

HE PIKI RAUKURA

Understanding strengths-based Māori child development constructs in Kaupapa Māori early years provision

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Abstract

The importance of early childhood education programmes has been widely established by researchers, but there has been little research on the outcomes of early childhood Kaupapa Māori educational initiatives in Aotearoa New Zealand. The aim of the research project reported here, He Piki Raukura, was to define Māori child behaviour constructs that may underlie positive Māori child development. We conducted in-depth interviews with two experts and 21 whānau participating in a Kaupapa Māori early years programme in Taranaki. Five themes were identified: local Māori identity, building whānau/community, commitment to a shared kaupapa, clear and consistent processes, and dealing with issues positively. Through wānanga, four Māori child behaviour constructs were defined: tuakiri (secure local Māori identity), whānauranga (acting as a member of whānau), manawaroa (persisting despite difficulty), and piripono (integrity, commitment and responsibility for a shared kaupapa). These constructs provide novel ways of understanding child development that can be applied to explore how Kaupapa Māori early years initiatives might impact on development.

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Keywords

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Introduction

It is well established that what happens in the early years fundamentally contributes to later life outcomes (Almond & Currie, 2010; Elango et al., 2015; Heckman et al., 2013). Early childhood education is considered a powerful, dynamic and positive intervention in the development of confidence, pro-social skills and self-regulation in young children (Bakken et al., 2017; Barnett, 2008; ECE Taskforce, 2011; Ministry of Education, 2013). There is much potential for early years interventions to substantially improve life outcomes for Māori, especially given the sizeable and enduring ethnic disparities in outcomes experienced by Māori, beginning in early life and persisting across the lifecourse (Marriott & Sim, 2015; Robson & Harris, 2007; Signal et al., 2007).

Indigenous early years programming

Community-grounded Indigenous approaches to early childhood education have operated for decades (Johnston & Johnson, 2002; Lockard & De Groat, 2010; Royal-Tangaere, 1997; Wilson & Kamanā, 2006) and existed in many forms prior to colonisation. Indigenous communities have fought to assert their language, identity and culture in the face of generations of pernicious, assimilationist colonial policies and actions (Gerlach et al., 2014; Penehira et al., 2014; Pihama et al., 2004; Romero-Little, 2010; Sims et al., 2008). This has resulted in Indigenous-led early years initiatives that have prioritised Indigenous language, delivered culturally relevant curricula, and involved families and community (Gerlach et al., 2014; Greymorning, 1999; Lockard & De Groat, 2010; Romero-Little, 2010; Sims et al., 2008).

Two countries that have documented Indigenous early years immersion learning models are Aotearoa New Zealand and Hawai'i. In Aotearoa, the most well-known Māori medium early years institution is Te Kōhanga Reo (Fleras, 1987; Hohepa et al., 1992; Royal-Tangaere, 2012). Established in 1983, the mission of Te Kōhanga Reo is the protection of te reo Māori and tikanga Māori in a total immersion Māori learning environment (Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust, n.d.). There are other standalone Kaupapa Māori immersion early childhood settings, referred to as puna reo or whare kōhungahunga, despite being formally documented as Education and Care Centres (Education Counts, n.d.). These settings mirror

the immersion imperative and kaupapa of kōhanga reo but are independently run (Education Counts, n.d.; Tamati et al., 2008). There are also informal whānau play groups or ngā puna kōhungahunga, which have a focus on Māori language and culture (Education Counts, n.d.). In Hawai'i, pūnana leo were established in 1984 and are modelled on the kōhanga reo movement. Their prime purpose is to revitalise Hawaiian Indigenous language and culture through Hawaiian immersion early childhood education (Beyer, 2018; Luning & Yamauchi, 2010; Wilson & Kamanā, 2001).

Much of the literature about kōhanga reo and pūnana leo documents the struggle for recognition of status and rights for Indigenous peoples, the determination to carve out spaces for revitalisation of languages and culture, the description of efforts to build children's fluency in their own languages, and the history and purpose of Indigenous immersion early years programmes (Beyer, 2018; Royal-Tangaere & McNaughton, 2003; Wilson & Kamanā, 2006). There are also some limited studies on the progress, benefits and academic outcomes of children participating in kōhanga reo and pūnana leo (Beyer, 2018; Cooper et al., 2004; Wilson & Kamanā, 2006). For example, the Te Rerenga ā Te Pirere study sought to chart the progress of children in kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa Māori over a four-year period and to highlight patterns of development of children (Cooper et al., 2004). The first phase of that study found that use of te reo Māori was associated with higher performance on the assessment tasks, that knowledge and fluency grow over time in immersion schooling and that Māori language fluency develops further knowledge and skills (Cooper et al., 2004). The authors also highlighted the "critical interplay" between te reo Māori and te ao Māori (Cooper et al., 2004, p. 154). Wilson and Kamanā (2006) noted that positive academic outcomes of Hawaiian immersion early years and school education were strongly evident, such as the 100% graduation rate and 80% college attendance rate for students who attend Ke Kula 'O Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u Iki, one of 21 Hawaiian-medium schools. They identified other equally important outcomes, including greater cultural connection and reclaiming of identity for Indigenous Hawaiian children and their families. Kana'iaupuni et al. (2017) refer to culture-based education as "cultural advantage". Overall, however, there is very little research on

the impact of early childhood education for Indigenous children (Martin, 2017; Prochner, 2004). No published studies were identified that evaluated child behaviour constructs in Indigenous immersion early years settings.

Te Kōpae Piripono

In this article, we examine the Indigenous Māori-medium early years programme Te Kōpae Piripono, which provides an innovative example of an early childhood Kaupapa Māori initiative (Tamati et al., 2008). Te Kōpae Piripono is a *whare kōhungahunga* based in New Plymouth, Taranaki, on the West Coast of the North Island of Aotearoa. Te Kōpae Piripono was established in 1994 by members of the Taranaki Māori community. It was born out of a shared desire for Taranaki Māori children to be raised within a Māori worldview, speaking the language of their ancestors, and at home with Indigenous concepts and practices (Hond-Flavell et al., 2017; Tamati et al., 2008). Features of provision include a programme that corresponds with primary school hours and term dates, qualified *kaitiaki*, and active *whānau* participation. Children attend for the whole school day and Māori is the only language of teaching and learning; this is staunchly adhered to. Central to the kaupapa of Te Kōpae Piripono is the reclamation of Taranaki Māori identity; the reinstatement of Taranaki Māori cultural norms and practices; the retention and enrichment of Taranaki *reo*; *whānau*/community development; and the restoration of pride, confidence and hope among *whānau* (Tamati et al., 2008).

In its establishment, Te Kōpae Piripono sought to acknowledge Taranaki's painful history and embody some of the principles of the community of Parihaka, which maintained a resolutely principled stance of passive resistance to counter the war, violation and land confiscation visited upon it by the colonial government in the 1800s (Waitangi Tribunal, 1996). One central concept of Parihaka is *maunga-ā-rongo*, a mutual or negotiated peace, which involves working collectively and collaboratively towards shared goals in empowering ways, for the benefit of the whole community (Hond-Flavell et al., 2017). Since Te Kōpae Piripono's inception, the concept of *maunga-ā-rongo*, applied through respectful and constructive communication, has been part of its approach.

Te Kōpae Piripono provides a *real-world* Kaupapa Māori programme designed to strengthen positive behaviours in young Māori children and support *whānau* development (Hond, 2013; Tamati et al., 2008). Its innovative approach has

been recognised by the Ministry of Education, which named Te Kōpae Piripono as a Centre of Innovation in 2005 (Tamati et al., 2008).

Te Kura Mai i Tawhiti

This paper presents initial findings of the research project He Piki Raukura, which is part of the research programme Te Kura Mai i Tawhiti (TKMT) (Ratima et al., 2019)—a collaboration between Te Pou Tiringa Incorporated—the governance body of Te Kōpae Piripono—and the University of Otago's National Centre for Lifecourse Research. The aim of TKMT is to generate an evidence base around what constitutes effective early life Kaupapa Māori programming for *tamariki* and *whānau*, which will lead to improved outcomes later in life for *tamariki*.

The research programme employs an interface approach whereby the research is located at the interface of Western science and *mātauranga Māori*, an Indigenous inquiry paradigm (Edwards et al., 2013). The underlying principle is that both knowledge systems are equally credible and relevant to disciplined inquiry (Durie, 2004; Edwards, 2010; Ermine, 2005), a principle expressed in other aligned approaches such as that of He Awa Whiria—Braided Rivers (Macfarlane & Macfarlane, 2019).

In summary, quality early years provision has been shown to have far-reaching positive impacts for young children. Indigenous early years approaches have been found to make a difference in the lives of young Indigenous children, but there is a lack of comprehensive evaluation of such approaches to understand the nature of their contribution to children's life outcomes. Given this identified need for rigorous evaluative research into effective Kaupapa Māori early years programmes, He Piki Raukura addressed the following research questions: (a) What are the key Māori constructs relevant to positive Māori child development? and (b) How are these constructs related to aspects of early life Kaupapa Māori programming that are likely to lead to improved outcomes for Māori children over their lifecourse?

Methods

Participants and procedure

A total of 23 semi-structured individual interviews were conducted. Twenty-one interviewees were *whānau* members of Te Kōpae Piripono, including 16 parents/caregivers of children currently or previously enrolled, two teachers, and three governance board members. The other two interviewees were recognised experts in education and

language revitalisation and also founding whānau members of Te Kōpae Piripono. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. Participants were asked about the key features of Te Kōpae Piripono's approach and its underpinning values and principles.

The interview schedule included the following questions:

- What values/principles/tikanga do you recognise being put into practice at Te Kōpae Piripono?
- How do you see this reflected in children's behaviour?
- Visualise your child aged 21 years. What does that picture look like?
- What types of behaviour, actions or capabilities might your child display right now that would fit with that description?
- What difference, if at all, does Te Kōpae Piripono make for you, your child and your whānau?

The study was approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee (#16/003). Participants gave informed consent to be involved in the study.

Data analysis

The interviews were analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) methods for thematic analysis to identify and report on patterns of meaning across the interviews. The analysis enabled us to identify themes articulating the main features of Te Kōpae Piripono's approach to Kaupapa Māori early years education, and these informed the development of child behaviour constructs. The themes were then further developed through a process of wānanga by the research team in consultation with whānau members, expert stakeholders, and a research advisory group comprised of senior Māori academics (see Ratima et al., 2019). The wānanga approach was an iterative process that involved a dynamic mix of hui and dialogue. This provided thinking space and enabled engagement with the literature, including customary cultural texts such as waiata tawhito and kīanga. Many of the wānanga were conducted in reo Māori and followed tikanga protocols such as karakia and manaaki. The process was not restricted by time and was an organic approach, taking as long as was required. The series of wānanga were carried out over more than a year. In addition, the wānanga drew strongly on the depth of experience, knowledge and understanding by research team members of Te Kōpae Piripono. This helped

shape thinking around the development of a set of Māori child behavioural constructs that provide the second level of thematic findings presented in this paper.

Results

Themes from the perspectives of whānau and experts

Data from the interviews revealed five themes: (a) local reo, tikanga and identity; (b) building whānau/community; (c) having integrity and a commitment to a shared kaupapa; (d) clear and consistent processes; and (e) dealing with issues positively.

THEME 1: LOCAL REO, TIKANGA AND IDENTITY

In the first theme, whānau and expert participants outlined the benefits of enabling tamariki to grow up proudly Māori, secure in their cultural identity. These included being proficient in reo Māori and gaining a lived understanding of tikanga Māori. All whānau referred to reo Māori and tikanga Māori as critical priorities for their tamariki, with one interviewee commenting, "Te Kōpae Piripono is basically a living product of not being colonised—to see tamariki still speaking te reo, and it's not as a second language to them, it's just normal" (Whānau Member 12, female, 27 years).

What was also highlighted was the importance of working with parents and whānau, just as much as with children, in order to enable tamariki to be confident as Māori:

Often, we had to work as much with our pakeke [adults] as we did with our kids. We couldn't expect to raise children who were strong and proud of themselves and their own identity, if they had parents who were still downtrodden or colonised. (Expert 1)

THEME 2: BUILDING WHĀNAU/COMMUNITY

In the second theme, participants indicated a deep sense of whānau/community that individual families felt within Te Kōpae Piripono. Parents said they both observed and personally experienced a range of aspects of the concept and function of whānau, whereby tamariki and their whānau felt comfortable and safe; took on roles and responsibilities; and felt a sense of caring, belonging and a responsibility for others:

The thing I like about Kōpae is when I walk in the door ... there's a sense of belonging. ... It's a small nutshell of Māoridom. It's like a food, that

everywhere you get fed in a physical, spiritual, in all those ways. It's about being who we are. I think when you don't know who you really are, you're floating around looking for something to hold on to. But then when you know who you are then you've found something—you stick to it ... because it's good for you. That's my view of why I come back every day. (Whānau Member 7, male, 41 years)

THEME 3: HAVING INTEGRITY AND A COMMITMENT TO A SHARED KAUPAPA

In the third theme, whānau identified the importance of commitment to an agreed set of values and kaupapa. Interviewees referred to the concept of pono, the idea of having integrity, a principled approach, and a set of shared beliefs by which to operate. Parents were very clear on the expectations of whānau commitment and responsibility for the kaupapa of the programme:

There's a high expectation. You cannot do your own thing. We must do what we do, or else it's a waste of time. Because we're Māori and you can't just be Māori from nine to five. There are roles to fill. There is an urgency for our reo. Te Kōpae Piripono is fostering that into our tamariki, into our parents. (Whānau Member 6, female, 29 years)

Whānau specifically mentioned the connection between the programme's approach and the principles of the historic Taranaki settlement of Parihaka and its unique perspective of community and non-violent political resistance (Ratima, 2015). Parihaka's distinctive approach and its success were based on integrity, mahi tahi, reciprocity, collectivity and genuine respect for others (Hond, 2017).

Kia mau ki tō Parihakatanga [Hold to the principles of Parihaka]. And for me, when I heard that, that's when I went, 'That's what Kōpae is about.' It's just an appropriate way of living, I feel ... and I believe it. I believe I'm not just here for my kids. They're my reason to be strong but it's how to live, how to look after myself. (Whānau Member 12, female, 27 years)

THEME 4: CLEAR AND CONSISTENT PROCESSES

The fourth theme relates to the clear and consistent processes of Te Kōpae Piripono that participants identified. Consistent routines and practices, or what one parent described as whakatū tikanga, were visible and recognisable. One interviewee

spoke of the importance of consistency: "You have everybody on the same page, all of the teachers, the parents and that is a key too because it is being consistent" (Whānau Member 12, female, 27 years).

Whānau said they saw positive behaviour modelled by kaitiaki and children. For example, one interviewee described children knowing "what they are going to be doing" (Whānau Member 7). This feeling of certainty, in turn, fostered a sense of tau and confidence among the children: "On a daily basis, for the kaitiaki to be able to maintain that tau [calm] with the children and relate with them in that calm manner, that's pretty amazing to me. Because I haven't seen it everywhere else" (Whānau Member 10, female, 39 years).

THEME 5: DEALING WITH ISSUES POSITIVELY

The fifth theme is about dealing with issues positively. Many whānau referred to the structured process for positive conflict resolution and for fostering relationships at Te Kōpae Piripono, known as Te Ara Poutama. This method was built on the principles of open, honest, and solution-focused communication and aroha. Through this process, children learnt how to deal with conflict, consider others, handle disappointment, express themselves confidently, and trust that their voices would be heard. Whānau said that this approach to dealing with issues made a difference to their children's behaviour and their own parenting skills. One interviewee commented:

If one has challenging behaviour, there is a process for that. Before I came to the Kōpae I thought you should just let a child do their own thing. ... And then coming to Kōpae, I was like oh my gosh, they've got the answers right here, [children] being able to explain in their words. I find that not a lot of places let children express how they feel. Here, children are learning to understand why things are and express how they feel. (Whānau Member 12, female, 27 years)

Children were observed advocating for themselves: "[My son] would signal that, actually it's my turn and I'm not feeling very happy here because you've taken [a toy] off me" (Whānau Member 13, female, 28 years).

Māori child behaviour constructs

This section documents the four Māori child behaviour constructs that were identified through the aforementioned wānanga process and informed by the interview data and literature. Table 1 shows

TABLE 1 Connections between the themes about whānau experience of early life Kaupapa Māori programming and the Māori child behaviour constructs

Theme underpinning constructs and quality provision	Themes linked to constructs	Māori child behaviour constructs
Clear and consistent processes	Local reo Māori, tikanga and identity	Tuakiri—secure local Māori identity
	Building whānau/community	Whānauranga—feeling and acting as a member of whānau/community
Clear and consistent processes	Resolving issues positively	Manawaroa—courage in adversity, persisting despite difficulty and a positive outlook
	Commitment to and responsibility for a shared kaupapa	Piripono—integrity, commitment and responsibility for a shared kaupapa

the connections between the five themes about whānau experiences of early life Kaupapa Māori programming and the Māori child behaviour constructs. A concise definition of each construct is then presented, followed by an explanation of how the construct may develop in tamariki and the observable behaviours. One of the themes—having clear and consistent processes—links to all of the constructs because it underpins quality provision (Hond-Flavell et al., 2017).

TUAKIRI

Ko taku raukura rā, he manawanui ki te ao.

(My sacred emblem, the raukura, is an assurance to the world.)

—Parihaka saying

Tuakiri is about secure local Māori identity; that is, knowing and valuing one’s cultural heritage, participating with confidence and understanding in things Māori, and expressing Māori beliefs and values through living as Māori. Tuakiri refers to a Māori identity that is derived from a shared cultural heritage—such as whakapapa and whānau, hapū and iwi social structures; connections to ancestral land and other features of the natural environment; language; and cultural beliefs and values (Durie, 1995; Karetu, 1990; Mead, 2003; Webber, 2012).

“Tuakiri” is a widely used term for Māori identity (Mataira, 2000; Williams, 1957c). Mead (2003) translates “tua” as being on the “farther side of something” and “kiri” as “skin” (p. 273). These translations reflect that tuakiri relates to aspects that are beyond the physical being, such as wairua, worldview, and an associated belief

system (Mataira, 2000; Mead, 2003). Mead (2003) emphasises the significance of the special nature of Māori connection to the land and natural environment, which “grounds a personality in place” (p. 273). A special attachment to the land, people and ancestors is a characteristically Māori spiritual dimension of belonging and connection (Pere, 1988; Sibley & Houkamau, 2013). Achieving a secure local Māori identity relies on being grounded within a whānau/community and exposure to Indigenous ideologies passed down through generations.

Characteristics of a secure tuakiri include having a strong sense of self and belonging, active use of reo Māori, and expressing Māori beliefs and values through living as Māori (Greaves et al., 2017; Matika et al., 2017; Muriwai et al., 2015; Sibley & Houkamau, 2013; Webber, 2012). These kinds of characteristics enable a person to confidently operate in Māori environments.

As tamariki develop tuakiri, they show an increasing preference to speak reo Māori and to do so with a local mita. They have growing confidence to recite local karakia and waiata, and actively participate in cultural practices, such as pōwhiri, mihi and hongiri.

WHĀNAURANGA

Maunga-ā-rongo ki runga ki te whenua, whakaaro pai ki ngā tāngata katoa, ahakoa ko wai.

(Peace on earth, respect for others, whoever they may be.)

—Parihaka adaptation of *King James Bible* (1611/n.d., Luke 2:14)

Whānauranga is about feeling and acting as a

member of a *whānau*/community, motivated by a sense of belonging and a concern for collective wellbeing. “Whānauranga” is a newly coined term, developed by the Te Pou Tiringa researchers. It has some similarities with the more widely used term “whanaungatanga” (Bishop et al., 2014; Macfarlane et al., 2008). However, “whānauranga” here encompasses the knowing and valuing of whānau relationships and exercising the knowledge and skills necessary to maintain connections as Māori, such as through *manaaki* and *tiaki* (Moorfield, n.d.; Williams, 1957).

Whānauranga emphasises the individual, as a whānau member, and their roles and responsibilities in the structure and operation of the whānau—reinforcing whānau values, conventions, expectations and practices. Roles and practices within a whānau setting serve to transmit cultural practice, thought and behaviour that, in turn, maintain positive whānau identity (Pohatu, 1996). Whānauranga speaks to a sense of belonging and of feeling and acting as a whānau member. It gives emphasis to the notion of contribution that fosters others’ wellbeing and overall whānau cohesion. Whānauranga also embraces a whānau development approach whereby whānau are supported to be confident and make their own choices, as part of a whānau collective (Hond-Flavell et al., 2017). Whānauranga includes participating in and contributing to whānau activities and decision-making and, in particular, knowing and understanding one’s role in achieving shared goals.

As tamariki develop whānauranga, they display pro-social characteristics such as sharing, caring, and being helpful, reassuring and kind to others (Hond-Flavell et al., 2017; Noddings, 2012b). Tamariki with a strong sense of whānauranga increasingly think about the needs of others (e.g., giving another child the first turn) and take on culturally defined whānau roles such as *tuakana* or *teina*, show leadership, and take on responsibility. They are increasingly able to work collaboratively with others, debate and express ideas, seek others’ opinions and share decision-making.

MANAWAROA

Me he raupō piko i te hau, ka ara.

(Like reeds rising when wind abates.)

—Parihaka Legacy Statement (see Hond, 2017, p. 7)

Manawaroa is about having courage in adversity, persisting despite difficulty, and having a positive outlook, motivated by collective interest. It involves notions of self-discipline and problem-solving. While the term “manawaroa” has been used or described in various ways by others (Mataira, 2000; Moorfield, n.d.-a; NZ Rugby League, 2017), it has a specific meaning in the context of child behaviour. In this context, manawaroa is the ability to make positive choices and persist with a task or work to resolve an issue positively. Making positive choices and resolving issues positively are linked (Carver & Scheier, 2014). Both are evidence of a person’s self-control, optimism and self-efficacy—a strong sense of one’s ability to achieve desired objectives, which can be simultaneously personal and collective (Bandura, 1997). Being able to resolve issues positively is also a key aspect of negotiation—skills that are enabled by shared experience and interpersonal understanding (Cannella, 1993). Problem solving is central to learning and being able to solve social problems gives children a sense of capability and confidence to deal with wider issues or life events that may affect them (Hope, 2002; Vestal & Jones, 2004).

With manawaroa, an individual is able to transcend (Lalonde, 2006) difficult times and find the strength to sustain themselves—to see beyond a current challenge or disappointment and to trust that today’s problems are not insurmountable. This resonates with what has been described as “dispositional optimism”: that a “stressful present can change to a better future” or that “things are bad now, but they will get better” (Carver & Scheier, 2014, p. 296). Tamariki displaying manawaroa have self-confidence, determination, and what might be described as a “courageous spirit” to positively deal with problems or adverse situations (Brokenleg, 2012, p. 10). They make progressive decisions with both themselves and others in mind. They are comfortable to live in the moment, while also having a positive long-term outlook.

As they develop manawaroa, tamariki are increasingly able to control their behaviour and emotions and stay calm even if they get upset, frustrated or disappointed. They can wait their turn, problem-solve, negotiate, and resolve issues positively. A child with well-developed manawaroa has patience, persistence and hope.

PIRIPONO

Kua hari, kua koa, kua tū te tikanga.

(We are assured and confident, on account of our ethical principles.)

—Parihaka pao

Piripono is about having integrity, commitment and responsibility for a shared kaupapa/purpose. Piripono's main features are critical consciousness and a sense of duty to the whānau/community. The word "piri" means to cling to or be closely connected (Williams, 1957a), and the word "pono" means to be true, honest and genuine (Moorfield, n.d.-c; Williams, 1957b). The term "piripono"—literally, "a bosom"—has been used to describe an extremely close connection (Ngata, 1993).

Piripono as a construct is concerned with the central importance of positive and strongly held values and principles, and it is evidenced in behaviour such as loyalty, faithfulness and commitment to a kaupapa or shared objective (Moorfield, n.d.-b). Panoho (2003) uses the word "piripono" to refer to the concept of entrustment. This resonates with the construct of ethical caring, grounded on a set of ideals and a sense of duty to others, which creates a climate of care and trust—encouraging the development of "moral people" (Noddings, 2012a, p. 777).

Piripono is about having integrity and a sense of higher purpose—of seeing one's relevance in the wider world and doing what one can to achieve collective good. Critical consciousness is central to piripono. Hence, piripono is typified by high levels of critical awareness, active citizenship and a unity of purpose with a group. Freire and Macedo (1995) talk about "critical citizenry" and the fundamental importance for people to locate themselves within an historical context and acknowledge its impact on their lived experience (p. 377). Monteiro and Sharma (2006) argue that "community responsibility" develops through participation and action (p. 64).

Piripono, in practice, is about upholding shared values, demonstrating a desire to benefit the group, and acting responsibly. It challenges traditional models of leadership that tend to be positional in nature (Rok, 2009) and have vertical, rather than lateral, lines of responsibility (McCrimmon, 2005). Te Kōpae Piripono's previous research described how a lateral notion of leadership requires every member of a whānau/community to take on four key responsibilities: having responsibility, taking responsibility, being responsible, and sharing responsibility (Tamati et al., 2008). Hence, piripono is both personal and collective responsibility—personal responsibility in relation

to the collective and collective responsibility in relation to the individual.

As tamariki develop piripono, they display increasing levels of integrity, responsibility and leadership. They are confident to be open and honest, and readily stand up for what is right and true, even if it is unpopular. Piripono can also be seen when tamariki take ownership of an issue, admit fault, step in to help, or put things right.

Discussion

As health, education and social sectors work to find ways to improve outcomes for young children, there are indications that quality early years interventions can make a difference in both the short and the long term (Barnett, 2008; ECE Taskforce, 2011; Heckman et al., 2013; Sturrock & Gray, 2013). In this article, we have identified a novel set of four pro-social Māori child behaviour constructs that we postulate are impacted on by Kaupapa Māori programming, which may lead to improved life outcomes for young Māori children. These constructs are generated from within a Māori worldview, are strengths based, emphasise interrelationships and responsibility to and for others, and express a concern for reinforcing shared values and developing the *character* of children. In combination, they are an expression of a philosophy of Māori Indigenous early childhood education that can be reinforced in multiple ways with tamariki and whānau.

The identification and description of child behaviour constructs grounded within a Māori worldview is important. This work informs the evolving thinking and understanding about the nature of effective Kaupapa Māori early life interventions to instil Māori prosocial behaviours and how this might positively impact tamariki throughout their lives. It is of particular value given the lack of research in the early years about outcomes for Indigenous children (Martin, 2017; Prochner, 2004). There is a pressing need to develop measures and assessment tools for young Māori children that are "culturally-located" (Rameka, 2012, p. 34). This study contributes to addressing this gap by identifying and articulating Māori-specific child behaviour constructs that provide a basis for quantitative measurement of the effectiveness and impact of Kaupapa Māori programming from a Māori perspective (Ratima & Jenkins, 2012; Robson & Harris, 2007).

This study contributes to the foundations for an evidence base around the positive impact of Indigenous early years approaches for Indigenous communities, globally. Given the shared experience

of colonial disruption among Indigenous peoples and their resolute determination to assert their worldviews, languages and cultures, this type of work can help substantiate the critical importance of Indigenous ways of knowing, doing and being, and their contribution to positive life outcomes for Indigenous children. The lack of research in this area suggests that understanding the value of Indigenous early years approaches as positive interventions for Indigenous children has not been a priority for governments or the academy. Rather, the predominant focus has been on investigating problem behaviours and universal interventions (Achenbach & Ruffle, 2000; Goodman, 2001; Horwood et al., 2011). Our findings indicate that there is much potential for greater understanding and evaluation of Indigenous approaches located within Indigenous worldviews.

One limitation of this study is that it mainly involved informants from an individual Kaupapa Māori early years setting who may differ in some ways from informants from other centres. It is acknowledged that focusing on one entity potentially limits understanding and exploration of diverse perspectives and approaches to Kaupapa Māori early years programmes. However, having one setting was intentional, because it enabled us to carry out the depth of methodological, cultural and practical groundwork, for a future, larger study that will include multiple centres. The current study may also differ from others in terms of regional variations. The themes identified from the qualitative interviews, along with the wānanga processes that resulted in the articulation of the Māori constructs, were generated within a Taranaki Māori worldview. Other settings are likely to have different perspectives or approaches. They will also have their own histories that will shape their specific worldviews and therefore their values, objectives, priorities and approaches to early childhood education. However, initial feedback from our presentations to providers in other regions suggests that our findings are of considerable relevance to a range of Kaupapa Māori and mainstream early years provision.

Concluding comments

Effective Kaupapa Māori early years interventions can positively impact the lives of young Māori children. The identification of strength-based child behaviour constructs grounded within a Māori worldview is important because they may enable us to better understand what underpins effective Kaupapa Māori early years programming. Moreover, they can help to address the historical

use of solely Western, often deficit-based, constructs in the assessment of young Māori children.

The four Māori child behaviour constructs identified in this study—tuakiri, whānauranga, manawaroa and piripono—provide a basis for further research to quantitatively measure these constructs and how they may be instilled through Kaupapa Māori early years programming. In subsequent phases of this research, we have developed measurement tools to quantitatively assess these constructs in tamariki Māori (Tamati, Treharne, Kokaua, et al., 2021; Tamati, Treharne, Theodore, et al., 2021). These tools have the potential to be used longitudinally to examine what constitutes effective early life programming for tamariki Māori over time. Importantly, the planned research may contribute to an evidence base to inform the scaling up of key features of quality Kaupapa Māori provision locally, nationally and internationally to enable positive outcomes for Māori and other Indigenous communities.

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Glossary

Māori

Aotearoa	New Zealand; lit., “the land of the long white cloud”
aroha	love, caring, respect
hapū	subtribe
hongi	Māori cultural greeting involving the pressing of noses
hui	meetings
iwi	tribe
karakia	Māori prayer/incantation

kaitiaki	Te Kōpae Piripono caregiver/educator	waiata	songs
karakia	incantations	waiata tawhito	traditional songs
kaupapa	purpose, objective, philosophy	wairua	spiritual essence
Kaupapa Māori	Māori philosophical framework	wānanga	processes of discussion and workshopping
kīanga	traditional iwi and Parihaka sayings	whakapapa	genealogy
kōhanga reo	Māori language nests	whakatū tikanga	establishing rules and boundaries of behaviour
kura kaupapa Māori	Māori immersion schools	whānau	family grouping/ community
mahi tahi	cooperation	whanaungatanga	process of fostering whānau relationships
manaaki	showing respect, generosity and kindness	whare kōhungahunga	Māori immersion early years setting
mātauranga Māori	Māori Indigenous knowledge systems	Hawaiian	
maunga-ā-rongo	mutual/negotiated peace	pūnana leo	preschool language nest
mihi	Māori verbal greeting		
mita	dialect		
ngā puna kōhungahunga	informal whānau playgroups		
pakeke	adults		
pao	short Māori ditty		
Parihaka	Taranaki Māori community established in 1865 by its leaders Tohu Kākahi and Te Whiti-ō-Rongomai		
pōwhiri	ceremonial welcome		
puna reo	Māori immersion early years setting		
reo	language		
reo Māori	Māori language		
tamariki	children		
Taranaki	region on the west coast of the North Island		
Taranaki reo	Taranaki Māori language dialect		
tau	calm, settled		
te ao Māori	the Māori world		
teina	younger sibling (with associated responsibilities)		
te reo Māori	the Māori language		
tiaki	to care about, nurture and protect		
tikanga	agreed conventions, protocols		
tikanga Māori	Māori culture, conventions		
tuakana	older sibling (with associated responsibilities)		

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