee-based brand equity and firm performance?

This study contributes to the literature in two ways. Johnson (2020) claims that previous studies on human resources in hospitality have centred around factors external to the organisation and neglected the relational aspect of the internal factors. She points out that there is a need for deeper internal assessments and examination of how human resources in the hospitality industry are based (Johnson, 2020). This study attempts to address this call. Second, as argued by Davies et al. (2018) and Hoppe (2018), studies on the relationship between an employer's instrumental brand image and its existing employees is abundant. However, studies on the relationship between an employer's symbolic brand image and existing employees is deficient. Additionally, Bufquin et al. (2017) argue that studies in the hospitality industry that examine the influence of social perceptions such as warmth and competence on employee retention are lacking. The domain of warmth and competence makes up a symbolic brand image. This sort of study is significant given the intense social and professional interaction between casual-dining restaurant co-workers (Bufquin et al., 2017). Our study partially fills this gap. Finally, although several studies have attempted to link the positive relationship between EBBE and sales growth, profit growth and firm performance in general, the literature is not consistent in reporting the effects; either it is insignificant or low (Mosley, 2007; Poulis & Wisker, 2016). This is not surprising because loyalty and allegiance do not always translate into firm productivity. Only some forms of loyalty affect a very specific aspect of performance (Guillon & Cezanne, 2014). Practically, the finding will provide some managerial guidelines to the hospitality industry to create a conducive work environment to manage employee retention strategies.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

The theory of Field (Lewin, 1997) supports the study's notion. Field Theory suggests a relationship pattern of interaction between individuals and the work environment. It argues that a person's behaviour is a function of the person interacting with the environment. Employees' behaviour does not occur in a vacuum but in a specific work environment (Lewin, 1997). The work environment is a combined space for more employees to share ideas and create a work life-space together (Ripley et al., 2006). Applying this concept to the current study, the work environment arguably plays a critical role in the relationship between an employer's symbolic brand image and EBBE. An employer has to create a warm workplace and allow free communication, coupled with person-job fit and a culture of excellence, to get employees to appreciate their workplace. If the employer does this, the employees will perform well, be loyal to the organisation and improve the organisation's performance.

Employer's symbolic brand image

An employer's symbolic brand image is subjective, abstract, and has intangible attributes related to the firm's employees' behaviour and corporate brand identification (Hoppe, 2018). The framework for symbolic brand image originates from Aaker's (1997) dimensions of brand personality, in which a brand has five dimensions: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness. Historically, an employer's symbolic brand image was measured using brand personality, through multidimensional scales similar to consumer branding (Geuens et al., 2009). However, it has more recently been suggested that the employer's symbolic brand image is represented by two domains: organisational warmth and competence (Davies et al., 2018). A warmth domain is about being trustworthy, friendly, honest, ethically sound and socially responsible, while a competence domain is about being flourishing, reliable and achievement orientated. The study findings of an organisation's warmth and competence vary. Stereotypical thinking has linked non-profit organisations with more warmth but less competence, while business organisations are seen as competent but less warm (Aaker et al., 2010). Anitha & Madhvakumar (2012) observed that competence was more critical in attracting employees. In contrast, Chun et al. (2002) found that warmth was more significant in predicting employee satisfaction. Davies et al. (2018) examined the relationship

between employer's symbolic brand image and employees' satisfaction and engagement, and found that employer's symbolic brand image impacted employees' engagement through satisfaction, concluding that the mediating variable holds. Employer's symbolic brand image was also found to impact other organisational outcomes, such as the point of differentiation, emotional bond and return on investment, among the indirect effects (Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). Therefore, the importance of an employer's symbolic brand image should not be overlooked, especially when an organisation attempts to separate itself from its competitors and retain its employees when instrumental aspects such as remuneration and job security offer no differentiation (Van Hoye et al., 2013).

Work environment

The work environment refers to the place where employees accomplish their duties, and this can have either a positive or a negative effect on their output (Pawirosumarto et al., 2017). A conducive work environment could determine the continuity of employees' employment at an organisation (Pawirosumarto et al., 2017). With the proliferation and accessibility of employment opportunities, work environment conditions are also decisive for job applicants' choice of employers nowadays (Massoudi & Hamdi, 2017). The literature has provided extensive descriptions of the work environment. For instance, Massoudi and Hamdi (2017) grouped the components of a work environment into two categories: physical aspects, which comprise lighting, heavy lifting and noise; and behavioural aspects, which refer to transparent and open communication, work-life balance, training and development focus, recognition of hard work and strong team spirit. Bibi et al. (2018) assessed the work environment in terms of working conditions, and repercussions on employee health, safety and wellbeing. Work environment dimensions comprise the working atmosphere, the relationships with co-workers and the work facilities (complete and modern equipment) (Pawirosumarto et al., 2017). Poropat (2010) suggests a four-scale model for assessing perceptions of the work environment: communication and staff participation; person-job fit; work organisation and design; and person-work-group fit. Although the concept of work environment seems varied, the literature has somewhat agreed that it has a positive influence on employee performance, motivation and job satisfaction (Badrianto & Ekhsan, 2020; Bangwal & Tiwari, 2019)

Employee-based brand equity (EBBE)

We conceptualise EBBE as "the differential effect that brand knowledge has on an employee's response to internal brand management" (King et al., 2012, p. 269). This concept necessitates the translation of a meaningful brand identity to the employees in the context of their roles and commitment. Employee-based brand equity is further represented by three domains: brand endorsement, brand-consistent behaviours and brand allegiance (King & So, 2013). A brand endorsement is the extent to which an employee is willing to say positive things about the employer's brand to others (King et al., 2012). In external branding, a customer can endorse a particular brand or product through a testimonial, such as a written or spoken statement endorsing, promoting, or advertising a product through positive word-of-mouth. A similar notion relates to internal branding. If an employee is extrinsically and intrinsically motivated, he or she would arguably participate in endorsing the organisation's brand to others by spreading the positive image to families and friends and external customers (Davies et al., 2018).

We define brand-consistent behaviour as employee behaviours that are often non-prescribed yet consistent with the organisation's brand values (King et al., 2012), while brand allegiance is conceptualised as employees' future intention to remain with the firm or, in other words, employee retention. Brand allegiance – or brand loyalty – is a primary dimension of brand equity, as some researchers term it. Employees are ambassadors to deliver the brand promise to customers (King & Grace, 2010). In external branding, if consumers have a high level of trust in and loyalty to a particular brand, it indicates that they are satisfied with that particular product and are more likely to communicate about the product to others and ultimately recommend it. Similarly, in internal branding, allegiance leads employees to behavioural loyalty and attitudinal attachment. In addition, if employees are loyal to the firm's brand, they can communicate and deliver their brand promise to their customers.

Firm performance

The study uses firm performance as the organisational outcome. Firm performance is conceptualised using Piercy et al.'s (2009) subjective measures that include the performance of a firm's overall sales, market share, overall profitability, new market entry and customers' satisfaction in the last 24 months as compared with their major competitors. Arguably, the ideal situation is to use both objective and subjective performance measures. Nonetheless, previous studies have found no significant differences between objective and subjective measuring metrics across various types of performance (Wall et al., 2004).

Relationship between employer's symbolic brand image, employee-based brand equity and firm performance

An employer's symbolic brand image is about being warm, honest, trustworthy, socially responsible to its employees, competent and successful (Davies et al., 2018). Therefore, it is not unpredictable that an employer's symbolic image has been linked to greater employee affinity, satisfaction, commitment, loyalty, engagement and retention rate (Barrow & Mosley, 2005; Davies, 2008; Kunerth & Mosley, 2011; Priyadarshi, 2011). Employer's symbolic brand image can also be the point of difference to retain existing employees, should instrumental aspects such as pay scale and job security offer no means of differentiating from competitors (Hoppe, 2018; Van Hoyer et al., 2013; Lievens & Highhouse, 2003). Although the positive direct relationship between employer brand image and employees' job satisfaction and commitment is well established, the direct impact of employer brand image on firm performance is not (Foster et al., 2010; Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). This is not surprising, because for employer branding to be successful there should be a psychological contract between employers and employees. The employer brand propositions should be established through the employees to ensure the rational and emotional benefits are congruent with employees' expectations (Foster et al., 2010; Mosley, 2007). In other words, without the interplay of the individual (employees), the employer's brand image will not be successful. Lievens and Slaughter (2016) argue that employer brand image could only impact organisational outcomes, such as a point of differentiation and return of investment, through the influence of mediators.

On the other spectrum, the EBBE literature has also reported a positive relationship between employees' satisfaction, commitment and retention, and firm performance (Dominguez-Falcon et al., 2016; Wisker & Kwiatek, 2019). Firms know the advantages of keeping their employees loyal and staying longer, as that ultimately translates into their performance (Kehoe & Wright, 2010; Wisker & Kwiatek, 2018). Employee-based brand equity is reflected in the internal brand that serves to create and maintain the organisation's substantial brand equity (King & Grace, 2010; Poulis & Wisker, 2016). King and Grace (2010), who observed employees in the service industry, found that employees' brand commitment, role clarity, knowledge dissemination and information generation have a positive relationship with employee satisfaction, positive word-of-mouth, and employee brand-citizenship behaviour, resulting in increased firm performance. Poulis and Wisker (2016) found that EBBE has a positive relationship with firm performance in countries in both the UK and the United Arab Emirates. King and Grace (2009) have suggested that EBBE positively impacts consumer-based brand equity, which results in improvements to finances. Other studies have also observed that existing employees who spread positive views about the organisation's brand could enhance sales growth and profit growth (Davies et al., 2018; Mosley, 2007). Indeed, a positive interpretation of an employer's symbolic brand image might further lead to increased positive work-related outcomes, which could translate to firm performance (Kashyap & Chaudhary, 2019). Hoppe (2018) observed that symbolic internal branding and its antecedents, such as employee behaviours and brand-citizen behaviours, have a positive relationship with employer branding. This has resulted in an increase in firm performance. The author further argues that the impact of symbolic job offerings on favourable brand-related employee attitudes and behaviours could lead to strengthening organisational achievements (Hoppe, 2018).

Summarising the discussion thus far, the study argues that the relationship between employer symbolic brand image and firm performance is indirect. The indirect relationship is mediated by EBBE. Hence, we posit the following hypotheses:

H1: The employer's symbolic brand image positively affects firm performance, and it is mediated through employee-based brand equity.

H1a: The employer's symbolic brand image has a positive direct effect on firm performance,

H1b: The employer's symbolic brand image has a positive effect on employee-based brand equity.

H1c: The employee-based brand equity has a positive effect on firm performance.

Moderation effect – work environment

As the objective of internal brand management consists of encouraging employees' identification with the brand, it is noteworthy to assess their sensitivity to the initiatives undertaken internally (King & Grace, 2010). Internalising the brand image through positive actions and behaviours occurs when employees perceive high compatibility with the work environment (Shamir, 1991). King and Grace (2010) validated a model which suggests that several work-environment dimensions are likely to contribute to predicting EBBE, i.e.: openness (existence of an organisational environment favourable for internal dialogue and interaction); human factors (referring to employees' perceptions of being decently treated in their organisation; with respect, co-operation, inclusive communication, trust, and commitment towards common goals); information generation (understanding of the employee's attitude concerning the organisation brand); and knowledge dissemination to the customers in a meaningful manner. Two critical elements of the work environment that arguably enhance employees' perception of their employer's brand are brand leadership and internal marketing orientation (Boukis & Christodoulides, 2018). The first exerts a direct effect on EBBE and entails employees' perceptions of their supervisors' brand leadership behaviours. The latter refers to supervisors' efforts towards increasing the degree of motivation and satisfaction of the workforce (i.e., treating employees as internal customers). Internal market orientation indirectly influences EBBE through brand knowledge and brand identification (Boukis & Christodoulides, 2018). Lee et al. (2019) demonstrate the mediating effect of two elements of the work environment, person–job fit and person–group fit, on the relationship of brand-specific transformational leadership and brand-specific transactional leadership with EBBE.

The literature in the hospitality industry has also reported a positive relationship between work environment and employee commitment, satisfaction and intention to stay longer (Frye et al., 2020; Lopez-Chabarcos et al., 2015; Walsh & Taylor, 2007). If employees perceive that their job has an important responsibility, is challenging and exciting, and is flexible, they will be more involved and emotionally invested, resulting in employees' job satisfaction and less likelihood of their leaving (Brown & Koettl, 2015; Frye et al., 2020; Kim & Jogaratnam, 2010). Better communication in the workplace, such as clear instructions, constant feedback, and recognition from supervisors also led to job satisfaction and consistent behaviour (Lee & Way, 2010). Given the discussion thus far, it is fair to argue that the work environment forms a critical element in employees' job satisfaction and retention; hence we posit the following:

H2a: Symbolic brand image has a positive direct effect on employee-based brand equity, and this relationship is moderated by the work environment.

H2b: Employee-based brand equity has a positive direct effect on firm performance, and this relationship is moderated by the work environment.

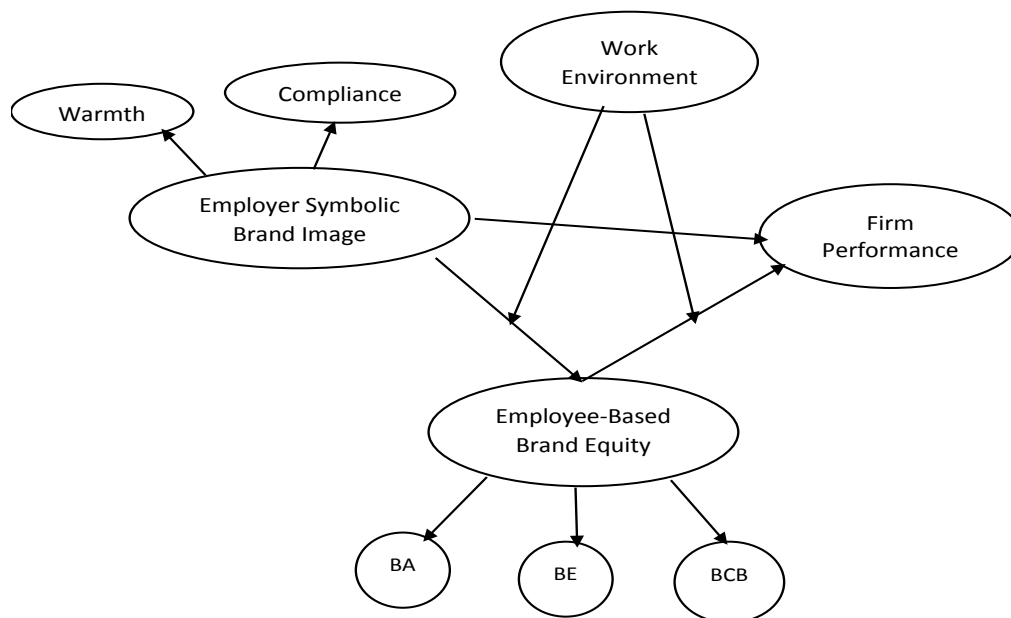


Figure 1. Model of the study.

METHODOLOGY

Design and participants

To test the proposed model, we surveyed hospitality employees in New Zealand through an online survey. The survey was fielded at the beginning of 2020, just before the first Covid-19 lockdown. The study took 12 weeks to operationalise, and it involved two sampling frames. Sampling Frame 1 aimed to gather data on the firms' performance, and Sampling Frame 2 aimed to gather cross-sectional data to test the posited hypotheses.

Sampling Frame 1

In Sampling Frame 1, we surveyed senior managers and business owners and partners to gather the data on the firms' performance. We contacted 163 hospitality firms to participate in the survey; ultimately, 58 firms agreed to provide access, yielding a 35.6% response rate. We used the SurveyMonkey platform to gather the data. For organisations with more than one senior manager participating in the survey, the data were merged, and the mean value was used to measure the firm's performance.

Sampling Frame 2

Data for symbolic brand image, EBBE and work environment were collected across employees we were given access to by the 58 firms. Subsequently, we received 238 responses. After a close examination, only 221 responses were deemed usable, hence retained. Seventeen were eliminated from the analysis for several reasons, including missing and invalid responses and the employee's age being below 18 years old. The age restriction was used to comply with the ethical concerns for vulnerable participants. Following the suggestion of Cohen (1992) in calculating the sample size, an alpha (α) of .05 was selected to minimise the possibility of Type 1 errors. Cohen (1992) also recommends aiming for a power ($1 - \beta$) of .8 or more to get an 80% or more chance of success. Concerning effect size (r), Cohen (1992) specifies that large effects correspond to effect sizes of .5, medium effects correspond to effect sizes of .3, and small effects correspond to effect sizes of .1 (Cohen, 1992). This study has chosen a small-to-medium

effect size, i.e., .2. To sum up, the sample size of 221 respondents can detect almost 85% probability respectively at the effect size (r) of .2 and an alpha (α) of .01.

Measures

This study used established measures to gather data on the work environment, EBBE, employer's symbolic brand and firm performance. The work environment was measured using Ripley's (1998) scale. The scale is a second-order factor that is contributed by domains of communication and participation, person–job fit, work organisation and design, and person–group fit. Each subscale has four items. The symbolic brand image scale was adopted from Davies et al. (2018) and has two domains, warmth and competence. Each domain was represented by five items. Employee-based brand equity was measured using King et al. (2012) and has three domains, brand endorsement, allegiance and consistency behaviour. EBBE was represented by an 11-item questionnaire (four items each for brand endorsement and allegiance, and three items for brand-consistent behaviour). All scales were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Firm performance was measured using Piercy et al. (2009). The scale has five items and was measured on a five-point scale ranging from much worse = 1, to much better = 5.

Control variable

This study controls three variables: gender, age group and the size of the firms. We created dummy variables corresponding to the specific levels of respective variables. The literature in the past has observed that gender and age group have different effects on behavioural tendencies and preferences (Hess et al., 2000). Past studies have also seen that the firm's size affects performance (Samiee & Walters, 1990); hence, it is critical to control these variables because they might interfere with the results of the study.

RESULTS

Before testing the proposed mediated-moderated model, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis. We validated the multidimensional constructs for the work environment, symbolic brand image and EBBE using SEM through AMOS. In fitting the model, we have dropped one item from person–work-group fit for the work environment measure and one item from the competence for symbolic brand image measure as the loadings are below the threshold of 0.4 (Byrne, 2010). In sum, the results for the second-order tests affirm that work environment, symbolic brand image and EBBE are multidimensional constructs. Table 1 shows the scale reliabilities and CFA results. We also conducted a bivariate correlation between variables, and Table 2 depicts the result.

In testing the posited hypotheses, we adopted Hayes's (2018) PROCESS Model 58 using SPSS to test the linear regression for the moderated-mediation effects. The tests were based on a 95% bootstrapping confidence interval on 5000 samples. Table 3 depicts the results. It indicates the significance of a mediating role, EBBE, with the indirect effects $\beta = .5147$, $se = .0639$, $t = 8.7931$, $p < 0.000$, accepting Hypothesis 1. Hypothesis 2a and Hypothesis 2b are concerned with the moderating role of the work environment. The moderating effect of the work environment on symbolic brand image and the EBBE relationship is significant. Surprisingly, the result shows no significant moderation relationship effect between the work environment on EBBE and firm performance relationship, subsequently rejecting Hypothesis 2b. For clarity, the study plotted the moderation interaction between low and high work environments on employer's symbolic brand image and EBBE relationship. As seen in Figure 2, the slope becomes steeper when the work environment is high.

TABLE 1: SCALE RELIABILITIES AND LOADINGS (N = 221).

Variable	Loadings	(α)	AVE
Work Environment		.82	.59
Communication			
I often receive feedback about my work	.85		
I am involved in setting goals for my jobs here	.86		
I normally get clear instructions about what is expected of me	.74		
I routinely participate in decisions about my jobs	.78		
Person–Job Fit			
My job is an important responsibility	.73		
Part of our job is to get involved in solving problems	.70		
I like most things about my jobs	.73		
There is enough variety in my job to satisfy me	.88		
Organisation and Design			
Resources to do the job are available when needed	.78		
We are able to take advantage of the technology available to us	.79		
Our work schedule gives us flexibility when I need it	.74		
We are well organised for the work we have to get done	.65		
Person–Work-Group Fit			
There are a lot of cliques here that don't get along with each other (-)	.69		
Co-workers interfere with me being able to do my job (-)	.63		
We have an atmosphere that most people feel comfortable working in	.88		
Many of our employees aren't cut out for the jobs they are doing (-)	.39*		
Symbolic Brand Image		.79	.59
Competence			
The organisation I work for is reliable	.70		
The organisation I work for is achievement oriented	.73		
The organisation I work for is efficient	.69		
The organisation I work for is competent	.73		
The organisation I work for is successful	.33*		
Warmth			
The organisation I work for is friendly	.77		
The organisation I work for is honest	.78		
The organisation I work for is trustworthy	.77		
The organisation I work for is socially responsible	.88		

The organisation I work for is ethical	.84		
EBBE		.81	.59
Brand Endorsement			
I say positive things about the organisation I work for	.71		
I would recommend the organisation I work for someone seeking my advice	.76		
I enjoy talking about the organisation I work for to others	.81		
I talk positively about the organisation I work for to others	.86		
Brand Allegiance			
I plan to be with the organisation I work for, for a while	.74		
I plan to be with the organisation I work for five years from now	.80		
I would turn down an offer from another organisation if it came tomorrow	.72		
I plan to stay longer with the organisation I work for	.70		
Brand-Consistent Behaviour			
I demonstrate behaviour that is consistent with the brand promise	.81		
I consider the impact on my organisation's brand before taking action	.74		
I am always interested to learn about my organisation's brand	.79		
Firm Performance		.92	.80
Sales performance	.89		
Market share	.92		
Profitability	.88		
New market entry	.86		
Customers' satisfaction	.91		

* Item removed due to low factor loadings (Byrne, 2010). Fit Statistics: chi-squared to df. $\chi^2 = 114.878$; $df = 62$; $(\chi^2/d.f) = 1.852$; Normed Fit Index (NFI) = .891 Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = .911; Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = .065; p-Value $\leq .01$.

TABLE 2: CORRELATION COEFFICIENT AMONG THE STUDY'S VARIABLES.

Measures	M	SD	1	2	3	4
Symbolic Brand Image	3.958	6.877	-			
Employee-Based Brand Equity	3.157	7.024	.627**	-		
Work Environment	3.771	8.135	.475**	.234**	-	
Firm Performance	4.080	3.429	.188*	.240**	.320**	-

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

TABLE 3: CONDITIONAL MODERATED MEDIATION EFFECTS RESULT.

Test of Employer Symbolic Brand Image (X) by EBBE (M) interaction on Firm Performance (Y)							
Mediation Model Summary <i>R = .745, R² = .555, MSE = .072, F = 38.736 df1=2.000, df2 = 62.000, p = 000</i>							
	Coeff	Se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	Conclusion
Direct effect of Employer Symbolic Image (X) on Firm Performance (Y)	.0331	.0531	.5043	.312	-.0283	.2378	H1: Mediation hold
Conditional indirect effect through EBBE (M)	.5147	.0639	8.7931	.000	.3246	.6887	
Test(s) of Employer Symbolic Image (X) by EBBE (M) interaction <i>F = 39.183, df1=1.000, df2=61.000, p=.000</i>							
Interaction Employer Symbolic Image (X) and EBBE (Y)* Work Environment (W) Interaction moderation summary: <i>R²chg=.018, F = 12.3126, df1=1.000, df2=120.000, p = .001 (significant)</i>							
Interaction EBBE (X)* and Firm Performance (Y)* Work Environment(W) Interaction moderation summary <i>R²chg=.006, F = 2.7096, df1=1.000, df2=120.000, p = .112 (insignificant)</i>							

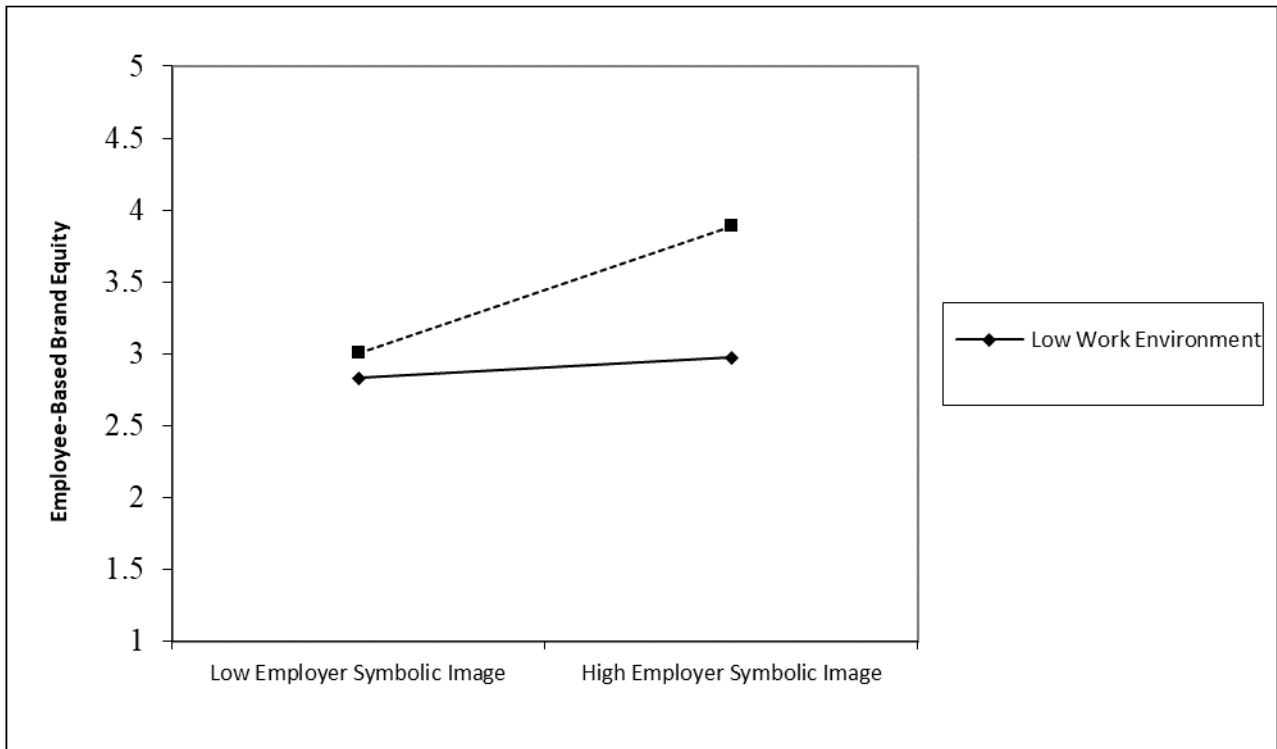


Figure 2: Conditional moderation effect of the workplace environment.

DISCUSSION

Theoretical contribution

This study contributes theoretically to the employer's symbolic brand image and EBBE in hospitality literature in several ways. Building upon Field Theory, this study posits that employer's symbolic brand image impacts firm performance through the mediating variable, EBBE, and finds significance. This study has observed that an employer's symbolic brand image plays a critical role in enhancing a firm's performance. It indirectly affected the firm's performance by mediating variable EBBE and directly affected, albeit a weak effect. The finding concurs with Davies et al.'s (2018) and Hoppe's (2018) studies, which suggest that an employer's symbolic brand image is as essential as an instrumental brand image and could serve as a point of difference from competitors. Employer's symbolic brand image influences employees' positive behaviour and retention rates. The hospitality industry is mainly dominated by a younger workforce (Frye et al., 2020) who often receive minimum wages and potentially have transactional relationships to the workplace (Kim et al., 2009). This study has found that employees appreciate an organisational culture that is warm (socially responsible, ethical, honest, trustworthy) and competent (achievement oriented, competent, efficient). In other words, the more honest, trustworthy, ethically and socially responsible the employer, the greater the employees' commitment, loyalty and engagement to the organisation, resulting in a higher retention rate, which is crucial for the hospitality industry. Past studies have found that the recruitment and training costs for new employees outweighs the cost to maintain existing employees (Brown & Koettl, 2015). Therefore, it is not surprising that this study has observed the positive indirect effect of the employer's symbolic brand image on a firm's performance. All in all, this study has shown that an employer's (internal) branding and marketing are as critical as external corporate branding and marketing in influencing employees' brand endorsement, consistent behaviour and allegiance.

The current study demonstrates a significant moderating effect of the work environment on the symbolic brand image of EBBE. This finding affirms several other studies in this arena (Boukis & Christodoulides, 2018; Lee et al., 2019; López-Cabarcos et al., 2015). To illustrate, work environment factors enhance the effect of symbolic brand image on EBBE. If an employee finds that the workplace is friendly, honest and transparent, they are more likely to perceive that the opportunities are available to use the resources needed for work, to carry out various tasks, and to work comfortably with the team. Likewise, if an employee is given a job that is perceived as an essential responsibility and is involved in decision making, and is occasionally given a variety of jobs, this would enable them to enjoy the job, which would subsequently improve retention rates. In a work environment that is warm and competent, employees are more likely to behave consistently with the brand promise and be more mindful about how their behaviour could impact the organisation. From the perspective of internal marketing management, brand-consistent behaviour is crucial. It promotes employee's willingness to learn their own organisation's brand and modify their work behaviour to fit their work environment.

Surprisingly, the study found no moderating effect of the work environment on the EBBE and firm performance relationship. This result implies that employee-based brand equity affects firm performance regardless of whether the work environment effect is present or otherwise. Nonetheless, this study has observed a strong effect of EBBE on firm performance in the absence of a work environment effect. On the methodological front, this study concurs with Davies et al. (2018) that the employer's symbolic brand image is a multidimensional construct that consists of two domains: warmth (socially responsible, ethical, honest, trustworthy) and competence (achievement-oriented, competent, efficient). By developing a unique employer identity proposed by Backhaus and Tikoo (2004), these elements appear to differentiate a restaurant from its competitors. However, the current study shows that one of the dimensions in employer's symbolic brand image, *success*, does not seem to concern the hospitality employees surveyed. Secondly, EBBE, which consists of the three domains proposed by King et al. (2012), appears to be important from the perceptions of the hospitality employees surveyed. Finally, this study also affirms the four domains of work environment proposed by Ripley (1998).

Managerial implication

The findings from the current research highlight the significance of a work environment that encourages internal communication, person–job fit, warmth and competence in improving business performance. The hospitality industry must treat employees as internal customers and create a work environment that connects them with the organisational vision. There are several strategies that the industry could implement. Although not the focus of this research, previous studies have found that employees in the hospitality industry tend to be young (Frye et al., 2020; Gill et al., 2011; Kim et al., 2009). Hence, the industry could create empowerment policies and programmes that enable young employees to participate in the decision-making process as part of person–job fit. Younger employees appear to be less motivated by money than previous generations. Hence, the industry could reward them by improving their working conditions, such as giving them a more pleasant breakroom and better equipment to work with. More importantly, better communication between managers and employees should be in place. Employees should be given clear instructions and training, be encouraged to set up their own goals and milestones to achieve, and be provided with regular feedback. The industry must utilise existing marketing resources to design internal communication campaigns that can align employees' personal goals with the organisation's vision.

Secondly, the findings of this research emphasise the importance of organisational competence and warmth in terms of being honest, trustworthy, and ethically and socially responsible. Organisations must be honest about their business, and be clear and consistent with the goals and objectives. They should involve all employees in being ethically and socially responsible by implementing bottom-up policies to generate ideas; not only would the organisations get richer ideas, but the employees would feel important and included. In addition, there is a need for internal marketing to streamline the external marketing campaign. Employees, especially those on the front line, should always be aware of external marketing campaigns and promotions that the organisation is running. Without a well-designed internal–external flow of information, employees can easily be embarrassed and humiliated in front of customers and feel disconnected from the organisational image (Kale, 2007). The organisations can provide their front-line employees with a complimentary meal at the restaurant to practically learn about the organisational philosophy and brand image. It would also foster employees' sense of belonging and motivate them to go beyond their job description (Nart et al., 2019) and hopefully allow them to endorse, and behave consistently with, the organisation's brand, which would improve organisational performance.

Limitations and future studies

Although this study has added some insights into the EBBE and symbolic brand image literature, it is also subject to some limitations, which could provide future research avenues. Firstly, in terms of the dimensions of employer's symbolic brand image, this study is limited to the measurement of the level of organisational competence and warmth. Other studies have included other domains, such as brand personality, sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, ruggedness, personal achievement and leadership excellence (Aaker, 1997; Lievens & Highhouse, 2003; Nolan et al., 2013). Future studies may examine these domains of firm performance. Secondly, this study used a subjective firm-performance report. Subjective reported performance can expose several distortions, including the faking of answers and elements of bias. However, previous studies have found when subjective and objective firm performance were gathered and compared, they were similar (Wall et al., 2004). Moreover, senior managers' ratings generally indicate true performance. Hence, the use of subjective reported firm performance in this study may constitute only a minor limitation.

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