The Waka Hourua Research Framework: A dynamic approach to research with urban Māori communities

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In this paper we present a methodological framework for research involving urban Māori, developed as part of a community-driven, cultural intervention at a State secondary school. The Waka Hourua Research Framework situates research exploration at the interface between Māori knowledge, and Western science (see Durie, 2005). The framework incorporates core Māori values, guiding principles, and contextual research considerations in a dynamic framework that allows for adaptations to be made throughout the research process. This framework enables researchers to affirm the legitimacy of Māori knowledge, and to use Māori knowledge as a platform for generating new knowledge, without dismissing Western knowledge bases. The utility of the framework is that it enables resulting research to reflect diverse Māori realities and respond to Māori research priorities, particularly within the discourses of Indigenous Psychology.

When researching Māori social and psychological phenomena, an in-depth understanding of Māori knowledge systems is necessary in order to produce informed, accurate, and useful research. However, Māori and other Indigenous knowledge systems have often been dismissed or overlooked in Western research (Durie, 2005). This paper responds to this issue and contributes to the diversity of Indigenous research by presenting a framework for psychological research involving Māori, founded on Māori realities, knowledge systems, and research processes. This framework was developed as part of a community-driven intervention at a low-decile State secondary school. The intervention was designed to increase the engagement of Māori students and their whānau (family) with the school. In this context, it was necessary to develop a framework that could reflect the realities of diverse Māori community members, and respond to their research needs. In this paper we present a novel research framework, describe how this framework was developed and applied in a community setting, and give insights into some of the research findings that were generated using this approach. This paper has been developed from the PhD thesis of the first author under the supervision of the second author.

Western Psychology and Mātauranga Māori (Māori Knowledge)

The purpose of psychology is to explain mental functioning, to make sense of behaviour, and to enhance mental wellbeing. Achieving these goals often requires an understanding of socially constructed, culturally specific value and belief systems. Despite the cultural specificity of value and belief systems underpinning psychology, psychology produced in Western settings is often applied uncritically to other cultural settings, resulting in a Western hegemony within the discipline that Allwood and Berry (2006) label 'ethno-centric'.

Lawson-Te Aho (2002) states that psychology is ethno-centric due to its construction within the culturally bound knowledge system of Western science. Although Western science is positioned as objective, culture free, apolitical, value free, and universally applicable, as with all

knowledge systems, it is culturally bound (Lawson-Te Aho, 2002). As a culturally bound knowledge system, Western science includes features that are not shared with many other knowledge systems, such as reductionism (i.e. separating objects under study into constituent parts to gain a greater understanding of the whole) and isolationism (i.e., studying objects in isolation; see Harris & Mercier, 2006).

Evidence of isolationism can be seen in Western psychology, as the individual is most often the basic unit of analysis, with little consideration given to wider social and environmental factors. Evidence of reductionism can also be seen in Western psychology, as psychological problems are considered to arise within the individual, often due to some structural or functional defect (Duran & Duran, 2002). Treatment is, therefore, directed at the individual, or some part of the individual. In contrast, Indigenous approaches to both scientific inquiry and healthcare identify the interconnectedness between all things and emphasise the importance of social and environmental relationships (for examples, see Pitama, Robertson, Cram, Gillies, Huria, & Dallas-Katoa, 2007; Williams, 2001).

As is common of Indigenous knowledge systems, mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) is founded on the unity of people and the environment, developed over successive generations (Durie, 2005). According to Māori, all things living and non-living, mental, physical, and spiritual are connected through whakapapa (genealogy), and descend from a common tapu (sacred) origin (Roberts & Wills, 1998). In a Māori sense, "…'to know' something is to locate it in time and space," thereby identifying its whakapapa (Roberts & Wills, 1998, p. 45). For Royal (1998), whakapapa is the research methodology used to understand the world, and mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) is the theory that is generated from the whakapapa process. In this way, mātauranga

Māori results from a holistic approach, where knowledge and understanding is enhanced by considering the wider relationships of the object of study. This holistic research approach common to Indigenous communities incorporates analyses of social relationships, connections with the physical environment, and historical events.

Interface Research

Innovative approaches have been developed that combine Indigenous approaches with Western approaches. These research approaches are able to draw on two value systems, two knowledge systems, and two traditions of scientific inquiry, while retaining the ability to address issues of dominance within Western knowledge systems. Durie (2005) describes this type of approach as 'research at the interface of Indigenous knowledge and Western science'. The science produced by this approach is not strictly Indigenous Knowledge, nor Western Science. Rather, this research approach generates new and distinct knowledge that is able to enrich both knowledge bases (Durie, 2005). It is this interface between Indigenous and Western sciences that The Waka Hourua Research Framework presented in this paper is designed to explore.

Method and Results

Developing the Framework

Navigating the largely uncharted space between Māori knowledge and Western knowledge can be challenging. The methodological framework presented in this paper was based on interactions between the Māori community, and the research team. During interactions the research priorities and preferred processes of community members and researchers became clear. Although centred on a State institution, and located in an urban context, this community of Māori students and their whānau placed value in Māori principles and practices. Therefore, these principles were incorporated into the methodological framework. Descriptions of the community intervention

and the researcher-community engagement processes are presented as follows.

Intervention Background

The intervention project grew out of community concerns with Māori students' outcomes at a particular State secondary school. Māori students at this school were disengaged with the educational process, were leaving school early with little or no qualifications, and were over-represented in negative school statistics (such as stand-downs and exclusions). In response to these concerns, a hui (meeting) was called to bring together Māori students' parents, and the school. Attendees identified the need to strengthen relationships, and to increase the cultural relevance of the school environment. The school and community initiated a novel intervention, without funding, to meet these objectives.

The intervention project had a number of components. Firstly, a Māori community liaison was appointed to improve relationships between Māori students, their whānau, and the school. This intervention activity demonstrated that the community valued whanaungatanga (connectedness). Secondly, regular meetings with Māori students' whānau were established. Matters affecting Māori students were discussed in these meetings, and recommendations were passed onto the school board. A member of this group was later put forward to sit on the school board. This intervention activity exemplified community-driven action, designed to increase Māori power in school decision making processes, and built-in a reflexive component to the intervention, as community feedback on the intervention was gained during these meetings. Thirdly, the intervention activities included increasing student access to the school marae (meeting house), thereby providing an institution that supported Māori cultural expression. In the marae context, wairua (spirituality) is acknowledged and expressed, the domains and attributes of the atua (deities, natural

elements) are clearly defined, and references are made to tīpuna (ancestors). Marae protocols guide actions around that which is tapu (sacred, prohibited) and that which is noa (profane, safe). Finally, the intervention activities also included offering Māori curricular and extra-curricular activities, such as te reo (Māori language) classes, kapa haka (Māori performing arts), mau rākau (Māori martial arts), and marae trips, which served to promote tikanga Māori (Māori laws, protocols), te reo Māori (Māori language), and mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge).

Eventually funding was secured and independent evaluators were sought to fulfil funding obligations. At this stage, the first author was contacted through University networks and asked to evaluate the project.

Community Engagement

Many different groups were invested in the project, and maintaining respectful relationships with these groups was crucial. Meetings were held with key stakeholders including whānau members, board of trustee members, school staff, rūnanga (Māori council) employees, the school principal, and other researchers. Through these hui (meetings), a mutually beneficial arrangement was made, whereby the research team would gather information and evaluate the intervention, giving feedback and suggestions to the community, and fulfilling requirements stipulated by project funders. In exchange, the information gathered could also be used to produce academic reports. In this way, the research would generate both action and theory.

Pōwhiri

During initial hui (meetings), stakeholders stated that it was necessary for the research team to be welcomed formally through the pōwhiri (formal welcome) process before beginning research at the School. The pōwhiri process recognises the tapu (sacred, prohibited) nature of outsiders entering a new environment, and involves the ritualised removal of that tapu. This process

makes it safe for the tangata whenua (people of the land) to receive visitors, and safe for the visitors to enter the new environment.

The pōwhiri (formal welcome) process affirms the mana (authority, power, prestige) of atua (deities, natural elements), tīpuna (ancestors), and tangata whenua (people of the land). The pōwhiri process also allows those involved to exchange whakapapa (genealogy) and to whakawhanaunga (build relationships). While bringing two groups together, the process also positions the two groups as tangata whenua, and manuhiri (visitors), and there are clear behavioural expectations for members of each group.

Being welcomed through the pōwhiri (formal welcome) process enabled the research team to adopt the manuhiri (visitor) position, which facilitated the research. As manuhiri, we understood that, although invited in, we were outsiders (see Te Huia & Liu, 2012). Although we shared whakapapa Māori (Māori genealogy), and had some experiences in common with the community members, we were outsiders as we were not directly associated with the school. In addition, many of the experiences and challenges faced by community members had not been experienced by members of the research team. As manuhiri, it was our responsibility to be respectful, to acknowledge the authority of the hosts, to follow their processes, and to position their realities as central.

Whakawhanaungatanga (Relationship Building)

As manuhiri, we visited with the students and their whānau (families) on a regular basis in a number of settings, including during regular classes, school intervals, kapa haka (Māori performing arts) practices, mentoring sessions, and fundraisers. These visits allowed the research team to become familiar with the research environment, and to strengthen relationships further with Māori students, their whānau, and project workers.

The earlier relationship building enabled the recruitment of participants for interviews and focus groups to occur in an organic manner. Often community members, whom researchers had already met informally at an earlier date, would approach members of the research team and asked to be interviewed. As trust had been established between researchers and the community, interviews were free-flowing, and uninhibited, and the participants provided rich descriptions of their observations, issues, and ideas concerning the intervention.

The free-flowing nature of interviews was also facilitated by the fieldworkers' knowledge of tikanga (laws, protocols) and te reo (Māori language), which enabled fieldworkers to conduct themselves appropriately in the marae (meeting house) setting, and allowed participants to use te reo during interviews. The Māori research assistants were also gender balanced, so Māori students were able to approach gender matched interviewers, if they desired.

Reflexivity

Ethnographic notes were made during all visits, and following our visits the research team would reflect on our experiences. We reflected on how community members' patterns of behaviours might have been influenced by our presence, for example by possibly censoring criticism towards other parties involved in the project. We also reflected on how our own behaviours were being influenced by the context. For example, we noticed that although certain members of our research group were accustomed to introducing themselves solely in te reo (Māori language) at formal and semi-formal hui (meetings), they tended to deliver their introductions at the school in English. This was due to their awareness that in this urban environment (where the rate of te reo fluency is low, and where many Māori are dislocated from their traditional tribal territories), many of the Māori students and their whānau (families) had limited access to te reo. These

researchers used English as they were conscious of making themselves understood, and wanted to avoid flaunting their knowledge of te reo.

Analyses

Based on the analysis of information gathered over successive school visits, a methodological framework evolved. This framework will be outlined in the following section. Field data was also used to generate reports for the community, and the funding entity. In addition, an inductive thematic analysis was performed to generate theory on increasing Māori student engagement with State secondary schools. Following these analyses, stakeholders at the school were visited and asked to provide feedback, which was then incorporated into the reporting. The findings from this thematic analysis also guided further studies looking at Māori identity development in State schools, and the relationships between cultural engagement, ethnic identity, and psychological wellbeing.

The Waka Hourua Research Framework

In this section we present a novel methodological framework developed in the context of a community-driven action research project, located within the discipline of psychology. The metaphor used to communicate this framework is the waka hourua (double-hulled sailing vessel). Waka hourua were used by the ancestors of modern Māori to migrate throughout the Pacific Ocean. The craftsmanship and navigational skill required to achieve such a feat serve as an example of the excellence in research, science, and technology demonstrated by these ancestors. The migratory waka (vessel) that Māori ancestors arrived in continue to hold central importance to Māori identity today. For these reasons the waka hourua is an appropriate metaphor to draw on in the construction of an analytic framework for researching with urban Māori communities.

In this framework, the waka hourua (double-hulled sailing vessel) sits within a wider environment (refer to Figure 1). Key parts of the waka (vessel) itself represent core values, celestial bodies represent guiding principles, and environmental elements that are crucial to way-finding represent wider contextual considerations that are crucial to research (refer to Table 1). A description of the components of the framework will be given to communicate an epistemic worldview, followed by an example of research that weaves these components together.

Core Values

Ten core values are represented in the Waka Hourua Research Framework. The first of these, tapu (sacred, prohibited), refers to the sacredness imbued by the atua (deities, natural elements) to all things living and non-living. Tapu is central to Māori beliefs and behaviour. Therefore recognition, and respect for tapu is necessary when engaging with Māori, and attempting to explain Māori social phenomena. In constrast, the second core value, noa, describes a state of balance and safety (Mead, 2003). Noa is highly pertinent to research, as, to conduct research ethically, it is important to consider safety.

Whakapapa is the third core value, and represents genealogical connections with atua (deities, natural elements), ancestors, relations, places, and histories. Whakapapa informs Māori identity, and produces diverse Māori realities. In order to understand social phenomena occurring at the individual level, it is important to have an understanding of who individuals are: where are they from geographically, who they are descended from genealogically, and what historical events shaped their reality? In short, what relationships do they have with people, places, and events?

Whanaungatanga, the fourth core value, is a Māori concept meaning close, warm, family-like connectedness with others. In research, the whānau (family) structure can be used as a model for research relationships, and the whakawhanaungatanga (relationship
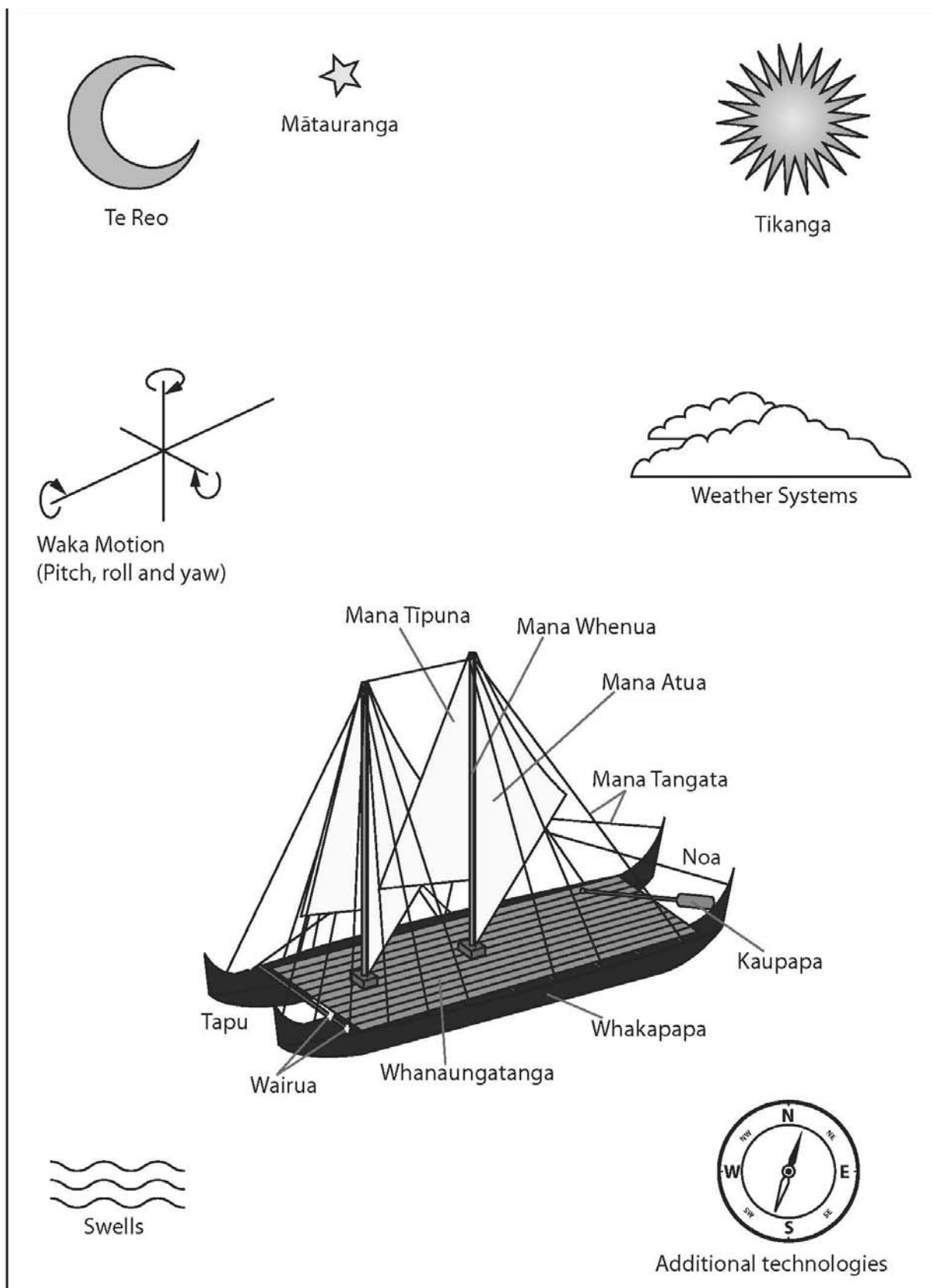
Figure 1. The Waka Hourua Research Framework

Table 1.
Components of the Waka Hourua *Research Framework*

Waka component	Research component	Description
Core values		
Ihu (bow)	Tapu	Sacredness imbued in all things living and non-living
Tā (stern)	Noa	Balance and safety
Riu (hull)	Whakapapa	Genealogical connections
Kāraho (deck)	Whanaungatanga	Ongoing, warm, reciprocal relationships
Aukaha (lashings)	Wairua	Spiritual connectedness between all living and non-living things
Rā (sail)	Mana atua	Respecting atua
Rā ngongohau (staysail)	Mana tīpuna	Respecting ancestors
Maihi (mast)	Mana whenua	Respecting the environment
Taura (rigging ropes)	Mana tangata	Respecting people
Urungi (steering paddle)	Kaupapa	Collective research vision
Guiding principles		
Sun	Tikanga	Affirming Māori laws and protocols
Moon	Te reo	Affirming Māori language
Stars	Mātauranga Māori	Affirming Māori knowledge
Contextual considerations		
Weather systems	Diverse realities	Recognising social, cultural, geographical, political, and historical circumstances
Swells	Power structures	Recognising the effect of power structures on research
Waka motion	Reflexive awareness	Self-monitoring and adjusting the research approach where necessary
Additional technologies	Combining knowledge systems	Respectfully combining knowledge systems in an additive manner, where appropriate

building) process can be used to guide interactions with others, resulting in the establishment of ongoing, reciprocal relationships.

The fifth core value, wairua (spirituality), connects all living and non-living things in the Māori world. It is through wairua that we are connected to the atua (deities, natural elements), to the whenua (land), to our tīpuna (ancestors), mokopuna (descendents), and to each other (Pihama, 2001).

Mana is a concept incorporating authority, power, and prestige (Williams, 1957). Mana is intricately linked with tapu (sacred, prohibited), as the higher the tapu of a being, the higher the mana. As tapu is passed down through whakapapa lines, so too is mana. The more senior one's whakapapa (genealogy) lines, the greater one's mana. As the atua (deities, natural elements) represent the origins of all whakapapa lines, the atua are imbued with the highest mana and tapu. As ancestors are genealogically linked to the atua more closely than current generations, ancestors too have high tapu and mana. Honouring atua and tīpuna (ancestors) is central in Māori protocol. Therefore research with Māori should uphold mana atua (divine power) and mana tīpuna (ancestral power), the sixth and seventh core values respectively.

Mana whenua refers to territorial rights, or prestige sourced from the land one occupies, and is the eighth core value in the Waka Hourua Research Framework. Those who are tangata whenua (people of the land) hold the authority in their area such that when different Māori collectives come together, the protocols of the tangata whenua preside. For research to be conducted with Māori in an appropriate manner, proper recognition and respect should be given to mana whenua.

Mana tangata (personal authority, power, prestige) is the ninth core value in the framework. All people have inherent mana, from conception, inherited through whakapapa (genealogy) from atua (deities, natural elements) and tīpuna (ancestors). For research to be ethical it must be respectful to people. In research involving Māori, the mana tangata of those involved must be upheld.

The final core value, kaupapa (agenda), is defined in this model as collective research vision. This component of the framework requires that research is directed towards Māori development, and approved by the community.

Guiding Principles

The celestial bodies depicted in this framework that make navigation possible are the sun, the moon, and stars, representing tikanga (laws, protocols), te reo (the Māori language), and mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) respectively. The guiding principles in this framework recognise the legitimacy, relevance, and utility of Māori culture and knowledge, and appreciate the capacity for new knowledge to be generated from Māori knowledge.

Contextual Considerations

When navigating the Ocean, it is crucial that environmental conditions are carefully studied, and responded to. Some of these environmental considerations are incorporated into this framework as important research considerations. The first contextual consideration in this framework is weather systems, which are likened to the diverse realities Māori experience. Just as kaiwhakatere (sailors) must be responsive to weather systems, researchers must be acutely aware of the social contexts within which their research takes place. For participant based research, an understanding of the diversity of participant realities is crucial to all stages of the research process, and caution must be exercised when attempts are made to generalise results across populations.

The second contextual consideration is swells. Māori navigators use swells to maintain course in the absence of more easily

detected points of reference, such as stars. In research, power structures can affect progress, much as swells affect waka (vessel) voyages. Researchers must therefore be cognisant of power structures and focused on attaining research goals when plotting the research course.

The third contextual consideration is waka (vessel) motion. Careful study of the way in which the waka hourua (double-hulled sailing vessel) moves is necessary to complete successful voyages. The movement of the waka hourua indicates seaworthiness, and environmental conditions. By monitoring the movement of the waka hourua, adjustments can be made to the waka itself, and to the course steered. Reflexivity in research similarly allows for self-monitoring and adjustments to the research approach where necessary. Just as waka hourua may need to alter orientation, course, or, in extreme cases, destination, researchers may need to alter their approach, processes, or even their research objectives.

The fourth and final contextual consideration is additional technologies. While waka (vessel) voyages can be made successfully relying solely on traditional way-finding techniques, this by no means excludes the use of modern innovations aboard waka hourua (double-hulled sailing vessels). On modern waka hourua voyages, information and technologies such as the compass, GPS, ocean charts, and marine weather forecasts are often utilised. These technologies are useful. However, to ensure smooth sailing, it is important that reliance on these modern instruments does not subvert information gathered using traditional techniques, as was discovered by the crew of Te Aurere, on its maiden voyage to Rarotonga, in 1992 (see Te Aurere Voyaging, 1992). In research too, Indigenous knowledge is used to generate legitimate new knowledge, without recourse to non-Indigenous knowledge. Indigenous knowledge can also be combined with non-

Indigenous knowledge systems to generate new knowledge. Provided the knowledge systems being utilised are given appropriate consideration and respect, combining the knowledge systems can be an innovation that leads to new discoveries. What is critical to Indigenous researchers is that the new knowledge is able to make a contribution to Indigenous defined goals and outcomes.

Te Ara Rangahau (the Research Path)

Just as a structurally sound waka (vessel) is needed to make an ocean voyage, a sound methodology is necessary to complete a successful research journey. A description of research that adheres to the Waka Hourua Framework will be provided, as follows. The kaupapa (agenda) of the research will respond to research objectives that have been identified by Māori communities. Consultation with appropriate Māori collectives and authorities that promotes whanaungatanga (connectedness) and that affirms mana whenua (territorial rights), mana tangata (personal authority, power, prestige) and whakapapa (genealogy) will occur from the initiation phase of the research. Acknowledgement and respect of wairua (spirituality), mana atua (divine power), and mana tīpuna (ancestral power) will be evident in all stages of the research. This will be achieved through understanding tapu (sacred, prohibited) and noa (profane, safe), and by adhering to tikanga (laws, protocols), which allows for the safe navigation between that which is tapu and that which is noa. The starting point of inquiry will be based on tikanga, te reo (Māori language), and mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge). Where researchers need guidance on these matters, research relationships with appropriate experts will be formalised. The research will show awareness of the diverse realities of Māori and the socio-political and historical contexts that produce these realities. Researchers will be cognisant of power structures that exert influence over the research process, the

research participants, and the researchers themselves. Researchers will also show reflexive awareness, monitoring the research process, themselves, and the research community, and demonstrating flexibility in adjusting the research process in light of their assessments of the research process, and community feedback. Finally, the research may or may not employ additional (non-Māori) knowledge and techniques. These additional research techniques could include qualitative and/or quantitative research techniques, applied in an additive manner to Māori knowledge and research methods, in order to add value to the research.

Discussion

Interpreting psychological phenomena requires an understanding of underlying, culture specific value and belief systems. The Waka Hourua Research Framework is an attempt to incorporate a Māori community's values and beliefs into the research approach. In the ethno-centric discipline of psychology, founded on Western scientific principles including isolationism and reductionism (see Harris & Mercier, 2006; Lawson-Te Aho, 2002), the Waka Hourua Research Framework allows for a holistic approach to psychological research to be taken, recognising how people's social, political, historical, and geographic context influences their psychology.

It is important to note that this framework was produced in response to the research needs of a particular urban Māori community. The components of the framework reflect concepts that the members of the specific community and research team deemed crucial to the research. Therefore the utility of this framework is that it can be used as a starting point in formulating a tailored methodological approach to suit other Māori communities. It is likely that the application of this model will be most successful in similar urban Māori communities.

The Waka Hourua Research Framework described in this paper was used successfully to guide research with an urban Māori community. The intervention project was successful, as key stakeholders reported satisfaction with the outcomes of the intervention activities. Information gained in the field was used in further studies that conformed to community members' research interests. In the first of these studies, a thematic analysis of community members' interview data was conducted, and a framework for increasing Māori engagement in State secondary schools was produced. A further study used the interview data to generate a process model of Māori identity development. Insights gained from community members also prompted further statistical studies using data from another research project. As an ongoing relationship has been established between the research team and the Māori community, results arising from these further studies will continue to be fed back to the community.

This paper explored one direction for psychological research involving Māori communities: researching the interface between mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) and Western science. The Waka Hourua Research Framework, positioned to explore this interface, is founded on core Māori values that enable research to reflect Māori worldviews. The guiding principles in the framework, tikanga (laws, protocols), te reo (Māori language), and mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge), then provide the bases and processes of scientific inquiry. Finally, holistic, contextual considerations that influence and provide feedback into the research process are outlined. The result of incorporating these components is a dynamic framework, based on ancient Māori values, processes, and knowledge, that is able to respond and adapt to contemporary and diverse Māori research needs.

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Glossary

Māori	*Meaning in English*	*Māori*	*Meaning in English*
Atua	Deities, natural elements	Pōwhiri	Formal welcome/s
Aukaha	Lashings	Rā -	Sail
Hui	Meeting/s	Rā ngongohau	Staysail
Ihu	Bow	Riu	Hull
Kaiwhakatere	Sailor/s	Rūnanga	Māori council
Kapa haka	Māori performing arts	Tangata whenua	People of the land, territorial authorities
Kaupapa	Agenda	Tapu	Sacred, prohibited
Kāraho	Deck	Taura	Rope
Maihi	Mast	Tā	Stern
Mana	Authority, power, prestige	Tikanga	Laws, protocols
Mana atua	Divine power	Tīpuna	Ancestor/s
Mana tangata	Personal authority, power, prestige	Te reo	The Māori language
Mana tīpuna	Ancestral power	Urungi	Steering paddle
Mana whenua	Territorial rights	Wairua	Spirituality
Manuhiri	Visitor/s	Waka	Vessel
Marae	Meeting house/s	Waka hourua	Double-hulled sailing vessel
Mau rākau	Māori martial art	Whakapapa	Genealogy
Māori	Indigenous people of New Zealand	Whakawhanaungatanga	Relationship building
Mātauranga Māori	Māori knowledge	Whanaungatanga	Connectedness
Mokopuna	Descendent/s	Whānau	Family
Noa	Profane, safe	Whenua	Land