

TOWARDS A KAUPAPA MĀORI FITNESS GYM

A Bourdieusian analysis

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Abstract

The fitness gym is an avenue where people pursue their health and well-being aspirations. In Aotearoa New Zealand, Māori have similar rates of physical activity to non-Māori; however, it is unclear how many Māori access the fitness gym. At the time of undertaking the research reported in this article, the lead author was a health advisor at a fitness gym within a Māori health provider whilst completing his Master of Physical Education. He was interested in examining whether a Kaupapa Māori gym was possible. This gave rise to a research project framed by a Kaupapa Māori theory that utilised Bourdieu's (1986/2011) theory of capital to examine the relationship between Māori health, capital accumulation and the fitness gym. There is little known about the value of fitness gyms for Māori, and whether Māori values and principles can be integrated within the fitness gym. The research methods utilised were individual interviews, an individualised personal training session and a questionnaire. There were 23 Māori participants, who were recruited within Dunedin during August 2015. The main finding of this part of the research was that capital accumulation through all Bourdieu's types of capital (economic, social, symbolic, bodily and cultural) was identified and enhanced through interpreting the participants' feedback and experiences, with Kaupapa Māori theory providing the foundational methodological support for enhancing Māori voices and aspirations for individual and collective hauora throughout the research process.

Keywords

capital accumulation, exercise, fitness gym, Māori health

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Introduction

Ko Horouta, ko Takitimu ngā waka kaha e kawē ana

Ko Hikurangi, ko Aoraki ngā maunga teitei e tu ana

Ko Awatere, ko Waitaki ngā awa whakapai e rere ana

Ko Porourangi, ko Tahu Potiki ngā tupuna e mihi ana

Ko Ngāti Porou, Ko Ngāi Tahu ngā iwi e noho ana

Ko Awatere, Ko Arowhenua ngā marae manaaki e tu ana

Ko Darcy Karaka ahau

E ngā rau rangatira—tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa.

The fitness gym is a known and normal construct in modern society. The rise in popularity of these establishments has led to a proliferation of gyms around the world. With the globalisation of the fitness gym, use of these establishments has become widespread among many countries and cultures. The fitness gym is a specific place where exercise and physical activity are vehicles for pursuing and achieving positive health outcomes. In the context of Aotearoa New Zealand, there are approximately 861 fitness gyms operating (IBISWorld, 2023).

There are many variables and reasons to consider when it comes to how and why people choose to use fitness gyms. The margins between Māori health statistics and non-Māori health statistics point to significant inequities relating to incidence and severity of negative health outcomes and all-cause mortality for Māori (Ministry of Health, 2021). Furthermore, Māori tend to have more unmet healthcare needs than non-Māori and have higher rates of health conditions such as diabetes, asthma, cardiovascular disease, and obesity. These aspects are explored further in the lead author's master's thesis, *A Kaupapa Māori Approach to the Fitness Gym* (Karakā, 2015); however, for the purposes of this article we have chosen to explore Māori use of fitness gyms as interpreted through the thematic analysis of Kaupapa Māori theory and Bourdieu's (1986/2011) theory of capital.

At the time of this research, the lead author was a Master of Physical Education student at the University of Otago and the Health Advisor Team Leader at Arai Te Uru Whare Hauora, a Dunedin-based Māori health provider. As a health advisor, his work complemented the research and in turn provided an opportunity to put the research into practice. At the time, he was fortunate to lead and operate a service that delivered exercise and

nutrition advice predominantly for Māori, but which was available to all. Working at a Māori health provider allowed him to work holistically and address health from a collaborative approach. This journey and experience led to him exploring the development of a Kaupapa Māori gym.

A Kaupapa Māori gym

In this article we situate the kaupapa of a Kaupapa Māori gym within the broad field of Māori physical education and health. We focus upon Durie's (1985) Māori perspective of health as Te Whare Tapa Whā—a four-sided conceptualisation that represents the four basic tenets of health. These are te taha whānau—the family aspect; te taha wairua—the spiritual aspect; te taha hīnengaro—the mental aspect; and te taha tinana—the physical aspect. Each tenet is independent yet interdependent as each relies on the others to form a comprehensive model (Durie, 1985). In relation to each tenet there are several values and customs, such as tikanga Māori, kaupapa Māori and mātauranga Māori. Te Whare Tapa Whā also underpins the Health and Physical Education Curriculum in New Zealand secondary schools and is one means for understanding the context of a Kaupapa Māori gym. While physical activity is commonly associated with the tenet of te taha tinana, in te ao Māori it is applicable to all tenets (Burrows, 2004).

In New Zealand, 55.7% of all Māori adults surveyed in 2020/21 reported being physically active (Ministry of Health, 2021). The Ministry of Health (2021) suggests that there is not a statistically significant difference between physical activity rates of Māori and those of non-Māori. However, Māori are overrepresented in diseases that can be prevented by physical activity, such as obesity (50.8%) and diabetes (6.7%) (Ministry of Health, 2021). While we know there is a causal relationship between physical activity and health, there are also wider issues, such as the impacts of colonisation, that explain why Māori have poorer health outcomes despite similar rates of physical activity. While we know that Māori have similar rates of physical activity to non-Māori, and that Māori engage in sport as well, there is little information about Māori participation in the fitness gym. It is known, however, that certain barriers prevent and deter people from participating in physical activity (Moschny et al., 2011). The barriers include accessibility, affordability and approachability. For Māori, these barriers can be strong inhibitors for physical activity and the fitness gym (Karakā, 2015).

The health and fitness industry is a global phenomenon, with fitness gyms and private health clubs making up a significant portion of the industry. In 2012, fitness gyms generated an estimated US\$75.7 billion in revenue globally, serving over 131.7 million members in more than 153,000 fitness gyms worldwide (International Health Racquet & Sports Club Association, 2013). Here in New Zealand, the health and fitness industry generates approximately NZ\$160 million annually and it is estimated that approximately 400,000 New Zealanders hold gym memberships at any one time (New Zealand Institute of Health and Fitness, 2009). The fitness gym is a popular service and has become a normalised part of contemporary society. Andreasson and Johansson (2014) see globalisation as a leading cause for the “fitness revolution”.

Globalisation refers to the expansion and influence a government or organisation has beyond its own borders (Berry, 2008). Today products and services are designed, assembled and delivered simultaneously in many places around the world, such as the United States, Europe and Asia. In regard to the fitness industry, and more specifically the fitness gym, globalisation has had a profound impact. Commercialisation has meant that “fitness” has become a global phenomenon. The fitness gym and the ideologies that surround it are manifestations of the fitness revolution. These ideologies include body ideals, gym culture, body projects and fitness pedagogy (Andreasson & Johansson, 2014).

The “one-size-fits-all” approach to fitness and exercise employed via homogenisation and standardisation, while popular among many cohorts, fails to consider the personal needs and preferences of individuals. This poses a problem for those who perhaps seek a relevant and specific standard of health and fitness. Cultural considerations are apparent here. For example, the isolation of the body from other health aspects conflicts with the Māori perspective of health and well-being (Durie, 1985). Rather, a holistic approach that encompasses multiple tenets of health, such as those of the Whare Tapa Whā model, is a more suitable approach for Māori. Within such an approach, the narrow focus on physical appearance does not warrant the same significance it is accorded in mainstream fitness gyms. According to Durie (1985), “The individual whose first thoughts are for himself, his personal ambitions or his own body is considered unhealthy, even though his body may be the epitome of fitness” (p. 484). It is vital to recognise, therefore, that the body ideals

that are prevalent among mainstream fitness gyms may not necessarily apply when promoting the fitness gym to Māori.

There are a number of interesting elements in the context of a fitness gym. The fitness gym is theorised in this article through the utilisation of Bourdieu’s (1986/2011) theory of capital alongside a Kaupapa Māori methodological approach. This methodological consideration has been used to showcase that capital accumulation in fitness gyms is not limited to economic capital in the form of profit-based values and priorities. While profits and margins are significant aspects of business and fitness gyms and should not be overlooked, the value and capital that exists as a result of the embodiment of values derived from a culturally relevant framework allows the exploration of the notion of capital accumulation in the fitness gym from a Kaupapa Māori perspective. Thus, the aim of this article is to examine the relationships among the accumulation of capital in accordance with Bourdieu’s (1986/2011) theory of capital, Māori health, exercise and the fitness gym. The analysis of Bourdieu’s theory of capital in conjunction with Kaupapa Māori theory (Smith, 1997) within a fitness gym context is uncharted territory. Evidently, this will create a new research space and could inform industry and populace considerations for how and why the use of fitness gyms corresponds with the perceived notion of capital accumulation from a Kaupapa Māori perspective. We have specifically chosen Bourdieu’s theory of capital as it provides an additional means to see how a Kaupapa Māori gym can provide for the accumulation of capital for Māori for flourishing wellness, beyond just physical benefits.

Bourdieu’s concept of capital

Bourdieu’s (1986/2011) theory of capital was used to interpret the information gathered during the interviews and questionnaires. Bourdieu explains that capital is able to be accumulated and is reproducible, and, therefore, capital is a commodifiable asset that should be considered to comprise five categories: economic capital, social capital, symbolic capital, bodily capital and cultural capital. Each of these forms of capital provides a lens for a systematic analysis of the accumulation of capital via exercise in a fitness gym. The intersections between the fitness gym, Kaupapa Māori theory and Bourdieu’s theory of capital provide an insightful analytical framework for the interpretation of participant feedback.

Kaupapa Māori

The research described in this article used Kaupapa Māori theory. Kaupapa Māori theory is a transformative praxis that engages with the dominant cultural system in order to make space for the sustainable existence of Māori ways of knowing, being, thinking, acting, living and speaking (Smith, 1997). Kaupapa Māori challenges the “ordinary” or notion of normal that has been constructed by the dominant culture, and seeks to identify and uphold Māori views, solutions and ways of knowing. There are eight key principles of Kaupapa Māori theory that have been used to inform the methodological considerations for this research: *tino rangatiratanga*—the principle of self-determination; *taonga tuku iho*—the principle of cultural aspiration; *ako Māori*—the principle of culturally preferred pedagogy; *kaupapa*—the principle of collective philosophy; *whānau*—the principle of kinship; *kia piki ake i ngā raruraru o te kāinga*—the principle of socioeconomic mediation; *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*—The Treaty of Waitangi; and *āta*—the principle of growing respectful relationships (Smith, 1997).

For the purposes of this article, Kaupapa Māori theory and Bourdieu’s (1986/2011) theory of capital have been used to interpret the information provided by participants. This means that the data retrieved from the participants has been collated and analysed using Kaupapa Māori theory and then categorised in relation to Bourdieu’s five different forms of capital. Situating Indigenous methodologies and ideologies within or alongside Western ones is not a new concept, especially in relation to academia. Take, for example, *He Awa Whiria*—the braided rivers framework (Macfarlane et al., 2015). This framework uses the metaphor of braided rivers to highlight the intersecting nature of a series of streams and rivers that are representative of the various worldviews, values and principles of Western ideologies and *te ao Māori* respectively (Macfarlane et al., 2015). Indigenous scholar Marlene Brant Castellano (2014) explains that it is the responsibility of all people to meet the challenge of catering for and implementing Indigenous research. Furthermore, “indigenous people must suspend distrust and non-Indigenous people must suspend disbelief” (Kovach, 2021, p. 255). For the purposes of this research, this is a useful guideline to consider because it provides a context for Kaupapa Māori theory as an Indigenous methodology to exist alongside mainstream health methodologies.

Methods

As noted in the Introduction, at the time of undertaking this research, the lead author was the Health Advisor Team Leader at a Māori health provider in Dunedin. Part of the role was to oversee and manage a small fitness gym. This particular fitness gym incorporates kaupapa Māori principles such as *tikanga Māori* and *mātauranga Māori* alongside exercise prescription to improve Māori health for the gym users. The gym users are primarily Māori, but there is an “open door” policy whereby the gym is open to the general public. The gym is free, and gym users can also access the health advisors. This gym is an interesting intersection of Māori and Western understandings of health, exercise prescription and disease prevention. In thinking about the complexities of this particular context, we utilised Bourdieu’s (1986/2011) theory of capital to explore the benefits of a “Kaupapa Māori gym”.

The data collection methods utilised were individual interviews, an individualised personal training session and a questionnaire. The methods were aligned with a Kaupapa Māori methodology and the *Te Ara Tika Guidelines for Māori Research Ethics*, according to the procedure of best practice endorsed by Hudson et al. (2010). Ethical clearance from the University of Otago Ethics Committee (Category A) and the University of Otago Ngāi Tahu Research Consultation Committee was granted for this research. There were 23 Māori participants in this research—nine males and 14 females—with ages ranging from 17 to 55. The participants were from a range of different *iwi*.

Individual interviews

In terms of Kaupapa Māori methodology, interviews provide the essential *kanohi ki te kanohi* aspect, which is important for building *whanaungatanga* to ensure that the participants know, understand and trust the research and the researcher. A semi-structured and open-ended questioning technique was chosen because it allowed for a more free-flowing discussion. This was important as a structured interview during an initial meeting can create a gap between the researcher and the participant. Rather, the lead author wanted the participants to feel comfortable with and trust in the research, the environment and him, to allow for better information collection from, and empowerment of, the participants. The interviews were recorded via a Dictaphone and then later transcribed.

At each interview, the lead author explained the research in terms of what it entailed, how he

planned to implement it, why it was important and the importance of their participation. The participants and the lead author then discussed their goals, motives and preferences for exercise (see the Appendix for questions used to guide the interviews). This also provided an opportunity to assess any contraindications for exercise that participants might have had (Crossley, 2013). The lead author asked the participants to discuss their goals and aspirations in relation to the Te Whare Tapa Whā health model (Durie, 1985). The physical benefits of gyms and exercise are obvious; however, Te Whare Tapa Whā allows participants to see their health holistically and establish goals and outcomes across multiple tenets of health.

Part of the policies and procedures at Arai Te Uru Whare Hauora is to gain participant consent. This is also a requirement of the University of Otago Ethics Committee. Informed written consent was obtained from the participants prior to the interviews. Any further questions of the participants were discussed, and an appointment was made for them to receive their personal training session. Each interview was recorded and transcribed during data analysis.

Training sessions

A personal training session was the second data collection method used in this research. These sessions allowed for further development of the whanaungatanga established through the interview. These sessions differed from mainstream training sessions as they took place at Arai Te Uru Whare Hauora and each training session was conducted with just the participant and the lead author present. Although the importance of whānau participation has been discussed, at this stage it was important to develop a connection with each participant on an individual level to gain trust and rapport. Furthermore, the participants were able to encourage and recruit their whānau and friends based on these methods and the employment of best practice as informed by Te Ara Tika. The personal training sessions employed tuakana-teina through the lead author's prescription and delivery of exercise for the participant and through their feedback. Personal training sessions also gave him the opportunity to inspire, motivate and encourage the participants to be physically active and use the gym facilities at Arai Te Uru Whare Hauora independently (Crossley, 2013). The lead author wanted to build a foundation of tino rangatiratanga for exercise in the fitness gym for participants; he was the only person who delivered these training sessions.

Each session began with a brief kōrero to explain what the training programme consisted of and to answer any questions that participants may have had, after which the delivery of the training session commenced. Each session ranged between 30 and 60 minutes in duration (depending on participant fitness levels), and the mode of training was specific to their goals and requirements. The training modalities prescribed during each session varied between resistance training and aerobic training. A training session was used so as to validate the service offered by Arai Te Uru Whare Hauora in terms of using the fitness gym and promoting exercise and physical activity. Also, this allowed for participants to use a fitness gym and elaborate on their experiences.

Questionnaire

At the conclusion of their training session, the participants were asked to complete an online questionnaire (reproduced in the Appendix). A questionnaire is a tool "for the elaboration of information structure" from a typological perspective and for "the collection of natural linguistic data, both spoken and written" (Skopeteas et al., 2006, p. 1). The design of the questionnaire was based on the research questions and aims of the research. For this research, the questionnaire was used to capture any information that participants may have forgotten to discuss during the interview. For this reason, very little information from the questionnaires was used as it was often a reproduction of what had already been captured during interviews.

Results

In this section, we will discuss Bourdieu's (1986/2011) five forms of capital, drawing on the participants' kōrero and Kaupapa Māori theory. This multifaceted approach provides a unique perspective on health, capital accumulation and the fitness gym. Each of the five subsections corresponds to one form of capital. Excerpts of participants' kōrero are added as examples of Māori interpretations of health and wellness.

Cultural capital

Cultural capital is the knowledge, skills and behaviours that people portray and acquire in relation to others within a sociocultural context (Bourdieu, 1986/2011). Cultural capital is often associated with formal education due to academia being viewed as a market for the distribution of cultural capital (Claussen & Osborne, 2013).

Six of the participants highlighted the importance of education within the gym as a factor for determining health outcomes, gym attendance and exercise adherence. The participants were not referring to academia here; rather, “education” referred to the transferral of knowledge in a culturally appropriate manner. This is evident in the following quotes. Participant One said: “Education around nutrition and physical well-being. Again, working as a family and getting the family involved.” Participant Two commented:

Educating people a lot more, educating Māori more. A lot more on who they are and what they want to achieve, putting in goals, making sure those goals are seen through, giving tricks of the trade so to say and little tips on how to improve.

Cultural capital is therefore an applicable form of capital for the fitness gym. The participants deemed the teaching and transferral of knowledge that is relevant to Māori to be important in the context of the fitness gym. Participant One explained that the involvement of family in education around nutrition and physical activity is important. According to Participant Two, education and advice for Māori is also a critical component for maintenance of exercise goals and motives. She felt that information pertaining to a guided process for goal accomplishment is necessary.

The gym as a sociocultural context presents the opportunity for cultural capital to be exchanged. Education around exercise techniques and formats is one example of how this can be implemented. The practitioner should be able to deliver sound information about exercise prescription as well as understanding the significance of cultural sensitivity (Sukala et al., 2012). Cultural capital, therefore, is not simply a teacher-to-learner phenomenon in this case. Rather, it is a mutual transaction between people that should not at any stage diminish the mana of either party and can be linked to the Kaupapa Māori theory principle of āta (Smith, 1997). There are some suggestions and advice for working with Māori that practitioners can employ to effectively engage with Māori (Sukala et al., 2012). The participants highlighted some of these steps. According to Participant Three,

Once again just having that kanohi ki te kanohi, so always having someone Māori taking those sessions. That helps break down that barrier and a little bit of empathy and tautoko goes a long way. A like-minded person, not to be judgemental

of our people, their health and how it’s got to be where it is.

Cultural capital and the relevance that it has within the fitness gym can also be analysed alongside Kaupapa Māori theory. The statements above can be linked to the Kaupapa Māori theory principle of ako Māori (Smith, 1997). In coaching or training a Māori individual or group through exercise, it is important that the practitioner has a reasonable understanding of te ao Māori and tikanga Māori (Henwood, 2007; Sukala et al., 2012). Tikanga is particularly important. Tikanga is a diverse concept that refers to Māori practices and procedures in dealing with groups or individuals (Mead, 2003). Tikanga is a template that governs behaviour and provides tools for thought and understanding (Mead, 2003). Currently, many fitness gyms and related exercise facilities do not acknowledge or observe tikanga. For Māori, this cultural insensitivity could be potentially harmful, and this may be partially responsible for the low rates of gym participation among them (Sukala et al., 2012). The inclusion of basic tikanga in the fitness gym would go a long way towards making the gym a more attractive exercise option for Māori.

Social capital

According to Bourdieu (1986/2011), social capital is the accumulation of networks and institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition. Social capital acknowledges one’s acceptance in a group (Bourdieu, 1986/2011). Eleven of the participants agreed that the gym presented an opportunity to harness social capital. The participants explained that group-based exercise was more appealing because it allowed for social interaction and relationship building. This brief quote from Participant Four during the interview supports this: “I guess it’s kind of a social thing too.” The fitness gym as a social sphere is nothing new. According to Andreasson and Johansson (2014), the fitness gym is a socially constructed environment that is upheld by ideals and values. In research by Stewart et al. (2013), social interaction was among the benefits that people highlighted gaining from using a fitness gym.

One form of social capital that can be acquired in a fitness gym is social support. According to Pridgeon and Grogan (2012), social support is a positive enforcer for exercise adherence in a fitness gym. In terms of cultural specificity, Sukala et al. (2012) suggest that social support in a fitness gym can be offered through a competent practitioner who knows and understands the requirements of

Polynesian people. Additionally, offering a service that encompasses all whānau members can assist in creating a comfortable environment that provides social support (Sukala et al., 2012).

When asked what factors would attract Māori to a fitness gym, Participant Five responded: “A Māori way of delivering it, face-to-face, meeting people, inviting them in and then an event where they can invite other people from their whānau.” In terms of social capital, the Māori gym users would receive more social support through the involvement of their whānau and through the respect of the practitioner to engage with people *kanohi ki te kanohi*, which supports Sukala et al.’s (2012) findings.

In contrast, three participants explained that they were not interested in using the gym environment as a social catalyst. In fact, some participants explained that they preferred not to be disturbed during their exercise training. Participant Six’s quote is an example: “I want to just go there and do my thing without being interrupted or having to talk to someone.” Therefore, there are individual differences in how one chooses to use the fitness gym (Sassatelli, 2010)—some appreciate the social aspects and opportunities, while others prefer a more individual and even solitary experience.

However, the accumulation of social capital through exercising at the gym is not restricted to experiences within the fitness gym itself. Often, using exercise to pursue health and fitness has positive effects on the social experiences people have outside the gym too (Stewart et al., 2013). This was noted by five of the participants, who explained that being healthy and fit could improve their relationships with people and specifically whānau through increased physical capability and confidence. The link between whānau and social capital is significant because it provides insight into some important variables of social capital for Māori. This was exemplified in the previous quote from Participant Five: “A Māori way of delivering it, face-to-face, meeting people, inviting them in and then an event where they can invite other people from their whānau.”

From a Kaupapa Māori perspective, there is a link between social capital and the Kaupapa Māori theory principle of whānau (Smith, 1997). It has been mentioned that exercise can elicit improved social experiences with extended kin groups. Exercise endorses whanaungatanga, and the fitness gym encapsulates people within a collective social circle that creates a relationship among people, place (the fitness gym) and practice (exercise). Often this creates a sense of community

among members and users—so much so that this community can have powerful effects on how someone or a group might identify themselves within and among this community.

Bodily capital

The gym is an environment that many use to improve their body. The previously mentioned term “body project” links people’s use of the gym with the idea of constructing their body as a project (Stewart et al., 2013). In Bourdieu’s (1986/2011) model of capital, the notion of body projects spans several domains of capital, but it most obviously resides in the concept of bodily capital. This form of capital relates to that which enhances one’s capacity to look good and perform well (Stewart et al., 2013).

For the participants in this study, there was an obvious association between their goals for exercise and bodily capital. Approximately 15 of the participants disclosed goals for exercise relevant to physiological and metabolic improvements to their body, validating the fitness gym as a useful environment to achieve such goals. Furthermore, bodily capital was indirectly identified through the goals and motives provided by the participants in reference to exercise, appearance and performance (Stewart et al., 2013). Participant Seven discussed specific target areas that she wanted to focus on: “Working on my hips, thighs and stomach. I’m down weight and I’ve done all that. It’s just toning up now pretty much. I don’t want to lose any more weight, I just want to tone.”

There are two main categories of body projects in a fitness gym: appearance enhancement and performance enhancement (Stewart et al., 2013). In Participant Seven’s quote above the term “tone” relates to appearance through the definition of muscle tone, which suggests that Participant Seven’s body project is informed by appearance enhancement (Stewart et al., 2013). In contrast, Participant Five’s body project focused on sporting performance as a motive for exercise at a fitness gym: “My main goal would be to remain match fit over the off-season so that pre-season isn’t that hard for rugby.”

Sport-specific training is a common training regime within fitness gyms. Many sports have physiological and metabolic requirements of athletes. Participant Five’s goal was specific to rugby, therefore it would make sense for him to engage in exercise that is relevant to the physical requirements of rugby (Crossley, 2013). In terms of bodily capital accumulation, the physiological and metabolic benefits of sport-specific exercise

will assist in his performance and provide him with the physical attributes necessary for his sporting performance.

While bodily capital was a common motivator for participants, it was also highlighted as a major deterrent. Bodily capital has a close association with symbolic capital. For example, five of the participants mentioned that what often deterred them from going to the gym was other people who they perhaps felt exhibited a bodily capital that was beyond their own. This is evident in the following quote from Participant Eight:

Whereas, mainstream appears to me to be very, oh I don't like to use this term, show-ponyish. And it's about looking good. To me it appears to be looking good, not so much feeling good as a whole.

Bodily capital acquired through gym work has been described as a deterrent for exercise adherence in a fitness gym. Specifically, Participant Eight mentioned the priority of looking good over feeling good. In this case, it can be postulated that physical appearance is not necessarily a positive driver of capital acquisition for Māori.

Therefore, bodily capital has both positive and negative effects on people's attendance at a gym. While acquisition of their own bodily capital is a primary motive for people's gym use, the display of others' bodily capital and a possible imbalance in people's bodily capital status can become a deterrent. In other words, some people use the fitness gym to endorse and acquire bodily capital and others see it as a platform for the comparison of bodily capital among the users. For the latter, this has become a major issue for attendance and exercise adherence at the fitness gym.

Symbolic capital

Symbolic capital relates to the status one acquires through one's achievements and also relates to one's material possessions (Bourdieu, 1986/2011). According to Stewart et al. (2013), when people accumulate status, it is often specific to a location or origin. In terms of the fitness gym, a variety of symbolic capital is evident. Symbolic capital portrayed in a gym environment can be related to gender differences (Stewart et al., 2013).

The reasons for using the gym tend to differ between men and women. For example, bodybuilding was traditionally a male-dominated pursuit whereas aerobics was dominated by females (Andreasson & Johansson, 2014). These trends are related to the values enshrined in symbolic capital and gender. During the 1960s and

1970s, bodybuilding and improving one's physical strength were predominantly male preoccupations and had close ties with warfare, violence and status accomplishment. Thus, bodybuilding is related to a masculine stereotype (Andreasson & Johansson, 2014).

A different mode of gym exercise, the "work-out", was popularised during the 1980s. This was typically characterised by gymnastics and pre-choreographed movements to music. The workout or "working out" carried strong connotations of femininity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), as gymnastics and dance were more usually considered female pursuits. The variations between male and female identities in the gym therefore rendered certain exercise modalities and philosophies more appealing than others for male and female users. Today we are witnessing an increasing collaboration of exercise modalities and philosophies. For example, there are many female bodybuilders and many male gym members involved in aerobics and other pre-choreographed exercise modalities (Andreasson & Johansson, 2014).

In terms of symbolic capital, the perceived value of achieving a certain look is important to many. These body projects are personified through neoliberal imperatives of gender performance, self-improvement and impression management (Stewart et al., 2013). In other words, the goal is to look young, fit and sexy. As a project, the body is crafted and moulded in the public sphere of a gym to showcase and secure identity through the portrayal of who one is and who one wants to be (Orbach, 2009, as cited in Stewart et al., 2013). However, of the participants in this research, only one directly related exercise to accumulation of symbolic capital. Participant Nine stated:

For me it's just about getting fit and body wise and I guess it's just about pumping up my spirit really. If I don't do anything about that then my whole body breaks down. That's why I think it's important to have some kind of look.

The almost complete lack of consideration among the participants of symbolic capital in a fitness gym suggests that this may be a major difference between the motivations for Māori to use a fitness gym and those of other gym users. This can be attributed to differences between Māori and mainstream approaches to health in general. According to Cram et al. (2003), "Descriptions of a Māori view of health are invariably holistic and centred on whānau health and well-being rather than the

health of the individual” (p. 1). Therefore, the notion of symbolic capital gained in a fitness gym through individual pursuits would be considered less relevant from a Māori perspective.

However, in relation to the general population, some participants did note that symbolic capital was a factor in people using the gym, as in the following quote from Participant Four: “I guess the main reason why most people go to the gym is to look attractive. I don’t go to the gym because it is full of fit people.” This is an interesting quote. Participant Four explains that while some people use the fitness gym to attain symbolic capital through looking fit, this same symbol of health and fitness was a deterrent for her. Participant Ten felt similarly, stating: “I would say that would be a deterrent, if I was quite big and I saw heaps of skinny people in there, I probably wouldn’t want to go in.” As an incentive to exercise in a fitness gym, symbolic capital is rendered insignificant due to the deterrent it presents for many. While symbolic capital is synonymous with status acquisition and social standing, the opportunity to partake in this process is inhibited due to the symbolic portrayal of health and fitness from other people in a fitness gym (Stewart et al., 2013).

A related issue that four of the participants highlighted in relation to symbolic capital in a fitness gym was the branded clothing that people wore. In the interviews, five participants were very explicit in their discussion of clothing brands as a factor in attendance at a gym. The symbolism associated with certain sport/exercise clothing is often comparable with economic capital (Stewart et al., 2013). As material possessions are often seen as a direct representation of economic capital, the pressure to wear branded labels was highlighted as a deterrent to gym attendance. Certain brands of clothing are more expensive than other brands. Therefore, in the context of a fitness gym there is a relationship between symbolic capital and economic capital as far as attire is concerned (Stewart et al., 2013). These, however, were not factors that attracted the participants to the gym. Rather, the participants explained that these factors would need to be subdued to attract more Māori to the gym. The following quote from Participant Eleven supports this: “Not deterring people from the gym is having a place where you can go in with workout gear that’s not labelled.”

Symbolic capital as it relates to clothing is difficult to negate as people are free to wear what they please and often certain brands are associated with sport and exercise. Therefore, the people who are not able to financially afford this type of

clothing might feel that they would acquire negative symbolic capital, especially given the social comparisons that exist as a part of gym culture (Pridgeon & Grogan, 2012).

There is a close association between social capital and symbolic capital when it comes to exercise. For example, one of the founders of the workout and aerobic movements, Jane Fonda, advocated that exercise was compatible with domestic housework and childcare (Andreasson & Johansson, 2014). Five of the participants in this research reaffirmed this by stating that they believed exercise could help with their involvement with whānau. This is evident in the following quote from Participant Twelve during their interview:

I try and go up there [to his family] and be a role model for them, so if I’m eating well and being active, I’d hope it persuades my other brothers and sisters to get outside and play, and I want to be able to do things with them but it seems like a lot of the time they’re trapped so they just stay inside playing games and stuff. I want to be a motivator for my whānau in that aspect.

This appreciation for whānau and the importance it has for total well-being is an essential requirement for many Māori. Being a role model entails significant symbolic capital. In terms of the fitness gym, it is important to consider the benefits exercise can have towards whānau health and general activities of daily living. Also, being a role model for whānau was mentioned as a strong motivator for many of the participants. Therefore, being a role model and exemplifying positive behaviour for health and fitness carries considerable social capital.

Symbolic capital from a Māori perspective is therefore unlikely to be related to how one physically looks or dresses. Rather, the symbolic capital for Māori can be linked to kanohi kitea. This relates to the involvement one has with the community and giving back. Specifically, it relates to how their participation contributes to the functioning and mana of the community. From this, a link can be identified among exercise, whānau, symbolic capital and social capital. Essentially, exercise is a vehicle for these other parameters.

Viewing exercise as a vehicle to improve activities of daily living, quality of life and whānau engagement is more likely to elicit a greater commitment to regular exercise and use of a fitness gym for Māori (Stewart et al., 2013). Having the fitness to partake in community events and increasing or maintaining one’s involvement with

one's community presents several opportunities to acquire both social and symbolic capital. For Māori the acquisition of social capital and symbolic capital can be linked to the acquisition of mana. This is an interesting concept, as mana is not self-proclaimed. Rather, it is earned through one's achievements, accolades and birth rights (Mead, 2003). In addition, if people are able to actively participate within the community, then this in turn can help maintain an active and vibrant community, thus allowing the community to gain social capital and uplift the mana of the collective.

Economic capital

Economic capital is the capital that is attained via the maximisation of profit and financial incentive (Bourdieu, 1986/2011). No participants provided a direct reference to the term "economic capital" as a benefit of exercise in a fitness gym. However, 10 of the participants mentioned that exercise could improve physical fitness and energy levels. For example, Participant Eight stated that her goals and motives for exercise were "to lose weight, to have more energy, to be able to do more things, to live a better lifestyle". Improving energy levels can assist in improving work capacity (Hamilton et al., 2007), which can in turn generate greater economic capital. According to Stewart et al. (2013), exercise in the fitness gym is further promoted by a growing awareness of the capital associated with physical activity. The notion of working hard, which is associated with exercise in the fitness gym, is also appreciated in the workforce. Health is highly valued in the workplace, reflecting the desire for profitability, which is dependent on a healthy and profitable workforce (Waring, 2008, as cited in Stewart et al., 2013). Thus, economic capital is relevant in relation to the fitness gym as health and fitness are products of using a fitness gym, which in turn increases economic potential.

There was a strong tendency among the participants to discount economic capital as a factor altogether. The participants' disapproval of any economic incentive to exercise became apparent during the early stages of the interviews and was consistent. The participants were more interested in economic factors that act as barriers to the use of the gym than they were in the acquisition of economic capital through exercising at the gym. This exemplifies the Kaupapa Māori theory principle of *kia piki ake i ngā raruraru o te kāinga* (Smith, 1997). The participants highlighted that the cost of services like gym memberships are a deterrent for participation as finances often need to be prioritised on other costs, like rent, food and power.

Conclusion

Capital accumulation (economic, social, symbolic, bodily and cultural) has clearly been identified within a fitness gym for Māori. However, the notion of capital from a Māori perspective differs from a mainstream understanding. For example, the traditional interpretation of symbolic capital pertains to individual status and material possessions (Bourdieu, 1986/2011). For Māori, however, symbolic capital is more appropriately aligned with the concept of mana. Therefore, status and achievement are mana-enhancing not only for the individual but also for the collective. Whilst the fitness gym has been identified as a viable option for Māori, the appropriate cultural implications need to be understood for such a context to warrant any validity and relevance for Māori. Thus, applying a Kaupapa Māori framework within a fitness gym allows for capital accumulation among Māori gym users. This informs the authenticity and specificity of the various forms of capital through a culturally relevant framework. A Kaupapa Māori gym will deliver a culturally relevant service that promotes Māori health perceptions and enhances individual and collective mana by way of capital accumulation. Moreover, a Kaupapa Māori gym represents an important avenue for the alleviation of negative health factors. The mitigation of issues surrounding health and well-being through exercise and physical activity fosters positive lifestyle advancements.

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Glossary

Arai Te Uru Whare Hauora	Dunedin-based Māori health provider
Aotearoa	Māori name for New Zealand
hauora	health

He Awa Whiria	framework blending Western science and mātauranga Māori; lit. “braided rivers”
iwi	tribe
kanohi kitea	a face seen
kanohi ki te kanohi	face to face
kaupapa Māori	Māori theme/principle
Kaupapa Māori	a theoretical framework that makes space for Māori principles, values and knowledge
kōrero	discussion/talk
mana	authority/prestige
Māori	Indigenous peoples of New Zealand
mātauranga	knowledge
Ngāi Tahu	tribal group of much of the South Island
tautoko	support
te ao Māori	Māori worldview
Te Whare Tapa Whā	a Māori health model symbolic of a marae; lit. “four walls of the house”
tikanga	correct procedure, values
tuakana-teina	refers to the mentoring relationship between an older (tuakana) person and a younger (teina) person
whakaaro	thoughts
whānau	family
whanaungatanga	relationships

Appendix

Interview questions

The following questions were used as prompts during the semi-structured individual interviews:

1. What are your main goals and motives for exercise?
2. In relation to exercise, what are some goals you might have for each aspect of Te Whare Tapa Whā?
3. What do you think is the difference between a mainstream and Māori perception of health?
4. What factors do you think would attract Māori to a gym?
5. What do you think would deter Māori from a gym?
6. What are the barriers and how can they be negated?
7. Do you think a Māori perception of health can be compatible with the fitness gym?
8. How do you think Māori health can fit into a gym or a gym can cater for Māori health?
9. What do you think are the best methods for improving Māori health?

Questionnaire

At the conclusion of their one-on-one training session, participants were given the following questionnaire to complete:

1. What is your first name?
2. How likely is it that you would recommend this service to a friend or colleague?
3. What topics would you most like to learn about or discuss at a gym?
4. How important is exercise to you? (Very important; Moderately important; Slightly important; Not at all important)
5. Do you feel you get too much exercise, too little exercise, or about the right amount of exercise? (Somewhat too much; Slightly too much; About the right amount; Slightly too little; Somewhat too little; Much too little)
6. What do you most often do for exercise? (Lift weights; Walk; Run; Hike; Swim; Dance; Aerobics; Pilates; Play a team sport; Other, please specify)
7. How does a mainstream perception of health differ from a Māori perception? What factors attract/deter Māori to/from the gym?
8. How can a Māori perception of health be compatible with the fitness gym?
9. Do you have any other comments, questions, or concerns?

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