

Conceptualising Māori and Pasifika Aspirations and Striving for Success (COMPASS)



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www.nzcer.org.nz

ISBN 978-1-99-004050-4

<https://doi.org/10.18296/rep.0019>

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He mihi | Acknowledgments

The COMPASS project is a partnership between Rangahau Mātauranga o Aotearoa | New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) and Professor Melinda Webber from The University of Auckland. It is part of NZCER's Te Pae Tawhiti Government Grant programme of research, funded through the Ministry of Education.

We are grateful for the expertise of NZCER colleagues who supported this project, and to Sheridan McKinley as the project's sponsor who reviewed our work and provided feedback throughout the project and on the draft report.

We are deeply appreciative to all ākonga, whānau, and kaiako respondents who completed the surveys and allowed us to shed the light on their experiences and views.

Karakia

Poua ki uta

Make fast onshore

Poua ki tai

Make fast at sea

He punga whakawhenua

An anchor that holds me to the land

He punga kōrewa

An anchor that holds me in the sea

Purutia e hika

Hold fast my companion

Kia piki ake

In order that we may rise above

Ki a Taihoronuku

The tides that engulf the land

Ki a Taihororangi

The tides that engulf the sky

Ka titiro ake au

As we cast our eyes upward

Ki te pae o uta

Towards the landward horizon

Ki te pae o waho

Towards the seaward horizon

Kia tau ki tuawhenua

To settle upon the mainland

Ki te kiri waiwai o Papatūānuku

And the vitality of Papatūānuku

E takoto nei

Lying before me



HE PUNGA (ANCHOR)

by Wi Taepa

He kupu whakataki | Introduction

Mohamed Alansari and Melinda Webber

He kupu mō te kaupapa | About the project

COMPASS is aligned to the broad goals and aspirations of NZCER, in that its overarching purpose is to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the notion of Whakātere Tōmua—Wayfinding. Whakātere Tōmua utilises the concepts of wayfinding, the voyaging spirit, navigation, and waka, as a means of better understanding the ways Māori and Pasifika ākonga successfully navigate their way through the schooling system, maintaining positive motivation, academic engagement, cultural connectedness, and high aspirations for the future. The overall concept of wayfinding or navigation can be understood through the lens of the following whakataukī:

He moana pukepuke e ekengia e te waka
A choppy sea can be navigated

Through kaupapa Māori informed wānanga and tīkanga, the COMPASS project has examined the ways kaiako, ākonga, and whānau navigate educational experiences and contexts. In a sense, this project has sought to identify the various punga (anchors) in the lives of Māori and Pasifika ākonga, with the four studies representing four focal directions on a compass. Master Navigator Hoturoa Barclay-Kerr commented:

Danger is part of the life of an ocean traveller. One of these dangers is losing your waka to high seas, reefs, rocks, and other tests of nature. To deal with this the waka must have its own ways of dealing with these threats. Out in the ocean during storms sea anchors [punga] will be deployed. Close to shore anchors for the land will be deployed and the correct ones must be used for different terrain. A crew needs to know which anchors to deploy and when.

Ultimately the crew understands that the main objective is to survive whatever may be dealt to them and that the distant horizon will eventually reveal the place where they can once again safely land their waka. A place of sanctuary from the storm.

(NZCER Owaha Booklet, 2021)

The COMPASS project has examined how learning, thriving, and succeeding at school are understood and experienced by Māori and Pasifika ākonga, whānau, and kaiako. It shines a light on the ways ākonga thrive emotionally, socially, and academically at school when good information about academic motivation, efficacy, attitudes, future aspirations, and cultural connectedness are shared between students, parents, teachers, and the wider school community. COMPASS has found that student behaviours at school are crucially influenced by punga (anchors) such as family involvement and encouragement, school and teacher support systems, cultural efficacy and belonging, and broader community contributions. Māori and Pasifika ākonga are wayfinders who do not navigate choppy seas on their own—they instead work alongside whānau, kaiako and other role models to reach new horizons.

He kupu whakataki | Introduction

What motivates ākonga to engage, persist, and thrive at school, even when faced with academic and social challenges? How can whānau help their tamariki to achieve at school and beyond, thereby increasing their academic efficacy, expectations, and aspirations? What kaiako practices help ākonga to see that their culture, language, and identity are assets and relevant to their learning and success?

We know that how an ākonga engages, performs, and succeeds at school has critical implications for the rest of their life. Ākonga with higher educational attainment have increased levels of employment,

better incomes, better health, lower incarceration rates, and higher levels of social and emotional wellbeing (Education Counts, 2021). Therefore, helping ākongā to develop academic motivation by understanding the value and benefits of education can have lasting and important impacts on their lives (Webber et al., 2018).

Academic motivation has been defined as “the process whereby goal-directed [academic] activity is instigated and sustained” (Schunk et al., 2014, p. 5). Implicit in this definition are three key ideas about academic motivation: (1) that it is purposeful and aspirational, (2) that it requires provocation, and (3) that it must be enduring for successful outcomes. Less clear in this definition is the role whānau, kaiako, and other community members play in the development and maintenance of academic motivation. It has been increasingly recognised in the fields of education and psychology that parents and teachers have significant impacts on students’ learning. Recognition of the important role parents and teachers play is reflected in educational policies that promote practices such as actively involving parents in the educational process (*The Action Plan for Pacific Education 2020–2030* (Ministry of Education 2020)), encouraging teachers to develop a range of cultural competencies to successfully teach Māori learners (*Tātaiako: Cultural Competencies for Teachers of Māori Learners* (Ministry of Education, 2011)), and system shifts in education that support Māori learners and their whānau, hapū, and iwi to achieve excellent and equitable outcomes (*Ka Hikitia–Kia Hapaitia* (Ministry of Education, 2011)). These policies are based on research that has told us about the significant influence of parental/teacher involvement on students’ academic engagement and achievement (McDowall et al., 2017; Rubie-Davies et al., 2018; Webber et al., 2016).

Family engagement in schooling has been shown to have a positive influence on students’ belief in their ability to succeed in their educational and career choices (Grubb et al. 2002; Webber et al., 2018), and high expectations communicated through effective, connected relationships between teachers, students, and families is key to ākongā educational thriving (Webber et al., 2018). Understanding the influence of home, school, and community environments on students’ academic motivation and outcomes is critical. By examining the links between the messages students receive about the purpose, value, and outcomes of education from teachers and family members, and the beliefs, values, needs, and goals that students adopt in learning situations, schools and families alike may be able to better influence academic motivation.

He tukanga | Method

The data used for COMPASS were taken from a national research project led by Professor Melinda Webber entitled *Kia tū rangatira ai: Living, thriving and succeeding in education*. The broader strengths-based research project investigated how ākongā learn, succeed, and thrive at school. This nationally representative project has large numbers of ākongā ($n = 18,996$), whānau ($n = 6,949$), and kaiako ($n = 1,866$) respondents. The project was funded by a Rutherford Discovery Fellowship, administered by The Royal Society Te Apārangi.

Kia tū rangatira ai employed surveys to gather quantitative and qualitative data from students over a 2-year period. The survey comprised a combination of 49 open-ended and closed questions. Initially students were asked to provide demographic data and then complete multiple-choice questions, Likert scale items, and open-ended questions. The project adhered to ethical principles and practices, including informed consent, protection of vulnerable students, anonymity, and confidentiality, as outlined by kaupapa Māori protocols (G.H. Smith, 1997; L. Smith, 2005) and The University of Auckland Code for Human Ethics. Firstly, a kaupapa Māori approach ensured a respectful, culturally

responsive and appropriate pathway was used for undertaking this important work alongside school communities. Teachers and school leaders were involved in the gathering of the data, liaison with students and families, and included in the analysis and interpretation of school level findings. Secondly, following ethical review, the project was lodged with the University and received ethical approval in 2018 (UAHPEC Approval Number: 021775).

COMPASS focuses on examining the social-psychological conditions for school success from the perspectives of Māori and Pasifika students ($n = 5,843$), Pasifika whānau members ($n = 362$), and Māori kaiako ($n = 311$) from 102 schools across Aotearoa New Zealand. The four studies undertaken as part of COMPASS focus on the following research questions:

Study 1 (led by Mohamed)

1. What are the motivational and engagement patterns of Māori and Pasifika learners in English-medium schools?
 - a. Do these differ with respect to major school and student demographics (gender, year level, and decile) and by cluster group?
 - b. Do these differ in relation to learners' self-reported achievement, support networks, and cultural pride by cluster group?

Study 2 (led by Sinead)

2. How can we become inspiring, encouraging, and supportive role models for ākongā Maori?
 - a. Who are the people ākongā Māori identify as being inspiring, encouraging, and supportive of their success?
 - b. What values or qualities do ākongā Māori identify in their role models?
 - c. What other factors (such as ethnicity or gender) are influential for ākongā when choosing role models?

Study 3 (led by Renee)

3. What do Pasifika primary/intermediate learners and families perceive as effective teaching qualities and practices for teachers?

Study 4 (led by Kiri)

4. What teaching and learning relationships, environments, practices, and experiences do kaiako Māori report make a positive difference for ākongā Māori?

Ko wai mātou | Positionality

Because of the nature and design of the COMPASS project it was important for each researcher to acknowledge the position they hold within their study. Guided by kaupapa Māori, and taking into account the purpose of the research, it was considered appropriate that we started each study by explicitly locating ourselves within the study and the kaupapa under examination. We collectively rejected the notion that researchers can, and should, write from a position of objectivity and distance. Jones (1992) once argued that researchers must organise a space “to reveal themselves legitimately in their work, to include [their] explicit subjective presence in their writing” (p. 25). Similarly, Clothier (1993) argued that indigenous oral traditions insist that researchers “position yourself, letting the listener/s know from where you come and thereby reminding yourself from whence you came” (p. 10). Therefore, each of the four studies are preceded by a positionality statement to enable the audience

to gain a better understanding of the nature and origin of the research and researchers. We also share our positionality statements to contribute to and tautoko the perspectives generously shared by the participants.

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STUDY 1

Exploring the motivational and engagement patterns of Māori and Pasifika learners: A cluster analysis study

Mohamed Alansari

Ko wai ahau | Positioning myself

I am “a first” in many ways, which shaped how I view myself as a person and as a professional: a first-generation university student, a first-generation immigrant, and a first-generation speaker of English. I was born and raised in Bahrain, by a grandmother, a mother, two sisters, and over 20 aunties. Despite living in Aotearoa New Zealand from a young age, I am Middle Eastern through and through. My culture, language, and heritage shape how I view myself and the world around me: respect and deep appreciation of ancestors who paved the way for me to “do” and “know” what I do and know; generosity and togetherness that shape why we do things; and the belief that one cannot succeed unless their family—immediate, extended, and chosen—succeeds with them. I grew fond of Aotearoa New Zealand because I was able to identify the same values here and see them manifest in everyday life.

I was raised by an extended family that was strict on traditions, protocols, and understanding spaces and places, as well as having a strong appreciation for how our ancestry has paved the way to how we live today. Back where I grew up, knowing and speaking your indigenous language and dialects, and holding on to your values and ways of being, are held to the highest regard. My upbringing, rooted in strong cultural values and worldviews, gave me and my siblings the confidence to be who we are, the strong sense of identity that serves as the backbone of our resilience, as well as our openness to relate to others beyond our own culture through building bridges that connect our worldviews. So, to me, it has always been intuitive to look at the wider influences that shape people’s growth, learning, and aspirations.

Attending school, and subsequently university, in New Zealand as a foreign student was challenging and at times intimidating. I moved here alone and did not speak but a few words of English. None of my classmates at the time knew where Bahrain was, or that it was even a country. No one spoke or looked like me, nor did I speak or look like anyone in most of my classes. Yet, I was expected to attend, to engage, to learn, and to keep coming back for more. I remember having 6 months to learn English, but 2 months to sit a physics exam to get UE credits. Somehow, with lots of help from teachers who believed in me, I managed.

I think back to those nights where I almost gave up and wanted to go home, and why I never had the guts to do that, and it almost always boiled down to one thing: the desire to make my family and friends proud, and to show them that their love and support of me have taken us all to a place beyond imagination. Indeed, I am one privileged individual to have that as my backbone. It is therefore not surprising that my research interests are now focused on learning environments, motivation, and engagement, and what we could do differently to create positive and inclusive educational experiences for students—hopefully better than the ones I had had.

As a mixed-methods researcher with a stronger focus on quantitative methods, my mission is to use quantitative methodologies to showcase strengths-based, positive stories about some of the most prominent enablers to student success and wellbeing. The COMPASS project allowed me to do just that: combing through the survey data, looking for the most promising insights, beliefs, and practices needed to re-think schooling for a more equitable educational experience for Māori and Pasifika learners. I am grateful to have partnered up with Melinda on this project, as we navigate through the data as research collaborators, colleagues, and friends.

He kupu whakataki | Introduction

This study seeks to set the scene for the subsequent Studies 2–4, by establishing that high levels of motivation and engagement reported by Māori and Pasifika¹ learners are strongly related to their educational and wellbeing outcomes² (measured by self-reported achievement, support networks, and cultural pride). The three qualitative studies that follow will explore what students, families, and teachers believe to be factors critical in creating supportive learning environments, which are characterised by high levels of motivation to learn, strong engagement, and, ultimately, success-oriented learners.

Although the existing literature has already established strong ties between student motivational patterns, engagement, and associated outcomes, few studies have focused on the motivation and engagement of Māori and Pasifika students. Also, large-scale quantitative studies that solely focused on the views of Māori and Pasifika learners (i.e., not compared against their New Zealand European counterparts) are limited. As will be shown in subsequent studies, the strength of this project lies in its unique ability to explore what Māori and Pasifika learners perceive as important or crucial to their success, including what success might look like through indigenous lenses, without diluting such views through comparing them with views of students from Western or historically dominant groups.

As is often reported in the literature (Crozier, 2009; Dandy et al., 2015; de Boer et al., 2010; Riley & Ungerleider, 2012; Turner et al., 2015), indigenous and minoritised students achieve at lower levels than their majority counterparts even though minoritised students do not necessarily self-report lower levels of motivation and engagement than their majority peers (Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Gillen-O’Neel et al., 2011). This suggests that the interplay of motivation, engagement, and student outcomes is likely to be more complex than straightforward linear relations. This is particularly the case when considering the wider sociocultural influences on student learning, and how these might shape students’ in-school beliefs and practices, as well as beyond-school aspirations and goals.

Studies that take a holistic view on learning, motivation, and engagement are also limited in the literature, thereby disconnecting the learner from their wider sociocultural contexts and aspirations. This is echoed by Furrer and Skinner (2003), who emphasised the importance of students feeling relationally connected to all the important social groups in their lives. In a number of qualitative studies (e.g., Webber & Macfarlane, 2020), the importance of these groups as contributing to the engagement and motivation of indigenous students has been reported but these relations have not yet been investigated quantitatively.

Motivation and student outcomes

In this study we focused on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation because most theoretical constructs can be modelled as distinct intrinsic and extrinsic factors (Hayenga & Corpus, 2010; Lee et al., 2016), with student intrinsic motivation being consistently associated with achievement outcomes in reading (Froiland & Oros, 2014), mathematics (Ker, 2017), science (Lau & Roeser, 2008), and social studies (Brophy, 2004). Higher levels of intrinsic motivation have also been associated with outcomes such as greater positivity towards schoolwork (Wigfield et al., 2000; Wigfield et al., 2012), higher levels of persistence at tasks (Miller et al., 2020), and increased metacognitive processing (Hoyle & Dent, 2018).

1 Throughout the report we use the term “Pasifika” to describe the people who originate from or identify with the Pacific Islands, in terms of ancestry or heritage, and now live in Aotearoa New Zealand.

2 In Study 1, we operationalised cultural pride and support networks as important components of wellbeing for Māori and Pasifika learners, but we suggest that future studies expand on this by investigating a wider range of wellbeing factors and explore how these can collectively enhance wellbeing.

Conversely, the research findings related to extrinsic motivation and associations with achievement have been more equivocal, with some studies showing extrinsic motivation to be a negative predictor (e.g., Lee et al., 2016) and others showing extrinsic motivation to achieve high grades to be positively related to student achievement (see Senko (2019) for a review). In addition, we were also interested in the students' motivation to give back to their whānau and make them proud as a driving desire to succeed at school (Webber & Macfarlane, 2020).

Engagement and student outcomes

In this study we also focused on student engagement (behavioural, emotional, and cognitive), given that engaged learners typically demonstrate better educational outcomes across all education levels (Fredricks et al., 2004; van Rooji et al., 2017). For example, higher levels of student engagement were associated with higher levels of achievement in tertiary, academic self-efficacy (Bae & DeBusk-Lane, 2019), and lower levels of burnout (Salmela-Aro & Upadyaya, 2020). Behavioural engagement relates to the actions and behaviours that students engage in during learning and school. Emotional engagement refers to students' emotional reactions to school and school activities. Cognitive engagement refers to the mental effort that students put into learning.

He tukanga | Method

Research questions

The current large-scale study explored the motivational and engagement patterns of Māori and Pasifika students from primary and secondary schools. We used person-centred analyses to investigate whether different clusters of Māori and Pasifika students could be identified in relation to their motivation and engagement. We also investigated whether clusters differed in relation to the students' cultural pride, support networks, aspirations, and achievement as well as in relation to their demographics (e.g., year level, decile, and student gender). Specifically, the current study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the motivational and engagement patterns of Māori and Pasifika learners in English-medium schools?
 - a. Do these differ with respect to major school and student demographics (gender, year level, and decile) and by cluster group?
 - b. Do these differ in relation to learners' self-reported achievement, support networks, and cultural pride by cluster group?

Participants

We analysed data from 4,651 learners who self-identified as Māori, and 1,192 learners who self-identified as Pasifika in the current study.³ Table 1 shows the highlights of respondent demographics, broken down by ethnic group and by education level.⁴

3 Participants were asked to list all ethnic affiliations they identify with, as well as whether they identify with a main ethnic group out of their selection. All students were able to identify a main ethnic group they identify with, which was then used to analyse data separately for Māori and Pasifika learners.

4 Where our sample under or over represents certain demographics (e.g., by region or decile grouping), caution is needed when making generalisations or conclusions from the study findings.

TABLE 1: Breakdown of major student demographics in the current study

<p>Māori participants—Primary (Y1–Y8)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3,709 Māori • 70.1% in Y1–Y6 • 50% female • 57.9% in low-decile schools • 41.7% in Bay of Plenty 	<p>Pasifika participants—Primary (Y1–Y8)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,042 Pasifika • 65.8% in Y1–Y6 • 46% female • 63.8% in low-decile schools • 50.6% in Auckland • 71.4% NZ-born
<p>Māori participants—Secondary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 942 Māori • 49.2% in Y9–Y10, 47.8% in Y11–Y13 • 48.7% female • 95.8% in mid-decile schools • 34.5% in Bay of Plenty 	<p>Pasifika participants—Secondary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 150 Pasifika • 48% in Y9–Y10, 48% in Y11–Y13 • 46.9% female • 90.7% in mid-decile schools • 32.7% in Waikato • 54.7% NZ-born

Design and approach

This study utilised a quantitative exploratory design to address the research questions. We specifically analysed responses from the closed-ended items in the survey, and analysed separately the responses from Māori and Pasifika learners. We also report the findings separately for the two groups and by education level (primary and secondary).

Data collection instrument

All measures were administered via online or print surveys during school hours. All substantive factors (self-reported achievement, motivation, perceptions of engagement, post-secondary aspirations, support networks, and cultural pride), excluding socio-demographic and the open-ended qualitative items, were measured on a 1–5 Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all true) to 5 (very true), with a rating of 3 reflecting a slightly positive position (somewhat true) on any given item. Table 2 summarises the major variables investigated in the study along with their definitions.

TABLE 2: Summary of factors investigated in the study with definitions and examples

Factor	Definition	Example statements/questions	Number of items
Intrinsic motivation	Motivation driven by curiosity and enjoyment (i.e., motivation to learn for the sake of learning)	"I like learning new things"	2 (5)
Extrinsic motivation	Motivation driven by external rewards and reinforcements	"I want a good job when I get older"	2 (5)
Whānau motivation	Motivation driven by social belonging, acceptance, and pride	"I want to make my family/whānau proud"	2 (5)
Emotional engagement	Student evaluations of feelings towards school	"When I'm in school, I feel good"	4 (4)
Behavioural engagement	Student evaluations of participation and involvement in learning	"When I'm in school, I participate in class discussions"	6 (6)
Self-reported achievement	Student evaluation of their level of achievement	"How well are you doing in your school work?"	1 (1)
Career aspirations	Student indication of post-secondary intentions	"What would you like to do when you finish school?" (Four options: I don't know, get a job, post-secondary training, or go to university)	2 (2)
Support networks	Student perceptions of academic support with school work	"Who has supported you to be successful at school?" (Responses coded in two ways: total number of support people, and named model—family member, peer, teacher, other)	1 (1)
Cultural pride	Student evaluation of their pride in their culture and traditions	"How proud are you of your cultural group?" "How proud are others of your cultural group?"	2 (2)

Note: The number of items in brackets represent number of items in the secondary survey, whereas the number of items outside the brackets is that for the primary survey.

Data analysis plan

Preliminary checks of the data were conducted to ensure reliability and validity prior to the main analyses. Given the surveys were modified and items were added to suit the New Zealand schooling context, an exploratory factor analysis (including Cronbach's alpha and Pearson's *r* coefficient) was necessary to investigate potential underlying patterns in student responses. This was then followed by hierarchical cluster analysis to identify groups of students with similar patterns of responses to the motivation and engagement bank of questions.

Ward's hierarchical cluster analysis technique was used to identify patterns in students' motivation and engagement, using similar procedures to those described by Alansari and colleagues (2013; see also Watson et al., 2020). A number of cluster solutions were evaluated and these were cross-validated using another clustering technique (i.e., k-means clustering method) to ensure the findings were replicable, identifying interpretable and theory-driven clusters, and consequently choosing the most theory-congruent number of interpretable clusters. Cluster analysis is a technique commonly used to classify participants' responses into interpretable profiles, and is analogous to factor analysis (i.e., factor analysis groups variables, whereas cluster analysis groups people). Once all factor scores were created in this study, they were converted to z-scores (with a mean of 0 and standard deviation of 1), to enable cross-cluster comparisons. Once interpretable clusters were identified from the analysis, they were examined alongside the literature and relative to each other, and were labelled based on patterns of student responses within them.

Chi-square tests, *F*-tests, and associated *p*-values were used to detect statistically significant differences that were not due to chance, whereas partial eta-squared was used as a measure of effect size to check whether the magnitude of differences was practically significant or meaningful (0.01, 0.06, and 0.14 denote small, moderate, and large effects respectively). Throughout the Findings section, we use the term "statistically significant" to denote results from an inferential statistics test where $p < .05$. All quantitative analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics and AMOS v27. We were guided by Pallant (2013) and Field (2013) when deciding on appropriate statistical techniques to organise, code, and analyse the data.

Findings are presented separately for Māori and Pasifika learners, and for primary and secondary levels.

He kitenga | Findings

Findings—Primary students

Tables 3 and 4 present the descriptive statistics for the major study variables, and the relations between them.

It is worth noting that, although the survey items were written to reflect three different types of motivation (intrinsic, extrinsic, and whānau motivation), our factor analysis revealed that these can all be grouped under one factor—positive motivation. This means that, to primary-aged Māori learners, they see these three types as strongly (and positively) inter-related, as opposed to three distinct sources of motivation.

We found that motivation and engagement were significantly and positively related; that is, Māori learners who reported being positively motivated to go to school were more likely to report being involved in classroom activities and discussions, as well as connected to what is happening in the classroom.

In addition, Māori learners who reported being positively motivated and/or engaged were more likely to report higher levels of cultural pride and self-reported achievement. Behavioural engagement, reflecting the more visible or social aspects of learning, seems to be more closely associated with achievement.

TABLE 3: Descriptive statistics for major variables in the *primary student dataset*

	Range	M (SD)	α
Positive motivation	1–5	4.16 (.81)	.83
Behavioural engagement	1–5	3.98 (.78)	.85
Emotional engagement	1–5	3.98 (.93)	.83
Proud of own cultural group	1–5	4.34 (.98)	Single-item
Others proud of own cultural group	1–5	4.02 (1.05)	Single-item
Self-reported achievement	1–5	3.63 (.92)	Single-item
Count of support networks	1–4	1.16 (.60)	Single-item
Career aspirations	Categorical variable		Single-item

Notes: 1 Skewness and kurtosis were inspected, and we found no violations to normality assumptions.

2 Cronbach's alpha was > .80 across and within ethnic groups.

 TABLE 4: Correlations⁵ between major variables in the *primary student dataset*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Positive motivation	1										
2. Behavioural engagement	.56**	1									
3. Emotional engagement	.63**	.65**	1								
4. Proud of own cultural group	.38**	.30**	.32**	1							
5. Others proud of own cultural group	.35**	.30**	.31**	.56**	1						
6. Self-report achievement	.25**	.39**	.28**	.16**	.14**	1					
7. Count of support networks	.04**	.06**	.04**	.05**	.05**	.04**	1				
8. Teachers as support network	.06**	.06*	.08**	.02	.03*	.03*	.34**	1			
9. Friends as support network	0	.01	.02*	0	0	.01	.34**	-.08**	1		
10. Family as support network	.02*	.02*	-.02	.06**	.04**	.01	.22**	-.35**	-.27**	1	
11. No support network	-.03**	-.03*	-.02	-.04**	-.03**	-.04**	-.35**	-.12**	-.09**	-.19**	1

Note: ** $p < .001$, * $p < .05$.

5 Pearson's r correlation coefficients are used to interpret the strength of the association between two variables, such that .10–.29 is a weak association, .30–.49 is moderate, and .50–1 is strong (Pallant, 2013).

Primary students' motivation and engagement patterns

Clustering the motivation and engagement patterns of Māori students in primary school

Ward's hierarchical cluster analysis technique was used to identify patterns in Māori primary students' motivation and engagement. Specifically, five clusters were identified, conceptualised, and labelled. These are described next and shown in Figure 1. We used the same conceptual definitions and label descriptors throughout the study when similar clusters were found.

Cluster 1 ($n = 831$) comprised **flourishing** Māori who prosper at school because they are highly motivated to achieve and are behaviourally and emotionally engaged. They report the highest levels of self-reported achievement, cultural pride, and perceptions of cultural status. They report lower numbers of people in their support networks. Flourishing Māori students are more likely to be female, in Years 1–6, and from low-decile schools. They are more likely to perceive strong family and teacher support networks, and only average motivation to get a job or attend university after secondary school.

Cluster 2 ($n = 1,325$) comprised **thriving** Māori who are fully engaged at school and experience slightly above average motivation and behavioural and emotional engagement. They report average levels of self-reported achievement and high levels of cultural pride and perceptions of cultural status. They have reasonably high numbers of people in their support networks. Thriving Māori students are slightly more likely to be female, in Years 1–6, and from low-decile schools. They are more likely to perceive strong family and teacher support networks, and the highest motivation to get a job and the lowest motivation to attend university after secondary school.

Cluster 3 ($n = 661$) comprised **surviving** Māori who are making great efforts to achieve at school. They have average motivation, and slightly below average behavioural and emotional engagement. They report average levels of self-reported achievement, cultural pride, and perceptions of cultural status. They have the highest numbers of people in their support networks. Surviving Māori students are slightly more likely to be male, in Years 1–6, and from low-decile schools. They perceive high levels of teacher and whānau support but lower peer network support. They have high motivation to get a job and average motivation to attend university after secondary school.

Cluster 4 ($n = 230$) comprised **striving** Māori who are trying to balance the competing demands of school. They have slightly above average behavioural engagement, average emotional engagement, and well below average motivation. They report low levels of self-reported achievement and cultural pride, and average perceptions of cultural status. They have average numbers of people in their support networks. Striving Māori students are slightly more likely to be female, in Years 1–6, and from low-decile schools. They are more likely to perceive low family and teacher support but high peer network supports. They have low motivation to get a job and the highest motivation to attend university after secondary school.

Cluster 5 ($n = 662$) comprised **struggling** Māori who are apathetic and dissatisfied at school. They have extremely below average levels of motivation and behavioural and emotional engagement. They report the lowest levels of self-reported achievement, cultural pride, and perceptions of cultural status. They have the lowest numbers of people in their support networks. Struggling Māori students are slightly more likely to be male, Years 1–8 (a relatively even spread across upper and lower primary contexts), and from low-decile schools. They perceive high levels of whānau support but low levels of teacher support. They have average motivation to get a job and/or attend university after secondary school.

FIGURE 1: Motivation and engagement profiles of Māori students in primary school

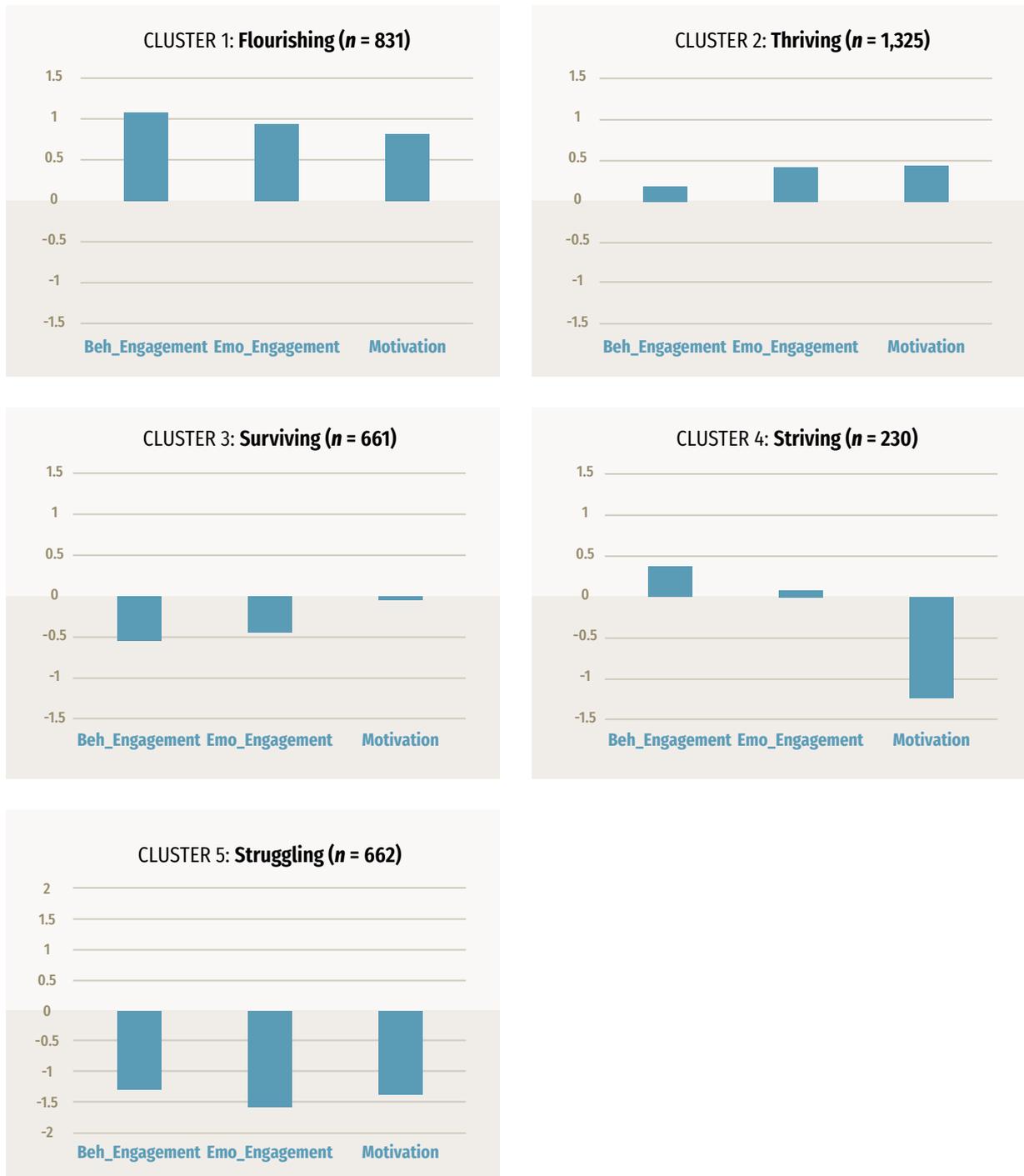


Table 5 below provides a demographic breakdown of the motivation and engagement clusters for Māori students in primary school. Chi-square tests of independence were used to investigate possible associations between student demographics and cluster membership.⁶ We found the following statistically significant associations:

- More girls were identified in clusters with higher engagement and motivation scores.
- More younger students were found in the more positive clusters (Flourishing, Thriving, Striving).
- Students from lower decile schools constituted a higher proportion in the most positive clusters.

Overall, the Flourishing and Thriving clusters seemed to be mostly composed of girls, younger students, and those from low-decile schools. However, all the effect sizes were small.

TABLE 5: Demographic breakdown of motivation and engagement clusters for primary Māori students

	Flourishing (n = 831)	Thriving (n = 1,325)	Striving (n = 230)	Surviving (n = 661)	Struggling (n = 662)
Gender					
Female	60.5%	50.6%	57.4%	42.7%	40.2%
Male	37.7%	47.8%	40.9%	55.8%	56.6%
Other	1.8%	1.6%	1.7%	1.5%	3.2%
Education level					
Lower primary (Y1–Y6)	85.3%	73.0%	63.0%	66.0%	52.0%
Upper primary (Y7–Y8)	14.7%	27.0%	37.0%	34.0%	48.0%
Decile					
Low (1–3)	62.3%	60.1%	46.1%	58.1%	51.8%
Mid (4–7)	29.8%	31.5%	39.1%	33.1%	37.9%
High (8–10)	7.8%	8.4%	14.8%	8.8%	10.3%
Teachers as support network	28.5%	32.4%	29.1%	31.8%	22.2%
Friends as support network	18.8%	16.9%	18.3%	16.0%	16.3%
Family as support network	55.5%	54.6%	54.8%	55.7%	56.3%
No support network	3.9%	3.6%	4.3%	4.8%	7.1%
Career aspirations					
No aspirations/do not know	0.4%	0.4%	1.3%	0.9%	2.0%
Getting a job	43.6%	45.7%	32.6%	44.9%	42.9%
Post-secondary training	2.2%	2.0%	1.7%	1.7%	2.4%
University education	53.9%	51.9%	64.3%	52.5%	52.7%

Note: Percentages for naming support networks may sum to more than 100% due to multiple selections.

⁶ Here, we use the phi coefficient as a measure of effect size (where .1, .3, and .5, denote small, medium, and large effects respectively; Cohen, 1988). Because chi-square tests are sensitive to large sample sizes, we only report on significant findings with an effect size of .1 and above.

Cluster differences on educational and wellbeing outcomes for primary Māori students

A one-way between-groups MANOVA test was performed to investigate differences in primary students' educational and wellbeing outcomes (self-reported achievement, support networks, pride in own culture, and perceptions of others' pride in own culture) by cluster. There was a statistically significant difference between clusters on the combined dependent variables, and between clusters for all outcome variables.

Table 6 shows the means and standard deviations for each of the dependent variables by cluster group.

TABLE 6: Means and standard deviations for the dependent variables by cluster group for primary Māori students

	Flourishing (n = 831)	Thriving (n = 1,325)	Striving (n = 230)	Surviving (n = 661)	Struggling (n = 662)
Self-report achievement	4.04 (.94)	3.61 (.93)	3.60 (.90)	3.30 (.90)	3.06 (.87)
Support networks	1.10 (.50)	1.15 (.57)	1.23 (.64)	1.16 (.61)	1.09 (.58)
Proud of own culture	4.78 (.59)	4.64 (.72)	4.34 (.96)	4.40 (.96)	3.99 (1.09)
Others proud of own culture	4.55 (.77)	4.26 (.90)	4.01 (.99)	4.04 (1.03)	3.59 (1.12)

Self-report achievement

There were statistically significant achievement differences between most clusters, with the exception of the Thriving and Striving clusters who reported similar levels of achievement. Those in the Flourishing cluster reported the highest levels of achievement, followed by the Thriving and Striving clusters, and then those in the Surviving cluster. Students in the Struggling cluster reported the lowest levels of achievement.

Support networks

Students in the Striving cluster named significantly more people as their support networks than those in the Flourishing and Struggling clusters.

Pride in own culture

Students in the Flourishing cluster reported the highest levels of pride in their own culture, followed by the Thriving cluster and then the Striving/Surviving clusters, whereas students in the Struggling cluster reported the lowest levels. There were no statistically significant differences in reported levels of cultural pride between the Striving and Surviving clusters.

Perceptions of others' pride in own culture

Students in the Flourishing cluster reported the highest perceptions of others' pride in their own culture, followed by the Thriving cluster and then the Striving/Surviving clusters, whereas students in the Struggling cluster reported the lowest levels. There were no statistically significant differences in reported levels of cultural pride between the Striving and Surviving clusters.

Clustering the motivation and engagement patterns of Pasifika students in primary school

Results from our cluster analysis revealed three clusters of Pasifika learners in primary school.⁷ These are described next and shown in Figure 2.

Cluster 1 ($n = 341$) comprised **flourishing** Pasifika who prosper at school because they are highly motivated to achieve and are behaviourally and emotionally engaged. Flourishing Pasifika learners are more likely to be female, in Years 1–6, and from low-decile schools.

Cluster 2 ($n = 398$) comprised **thriving** Pasifika who are fully engaged at school and experience slightly above average motivation and behavioural and emotional engagement. Thriving Pasifika students are slightly more likely to be female, in Years 1–6, and from low-decile schools.

Cluster 3 ($n = 303$) comprised **struggling** Pasifika who are apathetic and dissatisfied at school. They have extremely below average levels of motivation and behavioural and emotional engagement. Struggling Pasifika students are slightly more likely to be male, Years 1–8 (a relatively even spread across upper and lower primary contexts), and from low-decile schools.

⁷ Similar analytical techniques were used when identifying clusters and examining their differences throughout the study. In the interest of brevity, these were not repeated here or in subsequent sections.

FIGURE 2: Motivation and engagement profiles of Pasifika students in primary school

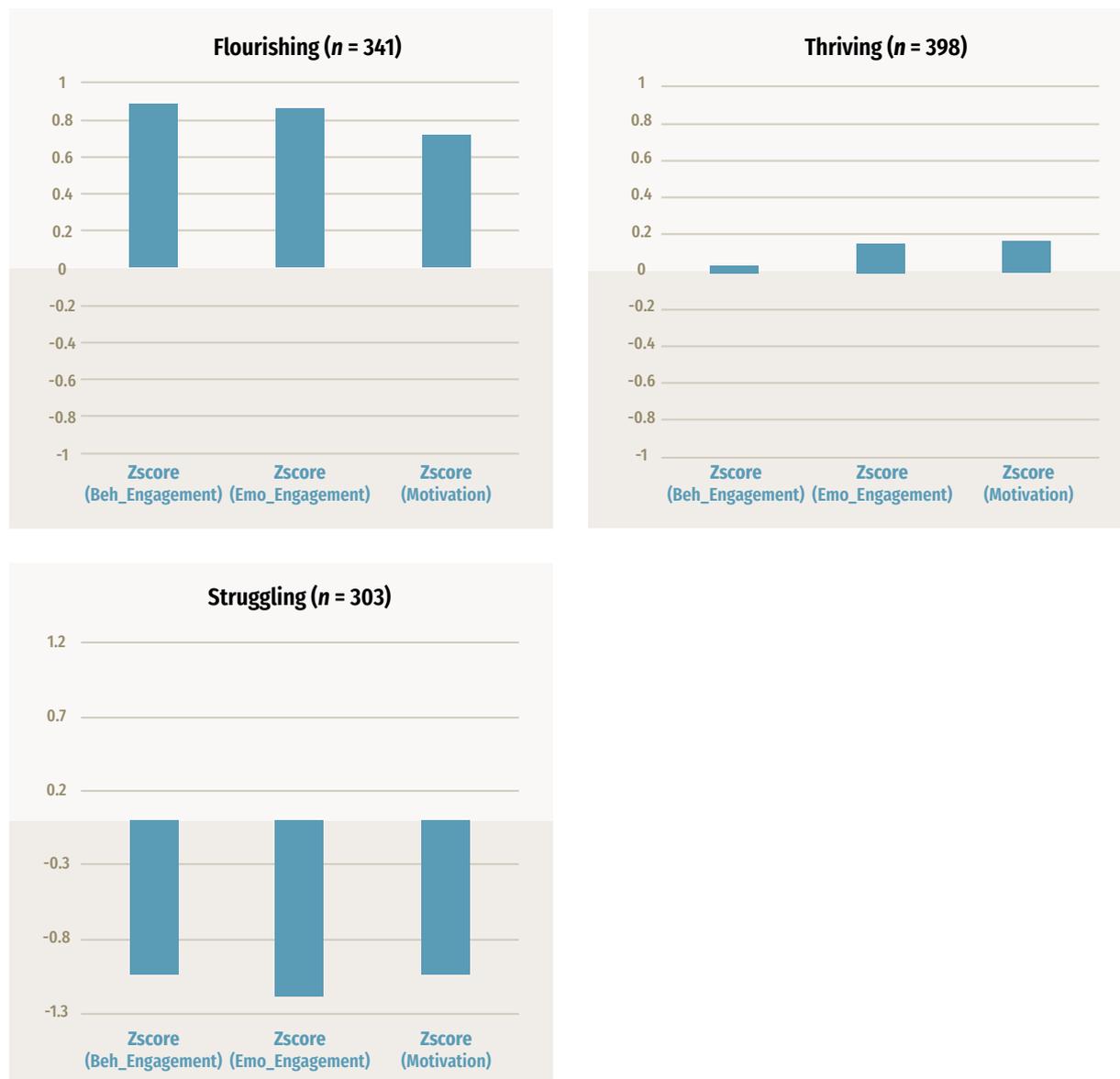


Table 7 below provides a demographic breakdown of the motivation and engagement clusters for Pasifika students in primary school. Chi-square tests of independence were used to investigate possible associations between student demographics and cluster membership. We found the following statistically significant associations:

- More girls were identified in clusters with higher engagement and motivation scores.
- More younger students were found in the more positive clusters (Flourishing and Thriving).

Overall, the Flourishing and Thriving clusters seemed to be mostly composed of girls, and younger students. This was the same finding for Māori students in primary school. Again, though, the effect sizes were small.

TABLE 7: Demographic breakdown of motivation and engagement clusters for *primary Pasifika* students

	Flourishing (n = 341)	Thriving (n = 398)	Struggling (n = 303)
Gender			
Female	57.2%	42.4%	38.3%
Male	40.8%	56.0%	59.4%
Other	2.1%	1.8%	2.3%
Education level			
Lower primary (Y1–Y6)	78.3%	62.8%	55.8%
Upper primary (Y7–Y8)	21.7%	37.2%	44.2%
Decile			
Low (1–3)	58.7%	64.6%	68.6%
Mid (4–7)	31.1%	29.9%	26.7%
High (8–10)	10.3%	5.5%	4.6%
New Zealand born			
	69.1%	74.0%	70.6%
Career aspirations			
No aspirations/do not know	0.0%	0.3%	0.7%
Getting a job	39.0%	37.2%	39.6%
Post-secondary training	1.2%	2.8%	0.7%
University education	59.8%	59.8%	59.1%

Cluster differences on educational and wellbeing outcomes for *primary Pasifika* students

Table 8 shows the means and standard deviations for each of the dependent variables by cluster group. The main statistically significant differences were between the outcomes of students in the Flourishing and Struggling clusters. There were no differences in the outcomes of Pasifika learners who were in the Flourishing and Thriving clusters.

 TABLE 8: Cluster differences on educational and wellbeing outcomes (means and standard deviations) for *primary Pasifika* students

	Flourishing (n = 341)	Thriving (n = 398)	Struggling (n = 303)
Self-report achievement	3.93 (.91)	3.55 (.92)	3.17 (.91)
Average number of support networks	1.10 (.50)	1.09 (.48)	1.06 (.47)
Proud of own culture	4.79 (.66)	4.67 (.80)	4.31 (1.04)
Others proud of own culture	4.60 (.78)	4.37 (.87)	3.98 (1.06)

Self-report achievement

Those in the Flourishing cluster reported the highest levels of achievement, followed by the Thriving cluster, whereas students in the Struggling cluster reported the lowest levels of achievement.

Support networks

There were no differences in the average number of support networks listed by students across clusters.

Pride in own culture

Those in the Flourishing cluster reported the highest levels of pride in their own culture, followed by the Thriving cluster, whereas students in the Struggling cluster reported the lowest levels of achievement.

Perceptions of others' pride in own culture

Findings related to perceptions of others' pride in own culture were identical to those found for pride in own culture. Those in the Flourishing cluster reported the highest perceptions of others' pride in their own culture, followed by the Thriving cluster, whereas students in the Struggling cluster reported the lowest levels.

Findings—Secondary students

Tables 9 and 10 present the descriptive statistics for the major study variables, and the relations between them. Similar procedures were undertaken when analysing the secondary student dataset.

Whereas primary student responses suggested that the three types of motivation were similar and hence were grouped under one factor, secondary student responses were factorised into intrinsic, extrinsic, and whānau motivation. This could suggest that secondary students see these three types as more distinct or fine-grained than primary students do.

The three types of motivation were significantly and positively related, with the strongest correlation being between Māori students' intrinsic and whānau motivation. That is, Māori learners in secondary school seem to adopt multiple sources of motivation that positively interact to support their engagement and learning. They see the intrinsic value in going to school, as well as the extrinsic rewards and benefits that it could bring to their futures, all while being driven to make their whānau proud of them and bring them on board with their journeys. This is also echoed in the finding that all three types of motivation were significantly and positively related to Māori learners' engagement, their achievement, and cultural pride.

TABLE 9: Descriptive statistics for major variables in the secondary student dataset

	Range	M (SD)	α
Intrinsic motivation	1–5	3.30 (.95)	.86
Extrinsic motivation	1–5	3.88 (.87)	.86
Family motivation	1–5	3.56 (.92)	.88
Behavioural engagement	1–5	3.67 (.77)	.86
Emotional engagement	1–5	3.16 (.92)	.86
Proud of own cultural group	1–5	3.82 (1.08)	Single-item
Others proud of own cultural group	1–5	3.55 (1.06)	Single-item
Self-report achievement	1–5	3.38 (.73)	Single-item
Count of support networks	Continuous	1.17 (.69)	Single-item
Career aspirations	Categorical variable		Single-item

Notes: 1 Skewness and kurtosis were inspected, and we found no violations to normality assumptions.
 2 Cronbach's alpha by ethnic group was > .80 across and within ethnic groups.

 TABLE 10: Correlations⁸ between major variables in the secondary student dataset

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Intrinsic motivation	1												
2. Extrinsic motivation	.61**	1											
3. Family motivation	.71**	.62**	1										
4. Behavioural engagement	.60**	.49**	.49**	1									
5. Emotional engagement	.68**	.42**	.48**	.66**	1								
6. Proud of own cultural group	.23**	.14**	.30**	.19**	.25**	1							
7. Others proud of own cultural group	.24**	.16**	.31**	.20**	.23**	.67**	1						
8. Self-report achievement	.30**	.30**	.17**	.39**	.31**	.04**	.03*	1					
9. Support networks	.13**	.09**	.15**	.13**	.14**	.11*	.09**	.05**	1				
10. Teachers as support network	.08**	.03**	.03	.06**	.09**	.02	.02	.02	.40**	1			
11. Friends as support network	0	-.04**	-.01	-.02	.01	.03	.02	-.02	.46**	.14**	1		
12. Family as support network	.08**	.11**	.18**	.09**	.06**	.11**	.11**	0	.20**	-.24**	-.08**	1	
13. No support network	-.02	-.03*	-.05**	-.04**	-.03	-.01	-.01	-.01	-.31**	-.11**	-.09**	-.34**	1

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$.

⁸ Pearson's r correlation coefficients are used to interpret the strength of the association between two variables, such that .10–.29 is a weak association, .30–.49 is moderate, and .50–1 is strong (Pallant, 2013).

Secondary students' motivation and engagement patterns

Clustering the motivation and engagement patterns of Māori students in secondary school

Results from our cluster analysis revealed three clusters of Māori learners in secondary school. These are described next and shown in Figure 3.

Cluster 1 ($n = 320$) comprised **flourishing** Māori who prosper at school because they are highly motivated to achieve and are behaviourally and emotionally engaged. They report the highest levels of self-reported achievement, cultural pride, and perceptions of cultural status. They reported higher numbers of people in their support networks. They are more likely to perceive strong family and peer support networks, and have the highest motivation to attend university after secondary school.

Cluster 2 ($n = 440$) comprised **thriving** Māori who are fully engaged at school and experience slightly below average motivation and behavioural and emotional engagement. They report average levels of self-reported achievement and high levels of cultural pride and perceptions of cultural status. They have reasonably average numbers of people in their support networks. They are more likely to perceive strong family support networks, and the desire to get a job or attend university after secondary school.

Cluster 3 ($n = 182$) comprised **struggling** Māori who are apathetic and dissatisfied at school. They have extremely below average levels of motivation and behavioural and emotional engagement. They report the lowest levels of self-reported achievement, cultural pride, and perceptions of cultural status. They have the lowest numbers of people in their support networks. Many still have not decided what they want to do after secondary school, but some are still considering getting a job or attending university.

FIGURE 3: Motivation and engagement profiles of Māori students in secondary school



Table 11 below provides a demographic breakdown of the motivation and engagement clusters for Māori students in secondary school. We found the following statistically significant associations:

- Strong family support networks were present across all clusters.
- Students in the Flourishing cluster were more likely to indicate wanting to go to university after finishing secondary school.

TABLE 11: Demographic breakdown of motivation and engagement clusters for secondary Māori students

	Flourishing (n = 320)	Thriving (n = 440)	Struggling (n = 182)
Gender			
Female	48.8%	45.0%	50.0%
Male	48.4%	52.3%	45.6%
Other	2.8%	2.7%	4.4%
Education level			
Upper primary (Y7–Y8)	5.0%	1.6%	3.3%
Intermediate (Y9–Y10)	47.5%	50.5%	48.9%
Secondary (Y11–Y13)	47.5%	48.0%	47.8%
Decile			
Low (1–3)	2.5%	2.5%	1.6%
Mid (4–7)	95.3%	95.9%	96.2%
High (8–10)	2.2%	1.6%	2.2%
Teachers as support network	25.9%	19.8%	16.5%
Friends as support network	18.1%	18.4%	18.1%
Family as support network	76.9%	74.5%	63.2%
No support network	3.4%	3.4%	7.1%
Career aspirations			
No aspirations/do not know	7.3%	13.3%	22.0%
Getting a job	23.2%	34.1%	35.6%
Post-secondary training	10.8%	13.0%	18.1%
University education	58.6%	39.6%	24.3%

Cluster differences on educational and wellbeing outcomes for secondary Māori students

Table 12 shows the means and standard deviations for each of the dependent variables by cluster group. There were significant and linear differences between the outcomes of the three clusters, where those in the Flourishing cluster reported the most positive outcomes, followed by Thriving, and then Struggling.

TABLE 12: **Cluster differences on educational and wellbeing outcomes (means and standard deviations) for secondary Māori students**

	Flourishing (n = 320)	Thriving (n = 440)	Struggling (n = 182)
Average number of support networks	1.34 (.73)	1.26 (.75)	1.04 (.62)
Self-report achievement	3.39 (.76)	3.15 (.53)	2.97 (.55)
Proud of own culture	4.59 (.68)	4.36 (.77)	4.02 (1.04)
Others proud of own culture	4.25 (.84)	3.91 (.88)	3.49 (1.11)

Self-report achievement

Those in the Flourishing cluster reported the highest levels of achievement, followed by the Thriving cluster, whereas students in the Struggling cluster reported the lowest levels of achievement.

Support networks

Those in the Flourishing cluster reported the highest average number of support networks, followed by the Thriving cluster, and then the Struggling cluster.

Pride in own culture

Those in the Flourishing cluster reported the highest levels of pride in their own culture, followed by the Thriving cluster, whereas students in the Struggling cluster reported the lowest levels of achievement.

Perceptions of others' pride in own culture

Those in the Flourishing cluster reported the highest perceptions of others' pride in their own culture, followed by the Thriving cluster, whereas students in the Struggling cluster reported the lowest levels.

Clustering the motivation and engagement patterns of Pasifika students in secondary school

Results from our cluster analysis revealed three clusters of Pasifika learners in secondary school. These are described next and shown in Figure 4.

Cluster 1 ($n = 43$) comprised **flourishing** Pasifika who prosper at school because they are highly motivated to achieve and are behaviourally and emotionally engaged. They report the highest levels of self-reported achievement, cultural pride, and perceptions of cultural status. They report lower numbers of people in their support networks. They are more likely to perceive strong family and peer support networks, and have the highest motivation to attend university after secondary school.

Cluster 2 ($n = 56$) comprised **thriving** Pasifika who are fully engaged at school and experience slightly above average motivation and behavioural and emotional engagement. They report average levels of self-reported achievement and high levels of cultural pride and perceptions of cultural status. They have reasonably high numbers of people in their support networks. They are more likely to perceive strong family support networks, and the desire to get a job or attend university after secondary school.

Cluster 3 ($n = 51$) comprised **struggling** Pasifika who are apathetic and dissatisfied at school. They have extremely below average levels of motivation and behavioural and emotional engagement.

They report the lowest levels of self-reported achievement, cultural pride, and perceptions of cultural status. They have the lowest numbers of people in their support networks. Many still have not decided what they want to do after secondary school, but might still consider getting a job or attending university.

Because of the small sample of Pasifika secondary students in our sample, we have not conducted any additional statistical tests. However, we do provide in Tables 13 and 14 a demographic breakdown of the clusters, as well as means and standard deviations by cluster. A brief examination of these tables suggests a similar pattern of findings to the ones found in earlier sections (i.e., more positive outcomes associated with the more positive clusters).

FIGURE 4: Motivation and engagement profiles of Pasifika students in secondary school

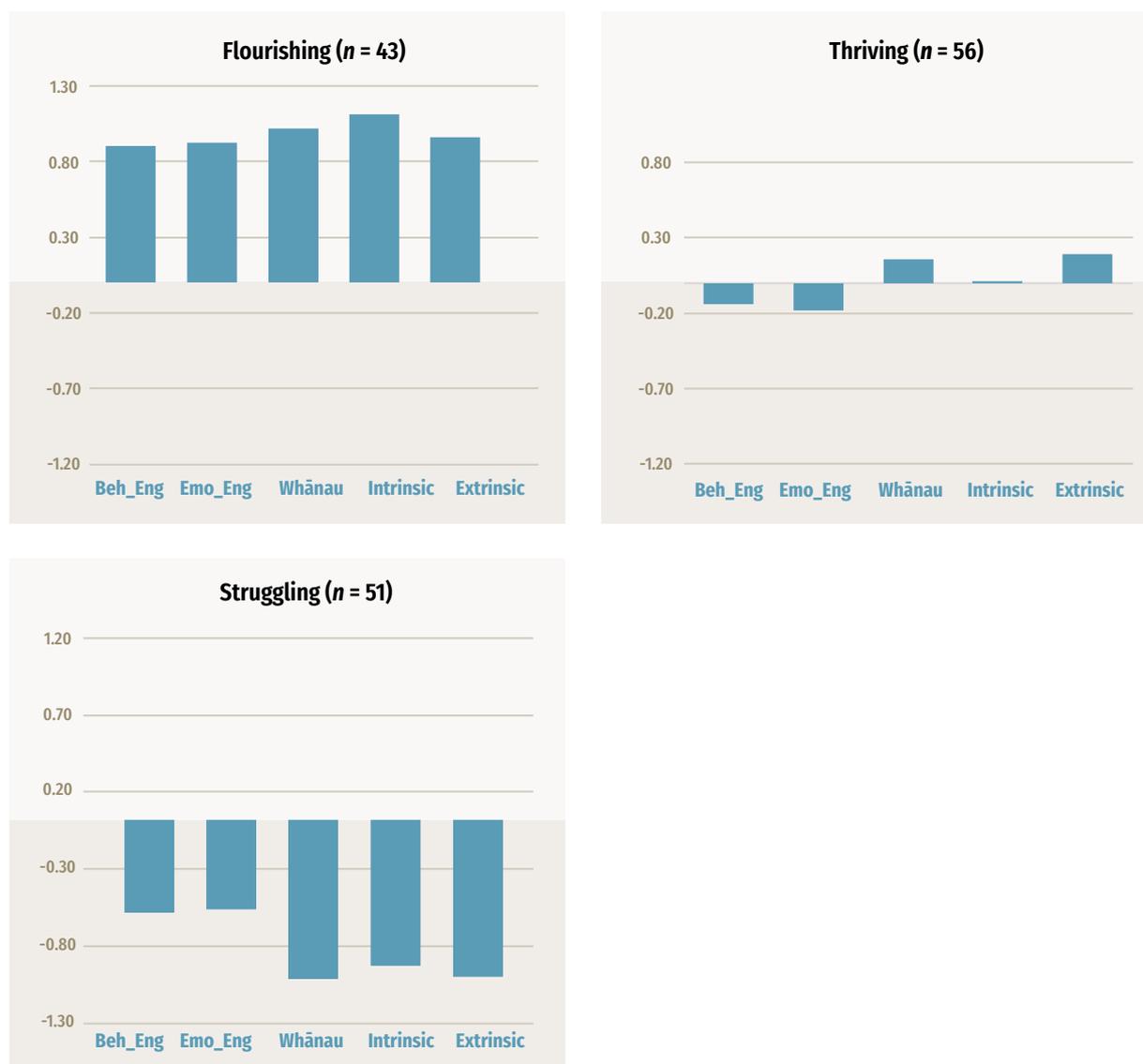


TABLE 13: Demographic breakdown of motivation and engagement clusters for secondary Pasifika students

	Flourishing (n = 43)	Thriving (n = 56)	Struggling (n = 51)
Gender			
Female	46.5%	46.4%	41.2%
Male	48.8%	51.8%	51.0%
Other	4.7%	1.8%	7.8%
Education level			
Upper primary (Y7–Y8)	7.0%	1.8%	3.9%
Intermediate (Y9–Y10)	51.2%	44.6%	49.0%
Secondary (Y11–Y13)	41.9%	53.6%	47.1%
Decile			
Low (1–3)	7.0%	3.6%	3.9%
Mid (4–7)	88.4%	92.9%	90.2%
High (8–10)	4.7%	3.6%	5.9%
New Zealand born	48.8%	53.6%	60.8%
Career aspirations			
No aspirations/do not know	4.9%	10.9%	25.5%
Getting a job	12.2%	20.0%	21.6%
Post-secondary training	4.9%	10.9%	31.4%
University education	78.0%	58.2%	21.6%

TABLE 14: Cluster differences on educational outcomes (means and standard deviations) for secondary Pasifika students

	Flourishing (n = 43)	Thriving (n = 56)	Struggling (n = 51)
Average number of support networks	1.19 (.59)	1.46 (.83)	0.96 (.69)
Self-report achievement	3.44 (.67)	3.07 (.68)	2.94 (.47)
Proud of own culture	4.64 (.56)	4.51 (.78)	4.01 (1.17)
Others proud of own culture	4.46 (.74)	3.74 (.96)	3.72 (1.02)

He matapaki | Discussion

Two-thirds or more of Māori and Pasifika students are motivated, engaged, and supported

The uniqueness of this study lies in its ability to examine cohorts of Māori and Pasifika learners in their own rights, and not compared against other groups (traditionally being NZ European or Asian students). In doing so, we were able to celebrate—while challenging deficit thinking—the finding that many Māori and Pasifika learners are indeed positively motivated to attend school, participate in school activities, report good levels of achievement, feel supported, and are proud of who they are. This is evident by many of the students (two-thirds or more) who were identified as either Flourishing, Thriving, or Striving across educational settings. It would be of value to explore in-depth the beliefs of learners in those clusters and unpack what and who makes a positive impact on their learning. Study 2 in this report investigates this through analysing qualitative data pertaining to the beliefs, experiences, and aspirations of Māori learners. Study 3 also tackles this by looking at what Pasifika learners and their families consider to be effective teacher practices and qualities.

It seems to be advantageous for learners to be identified in success-oriented, relational clusters

Māori and Pasifika learners who are Flourishing, Thriving, or Striving reported more positive wellbeing and educational outcomes, across both primary and secondary school. Those three clusters are likely to be success-oriented ones; characterised by multiple sources of motivation, higher levels of behavioural engagement, and aspirational future-oriented thinking. Interestingly, across these three clusters, and irrespective of ethnicity and education level, students reported moderate-to-high levels of behavioural engagement. It is possible that those students are taught by teachers who focus on building classroom relationships and foster positive interactions with students through class and one-on-one activities and discussions. Here, it would be of value to unpack the teaching qualities, dispositions, and instructional practices that teachers engage in that make a positive difference for Māori and Pasifika learners, particularly to understand strategies to move more students into success-oriented, relational clusters.⁹ Study 4 in this report addresses this by focusing on kaiako Māori perspectives of what supports ākongā Māori to succeed and thrive through education.

Moving away from binary notions of motivation, and towards a holistic view of what predicts students' wellbeing and educational outcomes

Contrary to prior research that reinforced a dual, and at times binary, notion of motivation, our findings showed both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to be positive predictors of self-reported wellbeing and educational outcomes. We also found that whānau was another positive predictor of student outcomes, as well as a positive correlate with the other two motivation types. Perhaps students are now more attuned to the multiple and simultaneous reasons why attending school can be important for their short- and long-term goals (both tangible and intangible), and are therefore able to utilise that knowledge to fuel their engagement with various aspects of school(ing). This is further supported by the finding that all three types of motivation were positively related to student engagement, and points to the need to consider the various motivations students might have to attend and learn at school, and how to use these to create engaging and personally meaningful learning experiences for them.

⁹ We suggest that this is an important implication, particularly given approximately a third of ākongā were identified in either Surviving or Struggling clusters.

Not only were students' motivation and engagement patterns predictive of their self-reported achievement, but they were also related to their perceptions of support networks and cultural pride. These patterns were also related to beyond-school factors such as post-secondary pathways. In other words, Māori and Pasifika alike are more likely to benefit from a holistic view on motivation and engagement, through connecting their wider sociocultural contexts (language, culture, and identity) to their classroom experiences, and using such links to support their lifelong success aspirations. The current study provides evidence that what schools do in the classroom has significant bearing on how students see themselves academically and socially. However, studies that explore a range of factors—like we did in this study—and how they interact to influence the wellbeing and educational outcomes of indigenous and ethnically diverse students are still limited in the literature.

Although we added whānau motivation as a third motivational construct in the study to challenge Western and binary notions of motivation (i.e., intrinsic versus extrinsic), future studies could also attempt to reconceptualise what motivation and engagement might look like through indigenous and ethnically diverse lenses. It would be exciting to explore such models and use these to inform the development of tools and resources that schools could use to transform their practice.

He kupu whakakapi | Conclusion

The genesis of this study was when Melinda and I were once commenting on the under-representation of large-scale, strengths-based, social-psychological studies that describe the strengths, beliefs, and aspirations of indigenous communities in/from/for education. This study, and COMPASS more broadly, is our attempt to illustrate why more research is needed in this space.

The current study explored the motivational and engagement patterns of Māori and Pasifika students from primary and secondary schools. A range of clusters were found (Flourishing, Thriving, Striving, Surviving, Struggling), and examined alongside students' educational and wellbeing outcomes. We found that, predominantly, Māori and Pasifika learners were flourishing, thriving, or striving in our study. They were motivated to learn, engaged in classroom activities and discussions, felt supported, and were proud of their cultural status.

Studies 2–4 in this report will utilise qualitative data to further unpack what makes a positive difference to Māori and Pasifika learners, and how to best support their success aspirations, as told by ākonga Māori (Study 2), Pasifika learners and their families (Study 3), and kaiako Māori (Study 4).

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STUDY 2:

**“I’m inspired and motivated
by my people, Māori.”:**

*The potential impact of role
models as poutokomanawa
for ākonga Māori*

Sinead Overbye

Ko wai ahau | Positioning myself

I am from Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki, Te Whānau a Kai, Rongowhakaata, and Ngāti Porou. My marae are Hinerupe in Te Araroa and Te Rongopai in Waituhi. My father is of British descent, but also has ties to Te Ātiawa in the Manawatū region. My research interest lies in kaupapa Māori education, and uplifting Māori voices within the field of educational research to create transformational change. These are lifelong goals, motivated by the people who have helped to create me (my tīpuna) in the hopes of creating a better world for those who come after me (my tamariki and mokopuna).

For me, the majority of role models in my life have been wāhine. They have supported me and enabled me to flourish into the person I am today. My most prominent role models have been my grandmothers, my aunties, and my mum. They have encouraged and instilled in me a passion for knowledge and creativity. They also displayed immense resilience in the face of challenges, while still finding joy in life. Although many of them have passed on, my role models continue to inspire me to be like them, to stay kind and care for others, and to not become hardened by the world.

When given the opportunity to analyse the data from Melinda Webber's *Kia tū rangatira ai* project, I was particularly intrigued by the role model questions in the surveys. By embarking on this research, I wanted to find out who and what inspires ākonga Māori across different levels of education. I wanted to do this through a specifically Māori lens, bringing the knowledge of my tīpuna to help me reflect on the findings. A priority of this study, for me, was to whakamana whānau Māori. I also wanted to uplift the voices of our tamariki, to see what makes a positive role model, through their eyes and in their words.

For me, having role models has been integral to shaping who I am. Maintaining contact with my role models still helps to keep me grounded and connected to my whakapapa. My hope is that, by knowing what makes a positive role model for ākonga Māori, we will be able to identify ways to impact upon, and positively transform, their lives.

He kupu whakataki | Introduction

Role models inspire us and allow us to imagine what is possible, by showing us what we could be like in the future. For young people, having positive role models can contribute positively to their academic achievements and plans for the future (Zirkel, 2002). Previous research has shown role models to have a positive impact on the outcomes of students (Hurd et al., 2009; Yancey et al., 2002, 2011). For example, in Yancey et al., the presence of a role model correlated with teens having higher grades, higher self-esteem, and a stronger ethnic identity than those without role models. Studies suggest that role models have their strongest influence on student achievement and motivation when the role models are of the same ethnicity or gender as the role aspirant (Zirkel, 2002). Race- and gender-matched role models show young people what people like them can achieve. Zirkel found that, regardless of the grades or achievements of race- or gender-matched role models, simply having a race- or gender-matched role model had a more positive influence than having a non-matched role model, the effects of which were similar to not having a role model at all (Zirkel, 2002). Cross-sectional studies have also found role models to act as protective factors against problem behaviour, such as physical fighting and substance abuse, as well as health-related issues (Hurd et al., 2009; Yancey et al., 2011).

According to Morgenroth et al. (2015), role models can influence students in three ways:

1. Role models provide vicarious learning for students (they can model how to do a skill).
2. Role models display a template of behaviours that students recognise they will need to achieve success.

3. Role models demonstrate that something is possible—either by breaking negative self-stereotypes, by increasing positive self-stereotypes, or lessening the impact of external factors (e.g., racism) as barriers.

Role models have been defined in different ways throughout role model research. A role model is generally thought to be a person who is regarded as worthy of imitation. Much of the research on role models makes a distinction between role models and mentors, as a role model is not necessarily someone who has personal contact with the young person. A mentor, however, does have personal contact, and helps support and guide a young person. However, role models can sometimes function as mentors too. Some role model studies argue against including certain groups of people—such as parents—as potential role models for students, reasoning that parental relationships are categorically different from role model relationships, and that separating out role modelling effects from other parental effects may not be possible (Hurd et al., 2016).

What this study seeks to do is to redefine role models from a student point of view. Additionally, this study seeks a uniquely Māori point of view on role modelling. Although few other studies like this exist, various studies (Stone et al., 2020; Yancey et al., 2002; Zirkel, 2002) have emphasised the significance of ethnicity and gender when it comes to choosing a role model. Looking at role models identified by a sample of ākongā Māori will help to expand the scholarship about role models generally, as well as create a specific framework for Māori role models that may not yet exist.

Analysing data about role models for ākongā Māori gives us an opportunity to see what makes a good role model, from a Māori student point of view. Knowing more about the role models of ākongā Māori and why they look up to them will grow our understandings about how we can be and become positive role models for tamariki and rangatahi Māori.

This study aims to shed light on some of the positive ways we can influence the lives of tamariki and rangatahi Māori, with the hope that knowing about positive role models will allow us to facilitate a pipeline of positive futures for ākongā Māori.

He tukanga | Method

He tirohanga Māori | A Māori worldview

In line with a te ao Māori worldview, a kaupapa Māori research paradigm was utilised to undertake these analyses. According to Pihama et al. (2002) analyses grounded in kaupapa Māori involve interpreting and understanding information in line with tikanga Māori, and Māori knowledge and understandings. Graham Hingangaroa Smith (1997) argues that kaupapa Māori is a local theoretical positioning related to being Māori which presupposes:

- the validity and legitimacy of Māori is taken for granted
- the survival and revival of Māori language and culture is imperative
- the struggle for autonomy over our own cultural wellbeing, and over our own lives is vital to Māori survival.

These features align with the strengths-based approach that was also taken in this study in that they speak to Māori aspirations, transformation, philosophies, processes, and values.

Research questions

The current study is a component of a wider COMPASS project, designed to analyse data pertaining to the beliefs, experiences, and aspirations of Māori learners. Specifically, this study focuses on survey data about positive role models, in order to answer the following research questions:

2. How can we become inspiring, encouraging, and supportive role models for ākongā Maori?
 - a. Who are the people ākongā Māori identify as being inspiring, encouraging, and supportive of their success?
 - b. What values or qualities do ākongā Māori identify in their role models?
 - c. What other factors (such as ethnicity or gender) are influential for ākongā when choosing role models?

Design and approach

This study utilised a qualitative exploratory design in order to address the research questions. Reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012) guided this process. The benefits of this approach were its flexibility and adaptability to change. Reflexive thematic analysis involves six steps: familiarisation with the data; coding; generating themes; reviewing themes; refining and naming themes; and writing up the findings. These steps were done recursively, enabling movement back and forth between different phases.

Kaupapa Māori also informed the design and approach. As opposed to previous role model studies, this study looks specifically at role models for Māori children and young people. It was therefore important to look at the data through a Māori lens, guided by kaupapa Māori principles (Smith, 1999).

The following three concepts in particular informed the approach to data analysis:

- Aroha ki te tangata—treat people with respect and allow them to define their own space and meet on their own terms.
- Kia māhaki—be humble and share knowledge without arrogance.
- Kāua e takahia te mana o te tangata—do not trample on the mana or dignity of others.

It was important not to bring any rules or preconceptions about what makes a “proper” role model to the data analysis process. Instead, each response was treated with respect and care. This study privileged the voices of ākongā Māori in terms of allowing them to “speak” first on who their role models were.

Each role model’s mana was respected, by ensuring that the coding captured the nuances of how each had played a pivotal role in the lives of ākongā. Attention was focused on the ākongā and what they said during analysis, rather than theoretical concepts. This was to enable us to prioritise the voices of Māori participants over academic theory.

Several ākongā provided responses in te reo Māori. These responses were analysed alongside the rest of the data and were not translated. This was to ensure that what ākongā meant was represented in their own words, and to respect the mana of te reo Māori. Therefore, some quotes in the following report are presented in te reo Māori only.

Participants

The data analysed were from ākongā (learners) at both a primary and secondary level. These were ākongā who identified their main ethnicity as being Māori. Overall, 3,449 responses from ākongā in primary school and 942 responses from ākongā in secondary school were analysed in this study.

At the primary level, 49.7% of ākongā were female and 47.5% were male, with 2.9% identifying as another gender. At the secondary level, 47.2% were female and 49.7% were male, with 3.1% of ākongā identifying as another gender. The split between male and female in both cases was even, and the number of children who identified as another gender was proportionally the same in both cases.

Data collection instrument

The survey questions relevant to this study were:

1. Name someone from your family/whānau, school, hapū/iwi, or community who you look up to?
Explain why they inspire you.
2. Describe this person in five words.

Consideration of participants’ gender was made during analysis; however, analysis by other factors such as school decile or iwi affiliation has not taken place in this study.

Data analysis plan

Data analysis was guided by the research questions listed earlier. The data were coded by one researcher using both Excel and NVivo qualitative analysis software. Data analysis, and the study as a whole, was guided by Guba’s principals of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Shenton, 2004).

To analyse the question “Who inspires you?” categories that emerged from the data were coded in an Excel spreadsheet. Examples of those categories were grandparent, parent/caregiver, friend, and teacher. This was used to create graphs that show who the students’ role models were. All data were then entered into NVivo for further qualitative analysis.

To analyse the question “Explain why they inspire you?”, an initial coding framework was generated based on a close analysis of the first 250 responses from the secondary survey, as these responses were more detailed, yet still reflective of the dataset as a whole. These initial codes were then used as an initial coding framework. The entire dataset was coded using these codes, with new codes emerging from the data as analysis continued.

The framework was scrutinised by peers, to ensure that the codes accurately reflected what was being said in the data. Frequent debriefing sessions about the analysis framework and writing were undertaken, and literature was also consulted to contextualise the research.

The question “Describe this person in five words” was analysed by creating word clouds in NVivo. Data were filtered by question, and word clouds created to reflect the 50 most frequent words in both the primary and secondary responses. Words less than four letters long were excluded from the word clouds. These word clouds helped to guide the emergence of qualitative codes, particularly in relation to attributes and values the ākongā saw as being valuable in their role models (e.g., “kind”, “nice”, “funny”).

A brief analysis of gender was also carried out, to interrogate whether gender-matching was a factor for ākongā Māori when identifying people who inspired them. Any findings from these analyses are preliminary and will require further quantitative attention to become robust.

Quotes from participants are used extensively in the findings and discussion below, labelled with their gender and school type (e.g., primary school female) to distinguish them. This is done to highlight some of the differences in the themes by education level, and to contextualise the data in terms of gender matching.

He kitenga | Findings

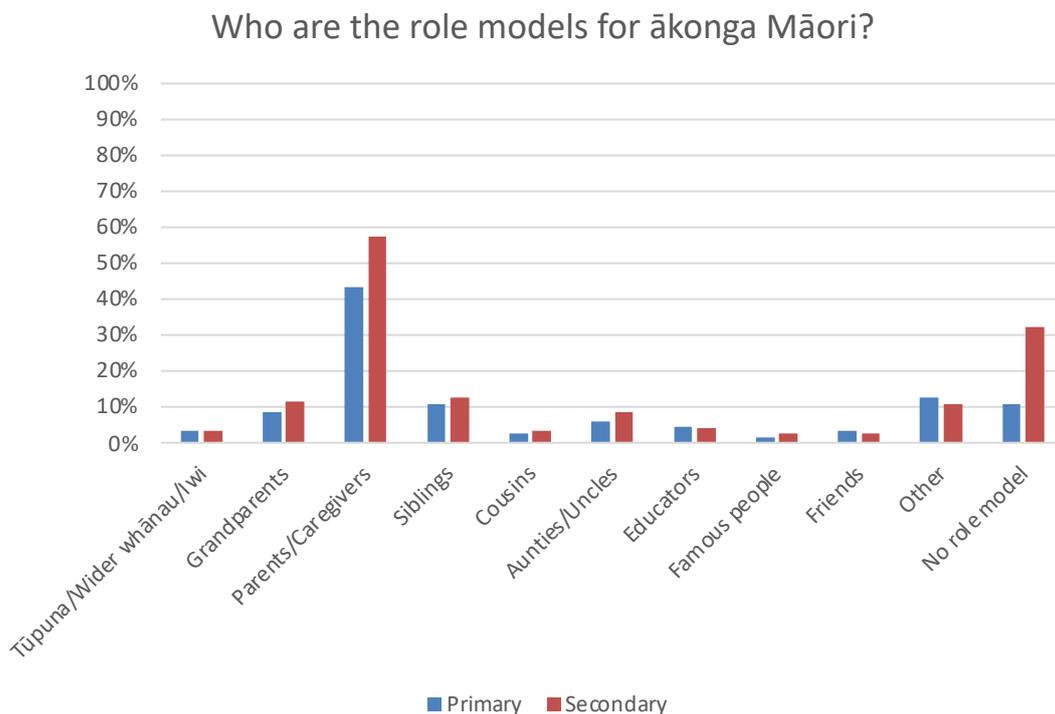
Who inspires ākongā Māori?

Figure 5 below shows the types of role models who were identified by primary and secondary ākongā Māori. While ākongā Māori identified role models from all aspects of their lives, the majority of these were members of their whānau (85.5%), with parents being the most mentioned role models (50.3%). Other whānau role models included grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings, and cousins. Additionally, 3.3% of ākongā mentioned larger whānau groups, such as their ancestors, entire whānau, hapū, iwi, or Māori people collectively.

Some ākongā mentioned role models from outside their whānau. Out of the non-whānau role models, 4.2% were educators, 3.1% were friends, and 2.2% were famous people, or people the ākongā didn't know personally. "Other" role models were identified by 11.7% of ākongā. These "other" role models were people who were referred to by name, but whose relationships to the ākongā were unclear.

Overall, 21.5% of all ākongā indicated they had no role models. The difference between primary and secondary ākongā who said they had no role models is notable, with 10.8% of primary ākongā saying they had no role models, compared with 32.2% of secondary ākongā. In both primary and secondary, over half of the ākongā who said they had no role models were male.

FIGURE 5: Breakdown of who ākongā Māori said are their role models



Gender in-group membership

Overall, 55% of identified role models were female as opposed to 45% who were male. Table 15 below provides a breakdown of role models’ gender correlation to the ākongā, split by school level and gender group. Analysis of role models’ gender in the data suggests that most student groups were more likely to identify a role model of the same gender as them:

- Primary school female learners were the most likely to identify same-sex role models (67.8%), compared with opposite-sex role models (32.3%).
- Secondary females also chose more female role models than male role models.
- Primary school male learners were also more likely to choose a same-sex role model (58.2%), compared with an opposite-sex role model (41.8%).

Interestingly, secondary school male learners were the only group who identified more opposite-sex role models than same-sex role models. This could be due to the significance of mothers as female role models. Alternatively, this could suggest a lack of male role models present in the lives of ākongā as they grow older.

TABLE 15: Breakdown of role models’ gender against the gender of ākongā Māori

	Same gender	Different gender
Primary females	67.8%	32.2%
Primary males	58.2%	41.8%
Secondary females	54.3%	45.7%
Secondary males	44.1%	55.9%

What makes a good role model?

Ākongā spoke about their desire to be just like their role models in the future. They saw their role models as leaders, and benchmarks of success. Some ākongā said that their role model showed them that something was possible. Others spoke about how their role model motivated them to achieve well in the future, and to strive for success. Ākongā often wanted to achieve just as well as, or even better than, their role models.

Ākongā appreciated whānau role models who were dedicated to their whānau unit, and who put their loved ones first. They admired people for who they were, how they treated others, what values they held, and their attitude towards life. They also generally admired people who had worked hard, persevered, and were resilient in the face of challenges, and those who displayed leadership.

Ākongā also identified role models for their skills and expertise. They admired those who were culturally confident and competent, as well as role models who had other passions, interests, and talents. They looked up to people who had achieved great things in their lives and had worked hard to get there. They also appreciated role models who helped them through life, and pushed them to achieve success.

More generally, the ākongā responses speak to seven distinct reasons why their role models are considered inspiring. These themes provide a framework for understanding how positive role models impact ākongā Māori:

1. **Whakapapa and whanaungatanga | Connections and relationships**—positive role models are people who establish long-lasting, quality relationships with ākongā.
2. **Āhuatanga whaiaro | Personal attributes**—positive role models are people who exhibit values and personal attributes that ākongā admire.
3. **Ahurea tuakiri | Cultural identity**—positive role models are people who are competent and confident in te ao Māori.
4. **Pūmanawa | Talents**—positive role models are people who are talented and skilful in various areas of life.
5. **Whakatutukitanga | Achievements**—positive role models are people who have achieved things in their lives that make them successful.
6. **Āwhinatanga | Assistance and mentoring**—positive role models are people who have helped ākongā get to where they are now.
7. **Wawata | Aspirations**—positive role models are people who support and encourage ākongā towards bright and promising futures.

The following section expands on each theme and gives examples of how they are embodied by the people who inspire ākongā Māori.

Whakapapa and whanaungatanga | Relationality

Ākongā value those with whom they have a kinship relationship. As described earlier, whānau members were the most frequently mentioned role models. For some, their whakapapa connection and relationship were integral to that person being a role model in their lives. They appreciated those who had raised them to be the people they had become. Often, their reason for choosing their role models was because of their shared whānau connection—they valued role models for the simple fact that they loved them or were related to them.

Like everyone I look up to my care takers because they do and have done so much just to keep me alive and keep my blood pumping though my veins and the money and the time they personally have spent on me is just incredible. (Secondary school female)

When role models were not whānau members, ākongā found ways to draw personal connections between the role model and themselves—for example, by saying their role model was from the same place as them or shared the same culture. Drawing a personal connection between the role model and themselves was an act of whakawhanaungatanga, which is embedded in tikanga Māori. Ākongā Māori seemed to do this with role models with whom they did not share a whakapapa relationship, as a way to draw the role model closer to them.

Whaea Rachel because we come from the same culture and she helps me with my pronouncing my Māori word and sentences. (Primary school female)

Beauden Barrett because he came from Taranaki and my mum did too and Beauden Barrett he's one of the best rugby players in the world. (Primary school male)

Lifelong relationships

Ākongā valued role models who had been constantly present in their lives. They valued people who were always there for them, and who showed them unconditional love and support. Being a constant presence in their lives allowed ākongā to get to know their role models better. These lifelong

relationships were often with whānau members, although some spoke about friends who were always there for them too.

Lifelong relationships stand the test of time. They require work, and enable both parties to experience the complexities and challenges of life together, as well as the joys and triumphs. Ākongā were strongly inspired by role models who were willing to stay by their side, even when things were tough. Knowing more about their role models’ lives, along with any hardships or struggles they had faced in the past, made role models more relatable and human.

My dad inspires me, because despite the rocky past he’s been through, and the struggles he had in childhood (not having much money, and bad education) he has made a life for himself and has made a life for his family. (Secondary school male)

Nan she was there on the hardest times of my life. (Primary school male)

Some students mentioned role models who were no longer with them, suggesting that even when someone was no longer physically present, their continued impact was long-lasting, and remained despite distance or even death.

My mum, even though she died she told me to never give up and listen to the bully and be myself and I love her for that. (Primary school female)

My Great Grandfather. I look up to him because he has taught me so much in life ... He was my idol and inspiration and still is. He was my soul, but he has left this world which makes me try more. (Secondary school male)

Āhuatanga whaiaro | Personality traits and characteristics

Many of the ākongā in this study identified specific characteristics and identity traits they admired in their role models. Among the most frequently mentioned traits were that role models for ākongā were hard-working, resilient, caring, kind, loving, intelligent, awesome, funny, and confident. Many role models displayed manaakitanga. Ākongā admired people who were true to themselves, had a positive outlook on life, and had overcome challenges to continue to thrive and be successful.

Ākongā often referred to their role models as “good people”. The template of what made a “good person” came from their observations of who their role models were, and the āhuatanga whaiaro that ākongā valued in them.

Manaakitanga

Manaakitanga is often loosely translated as caring. For Māori, manaakitanga encompasses many different ways of caring and treating people. One interpretation is that manaakitanga is the process of encouraging (expressed in the root word “aki”) somebody else’s mana (prestige).

Ākongā identified many role models who nurtured the mana of others. They identified role models who put others before themselves, and who were generous and caring towards other people. This extended beyond the whānau, into the wider community. Role models were people who were involved with helping vulnerable people in their communities, such as helping the homeless, those vulnerable to COVID-19, or working to ensure Māori were cared for in the health system.

I look up to many Māori wāhine mā who are involved in the health sector who are trying their best to assist the wāhine hapū or māuiui in our community ... they consistently are helping so many Māori tāngata who need help and I really want to be able to help them because they give so much. (Secondary school male)

My Mom she is the most caring person you could meet. She is always putting other people's problems before herself even if it means she misses out on something. She is so strong and outgoing and will always bend over backwards to make someone else happy.

(Secondary school male)

Toku māmā—nā te mea ka āwhina ia i ētahi atu tāngata i ngā wā katoa. (Primary school female)

Ākongā particularly admired whānau members who prioritised their family's needs and wellbeing. Role models who were dedicated to their loved ones, and who were able to provide and care for them even in spite of hardship or struggle, were inspirational to many ākongā Māori. They appreciated role models who took care of them, and who were committed to raising their children, and taking care of other members of the whānau such as siblings, grandparents, and elders.

My brother, he has been so good to us and has always helped us ... whenever we felt down he makes cups of teas for my mom, he respects her whenever mom feels pain, and his manner is so kind. My brother may not be the best of all but he's the best to me and my family.

(Primary school female)

I look up to my dad because he has accomplished raising me and my brothers and sisters up as a solo dad without any support. (Primary school female)

Kindness and positivity

Ākongā were inspired by people with positive attitudes towards life, and people who were joyful, even despite being through tough times in the past. They also appreciated role models who had a sense of humour and were fun. They admired people who were optimistic and made them feel positive about life.

My Mum inspires me to be happy in life, no matter what happens, she's always positive and lives life to the fullest. (Secondary school female)

Hard work and ambition

Ākongā admired people who were hard-working and driven to achieve their goals. Being hard-working was the most mentioned character trait by secondary ākongā in particular. They valued role models who worked hard to provide for their family. Role models who were able to juggle multiple commitments and still work hard at them were admirable. Role models who worked hard set examples for how ākongā should act.

Pāpā—nā te mea he tangata pukumahi ia. (Primary school female)

My mummy because she has worked very hard to get where she is today, and she keeps on striving for the best in her work in order to provide the best for me and my siblings. (Secondary school male)

My dad works really hard and always puts 120% into everything he does so he's set a really good example for how I should be with anything I do. (Secondary school female)

Resilience, tenacity, and strength

Role models were also identified for their resilience. Those who had overcome adverse circumstances, such as those who displayed fortitude in the face of poverty, negative stereotypes, and racism were admired by ākongā. In another sense, role models went beyond merely being resilient against adversity, and could instead be described as tenacious. Role models showed elements of strength and persistence and were people who never gave up, even when things were hard.

I look up to my mum because she's had to deal with so much (racism) and has still been able to become successful in the career world. (Secondary school female)

My mum. Even through the difficult times in our life she was strong and kept it all together. She kept her head high when we hit rock bottom. She taught me to work hard for the things you want the most. And to never give up. (Primary school female)

I look up to my dad because he is very strong and he's been through A LOT through his life, and he's never given up or doubted himself. He's always been positive about things and always tells us to stay strong for him, and so we do. (Primary school female)

Ahurea tuakiri | Cultural identity

Some ākongā identified role models for their confidence and competence in te ao Māori. These role models were inspiring as they were experts in various cultural areas, including speaking te reo, doing kapa haka, and upholding mātauranga Māori. These role models were passionate about helping their people reconnect to te ao Māori. Role models with cultural expertise were also people who passed on their cultural knowledge to their community. In some cases, these role models passed their cultural expertise to ākongā, and in doing so supported their sense of cultural identity and cultural pride.

I look up to my Aunty ... because she loves embracing her culture and living up to the kaupapa. She loves her whānau and will do anything to help them out and make them feel at home and learn more about her culture and beliefs. (Secondary school male)

I look up to my uncle who is spreading around Māori culture and teaches people Māori stories. (Primary school male)

My Nana because she is able to speak fluent te reo Māori and can guide a large group of people. (Primary school male)

The person that inspires me is my great nana that's 96 years old because she taught me how to learn my pepeha. (Primary school female)

One ākongā spoke about Māori people collectively as a source of inspiration. This signalled an element of collectivity in the responses of ākongā Māori. Many did not just look up to individual people, but saw wider groups as being inspirational.

I'm not inspired by any one person to be honest. I'm inspired and motivated by my people, Māori. This is because I love my people and the events in history that we as a people have overcome inspire me to pave a way for an even brighter future for all of us. (Secondary school male)

Pūmanawa | Talents

Ākongā identified people who were talented in areas that interested them. Many were famous sports players, and being "good at sports" was a recurring talent that ākongā spoke about. These role models were admired not only for their sporting ability, but also for the other traits that ākongā believed made them good sportspeople. For instance, ākongā described having learnt many other skills from sportspeople, like how to strive for their dreams, be dedicated, and be a good team player.

Lisa Carrington. She is always pushing herself to improve and succeed in her rowing career. No matter how hard her races may be or how challenging she always pushes to her limits. She's a fair playing person and shows amazing sportsmanship to all her races and teammates. (Secondary school male)

Other valued role models were performers, dancers, musicians, and singers. They were valued for their artistic talents, and ākongā wanted to be like them in the future.

Friends, educators, and whānau members were also valued for their talents. These talents were wide-ranging, and included many things, from gardening to construction work, to being good at playing the guitar, cooking, or drawing. Sometimes their skills aligned with shared ākongā interests, such as peer

role models who were valued for their skill at playing video games. This meant there was opportunity for mentoring to take place. At other times, ākongā simply admired that their role models were talented in general. Some ākongā valued their role models for talents that they did not necessarily have a personal interest in. Mostly, they admired role models for following their passions.

Mum, she is a smart and independent lady who likes to do things her way, she is also good when it comes to constructing/building things. (Secondary school female)

Dad, he is very musically inclined. Always there for me when it comes to my music. (Secondary school male)

Some of the role models were inspiring because they motivated ākongā to become as skilled in a chosen field, or even to become better than their role model. In other cases, the role model's talent was not something the ākongā was passionate about, but they were still inspiring for dedicating themselves to that talent. One ākongā spoke about a famous hip-hop dancer who they connected with for having grown up in the same area as them. Although this ākongā did not want to pursue a career in dance, they found their role model inspirational as it showed them that people like them can be successful, and anything is possible.

I look up to Kaea Pearce because she came from Whangārei, and she followed her passion for dance although I don't want to be a dancer I would like to be like her and follow my passion for netball. (Primary school female)

Whakatutukitanga | Achievements

Some ākongā looked up to people for what they had achieved in their life. Mostly, they looked up to role models who had a job they were passionate about, and a good education. A few ākongā spoke about having money and possessions, and a minimal number of students spoke about being popular, famous, or having travelled. Long-term dedication to achievements, such as getting a good job or getting a degree, appeared to be more highly valued by ākongā than gaining material wealth or status.

The achievements of their role models helped ākongā to believe they could achieve as highly as them in the future. Role models were examples of what they could do with their lives, and where they could be in the future. Role models who enjoyed their jobs, and had studied something they were passionate about, helped ākongā to see that it was possible to enjoy these elements of life. Role models who had achieved highly at school, and who had got university degrees, inspired ākongā to achieve as highly as them.

Dad because he is a good plumber/Dad and one day I want to be a plumber like him. (Primary school female)

I look up to my brother because he did really well in school, he got a job and he'll be going to uni next year and I hope to be like him and go to uni as well. (Primary school female)

My aunty she works very hard and is the first person in my family to gain a doctorate. (Secondary school female)

However, not every role model had a university degree or had even finished school. In fact, some role models were admired because they had not achieved success in the education system, but they persisted to become successful in life nonetheless.

My daddy, because he didn't go to uni and he has a really good paying job at the bank so that makes me feel like I can do anything. (Primary school female)

Ākongā spoke about their role models having "the good life". This did not always include having a qualification or degree, but was more oriented towards other life achievements, such as continuing

to learn, enjoying what they do, achieving their own personal goals, and being able to provide for themselves and their whānau.

My Mum because she is hard working as a stay-at-home mum and she is also studying how to be an accountant at home ... she gave up a lot of time to help me and my siblings and I am very thankful for that ... she is a mom during the day and a student at night. (Secondary school male)

I look up to my dad because he didn’t finish school, but he is always learning new things and expanding his knowledge. (Secondary school male)

All my cousins are my idols because they lead the kinda lives I would like to live. That involves having income to sustain themselves and money to buy the extra things they want. (Secondary school female)

Āwhinatanga | Assistance and mentoring

Ākongā were inspired by role models who assisted and helped them through life. Primary school ākongā spoke more about the daily activities their role models helped them with, including getting them to school on time, and providing food and clothing. These were acts of service that primary ākongā Māori found inspiring.

My mum—she has always helped me with anything, uniforms, lunches, clothes, sports or school fees etc. ... and has always been a good role model. (Primary school female)

Secondary ākongā were more likely to talk about role models who had helped them through tough times. They valued people who were always there to support and care for them. This included supporting them through challenges such as illness, adversity, or grief. They appreciated role models who showed up for them in times of need, and who stayed even through life’s challenges.

My teacher because he always looked after me and helped me in difficult situations. (Primary school male)

Probably be my nan. Because she always helped me through the struggles that me and my family have been through and she’s always said to me no matter what you do or where you are just keep going. This motto of hers has pushed me so far in life that I am determined to be a successful Māori woman. (Secondary school female)

Ākongā also spoke about aroha, which can be loosely defined as love, reciprocity, and respect. There were many ways that role models expressed aroha. Being proud of ākongā, making them feel loved, and reciprocating their affection made role models more inspiring to ākongā Māori. Acts of service were also a way to show aroha.

My nana because she was nice to me and we love each other. (Primary school female)

My older brother because he always stood up for me and got my bullies to leave me alone. (Primary school female)

Helps me with schoolwork and learning

Some ākongā, particularly primary-aged ākongā, mentioned role models who helped with their schoolwork and learning.

Mum because she likes helping people and she helps me and my sister with our homework when it gets a bit tricky. (Primary school female)

My dad because he supports me with everything that I do and he helps me with my reading if I get really stuck or if I need help with anything. (Primary school female)

Supports me with “tough love”

Although children mostly spoke about the positive aspects of their role models who they admired, some also used words such as “hard”, “mean”, and “strict” to describe their role models. Being strict can be a way for whānau Māori to support one another. Even though they are sometimes strict or show “tough love” towards the ākongā, these role models were still valued.

My grandmother’s sister who I lived with because she was always strict on me to do well and raised me to be the person I am today. (Secondary school student, another gender)

Wawata | Aspirations

Role models were people who supported ākongā to achieve their aspirations. They were described as people who were invested in the future of ākongā, and who made them believe they had a bright future ahead of them. Role models were people who understood the interests and strengths of the ākongā, and who gave them advice about potential career paths. This looked like role models giving advice about the future, having conversations about career possibilities, or encouraging ākongā to pursue their passions. Ākongā appreciated this investment in their future.

My uncle inspires me to try my hardest to do work and conversations about what my future plan is in life after school. (Secondary school male)

Ākongā valued role models who had high expectations of them and pushed them to achieve success. Some ākongā spoke about role models who pushed them beyond what they themselves even thought they were capable of. Having high expectations of ākongā was a key aspect of positive role modelling and led to ākongā persisting with things they found challenging in order to make their role models proud.

Mrs Lowe. She is the nicest, most understanding teacher. She is a really empowering person. My favourite teacher. She helps and makes me believe I can do whatever I can. (Secondary school female)

My Nan because she encourages me to do very well in school and pushes me to be a good person and to succeed in life. (Secondary school male)

Mum inspires me to do something I love by telling me how beautiful I am and smart, saying I can go a long way in what I can do. (Secondary school male)

Whānau role models show me who I am destined to be

Whānau role models in particular showed ākongā what their future could be like, by embodying a future version of the ākongā that they could connect to. Because they came from the same circumstances, background, whānau, and culture as the ākongā, they often served as great examples of what ākongā could achieve.

My Nan. My nan was very selfless, caring and brave and I really want to be like her because I want to make my whānau proud. (Primary school female)

My nana because what she did was what I did or would do and my dad always says how great she was and how much I am like her. (Primary school female)

He matapaki | Discussion

Inside the wharenuī at my whānau marae, Te Rongopai, the first thing that you see is the poutokomanawa or carved central post. Our poutokomanawa depicts Wi Pere, who is a significant tīpuna for our hapū. Wi Pere demonstrated many of the traits that make a positive role model for our people. He was dedicated, determined, driven, tenacious, and had a heart for his community. He

is also renowned in our iwi for his achievements, having represented Eastern Māori in the House of Representatives to defend our land in the late 1800s. He had a gift for oratory that we believe has been handed down to us, his descendants. He was exceptionally intelligent and schooled in tikanga and whakapapa by his elders. He was a fluent speaker of te reo Māori, and had a strong sense of ahurea tuakiri, or cultural identity.

FIGURE 6: **Portrait of Wi Pere**
Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington,
Ref. 1/2-034936-F



Wi Pere serves as a role model for our whānau and hapū. He is not only inspiring because of all he achieved, or the type of person he was, but also because of our whakapapa connection to him. When we see Wi Pere, we see ourselves.

In wharenuī around the country, poutokomanawa serve a similar function—depicting significant tīpuna as role models for their community.

Poutokomanawa are fundamentally Māori, and therefore serve as a relevant metaphor for talking about role models for ākongā Māori. They help us to reconceptualise concepts like success and motivation, from a Māori point of view. In the following discussion, I will use the term “poutokomanawa” as an attempt to redefine the concept of a role model, through a Māori lens.

The following quote, from a female primary school akonga, draws together all seven aspects of role modelling that were identified in the findings, and introduces the concept of being a poutokomanawa:

My nanny inspires me to be the best I can be, and she has taken me down a pathway that has built me up to be a strong and young Māori wahine. My nanny has

taught me a lot of te reo Māori and when her time on earth is up, I will be the poutokomanawa of my whānau. (Primary school female)

For this akonga, her nanny is a positive role model who has fostered her sense of identity, has taught her how to be a good person, and how to speak te reo Māori, and has also shown her what her role in the whānau is, and she could be like. Her nanny is a poutokomanawa for her whānau, and she is destined to be like that in the future.

The metaphor of role models as poutokomanawa has subsequently been used to construct a framework for Māori role models, which will be elaborated on below.

What is a poutokomanawa?

A poutokomanawa is a central pole on the interior of a wharenuī. The first thing we would encounter as we enter the wharenuī is the poutokomanawa sitting at the centre of the whare, with a tīpuna figure carved at its base. It signifies both the human heart and the heart of the whare, and the mauri of the whare is buried beneath it (Heaton, 2015). From behind the head of the carved figure stretches a long pou that reaches to the ceiling. In their hands, often, is an object that represents some of their talents, or things they were renowned for in their life. Examples of objects might be a patu, a toki, or a

taiaha. The poutokomanawa is at the heart of the wharenuī and indicates an inseparable connection between Māori people, their language, and histories (Melbourne, 1991).

A poutokomanawa is therefore not only a central post, but it also serves many other practical and spiritual functions. For the purposes of this study, I will focus on the following four functions:

1. A poutokomanawa represents a person of excellence.
2. A poutokomanawa depicts a tīpuna students can relate to.
3. A poutokomanawa holds up the whare—without it, the whare could not stand.
4. A poutokomanawa is the “heart post” of the whare that connects Māori people to their identity, language, culture, and futures.

These four functions of poutokomanawa are discussed below, with parallels being drawn with the seven key themes that emerged in findings for this study, and previous literature about role models.

1. A poutokomanawa represents a person of excellence

The poutokomanawa depicts a tīpuna who has achieved greatness, who has worked hard, and whose mana is recognised by the iwi. This tīpuna has the characteristics of a “good person” from the perspective of the iwi. They embody the various traits that are important to that particular community. One thing we know from the role modelling data is that role models can be valued for different reasons depending on where they are from, as explored by Webber in her paper on role models for Ngāpuhi students (Webber et al., in press). They embody traits that are admirable for children in their communities.

Resilience, perseverance in the face of challenges, and having a positive mindset are some of the traits identified by ākongā. These are traits that allow people to overcome adversity, challenge stereotypes, and remain strong. Māori students were aware of the necessity of having these traits in a colonised society, and admired those who showed strength and tenacity (Stone et al., 2020). They indicated admiration of role models who had overcome hardships, and who remained positive in the face of challenges, such as illness, poverty, and adversity.

Other traits that were valued were oriented towards being a good, kind, and nurturing person who treated others well. Ākongā understood the value of manaakitanga, and admired those who put others first, and prioritised maintaining positive relationships. In te ao Māori, the concept of mana is important and highly valued (Kāretu & Milroy, 2018). Mana is often described as dignity and status, and is a quality that is given to people who treat others well. The word “manaakitanga”, which can be loosely described as being hospitable and kind to others, also suggests that this treating others well is a process of supporting (to “aki”) someone else’s mana. Ākongā looked up to people who valued mana and manaakitanga.

Just as the model of poutokomanawa re-orientates the idea of role models into a more Māori framework, so too is it necessary for us to redefine the concept of success in a more culturally relevant and resonant way for Māori. These ākongā were invested in their role models having a good education and a job they enjoyed. However, they also looked up to people who had become successful despite not having finished high school or university. Ākongā were able to conceptualise success as being lifelong, and of not necessarily being dependent upon achieving well within the Western education system. Having a family, being happy, and living good lives were as important to ākongā as having jobs or qualifications.

Ākongā also saw success as being a good person. Ākongā expressed that they wanted to do things that they loved, and to work hard in ways that would benefit their people and their communities in the

future. They also wanted to reconnect to their culture and become culturally competent and confident, expanding further on ideas about what success looks like from the perspective of ākongā Māori.

2. A poutokomanawa depicts a tīpuna students can relate to

A poutokomanawa is inextricably linked with whakapapa. A tīpuna depicted on a poutokomanawa comes from the hapū and iwi of the place they are in. This means that the poutokomanawa is a relatable figure connected to the ākongā and the place they come from. Because whakapapa is so integral to te ao Māori, it is no surprise that most ākongā Māori chose whānau role models, and other Māori role models, above everyone else.

As Yancey et al. (2002) found, the effects of role models are generally stronger if they are personally known by the adolescents. Family role models, especially parental role models, have a stronger impact on adolescent outcomes than non-parental and non-familial role models. It is therefore important for us to acknowledge and celebrate whānau members as role models who can positively influence the achievements and aspirations of ākongā Māori.

While some have suggested that family members should be excluded from being identified as role models on account of the parental role being exclusively distinct from that of a role model (Hurd et al., 2016), the current study would suggest that excluding parent role models is antithetical to a Māori worldview (Mahuika, 2020). Role models for Māori in this study were overwhelmingly parental and familial, and less than 3% of their role models were people they did not know personally.

For ākongā Māori, the people they choose as role models are predominantly the people they know personally, and have close relationships with. The closeness of this relationship could benefit ākongā Māori, as international studies suggest that role models who have personal relationships with students have the most positive impact on their lives (Yancey et al., 2002). A poutokomanawa who has connections to the ākongā personally is more likely to positively influence their lives.

In keeping with the literature about role models, ākongā Māori look for role models who are like them. If positive role models are not available in their family, they will choose role models from other areas of their lives. This is where many ākongā specified that they were choosing role models because they were also Māori, or grew up in the same place that they did.

Ākongā drew connections between themselves and their non-whānau role models to form a sense of closeness or in-group membership. Seeing someone from the same in-group achieve something shows ākongā that people like them can achieve success, and therefore increases their sense of self-belief. Having role models from the same in-group has also been shown to improve student outcomes. In fact, Zirkel (2002) showed that having a gender- or ethnicity-matched role model improved outcomes, while having a non-matched role model had the same impact on outcomes as ākongā who had no role models. A poutokomanawa who has connections to the culture and identity of the ākongā is therefore more likely to have a positive impact on their identity and aspirations.

An issue presented by the data in this study was that secondary school-aged Māori males had less gender-matched role models. Males also made up over 50% of ākongā who said they had no role models. This is concerning, as shared in-group membership has been shown to be correlated with positive student outcomes, as well as higher levels of motivation and orientation towards the future (Zirkel, 2002). It is also concerning that the number of ākongā who indicated they had no role models increased substantially with secondary school students.

3. A poutokomanawa stands strong to support the whare

A poutokomanawa is vital structural element of a whare as it allows the whare to stand strong. This relates to role models functioning as supporters of ākongā Māori. Ākongā identified role models who were present in their lives, and who offered them the support they needed to get through life. The poutokomanawa also holds up the whare to protect those within it. A poutokomanawa can therefore be a person who supports their people and works for the benefit of their people and community.

Role models were described as people who were always there, who were reliable and strong, and who helped ākongā through life—whether it be small, everyday tasks to help them survive, encouragement for their achievements, or support through tough times and challenges.

Ākongā identified three main ways that their role models supported them: survival, emotional support, and educational support. It was mostly primary school ākongā who mentioned ways their role models helped them to survive. This may be because they were in an early stage of their development and appreciated being helped through everyday tasks that they found they could not do for themselves. Emotional support included helping ākongā to overcome emotional challenges, or being there to help them through tough times.

Educational support was another key thing role models helped with. Role models who offered educational support were far more involved in primary school, and role models who helped academically at a secondary age were few. This suggests there may be an increasing disconnection between school and home environments as children get older, and particularly as they reach the age of NCEA. This is concerning as it may isolate ākongā who have to “fend for themselves” in a system that can be confusing to students and their whānau.

For ākongā Māori, role models appear to serve the added function of providing mentorship and support. Although distinctions are often made between these two functions in role model literature, the metaphor of the poutokomanawa supports the idea that role models for ākongā Māori can necessarily function as both a role model and a mentor at once. By knowing about role models for ākongā Māori, we can therefore also know about ākongā support systems. The two are not mutually exclusive for ākongā Māori, and within a Māori world view.

4. A poutokomanawa connects Māori to their language, identity, culture, and futures

The final function of a poutokomanawa in a wharenuī is that it serves as a connector. In the context of role models, the poutokomanawa connects ākongā with their own Māori identity, language, and culture. The poutokomanawa also helps connect an ākongā with their future self, or potential future pathways.

Having cultural pride and knowledge was highly prized by ākongā Māori. Ākongā appreciated people who had cultural expertise. This suggests that these ākongā also wanted to become proficient in cultural practices, reconnect to te ao Māori, and that they were proud of their culture and dedicated to te reo, tikanga, and ngā mahi Māori.

As well as connecting ākongā to their culture, it is the role of a poutokomanawa to connect the ākongā, as a child, to their future self, the thriving adult. Poutokomanawa therefore play an important role in the life journeys of ākongā Māori. Having conversations with ākongā about their futures, having high expectations of them, and pushing them to be successful were practices that motivated ākongā to succeed. This also helped increase ākongā self-belief and gave them the encouragement to persist and pursue their passions.

Role models can be people who show students what it is possible to achieve (Morgenroth et al., 2015). Additionally, they play a potential role in motivating and celebrating ākongā skills, strengths, and aspirations for the future.

He kupu whakakapi | Conclusion

Knowing about role models expands on our understanding of ākongā aspirations, and is not limited to career prospects, which can be subject to change. Role models instead give us deeper insight into what kinds of people ākongā would like to be, and what their values are.

In keeping with much of the role model literature, this study found that role models for ākongā Māori:

1. provide vicarious learning for students
2. display templates of behaviours that students recognise they will need to achieve success
3. demonstrate that something is possible—either by breaking self-stereotypes or by breaking the impact of external factors (e.g., racism) as barriers.

These functions are all reflected in the poutokomanawa model. However, to be a positive role model and poutokomanawa for Māori children, there are more elements at play. Role models for Māori children, or poutokomanawa, hold the following added functions:

- to model cultural competence and confidence
- to support and mentor the student
- to encourage and celebrate the student’s achievements
- to help the student achieve their dreams in the future.

These are reflected in the vital role a poutokomanawa plays to hold up a whare and connect Māori with their identities and futures.

To redefine role models as poutokomanawa allows for both a role model and mentoring role to be acknowledged at once. From a Māori worldview, role models are like poutokomanawa. They are people who hold the whare up, connect the people to their cultures and futures, and at the same time embody the traits of people ākongā aspire to be.

Ākongā have explained what they believe a person of excellence or a poutokomanawa looks like. Poutokomanawa demonstrate sets of behaviour and characteristics that are desirable for achieving success. They are relatable to ākongā, and in many cases have personal relationships to them or are related through whakapapa. Poutokomanawa stand strong to support the ākongā and their community, and they also connect ākongā not only with their culture and identity, but also with their futures.

While the majority of poutokomanawa are whānau members, it is possible for educators, friends, and others to be poutokomanawa too. Ākongā live in many different settings outside of the whānau and these settings (the school and te ao whānui, or the wider world) are sites where ākongā can encounter positive role models.

Teachers and educators play a vital role in the development of our ākongā and need to be aware of how they can function as positive role models and poutokomanawa for our tamariki. Teachers may want to integrate role models or poutokomanawa into the classroom by asking students about who inspires them. This could give a clearer sense of what support systems ākongā have outside of school, and who within their lives and whānau might be key people to talk with. It could also be a way to build trust, and gain insight into that student’s values, as well as their aspirations and motivations to come to school.

Additionally, educators could bring key Māori role models from the community into their schools to show ākongā the kinds of people they could be in the future.

With growing access to the wider world and media, the influence of te ao whānui is likely to play an increasingly important role in identity formation in the future. It is vital that ākongā Māori be exposed to positive Māori role models in the wider world. Many of these already exist. Actively promoting positive stories about strong Māori men and women who have achieved success is necessary if ākongā are to believe in themselves and realise their full potential.

Additionally, whānau members and educators could:

1. display the traits of a “good person” or poutokomanawa that ākongā Māori value, such as being kind, caring, resilient/tenacious, and hard-working (āhuetanga whaiaro)
2. demonstrate cultural awareness and interest in Māori culture and language—show that it’s important and valuable (ahurea tuakiri)
3. invest in the passions and interests of ākongā Māori—allow space to share their own passions and interests with ākongā (pūmanawa)
4. celebrate the achievements of ākongā Māori—let them know when they’ve achieved success, and be proud of them (whakatutukitanga)
5. have high expectations of Māori achievement, and expect them to meet or exceed those standards (āwhinatanga)
6. talk to ākongā about the future, their aspirations and goals, and discuss with them the steps and processes towards achieving success (wawata).

Role models connect ākongā Māori to their futures and show them what it is possible to achieve with their lives. In this way, they are inspirations. Redefining role models for ākongā Māori as poutokomanawa enables inspiring people to be both mentors and role models at once. This allows for an expansion of our understanding of how role models function, as well as providing a new framework for how to conceptualise role models for ākongā Māori.

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STUDY 3

Solesolevaki—Pacific-focused study on what learners and their families perceive to be teaching qualities and practices of effective teachers

Renee Tuifagalele

Positionality and worldview

Solesolevaki means the collective effort of a community. It is demonstrated in the collective nature of indigenous Fijian society, where everyone is related, and are all obligated to work together (Ravuvu, 1987). To achieve this, a number of key indigenous Fijian concepts and values, such as veidokai/vakarokoko, veikauwaitaki, veirogorogoci, and veiwekani, are acknowledged and practised.

I am a first-generation New Zealand-born indigenous Fijian woman. My parents and grandparents migrated to Rotorua, Aotearoa New Zealand in the late 1980s, with the intention of gaining more career and educational opportunities. Despite being in a different country, my vuvale (family) did their best to ensure that my generation and I were instilled with *i valavala vakavanua* (Fijian protocols and acceptable values and behaviours) when we were growing up. While they were helping us grow as indigenous Fijian people in Aotearoa, we were all together learning how to be indigenous Fijian learners in Aotearoa as well.

For indigenous Fijians, family and clan members have the responsibility of teaching children important knowledge that can be integrated into their everyday lives (Lausere-Tiko, 2013; Ravuvu, 1983). Parents, relatives, and elders act as teachers in a *vanua* (tribe) and, from this, the child can learn “relationships and understandings of respect, commitment, and service on both sides as stipulated in custom, cultural, and behavioural practices” (Lausere-Tiko, 2013, p. 131). In the context of Aotearoa, parents and families of other Pacific ethnic groups recognised the significance of sharing their cultural knowledge and practices with their children (Schoeffel et al., 1996).

I was fortunate enough to grow with and learn from both my maternal and paternal families here in Aotearoa. When I refer to “my family”, I am including my extended family members in this because the responsibility of teaching was, and still is, shared amongst the elders, relatives, and my parents. It was through the regular interactions and *talanoa* with them that helped me develop the Aotearoa-indigenous Fijian worldview that I have today. I call it an “Aotearoa-indigenous Fijian worldview” because I was learning all things indigenous Fijian in an adapted and contextual form due to living in Aotearoa. The Vanua Research Framework encompasses a lot of what was taught to me by my family, with some adjustments because we were living in Aotearoa (Nabobo-Baba, 2008).

From a young age, my family did their best to be involved in my educational journey. This could be seen in the form of interest in up-to-date school results or sharing stories of their own educational pathways. It was through this that I was able to recognise the expectations that they had set for me and, to achieve this, I wanted to introduce the knowledge I learnt from home into the classroom setting. It is from experiences like these that my interest in collaborative work and support between Pasifika learners, families, and schools grew.

From my own experiences, I wanted this research to highlight the collective support and effort that both Pasifika learners and families give. The relationships between the learners, families and their teachers are powerful, and I found it important to explore this, as it gives an insight to why educational success is perceived as a collective achievement rather than as an individual. In exploring these same relationships, I also wanted to share how important they are in shaping people’s lives.

Method

Research question

This study is a part of a large-scale project that explored Pasifika and Māori learners, families and teachers' understandings and experiences of learning, thriving and succeeding at school. Specifically, the current study focused on the perspectives of Pasifika learners and families to answer the following research question:

3. What do Pasifika primary/intermediate learners and families perceive as effective teaching qualities and practices for teachers?

Design and approach

This study utilised a qualitative exploratory research design, giving precedence to what Pasifika learners and their families have to share about their experiences and perspectives of support and success with teachers. It is not just the learner who undertakes this learning journey, but the families and communities that support them as well (Fletcher et al., 2009; Hedges & Cooper, 2014). This study will provide in-depth perspectives on what is already working well, and what can be done further, to facilitate the success of Pasifika learners in the classroom and beyond. The analyses for this study are underpinned and informed by the Vanua Research Framework (Nabobo-Baba, 2008). The Vanua Research Framework is an indigenous Fijian approach that encompasses indigenous Fijian worldviews, knowledge systems, lived experiences, representations, cultures, and values (Nabobo-Baba, 2008). This theoretical framework validates Fijian language, knowledge, culture, worldviews, and philosophies as legitimate and important analytical constructs. The kinship groups and cultural concepts outlined in this framework such as vanua, yavusa (clan), mataqali (sub-clan), tokatoka (extended family), and i valavala vakavanua (Nabobo-Baba, 2008) informed my analytical approach and interpretation of data. The Vanua Research Framework puts yavusa (tribal) organisation principles at the centre, and utilises tokatoka (family unit) practices, protocols, and principles as an organising structure for data.

Participants

The participants for the present study were primary and intermediate students who identified themselves as belonging to one or more Pacific Island ethnic groups, and families that identified their child as belonging to one or more Pacific Island ethnic groups. The primary/intermediate students' group was chosen due to the large number of responses in the data set. Overall, we analysed the responses of 1,042 Pasifika primary/intermediate learners and 362 family members of Pasifika learners, as shown in Tables 16–17 below.

TABLE 16: Ethnicity of Pasifika primary learners

Ethnicity	Percentage
Sāmoan	35
Tongan	26
Cook Island Māori	18
Fijian	8
Niuean	5
Tuvaluan	2
Kiribatian	1
Other	6
Total	100

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

TABLE 17: Ethnicity of Pasifika primary learners identified by their families

Ethnicity	Percentage
Sāmoan	31
Tongan	26
Cook Island Māori	20
Fijian	7
Niuean	6
Tuvaluan	3
Other	7
Total	100

Data collection instrument

Data were gathered through a survey that gathered closed- and open-ended responses to a range of questions (as described earlier in the Introduction). To address this study's research question, responses to the following questions were analysed:

From the Family Survey:

- Who has supported them [the child] in being successful? What did this person do that was helpful or encouraging for your child?
- What is the best thing a teacher can do to help children be successful at school? How does it help?

From the Primary/Intermediate Learners Survey:

- Who has supported you to be successful at school? What did they do that was helpful or encouraging?
- What is the best thing a teacher has done to help you be successful at school?

Data analysis plan

Qualitative coding and reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) were applied, and the data were coded by one researcher using both Excel and NVivo qualitative analysis software. Reflexive thematic analysis consists of the researcher becoming familiar and immersed in the data and then recognising patterns and developing initial codes. With these same codes, overarching themes are generated and are later refined and renamed.

To analyse the questions, “Who has supported them in being successful?” and “Who has supported you to be successful at school?”, categories that emerged across both datasets were coded in Excel spreadsheets. Examples of the categories coded for this question include “parents”, “educators”, and “friends”. This was used to aggregate the data and describe who supported students in being successful. All other data were entered into NVivo for further qualitative analysis.

For the rest of the questions, initial codes were created based on analyses of the first 250 responses for each question of both datasets. These codes were then grouped together under two distinct themes, with new codes developing organically throughout the analysis. These new codes were grounded by both the data and literature about Pasifika learners in New Zealand (Allen et al., 2009; Fletcher et al., 2011; Siteine, 2016).

When becoming familiar with the data, keywords were drawn out from the first 250 responses of both family and learners. Using these keywords, sub-themes were developed and could be applied to both group datasets. The sub-themes were used as codes and, during the coding process, some codes eventually collapsed into others. When the sub-themes were being developed and refined, it was then that two overarching themes emerged.

Several research team meetings were organised for coding frameworks to be presented and refined. The frequent meetings between researchers and peer analysis approaches ensured consistent quality assurance checks were undertaken (Shenton, 2004). These team meetings also enabled discussions about synergies, coding schedules, and other aspects of the COMPASS project to happen.

In the next section, the results from the data analysis of both family and learners data will be discussed and illustrated.

Findings

Themes in this section are related to what Pasifika families and learners consider to be effective teacher practices and qualities. Pasifika learners’ responses reflected what teacher practices already worked well for them, and the family responses highlighted what practices they would like done, by teachers. Across both respondent groups, five themes were found:

- For and with the family
- Getting to know the child
- Growth and development of the child
- Teaching strategies with Pasifika learners
- Family involvement.

Each of the themes will be described and supported by quotes from Pasifika learners and their families. Central to all themes was the strong emphasis on reciprocal relationships and how that supports teaching and learning.

For and with the family

This theme is focused on the motivation and veivuke (support) that Pasifika families provided for learners which supported their success in school. The family stories of effort and sacrifice were an incentive for students to “work hard” and “do well”. Some students spoke about the opportunities they had that were not available to older members of their family for various reasons. To those students, educational success was perceived as high-stakes and an important responsibility.

[My grandmother] never went to school because her step mum couldn't afford it so she wants me to do well in school so I can have a GOOD life when I am older.

My dad and mum - they told me how they did not get the opportunity to do stuff as kids in their day.

My brothers. They encouraged me to grow up and be successful to help my parents when they get older. They gave me little pep talks about their school years and wishing they could go back and change their ways.

Education as a privilege

Some Pasifika students were very aware that education was a privilege that they should not take for granted. Students were reminded, by family members, of the different educational opportunities they have as motivation to continue to work hard. They talked about their parents and grandparents limited access to schooling.

My grandparents have told me a lot about their childhood and what school was like for them. They always tell me to either read or write after school.

My parents, they haven't gotten much education and they inspire me to work harder towards my dreams

One parent of a Pasifika student also mentioned the influence and responsibility of Pasifika students to be successful for their family's sake.

In my child's learning, she has had support from her parents, her grandmother, who never went to school and who always gives her words of encouragement, and also her past school teachers.

Many Pasifika students and family members saw educational success as an opportunity to lift the status of all family members to the benefit of all. Pasifika students recognised that their responsibilities in achieving success was not just for themselves, but also for their families.

My family, they showed me that you need to try to do your best at school because life isn't easy, they say. They want me to do my best and not follow their footsteps.

The collective effort and support of a family

Both Pasifika families and students recognised and associated the hard work and perseverance of family members with their own success. The success of the student is shared by all who contributed to their educational journey, in many ways. One family member referred to the collective efforts of all family members.

[T]heir father immigrated to NZ and worked very hard for his education. Their mother works very hard. Our family works together.

Two students mentioned the ways their family members overcame adversity to achieve their best.

My older sister because she has gone through a lot but still does her best in what she does.

The person that has supported me is my beautiful mother even though she is struggling with money.

It is important to note that the notion of success at school is not limited to academic achievement for learners. Many of the Pasifika families commented that success in school included developing skills and qualities that could be used in their everyday lives. Family members also emphasised that these skills and qualities are not developed in isolation or individually. Rather, role models and community members from the wider world of Pasifika learners have a strong role in helping learners succeed. Embedded achievement was apparent through the acknowledgement of family and student success at school being closely linked.

We live by the phrase 'it takes a village to raise a kid'. From grandparents, parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins - everyone has a certain value that is passed on, and our child benefits from it.

I wouldn't say one person, but I feel everyone in the family have supported her to be successful. Everyone was important in raising/making her the person she has become. She has a trait from everyone that she has various options in being very successful in whatever she chooses to do.

Overall, Pasifika respondents highlighted the importance of considering the out-of-school and social motivators that shape Pasifika learners' views about learning. They also highlighted the importance of creating authentic learning experiences at school that resonate with Pasifika learners and their families. This could be done through making explicit how and why would in-school learning connect with out-of-school outcomes for Pasifika peoples and what they value as a community.

Getting to know the child

Many Pasifika families and students highlighted the importance of teachers taking the time to get to know Pasifika learners and working collaboratively with Pasifika students towards their success. When asked about the best thing a teacher has done to support their success, Pasifika students articulated several ideas and strategies that teachers used to connect with them and nurture their development. They appreciated teachers who were available and willing to listen to individual learners and understand their needs. Also, they were positive about teachers who were responsive to their individual needs and encouraged more teachers to do the same.

She listens to me and always includes my opinions. This makes me feel like my voice can be heard

Would always ask me if I needed someone to talk to, they would always be there.

Listen. Knowing a child's strengths and weaknesses is key to helping better educate them. So, if they listen, they should have a better understanding of this.

Pasifika families and learners wanted teachers to be able to understand Pasifika children and to know what works well for them. Families wanted teachers to take the time to get to know the child, in order to integrate the necessary and specific teaching strategies.

[E]ach child is different and unique.

Get to know my child, his learning styles and how to best engage with him and his learning, make it fun!

The time and effort that teachers gave to their learners did not go unnoticed by Pasifika students too. Pasifika students appreciated teachers going the extra mile, when working with them.

Teachers talking to me and taking their time on me and trying to understand me.

They [teacher] understand what I do and don't get, and they try to help me as much as they can.

Both Pasifika families and learners understood how much Pasifika children can benefit when teachers are able to work with them individually to address their strengths, interests, and learning needs.

More than a “student”

In addition to recognising learner needs, Pasifika families wanted teachers to be aware of the wider world of the child and to recognise how much home, community and church learning was occurring.

Understand where the child is coming from – their household context and how that influences their learning and belonging and curiosity.

Getting to know the child’s family and cultural background.

Pasifika families wanted teachers to form positive relationships for students to succeed inside the classroom. The families also encourage three-way relationship building between teachers, learners, and families.

Take the time to learn about the child’s family situation, etc.

Believe in them [...] build a relationship first, then the learning will come.

It was evident throughout the responses the positive impact teachers can have when they develop learning environments that cater to the diverse needs and strengths of their learners. Such environments are underpinned by deep understanding of who the learner is, inside and outside of the classroom, and how that impacts teaching and learning.

Growth and development of the child

Pasifika family members and students held teachers in high esteem and believed that the best teachers do more than just “teach” students—they care for and nurture their confidence, strengths, and interests. Both families and learners saw teachers’ role as a holistic one, extending children’s lifelong skills, knowledge, and understanding of the world around them.

Pasifika families wanted teachers to contribute to their children’s self-confidence, and not just their academic progress and achievement. When teachers encouraged students to be confident, Pasifika families saw that this confidence would develop academic efficacy and further develop their children beyond the classroom.

This will help them with speaking out in the community or at home.

Promote self-confidence, self-worth, empathy and allow children to be themselves and strive always for the best.

As well as encouraging confidence, Pasifika respondents saw that teachers could help students grow and develop certain values and mannerisms. One family member likened the role of a teacher to a parent, encouraging teachers to equip students with the necessary skills and qualities to achieve success.

Show them how to behave, teach them respect and to work hard.

One Pasifika learner supported the idea of teachers taking on a parental role as well, when sharing what their favourite teacher had encouraged them with.

To be respectful, kind, and responsible

Safe learning spaces

Pasifika families wanted teachers to create safe learning environments that allow children to explore, be confident, and challenged. One family member wanted information to be taught using non-biased approaches. Families did not want their children to be subjected to racism or bias in the classroom, encouraging teachers to use different strategies and lenses with their own work.

So many educationalists do [that] out of their own insecurities, inadequacies, and extreme bias[es].

[Being] culturally competent and take an equity/social justice lens to their work and ideally fragment manifestations of institutional racism/dominant western discourse ...

With these approaches in place, Pasifika families feel that their children will be able to learn and grow in more culturally sustaining and safe environments.

Success beyond the classroom

Pasifika students appreciated the teacher support and encouragement beyond the classroom. They saw teachers providing personal support as a teaching practice that helps with success at school and reduces their stress levels.

Talked to me through my hard times and let me have a break from all the stress.

The concept of becoming a “good person” was described by Pasifika learners as integral to how they saw success and what it meant for their teachers to support them become successful. Both teachers and parents were instrumental in helping children develop personal qualities and skills that respondents perceived to be important to their success.

[My teacher] taught me a lot of things I need to know to be a good person in the future ...

My parents support me, [mostly] they encourage me to be a better person in my future too.

Teaching strategies with Pasifika learners

Pasifika learners stated that they benefited from the one-on-one time they had with teachers who recognised their strengths and weaknesses. They appreciated teachers who showed patience when working with them.

[The teacher would] go over things I get stuck on and explain to me what and where I went wrong.

[The teacher was] chilled out when I wasn't doing it right, and they gave me time to figure it out on my own.

It was the extra one-on-one time that teachers had with students that made a difference. Both Pasifika families and the students also wanted this teaching strategy to be used with them. When asked what the teacher can do to help their child be successful at school, family members encouraged more teachers to have one-on-one time with children, citing the benefits this could have on their child's learning.

One-on-one time, [for] her to know what they need to work on.

One-on-one learning relationships empower Pasifika students to take control over their learning, have the confidence to communicate what they need, and receive the personalised attention that will enable them to succeed.

What works for different Pasifika students

Pasifika learners appreciated teachers who take extra time to explain key ideas and practice new strategies for learning. Pasifika family members also appreciated teachers who go the extra mile. Family members provided suggestions for teachers as well.

[Teachers can use] resources relevant for children to be able to succeed in learning e.g., visual, reading resources ... this may help to develop and extend a child's learning.

Pasifika learners recognised the use of new and different teaching strategies and credited them towards their success at school.

All of my previous teachers and my current teacher have helped me by teaching new strategies in all of my subjects.

As well as recognising the range of teaching strategies that are helpful, some learners highlighted strategies that worked well for themselves and with others.

Mak[e] it more fun, [they] understand me and have always asked how I am.

She always brings us down onto the mat and if we don't know it, she shows us a different way to do ... when we think we know it, we can go off and do our work.

Overall, Pasifika learners seem to have benefited from being exposed to a range of teaching strategies that offer them multiple opportunities to encounter, engage with, and elaborate on new skills and knowledge.

Challenging the student

Pasifika families wanted their children to be prepared and resilient when navigating difficult academic challenges. Many parents indicated taking the time needed to teach the children new skills for making wise decisions, so they wanted teachers to do the same at school. Some family members even encouraged teachers to challenge their children.

Challenge children to make attempts in class whether they fail or not [...] it helps build a better learning environment and encourages class discussions about topics.

Family members also wanted teachers to encourage and support learners to become independent with their own learning. When asked what teachers can do to help children be successful at school, one respondent had the suggestion for self-directed learning.

Teaching them with knowledge. Doing things by themselves and being independent but when they don't know anything, they can ask the teacher.

In addition to independent learning, Pasifika families wanted teachers to encourage learners to develop and acknowledge different worldviews. Pasifika families want to extend their children's resilience by expanding their opportunities to develop determination, grit, and perseverance to tackle problems and cope with the emotional challenges of school and community life.

It was evident from the data that Pasifika learners and families are requesting and encouraging more effective teaching pedagogies that resonate well with them. Pasifika learners appreciate more collaborative strategies with teachers that allow for clear communication and understanding, while Pasifika families encouraged more strength-based teaching strategies that encouraged resilience. These teaching strategies can help, and may already, build towards academic efficacy for Pasifika learners.

Family involvement

Family involvement was seen as a key driver by both respondent groups. When working towards the success and learning of learners, both groups offered different perspectives or forms of involvement. Family members clearly put time and effort into helping Pasifika students be successful at school, whether it was through helping with homework or teaching them through daily activities.

They [family members] help me with my homework, they always include me in family stuff.

My family has supported me throughout school because they're always teaching me stuff like maths during shopping, and I don't even recognise it.

Pasifika families are prepared to go the extra mile to ensure that the students are physically, spiritually, and mentally well enough to engage in learning. One student identified their nana as someone who supported them to be successful in school.

She was helpful for helping me with my spelling sometimes and making my bed ... She also encourages me to get a good job and have a happy life.

Verbal encouragement and affirmation are particularly important to Pasifika learners, as they take heed of this and put into practice what family members had shared with them.

They always say, "Try hard, don't get distracted by other boys". So, I'm trying my best.

Communication between families, teachers, and students

Pivotal to family involvement was family members wanting more open communication between them and teachers. Pasifika families indicated wanting additional information about their children's progress, strengths, and achievements at school. There were suggestions as to how this can be achieved.

Explain in ways that children understand and can relay to parents ... 'cause parents can help with homework, if need be ...

Parents wanted to be involved in helping their children do well and emphasised they will do whatever it takes to help. They wanted regular feedback and to be able to intervene when things get tough. They also understood the importance and benefits of teachers and parents working together to support the children's educational progress. Teachers need to be mindful about how they deliver achievement information, and make sure they include specific feedback about what parents can do to help their children.

Teachers talking to parents about students' progress will help parents to understand their kids better and continue to encourage them.

[Involving parents] helps parents, keeps the child on track and helps to fix any issues earlier rather than when it's too late

Be honest. If I ask how well my child is doing, please don't sugar-coat it ... If they misbehave and don't put in time for work, then I want to know now so we can work together to help them and see what it is that is causing their struggle.

Discussion

My family members were my first teachers. I continue to look to my family for guidance on indigenous Fijian customs, practices, and knowledge. From my perspective, they were the experts and therefore became my teachers while maintaining the expected behaviours and attitudes that came with our

specific kin relationship. In an indigenous Fijian context, my interactions with each family member differ, because kin relationships inform the way I speak, act, and behave with them. However, several values/concepts remain consistent across the relationships and support the collective effort (solesolevaki) that my family and I contribute to my indigenous Fijian knowledge. Some of them are:

- veidokai/vakarokoroko (respect/deference)
- veikauwaitaki (mutual caring)
- veirogorogoci (to consult with)
- veiwekani (relationships).

It is important to note that intertwined with these values are the Christian interpretations as well, as my family's Christian beliefs contributed to our understanding and practice of these.

Veidokai/vakarokoroko

Many of the themes identified earlier are linked to veidokai. Veidokai is demonstrated in how an individual or a group responds or reacts considerately around others, such as manners that show qualities of dignity and composure (Ravuvu, 1983). Vakarokoroko is used interchangeably with veidokai. It highlights obedience to forms of behaviour where positions in a traditional hierarchy are acknowledged to maintain kin relationships (Ravuvu, 1983). The high level of respect given and shown to individuals must be consistent with everyone, regardless of their traditional role in the vanua. As a chief, it is expected that they would be treated with the utmost respect by their people and be reciprocal of this. This can be seen within a family context as well, with the elders holding that leadership role. Just like parents and elders, teachers are respected by many. This was evident in the data when Pasifika learners and families showed the respect and high regard they have for teachers, when they acknowledged that teachers can support and influence Pasifika learners inside and outside of their academic journeys. Pasifika families want the same respect to be reciprocated by teachers towards their children, families, and communities (Rimoni & Averill, 2019). Whether this is accepting and working with the different worldviews that learners bring into the classrooms or simply acknowledging the families and backgrounds that Pasifika learners come from, Pasifika families want respect to be shown towards their children and everything else that comes with them (Ministry of Education, 2020; Ministry of Social Development, 2019).

Veikauwaitaki

The second set of themes is related to veikauwaitaki, which is generally understood as sharing with each other and caring for one another, a common practice in the family context (Ravuvu, 1983). This also includes recognising the presence of others and at the same time considering them as either equal or superior (Ravuvu, 1983). This term can also be understood as hospitality as well (Lausere Tiko, 2013; Ramacake, 2010). When strangers are invited home, it is common for families to offer food and drink as it creates a comfortable environment for the visitors in a respectful manner. It is through this, and the talanoa (talking/conversations) that happens with it, that familiarity and relationships can be established. Teachers can create comfortable and safe environments for Pasifika learners by getting to know the learners. This was evident when Pasifika learners shared that they appreciated it when teachers take the time to work with them, using different strategies and explaining ideas that resonate well with them. Similar to Spiller's (2013) work with Pasifika learners, Pasifika families encouraged teachers to identify individual strengths and weaknesses with Pasifika learners, getting to know how one learns and use this knowledge in their teaching. Pasifika families wanted their children to be comfortable and confident in the classroom with their teachers, so they can receive the

best education they possibly can. The classroom is an environment that not everyone is comfortable in, and teachers have the power to demonstrate *veikauwaitaki* in the way they learn and work with Pasifika learners to ensure that they can achieve their own success.

Veirogorogoci

The third set of themes is linked to *veirogorogoci*, which is understood as someone who is *veidokai* and does not impose without consultation any idea or action outside of their traditionally defined boundary of social expectation (Ravuvu, 1983). They must agree with others who are going to be affected before they make any public consultation. For families, it's the practice of sharing, communicating, and listening to each other while acknowledging the *tabu* (taboo) that comes with family order, rituals, and processes (Lealea, 2012). The data showed that Pasifika families were wanting to participate and be more involved with their children's learning, and according to Pasifika learners, they were already doing this in various ways. Family members sharing personal stories and experiences of hard work and perseverance were recognised as a form of supporting success by Pasifika learners. Families were also recognised for their help with homework and other schoolwork, and it was with this, and more, that learners recognised their families' collective efforts towards their success in school. Pasifika families have shared what they do in support of the children's success and their willingness to do more, particularly how they wanted to work with the teachers. Families want teachers to be able to communicate with them about their child's progress in school and what they can do to help. Strengthening communication between families and teachers is seen as a positive contribution towards Pasifika learners and their academic outcomes (Flavell, 2014). When achieving success in school, it is a collective effort with Pasifika learners and their families, as each has their own responsibilities and roles that contribute to this. Teachers have their own role and are acknowledged by the families and learners for this. This is an opportunity to practise *veirogorogoci* with Pasifika families, learners, and their teachers to achieve the common goal they all share, which is to support Pasifika learners and their success at school. There is a willingness from Pasifika families to share, communicate, and listen to teachers while maintaining the respect for each other as well.

Veiwekani

The last set of themes is closely tied with *veiwekani*. The closest English translation to *veiwekani* is relationship, and these are either kin-based or based on forms of tribal ties (Lausere-Tiko, 2015). When a child attends school, their entire family and community goes with them too (Ritchie & Rau, 2006). This is evident in the data as Pasifika families have shown their interest in becoming more involved with their children's learning and Pasifika learners shared the different ways in which their families support them. Within this web of relationships of Pasifika learners, families, and communities, there is an incentive to establish partnerships with teachers that will include them in this same web of support (Ministry of Education, 2020; Ministry of Social Development, 2019). With *veiwekani*, it is expected that *veidokai/vakarokoroko*, *veikauwaitaki*, and *veirogorogoci* are constantly practised to maintain the relationships and collective way of living. These adapted interpretations of the indigenous Fijian concepts could help grow partnerships between teachers and Pasifika learners, families, and communities.

In addition to the partnerships and relationships with teachers, the themes also highlighted the wider world of Pasifika learners. This was clear in the data, as Pasifika families wanted teachers to learn more about the different roles Pasifika learners have and "understand where the child is coming from". Pasifika learners have multiple relationships outside of the classrooms and as well as taking

their families and communities with them to school, they take their diverse roles and responsibilities with them as well. Pasifika families want teachers to understand this and know their children as more than just another learner in the classroom. As well as this, teachers were also encouraged to challenge Pasifika learners and help broaden their worldviews. Pasifika families want teachers to help enhance their children's resilience in the classroom so that they can apply this in other areas in their lives (Reynolds, 2022).

The themes also highlighted another important aspect of *veiwekani*, which is *talairawarawa*. This is knowing where you are positioned and your duties within the family, other kinship groups, and society (Ravuvu, 1983). It also provides a sense of belonging (Lausere-Tiko, 2015). An individual can have several roles and responsibilities because of their different relationships and the expectations that come with it. There are the traditional roles in the *vanua*, such as chief, warrior, etc., and the roles as an elder, parent, child, sibling, teacher, etc. Everyone in these groups shares the responsibility of the group's wellbeing and do their part by fulfilling the duties of their many roles. There is an element of this that is evident in the data, when Pasifika families and learners shared their appreciation for how teachers can "promote self-confidence, self-worth, empathy and allow children to be themselves and strive for the best". Just like how parents and other family members care for and teach their children, teachers can do the same in their role. Pasifika families encourage teachers to care for Pasifika learners and help them develop values, qualities, and skills that contribute to academic efficacy. There's a collective responsibility in encouraging Pasifika learners towards academic efficacy, which is similar to Webber et al.'s (2016) findings with Māori learners. Pasifika learners have shared that teachers are already doing this with them and they acknowledge this as helpful towards them achieving success in school. This holistic teaching strategy encourages collective responsibility and resonates well with Pasifika learners and families.

Conclusion

Pasifika learners and families emphasised establishing partnerships and relationships with them as an effective practice for teachers to further engage in. The partnerships with Pasifika families allow for teachers to gain a better understanding of who the child is and the different worlds they are a part of. For Pasifika families, they can communicate and work collaboratively with teachers to support their children to achieve success in school. Pasifika families can feel respected when being acknowledged and encouraged to communicate with teachers. They are willing to do more for their children and are wanting teachers to share with them different strategies to use as well.

Pasifika learners feel respected and appreciated when teachers can work with them individually, taking time to understand the way they think and work. Pasifika learners can develop confidence and trust in their teachers when they can clearly see that their teachers are willing to put in the effort and time to support their success.

Pasifika families and learners both demonstrated their desires to achieve success in school in various ways. The academic journey and outcomes that a child experiences are shared with all those involved, and it demonstrates the collective way of living that many Pacific Island groups practise. Both respondent groups consider teachers to be a part of this collective responsibility and academic journey, with the hopes that teachers have the same intentions of helping Pasifika learners become successful at school.

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STUDY 4

**Re-defining pathways to
success for ākonga Māori:**

Kaiako Māori kōrero

Kiri Edge

Ko wai ahau | Positioning myself

As a Kairangahau Matua Māori in the COMPASS project, my orientation to the research was informed by my own identities, roles, and experiences. As a descendant of Ngāti Maniapoto, I am indigenous Māori. Proudly acknowledging my Celtic ancestors, I am also bicultural—Māori and Pākehā. My professional “whakapapa” originates from the Māori & Psychology Research Unit, Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato. My research training has centred on the disciplines of community psychology, indigenous psychology, and, more specifically, Māori psychology. Māori psychology emerges from a uniquely Māori worldview, guided by tikanga and committed to endeavours that will “... meet the needs of Māori people in a way that maintains a unique cultural heritage and makes for a better collective Māori future” (Allwood & Berry, 2006, p. 255). As a Māori researcher and lifelong ākonga of Māori psychology, I have trained in kaupapa Māori methodologies and research methods, specialising in qualitative research. My research endeavours express a commitment to contributing to the wellbeing and flourishing of people, whānau, and their communities. I also have a vested interest in educative environments and experiences that support ākonga Māori to flourish, as a māmā of an ākonga Māori and as a senior Māori researcher in an educational research organisation.

He tukanga | Method

Research question

This study focused on the perspectives of 311 kaiako Māori¹⁰ on what supports ākonga Māori to succeed and thrive through education, and was guided by the following research question:

3. What teaching and learning relationships, environments, practices, and experiences do kaiako Māori report make a positive difference for ākonga Māori?

Design and approach

Kaupapa Māori methodology

This qualitative study was informed by kaupapa Māori approaches and data analysis methods. As a research methodology, kaupapa Māori shaped the values, concepts, orientations, and aspirations fundamental to the study. Kaupapa Māori methodologies claim space for indigenous communities and indigenous researchers to self-determine their research priorities, endeavours, and aspirations (Smith, 2012). From within a distinctly Māori worldview, kaupapa Māori research privileges indigenous Māori ways of knowing, understanding, and being in the world (Smith, 2012). Through a critical lens, kaupapa Māori research is attuned to historical and contemporary colonisation and assimilation, and the imposition of imperial Western knowledge and assumptions that have produced inaccurate and deficit-based perceptions of Māori (Smith, 2012). As Nikora (2007) emphasised:

A kaupapa Māori approach to research closely questions the intentions of the researcher, their commitment to those communities they are working with, and makes salient issues of accessibility, participation, and control by those who are researched. (p. 139)

Ultimately, kaupapa Māori methodology focuses on empowerment and transformation, and supporting outcomes and aspirations self-determined by Māori, for Māori (Smith, 2012). These are the methodological interests, priorities, and aspirations of this study. As an indigenous Māori, and trained kaupapa Māori researcher, the utilisation of kaupapa Māori approaches in the study meant privileging

¹⁰ Survey participants who self-identified as Māori, and have teaching and/or related roles in schools.

indigenous Māori ways of knowing, understanding, and being in the world. As part of the kaupapa Māori methodology, this study was guided by three key principles or concepts.

1. Whanaungatanga: Relatedness, relationships, and connections

As a fundamental principle in te ao Māori, whanaungatanga is highly valued and emphasises whānau, whakapapa, relationships, and connectedness (Mead, 2003). Although whanaungatanga affirms relatedness and connections through whakapapa, it has also been used to describe a broad range of other relationships and connections. The principle of whanaungatanga affirms the importance of manaakitanga, reciprocal support, and care in relationships (Mead, 2003). In this study, whanaungatanga, and relationships between people, places, and spaces was a guiding principle in the data analysis. I paid particular attention to kaiako Māori kōrero that described relationships and connections that can make a positive difference for ākonga Māori. As will be shown later, whanaungatanga emerged as one of the most prominent themes in the study.

2. Critical analysis: Looking back and moving forward

Throughout the analysis I adopted a critical lens to attune to historical and contemporary experiences of colonisation, assimilation, prejudice, and racism. Some of these themes emerged in kaiako Māori responses as they reflected on indigenous experiences of education. My analysis looked for perspectives and insights that were transformative and would disrupt conventional approaches to teaching and learning that did not work for ākonga Māori. Importantly, kaiako Māori reflections on less-than-ideal educational experiences for Māori prompted insights that imagined better experiences and outcomes for future ākonga Māori.

3. Reclamation and self-determination: Re-defining “success” and “achievement”

In adopting a kaupapa Māori approach in this study, the analysis privileged Māori ways of knowing, understanding, and being in the world. The analysis also attempted to make meaning of the data in ways that reflected self-determined aspirations for ākonga Māori. The approach to the analysis endeavoured to remain free from assumptions about how kaiako Māori understood and defined concepts such as “success” and “achievement”. Further reflecting a steadfast commitment to indigenous reclamation and self-determination, this study focused on how kaiako Māori defined and affirmed what makes a positive difference for ākonga Māori. This study focused on how *education* successfully engages with ākonga Māori, rather than the traditional focus on how *ākonga Māori* engage with education. In these ways, the study prioritises self-determined aspirations that kaiako Māori shared for ākonga Māori in education, and their future successes and contributions to whānau, hapori, and community.

Participants

A total of 311 individuals who completed the survey as kaiako self-identified their main ethnicity as Māori. The kaiako Māori were located across Aotearoa and named over 18 locations. The kaiako Māori worked in schools representing all school decile bands, and taught across primary, intermediate, and secondary schools. The kaiako Māori had diverse roles in schools including principals, assistant principals, deputy principals, administration, SENCOs, subject teachers, classroom teachers, bilingual teachers, rumaki kaiako, heads of rumaki units, counsellors, cultural advisers, heads of departments, deans, release staff, support staff, and teacher aides. Many kaiako held more than one role in their school.

Data collection instrument

The current study focuses on kaiako Māori perspectives, and their responses to the following two survey questions:

1. What teaching practices make a positive difference for Māori students at your school? What works?
2. What evidence do you have that those practices have made a positive difference? How do you know they work?

Data analysis

The kaiako Māori survey responses were analysed using a qualitative thematic analysis approach. In this study, thematic analysis offered a flexible way to identify salient themes and produce rich and detailed insights (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis was appropriate given the interests of the study to explore and understand kaiako Māori reflections on what makes a positive difference for ākonga Māori.

Immersing myself in data for this study, I firstly read and considered each of the contributors' responses to gain an overall sense of the kōrero from kaiako Māori. Secondly, I began to identify and code themes emerging from the data. I compiled a preliminary data analysis table where I recorded the coded themes, and a brief description of each theme. I also looked for patterns and connections across and between themes and organised the themes to make such patterns clear.

I focused on how the insights identified by kaiako Māori could be best supported or applied in educational contexts. As a result, I developed action-orientated categories, termed *domains of influence*. These domains aided in organising and categorising the themes that emerged from the data analysis. The research findings section that follows is structured by the following domains of influence categories:

- school-wide environments and conditions that make a difference
- kaiako practices, dispositions, and qualities that make a difference.

He kitenga | Findings

This section presents the research findings from analysis of kaiako Māori responses. The findings are presented according to the domain of influence categories that consider how and where the insights from kaiako Māori could be best applied across educational contexts. It is worth noting that, although kaiako Māori were asked to focus specifically on dispositions, practices, and qualities, their responses extended far beyond this focus and reflected more holistic and comprehensive perspectives.

School-wide environments and conditions that make a difference

Reflecting a “big picture” perspective, kaiako Māori detailed a wide range of school-wide environments and conditions they perceived as making a positive difference for ākonga Māori. Kaiako Māori emphasised the need to further progress kaupapa Māori approaches in all aspects of school-wide planning, resourcing, teaching, and learning. They connected kaupapa Māori with the expression of important cultural values including whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, and mana. Kaiako noted these values as fundamental to culturally inclusive and sustaining practice that makes a positive difference for ākonga Māori. Kaiako Māori elaborated further on some of the key dimensions that support transformational change in schools:

- manaakitanga
- whanaungatanga
- te ao Māori
- te reo Māori
- tikanga Māori.

Manaakitanga

The principle of manaakitanga was prominent across what kaiako Māori reported makes a positive difference for ākonga Māori. In schools, manaakitanga supports the creation of learning environments that are warm, welcoming, caring, and inclusive. As a school-wide approach, manaakitanga and whanaungatanga support connections in schools and beyond into hāpori whānui or the wider community.

Kaiako Māori described different forms of manaakitanga, including the expression of care and concern, offering advice or guidance, alongside provision of more tangible supports and resources. Manaakitanga was also expressed through pōwhiri and mihi whakatau to welcome new ākonga and whānau into the school community.

Many kaiako underlined the need to be more “hands-on” with supporting ākonga, offering examples including providing stationery, learning resources, Chromebooks, zero school fees, kai, and initiatives such as breakfast programmes. Kaiako also noted that support needs to be provided in ways that uphold whānau mana and do not inadvertently cause ākonga and their whānau to feel whakamā. Some kaiako also suggested that manaakitanga involves collaborative whole-of-staff relationships and open sharing of strategies and approaches that support ākonga holistically.

Students do know if you generally care about them and their education and this is reflected in their behaviour in class, the way they speak to you, greet you in the morning and feel safe taking risks with their learning.

Knowing them and their story. Wanting to get to know them inside and outside of the school. Having empathy for them. Giving them respect. Respecting their mana.

Ensuring my classroom is a safe, welcoming place ... Providing a breakfast club and morning tea for students next to the whare so it becomes a social gathering and makes sure that no students are hungry. This helps ensure they are ready for learning. Teachers are encouraged to build relationships with students by having a whānau class where we have students from Year 9 to Year 13. We get to know the students well and their parents/caregivers. This is important for student and teacher wellbeing.

Whanaungatanga

Overwhelmingly, kaiako Māori reported that whanaungatanga, relationships, and connectedness are what make the most positive difference for ākonga Māori. Kaiako described whanaungatanga as ongoing and reciprocal processes of deep knowing and connectedness with ākonga, their whānau, and communities. Kaiako Māori emphasised an inclusive view of relationships that centred ākonga, acknowledging the importance of building connections across a community of care including whānau, hapū, hāpori whānui, iwi, kaiako, and school.

Whakawhanaungatanga i ngā wā katoa.

Whanaungatanga—relationships are important—knowing each other, teachers sharing themselves and their lives—their children, goals and aspirations. All teachers and all children knowing each other so that when we are interacting with them outside of the classroom, we ‘know’ each other. This develops mutual respect of ourselves as people.

Contact with whānau and strong relationships.

Whanaungatanga. All parties are involved in learning, education, hopes, goals, and dreams.

Kaiako Māori were emphatic that developing positive and caring relationships with ākongā should start from the time they enter school and kaiako must continue to build upon these relationships. They emphasised that developing deep knowing and understanding of ākongā Māori is essential for making genuine connections with ākongā, and establishing strong, positive relationships.

Whakawhanaungatanga!!! Genuinely wanting to know more about/who your Māori learners are—making caring connections to their world/needs.

Really getting to know your students on a personal level, creating a relationship of mutual trust & aroha.

Kaiako Māori emphasised that positive relationships between kaiako/school and whānau are critical to making a positive difference for ākongā Māori.

When there is an equal partnership for learning between home and school, Māori students will have their identity, language and culture valued and included in teaching and learning in ways that support them to engage and achieve success. They will thrive and succeed when there is an equal partnership for learning between school and home.

Having their whānau share their expertise. Tuhi atu, tuhi mai writing initiative, where whānau respond to ākongā weekly through writing. This was a huge success.

Partnerships between whānau and kaiako/school enable whānau to have a voice about what works best for their child. Partnerships also enable whānau to contribute to teaching and learning in areas that they hold expertise in and support collaborative approaches that enable overall ākongā wellbeing and success in and out of school. Kaiako Māori supported such partnerships and gave examples of how they develop these in their contexts:

- welcoming and inclusion of whānau through a range of informal and formal activities
- ensuring whānau feel comfortable when in school and communicating with teachers and leadership at any time
- developing excellent communication processes with whānau, especially to share positive feedback
- whānau concerns are listened to and addressed swiftly
- communicating and sharing ākongā successes and achievements through a range of platforms, including phone calls, kanohi ki te kanohi, and Facebook
- genuine partnerships where whānau have autonomy and a voice in determining ākongā learning and learning outcomes
- opportunities for whānau to contribute to teaching and learning; whānau may have knowledge and skills that could contribute within schools
- understanding that whānau historical engagement with education may include negative and traumatic experiences. Strong, supportive, and genuine engagement to form meaningful partnerships may mediate negative perceptions but will take time and effort.

Kaiako Māori highlighted the importance of developing collaborative and reciprocal relationships between iwi, hapū, haporī, and school. Some kaiako affirmed the potential for these broader relationships to be mutually beneficial and support transformative and enduring change for ākongā Māori.

Some of our students have leadership roles within their iwi and hapū. Seeing our ex-students on the Te Matatini stage. Ex-students returning to kura as kaiako.

Linking our local curriculum and hapū to what we do within our learning areas, giving them opportunities to be involved in many of our local curriculum initiatives that are involved around our local hapū.

Te ao Māori

Prominent in kaiako Māori descriptions about what makes a positive difference for ākonga Māori was school-wide recognition and valuing of te ao Māori.

To kaiako, embedding te ao Māori supports ākonga because it normalises their cultural ways of being in the school context. Embedding these cultural elements in the school context also enables Māori students to “be”, “belong”, and thrive at school. This has the potential to transform relationships, teaching practice, and learning experiences in ways that make a significant difference for ākonga Māori. When discussing te ao Māori, kaiako also described changes they saw necessary to their schools’ localised curriculum.

Whakamahia ngā momo tikanga Māori ki te kōrero ki a rātou, stories and practices, ideals and te ao Māori hoki.

Valuing our culture and identity, making it clearly visible and immersing everyone in te ao Māori and enabling Māori students to lead and assist others with culture, reo, tikanga.

Acknowledging Māori as an important medium of education. Validating its place in society as an important aspect of our everyday life in Aotearoa.

Localised curriculum learning based on regional cultural stories and themes, kapa haka experiences, positive Māori role models, te reo Māori me ōna tikanga being practised and lived out, high expectations.

Making sure that the history of our area is acknowledged and that our whānau are included in this process. We are currently using the legend of Hinemoa and Tūtānekai as a vehicle to access the curriculum—whānau were key in the decision.

Tikanga Māori

A school-wide approach to embedding tikanga Māori makes a positive difference for ākonga Māori. Embedding tikanga Māori in schools means creating learning environments where culture is nurtured through a wide range of relationships, processes, and practices. Some kaiako Māori noted examples of tikanga Māori including pōwhiri, waiata, karakia, and kapa haka. Others focused on important cultural values underpinning tikanga Māori that need to be embedded in schools, including whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, mana, ako, and rangatiratanga.

Kaiako Māori highlighted the need for schools to consider tikanga Māori as everyday practices, rather than singular or one-off events.

Showing that te reo and tikanga Māori are valued and important. Normalisation of te reo and tikanga through regular and consistent integration of practices and language. Taking the time to know and make connections with Māori students.

Learning through Māori contexts increases engagement. Incorporating and respecting tikanga Māori raises status and mana in our class. Confidence grows.

Teaching of pepeha at the beginning of every year. Teaching Māori concepts—taonga, tūrangawaewae, whanaungatanga, kaitiaki. Integrating Māori kupu into concepts. Teaching and using te reo Māori in the classroom. Teaching himene, waiata and karakia. Allowing Māori students to be Māori.

Te reo Māori

Kaiako Māori advocated for normalising and supporting the teaching and learning of te reo Māori across their teaching environments, as part of an ongoing and sustainable approach.

Me whakamana i te reo Māori ki roto i te kura, hai kaupapa matua ki Tau 9, Tau 10—me whakamana i ngā mahi ā rēhia—MPA ki Tau 9 and 10. Ki ngā kokonga katoa o te kura, mai runga ki raro, mai raro ki runga, mai roto ki waho, mai waho ki roto.

When the timetable allows [ākonga] to take te reo Māori and not being forced to choose between a core subject and their culture. When their art forms are offered as part of the curriculum and not as an added extra to be done outside of the timetable.

The high use of te reo Māori in the classroom, whakawhanaungatanga with the student and their whānau, great knowledge and understanding of te ao Māori, te reo Māori & tikanga Māori. Really getting to know your students on a personal level, creating a relationship of mutual trust & aroha.

Kaiako suggested several approaches and strategies that would further support the normalisation and increased use of te reo Māori:

- recruitment of Māori staff with knowledge of te ao Māori, te reo Māori, and tikanga Māori
- aspirations for establishing/sustaining bicultural and bilingual school environments, and building these as part of the school goals or mission
- prioritising and resourcing support for all-of-staff capability and fluency in te reo Māori
- structured and regular opportunities for staff practice and pronunciation
- school-wide communications that integrate te reo Māori meaningfully and consistently
- establishment of rumaki reo and reo rua classes, te reo Māori immersion language units in schools.

Kaiako practices, dispositions, and qualities that make a difference

Kaiako Māori described a range of instructional practices, dispositions, and qualities that they perceived as making a significant difference for ākonga Māori:

- ako: teachers as learners, learners as teachers
- equity, advocacy, and excellence
- authenticity and vulnerability
- relating, relatability, and humour
- manaaki, aroha, and caring
- mutual respect and fairness
- high expectations.

Ako: Teachers as learners, learners as teachers

The concept of ako expresses a commitment to ongoing learning, for both teachers and learners. Kaiako affirmed the importance of teaching practice that is committed to ongoing learning alongside and from ākonga as fundamental to ongoing professional learning and development. Some kaiako also noted opportunities for peer-based learning, providing a way for non-Māori teachers to draw on the sophisticated understandings of kaiako Māori about what makes a positive difference for ākonga Māori.

In my classroom students are considered kaiako, embedding a reciprocal teaching and learning relationship which allows students to feel they belong.

We can learn from our peers but my peers can learn from me too. This also applies to teachers.

Equity and advocacy

Overall, kaiako Māori affirmed the need for an ongoing commitment to eradicate inequity and injustice in education and argued that advocacy was an important part of teacher practice. They raised concerns about ongoing inequity and injustice within education that negatively impact on ākonga Māori. And, to them, their ongoing professional practice and development is about creating much more inclusive and positive learning experiences than the ones they had experienced.

I use schooling experiences from discussion with my own grandparents, parents and siblings to underpin my teaching and doing exactly the opposite of what 95% of teachers did for us.

When teachers advocate for [ākonga Māori] and it's not dependent on their behaviour it's because [teachers] care about inequity and injustice.

Authenticity and vulnerability

The ability to be authentic as a teacher and person was emphasised as a crucial part of developing relationships and demonstrating humanity. Kaiako noted that demonstrating authenticity involves acknowledging mistakes and role modelling resilience and determination in overcoming challenges.

To me, being vulnerable in your teaching pedagogy. I feel that students who see kaiako making a mistake and know we are only human, provides opportunities for these students to see that it is also okay for them to make mistakes and to be able to dust them self off again to try again.

Relating, relatability, and pride

Emphasised throughout the research findings was the importance of kaiako relating to ākonga, and being relatable in turn. Kaiako noted this as an important part of teacher practice that makes a positive difference for ākonga Māori. Developing ways to relate to ākonga and being relatable to them in turn is fundamental to ākonga feeling proud of who they are and what they can achieve.

Knowing their whānau, knowing them, knowing and nurturing what they are good at, and helping them to be proud of who they are.

Manaaki, aroha, and caring

Demonstration of manaaki, aroha, and caring were all described by kaiako as integral qualities to their practice. The three concepts were often mentioned together. To kaiako, taking a genuine interest in ākonga and coming to know their interests, strengths, needs, and aspirations is crucial to making a positive difference to their learning and engagement.

Manaaki! Aroha! Bring the positive influence and role model ... so [ākonga] are able to draw that energy!

I have built many positive relationships with students and whānau. My students know that I care. [These practices] work because kids come to school and are happy and engaged in their learning.

Mutual respect and fairness

Kaiako highlighted the importance of developing relationships with ākonga Māori that are founded on mutual respect. Many kaiako indicated that respecting ākonga and earning their respect was integral to teaching practice. Kaiako also indicated the importance of demonstrating fairness, and others described the importance of being firm, but fair.

Listening when children have something to say. Understanding that respect is earned and a two-way thing. Sharing about yourself too.

I always work on my relationships with my Māori students. It is important for me that I earn their respect. To help them understand and believe that they have every opportunity to achieve their goals.

High expectations

Kaiako emphasised the need to hold and articulate high expectations of ākongā and support them to meet these expectations. They emphasised the importance of teaching students strategies that supported their learning when faced with academic challenges, as well celebrate with them at every step of the way.

Knowing expectations—I don't settle for 'average' and push the students to attain higher (with support). There is complete trust both ways.

The students celebrating and sharing their successes with you. The students also wanting to continue to challenge themselves and showing lots of resilience and perseverance. Seeing the students being engaged and focused in their learning.

Kaiako Māori described the importance of expecting excellence from ākongā and supporting their successes. Many kaiako Māori were emphatic about the high expectations they hold of ākongā Māori. They offered examples from their own practice of how they support ākongā success:

- meaningful feedback/feedforward, including positive feedback towards achievement and success
- opportunities for ākongā to develop personal and relevant goals
- feedback on learning and progress, enabling the ongoing development of new goals, and identifying the steps required to achieve goals
- utilising culturally appropriate resources to support ākongā to identify and achieve their goals
- opportunities for ākongā to create and share their goals with peers through a variety of modes
- ensuring ākongā have opportunities to celebrate success, with whānau involved where possible
- acknowledging ākongā achievements and success through presentation of certificates and awards
- Māori graduates evening each year to celebrate ākongā successes and achievements
- opportunities for kaiako to reflect on and discuss ways they support ākongā Māori and enable their pathways to success.

He matapaki | Discussion

This study analysed responses from kaiako Māori to explore the school environments, practices, and experiences that they perceived to be making a positive difference for ākongā Māori. Several themes were identified in the data, pointing to the importance of school-wide, relational, and strengths-based approaches to supporting ākongā Māori.

School-wide environments and conditions that make a difference

Learning environments that are inclusive and embracing of cultural identities, histories, and aspirations are fundamental to making a positive and significant difference for ākongā Māori (Macfarlane et al., 2017). In these environments, teachers use cultural diversity as a resource for learning, and utilise cultural knowledge, experience, worldviews, and ways of being to develop learning opportunities that are relevant and effective for diverse students (Gay, 2018). Much like the literature, teachers in the current study saw the inclusion of te ao Māori and mātauranga Māori in teaching and learning as fundamental for supporting equitable outcomes for ākongā Māori (Hetaraka, 2019). As Macfarlane et al. (2017) asserted:

When teachers have knowledge of, and empathy for, students' identity, language and worldviews and introduce content and context that include cultural perspectives, they are more likely to provide an environment that is conducive to social and emotional learning and consequently successfully motivate Māori students. (p. 277)

Kaiako Māori were emphatic that ākongā Māori success and flourishing is enabled when te ao Māori is not just visible but embraced through education. International research has similarly asserted that aligning the contextual conditions for learning against the cultural experiences of learners can increase their academic engagement (Gay, 2018). Therefore, it would be of great value to continue exploring ways to better incorporate Māori worldviews, values, language, and knowledge systems in schools and schooling.

Whanaungatanga as the foundation for teaching and learning for ākongā Māori

Kaiako Māori described whanaungatanga, relationships, and connectedness as the foundations for teaching, learning, and supporting ākongā Māori. Whanaungatanga speaks to relationships, but more so to connectedness established through deep and reciprocal knowing, understanding, and being in relationship with others. As shared by kaiako in this study, strong and positive relationships between them and ākongā Māori can have a profound and positive impact on their learning, wellbeing, and flourishing. Whanaungatanga between kaiako and ākongā Māori supports positive and often remarkable changes in ākongā attitudes, engagement, and motivations for learning and achievement.

In this study, kaiako defined whanaungatanga as the ongoing process of developing deep knowing, understanding, and connectedness with ākongā Māori. Kaiako articulated sophisticated cultural understandings of tikanga and principles that support whanaungatanga between teachers and ākongā Māori. Kaiako Māori also emphasised whanaungatanga in identifying the need for connectedness between schools, kaiako, ākongā, whānau, hapū, and iwi. Kaiako expressed that connectedness within and between these individuals and groups creates a "community of care" with ākongā Māori at the centre. The seminal *Ka Awatea: An Iwi Case Study of Māori Student Success* project (Duckworth et al., 2021) similarly reported ākongā Māori voices that support from teachers and whānau was vital to their success and achievements. Kaiako noted that communities of care were particularly supported when connectedness was based on collaborative and supportive partnerships. Kaiako Māori acknowledged that there is still much work to be done to progress these endeavours but suggested pathways that could progress such efforts.

Manaakitanga as the foundation for caring, supportive, and mana enhancing school environments

Manaakitanga emerged as a cultural and relational principle that is fundamental to creating learning environments that are caring, supportive, and mana enhancing. As a significant principle in te ao Māori, manaakitanga refers to reciprocal and unqualified care and concern for others and affirms whanaungatanga and connectedness through an emphasis on reciprocal care and support in relationships (Mead, 2003). Manaakitanga centres the importance of care and concern, and international research has similarly emphasised that students flourish when their classroom teachers express genuine care for their educational and wellbeing outcomes (Gay, 2018).

In this study, mana and manaakitanga were prominent in kaiako Māori responses as they affirmed the fundamental importance of ensuring that mana Māori is always held and supported in the highest regard. To kaiako Māori, mana and manaakitanga are interrelated, and foundational to understanding ākongā Māori, their interests, and aspirations.

The cultural concept of mana has been significant in kaupapa Māori conceptual frameworks that have centred on ākonga Māori and success. As part of the seminal Ka Awatea study, a Mana Model (Webber & Macfarlane, 2020) was developed which presents the optimal personal, familial, school, and community conditions for ākonga Māori success:

Mana Whānau (familial pride)

Mana Motuhake (personal pride and a sense of embedded achievement)

Mana Tū (tenacity and self-esteem)

Mana Ūkaipō (belonging and connectedness)

Mana Tangatarua (broader knowledge and skills).

The Mana Model expresses the importance of mana in understanding ākonga Māori engagement, participation, and achievement at school. As articulated by ākonga Māori in Webber and Macfarlane's research, mana relates to ākonga Māori sense of being, motivations for achieving, and their personal and collective identities. For ākonga Māori, a strong and positive sense of identity as Māori creates a protective “buffer” against negative experiences in education, and significantly enhances their potential for success.

Practices, dispositions, and qualities that make a difference

Kaiako Māori positioned caring and reciprocal relationships as fundamental to professional practice that makes a difference for teaching and supporting ākonga Māori. They also indicated a range of instructional practices, dispositions, and qualities that they saw as enhancing the educational outcomes of their ākonga. These are echoed by Gay (2018) who argued that “teachers who really care for students honor their humanity, hold them in high esteem, expect high performance from them, and use strategies to fulfil their expectations” (p. 59). Similarly, kaiako Māori in the current study highlighted the positive impact of high expectations on ākonga Māori outcomes. They also expressed strong beliefs in the potential and capabilities of ākonga Māori—they expected success from them and supported them to achieve successes.

The concept of ako was emphasised as important and acknowledges learning as a lifelong process through which people can be both teachers and learners, regardless of their formal role at school. Kaiako Māori affirmed the importance of teaching practice that is committed to ako, and learning alongside and from ākonga, as a mutually beneficial part of ongoing development. Further, kaiako noted the importance of ākonga Māori having meaningful opportunities to act in teaching and leadership roles. Kaiako Māori also extended the concept of ako, as a way for non-Māori teachers to engage in peer-based learning with kaiako Māori to draw on their astute understandings of what makes a positive difference for Māori. Kaiako also affirmed the crucial importance of professional practice that challenges inequity, and actively works to support equity and equitable outcomes for ākonga Māori.

He kupu whakakapi | Conclusion

This current study illuminated pathways to success for ākonga Māori as founded on whanaungatanga, connectedness and manaakitanga, reciprocal care and concern. The insights by kaiako Māori offered a holistic perspective in terms of what ākonga Māori need to flourish and succeed in education. They helped identify a range of cultural and relational principles that can be embedded throughout school environments and used as guiding principles for teachers' professional learning and development.

Kaiako insights also offered a nuanced perspective on educational success and flourishing ākonga, one that encompassed a traditional view of academic support and success, alongside a culturally specific and contextualised one. Ultimately, a nuanced perspective on educational success like this has the potential to lift the educational trajectories of ākonga Māori, once recognised, embedded and celebrated through and throughout education.

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He kupu whakakapi | Conclusion

Mohamed Alansari and Melinda Webber

The purpose of the current project was to examine how learning, thriving, and succeeding at school are understood and experienced by Māori and Pasifika ākongā, whānau, and kaiako. Through four studies, COMPASS showed that Māori and Pasifika ākongā are wayfinders who do not navigate choppy seas on their own—they instead work alongside whānau, kaiako, and other role models to reach new horizons.

Whereas Study 1 sought to establish the importance of high levels of motivation and engagement for ākongā outcomes, Studies 2–4 pinpointed factors associated with ākongā experiencing success and flourishing through education. Taken together, the four studies identified critical factors that serve as important punga (anchors) in the educational journeys of ākongā:

- strong and positive motivational beliefs about learning, as well as participation in learning experiences that are culturally embracing, aspirational, and future-oriented
- having strong and positive networks of support and role models, both in and out of school, who enable and embody success for ākongā
- home–school partnerships that are built on mutual care, respect, and a collective vision for ākongā and their communities
- school-wide conditions and teaching practices that are strength-based, ambitious, and contextually unique to the needs of Māori and Pasifika ākongā.

Although COMPASS attempted to generate an overall picture of what success—and success anchors—could look like for Māori and Pasifika ākongā, the work is not yet complete. One aspect of this work that can be thought of as both a limitation and a point of discussion is the lack of, and hence the need for, more studies that explore the enabling factors to creating school environments that embed the above punga as key drivers to the success of Māori and Pasifika learners. This is especially to avoid the saturation of cyclical and/or descriptive studies that perpetuate a status quo that is well understood to under-serve Māori and Pasifika learners and their communities.

Therefore, we conclude this work with a positive outlook: it is powerful to think that Māori and Pasifika student perceptions about themselves and their learning can impact the ways they experience success in education. Indeed, it is even more powerful to think that they can experience success, and thrive emotionally, socially, and academically at school when good information about ākongā worlds, motivation, and aspirations are shared between parents, teachers, and the wider school community. Thus, realising how much research can still be done to enable such synergy is truly exciting.

