

TE WHARE TAPA WHĀ AND FACEBOOK

Online communication with Māori postgraduate students during the 2020 COVID-19 lockdown

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Abstract

In 2020, New Zealand Māori made up 6.8% of postgraduate students at the University of Otago (Sizemore, 2020). These students are supported by the author in her role as Māori Postgraduate Support Adviser (hereafter “the Adviser”). During the country’s first COVID-19 lockdown in 2020, the Adviser used Facebook—specifically the University of Otago’s page for Māori postgraduate students—to communicate with this cohort. She adapted the kaupapa Te Whare Tapa Whā (Durie, 1985) into a communication tool, and its success is evaluated in this article by tracking engagement online and through autoethnographic analysis by the Adviser. Engagement with the page by students and staff was frequent but decreased over time. Given the average number of people reached was 50, the posts were deemed to be effective. Whānau was the most important pillar of Te Whare Tapa Whā in getting students to engage, and this was stimulated by the introduction of the Adviser’s pets. Pet posts helped maintain and form relationships with students. The Facebook page continues to be used to communicate with students in the post-COVID-19 environment.

Keywords

COVID-19, Facebook, Māori postgraduates, Te Whare Tapa Whā

Introduction

He aha te kai a te rangatira? He kōrero, he kōrero, he kōrero.

What is the food of the leader? It is knowledge. It is communication. (Revington, 2015, p. 14)

Despite Māori making up around 16.5% of the population of Aotearoa New Zealand (StatsNZ, 2019), Māori are under-represented in the postgraduate cohort at the University of Otago,

accounting for 6.8% of students (Sizemore, 2020). The current cohort of 312 is supported by the author in her role as Māori Postgraduate Support Adviser (hereafter “the Adviser”) who engages, supports, advocates for and fosters Māori postgraduate student success by providing equitable programmes. Inequities or disparities for Māori in postgraduate study often stem from their coming from low-socioeconomic backgrounds or areas, or lower-decile schools, or their being the first in their family to attend university. Equitable programmes for Māori exist because Māori are often

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over-represented in negative education outcomes (Theodore et al., 2017).

Inequity for Māori postgraduate students can be attributed to the colonisation of New Zealand in the 1800s by the British Crown and settlers (Smith, 2012). Colonisation subsequently led to the loss of Māori cultural knowledge, language and land. Te Tiriti o Waitangi | Treaty of Waitangi, a governance agreement signed in 1840 between some Māori chiefs and representatives of the British Crown, has, from its implementation, been subject to different interpretations. Māori chiefs anticipated protection and partnership, while the British Crown anticipated sovereignty and colonisation of the Indigenous peoples.

Formal education in New Zealand has followed a European model and has, over the colonised history of the nation, been used as a tool to assimilate Māori to Pākehā cultural, linguistic and economic norms (Pihama & Lee-Morgan, 2018; Smith, 2012). Negative education outcomes for Māori have followed, and Māori students are over-represented in exclusion, attrition and underachievement rates (Theodore et al., 2017). The historical exclusion of Māori language and culture from publicly funded education, and the unacceptable outcomes for Māori, have meant that education has become a site of resistance for Māori (Walker, 2016). Māori activism and leadership, alongside Treaty reparations resulting from the Waitangi Tribunal, have seen a rise in equity programmes for Māori in education settings.

Equity programmes run by the Adviser include social hui, writing days, writing retreats, one-on-one consultations, workshops, and the nationwide Māori and Indigenous (MAI) programme doctoral student conferences. All of these programmes add equity for our students and help them to complete their postgraduate degrees. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, all of these programmes were held in person, *kanohi ki te kanohi*.

During the first COVID-19 wave (March–July 2020), all teaching, learning and communication went online in New Zealand universities. Level 4 lockdown (whereby all schools, institutions and businesses except for essential services were closed) lasted for four weeks, from March 23 to April 27. As then Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern (2020) stated, this move was to “contain the spread and prevent the worst”. Following Level 4, the country moved to Level 3, but even at this level access to universities was restricted, and this lasted another 2.5 weeks.

At the University of Otago, the lockdown required the Adviser to shift her support of Māori

postgraduate students to online communication. Consequently, the Adviser shifted all equitable programmes (social hui, writing days, office hours and workshops, MAI and Hono MAI conferences) online. This article presents an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Adviser’s communication via Facebook to determine whether there were clear lines of communication regarding administrative information, online services, and health and well-being for Māori postgraduate students during the 2020 lockdown. Before considering the methods of evaluation, the article first discusses what communication for Māori looks like and how it is best delivered, which is followed by an outline of the framework that was chosen to deliver this communication. Finally, online learning approaches and their success with Māori during this intervention are discussed.

Communication for Māori

As *te reo Māori* was originally a spoken language (Best, 1931), communication for Māori has traditionally worked best face-to-face—*te kanohi kitea*—to develop relationships and maintain *whanaungatanga*. With the advent of the internet, social media platforms such as Facebook, and the development of video calling, Māori have increased access to social networking, allowing them to develop and maintain relationships virtually (O’Carroll, 2013). During COVID-19, *kaumātua* and *kuia* were able to connect online in a way that incorporated *Te Whare Tapa Whā*, a holistic health model devised by Durie (1985). It was found that *whānau* elements were helpful in connecting with others and maintaining existing relationships (Tinirau et al., 2021). Successful online programmes for Māori include culturally appropriate communication and pastoral care (Ferguson, 2008; Hudson, 2020). Unfortunately, *whanaungatanga* cannot always be fully recreated online, and some programmes have had mixed success achieving virtual connectedness (Karakla-Clarke, 2020).

Theoretical framework guiding communication

As Aotearoa went into lockdown in March 2020, the Adviser used a *Kaupapa Māori* approach to adapt Sir Mason Durie’s (1985) holistic health model *Te Whare Tapa Whā* into an online communication tool. The pedagogy of *Te Whare Tapa Whā* addresses the person’s well-being holistically, using the metaphor of the four walls/pillars of a house. The walls respectively represent *wairua*, *hinengaro*, *tinana* and *whānau* involvement. While

it was initially designed as a health model for Māori, Te Whare Tapa Whā has been successfully adapted to other contexts beyond the health sector, such as mathematics in secondary schools (Averill, 2011), and as a form of online communication for kaumātua and kuia (Tinirau et al., 2021). The Adviser adapted this holistic model for the tertiary sector to inform her communication with University of Otago Māori postgraduate students during lockdown.

Online learning for Māori

Online learning for Māori is not new, with some systems in place pre-COVID-19. For example, the Indigenous tertiary education provider Te Whare Wānanga ō Awanuiārangi established a Māori e-learning framework for Māori studying for a Bachelor of Teaching and Learning in 2008, providing culturally appropriate education online (Ferguson, 2008). These programmes used a Kaupapa Māori “by Māori for Māori” approach. Ferguson (2008) noted that for an e-learning framework to work there had to be clear direction from the lecturer, or students would disengage. Once disengagement happened it was difficult to get students to re-engage. Engaging is easier if students can engage face-to-face; Skype was used to recreate this effect online (Ferguson, 2008), similarly to how kaumātua and kuia used Facebook in Tinirau et al. (2021). Two key te ao Māori values were also required:

- **Manaakitanga:** If the online environment was safe and welcoming students were more likely to engage.
- **Maintaining students’ spirituality:** This was achieved through tikanga, such as karakia and waiata.

As part of Ferguson’s (2008) programme, there was an online pastoral care component which used a holistic approach by incorporating Te Whare Tapa Whā principles (Durie, 1985, 2015). With this holistic approach in mind, recent research has looked at reproducing wairuatanga online for distance Māori undergraduates learning te reo Māori (Karaka-Clarke, 2020). There is also research on Indigenous Māori postgraduate students engaging online during COVID-19 (Simati-Kumar & Rangiwai, 2020). An online teaching and learning plan for a Master of Applied Indigenous Knowledge programme was developed in Māngere, Auckland (Simati-Kumar & Rangiwai, 2020). This programme allowed Māori postgraduate students to continue to succeed at

their studies. COVID-19 has potentially prepared tertiary providers for a future of teaching online. For these online programmes to work, clear communication is key.

By weaving Te Whare Tapa Whā and Māori values into her Facebook posts, the Adviser’s aim was to design a platform for clear lines of communication which would help with student retention and success during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methods

Study context

This study is part of a larger project evaluating all of the University of Otago’s equity programmes that shifted online during the COVID-19 pandemic. This section describes the broader context that the Facebook study fits into. With the advent of the pandemic, and in line with the university switching to online teaching, all in-person programmes were cancelled. Students were initially informed of the shift to online programmes via emails and the monthly postgraduate panui. These emails and panui contained links to the scheduled Zoom sessions that students could register for online. As mentioned previously, the equity programmes consisted of office hours, writing days, workshops, social hui and conferences (MAI and Hono MAI). Office hours became weekly Zoom sessions students could drop in on. Writing days were offered on Zoom for half a day instead of two days in person. Workshops occurred as Zoom meetings with breakout rooms for group discussions, and the chat function was used as a forum for questions. The planned Hono MAI conference went online. The social hui took the form of the Facebook page. A Facebook page for MAI ki Otago Māori postgraduate students already existed but had not been utilised in this way. This page was re-imagined as an online forum for all Otago Māori postgraduates by providing key information for students, as well as an advertising platform for the programmes described above.

The following sections provide information on the cohort of Māori postgraduate students, how they were recruited, communication via the Facebook page, and how data were collected and analysed.

Participants

This study was conducted with Māori postgraduate students who were enrolled in postgraduate programmes at the University of Otago. In 2020, 312 Māori were enrolled in a postgraduate programme, including 215 females and 97 males. Ethical approval was obtained from the University

of Otago Human Ethics Committee (Ref. D20/105), and research consultation with Māori was sought through the university's Ngāi Tahu Consultation Committee.

Postgraduate students were recruited via emails containing specific information about Facebook and through monthly postgraduate panui. Students were provided with a study information sheet and a consent form. All student participation in the research was voluntary, and the gathering of personal information was optional. In the reporting of the findings, no personal information is disclosed. Nineteen students engaged with the Facebook page; four of these students were not previously known to the Adviser. This number does not include the number of people ultimately reached, however, because posts were sometimes shared, and the names of the people reached in this way were not included in Facebook's statistics.

Communication via Facebook

The Adviser established an online hui/forum on social media by adapting an existing Facebook page for Māori postgraduates to provide a clear and effective line of communication to Māori postgraduate students about health and well-being, administrative information updates, and any changes to study and research during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. Messaging used the Māori pedagogy of Te Whare Tapa Whā to appeal to those students who had not already engaged with the Adviser, and to maintain support for other students to continue to engage. The Adviser's dog Jagi and cat Easta were used to convey health messaging such as washing your hands to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Posts that did not include pets focused on providing advice, clear guidelines and/or information for students during the lockdown. Examples of posts were how to make a self-plan, how to set up a workspace, how to rescope your research, and how to adapt and stay motivated in the "new normal" working environment.

Data collection and analysis

All Facebook posts to the support page during lockdown (March 18, 2020–July 10, 2020) were harvested. Facebook allows evaluation of the effectiveness of these types of communication through built-in statistics. These included the number of people reached, the number of engagements (e.g., clicks on the post), and the number of comments, shares, likes and loves for each post. In order to fully evaluate the posts, I collated all the data for each individual post together in an

Excel spreadsheet, and then analysed the number of responses in relation to the type of posts, which wall(s) of Te Whare Tapa Whā these posts related to and how these related to the lockdown situation. I also calculated the average number of posts, engagements and people reached, as well as the number of comments, shares, likes and loves over the lockdown period.

One limitation of the Facebook statistics was that it was hard to determine which data originated from Māori postgraduates. Both staff and non-Māori students also saw the Facebook posts, which were then shared on other university and personal Facebook pages. For reactions that named people, such as likes and loves, the Adviser was able to run names through the university database eVision to determine if they were Māori postgraduate students. In addition to the Facebook statistics, the Adviser undertook an autoethnographic analysis of a descriptive account she wrote about curating the Facebook page and her experiences of using Facebook during lockdown.

Results

First an overview of the study period is given, with commentary about the situation and some overall statistics from the Facebook posts and engagement with these. The results are then presented in chronological order, according to the timeline of the pandemic in 2020 in Aotearoa. In order to understand the needs of the Māori postgraduate cohort and the pressure they felt during lockdown, I will describe the use of Te Whare Tapa Whā, the types of posts and engagements, and the reactions to these posts using a mix of quantitative and qualitative data.

Overview of the study period

The Facebook page was used leading up to the countrywide lockdown. Aotearoa had its first confirmed case of COVID-19 on February 28, 2020 ("Timeline: Coronavirus", n.d.). After this, the border was closed to international travellers. As New Zealanders started returning home from COVID-ravaged countries, the number of cases in New Zealand spiked. Community transmission started to occur, causing clusters of COVID-19 cases to spring up around the country. This sent the country into Level 4 lockdown on March 25, 2020, in an attempt to slow the spread, "flatten the curve" and ultimately to eliminate the virus. As the then Prime Minister put it, "We're in this together and must unite against COVID-19... We will get through this together, but only if we stick together. Be strong and be kind" (Ardern, 2020).

The frequency of posting remained steady across all alert levels, but the number of posts was highest when the need was greatest in Level 4, with 22 posts (see Figure 1). Overall, especially given the size of the postgraduate cohort, comments, engagements and reactions were quite few, with between 0 and 5 reactions or comments per post. A total of 19 students were identified as engaging with the page via emoji (loves, likes, hahas) or comments. As noted above, four students were previously unknown to the Adviser. Nineteen students represents just over half of the cohort (52%) that engaged face-to-face (36 students) during the rest of 2020. Again, as noted above, Facebook statistics do not provide names of the people reached or those who engaged by clicking on the page, and therefore I was unable distinguish who were staff and who were students. Despite this, the number of people reached on average for posts in Level 4 and Level 3 were 39.7 and 60.9, respectively. This dropped over Level 2 to 31 but climbed to 71.7 during Level 1, with the overall average reach being 50 people.

As expected, average engagement was highest at Level 4 at 41 people, before dropping off gradually from Level 3 to Level 1. This could be indicative of need for COVID-related posts decreasing over time. The number of interactions with, or reactions to, posts (shares, loves and

likes) was higher in pre-lockdown and in the first week of Level 4 lockdown, with another surge at Level 2. During alert level changes, students were trying to find details about the current alert level, including what they could and could not do as part of their postgraduate studies. The Adviser categorised the posts according to Te Whare Tapa Whā walls based on the content of the post. For example, a post about going for a walk helps with one's tinana and hinengaro. While reactions occurred across all wall types, hinengaro was the most common, either on its own or in combination with other walls, to help maintain mental well-being in this new environment where COVID-19 is present (Figure 2). Liking a page was the most common type of interaction or reaction, followed by loves. Despite low overall engagement with the Facebook page, the development of the page was evident, and is detailed below.

Pre-lockdown: March 21–24, 2020

Before mandating nationwide Level 4 lockdown, the government gave the population time to prepare. Restrictions started pre-lockdown (e.g., physical distancing of 2 metres was required, including at universities) and ramped up through Level 3 (e.g., businesses could use click and collect, takeaways could open, and universities started allowing staff back onto campus) before entering

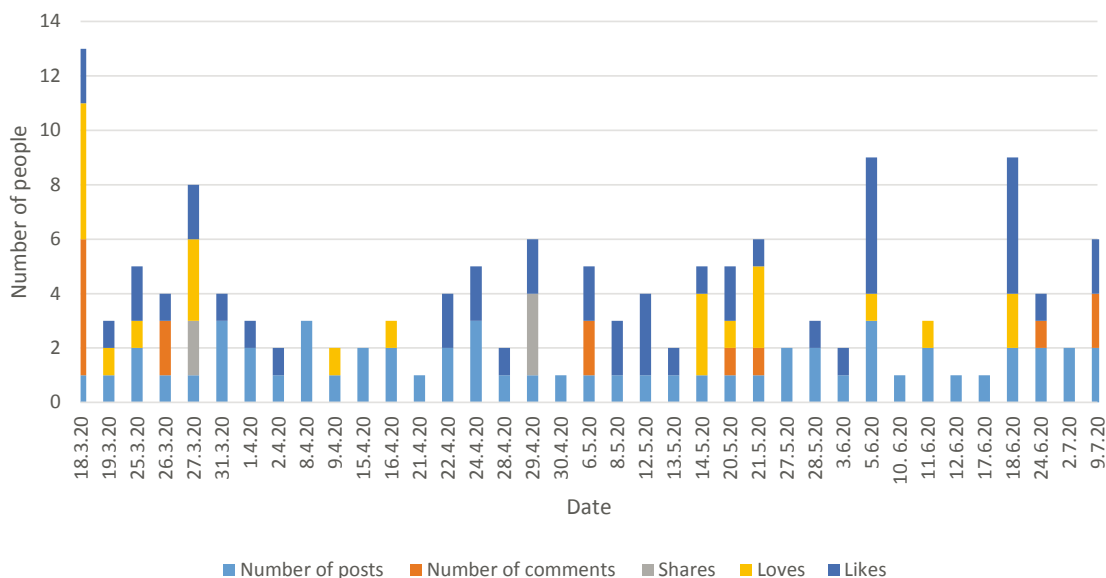


FIGURE 1 People reached by, and reactions to, Facebook posts on the MAI ki Otago Māori Postgraduate Support page by COVID-19 alert level (first wave of the pandemic, 2020). Source: Facebook Statistics (March 18–July 8, 2020).

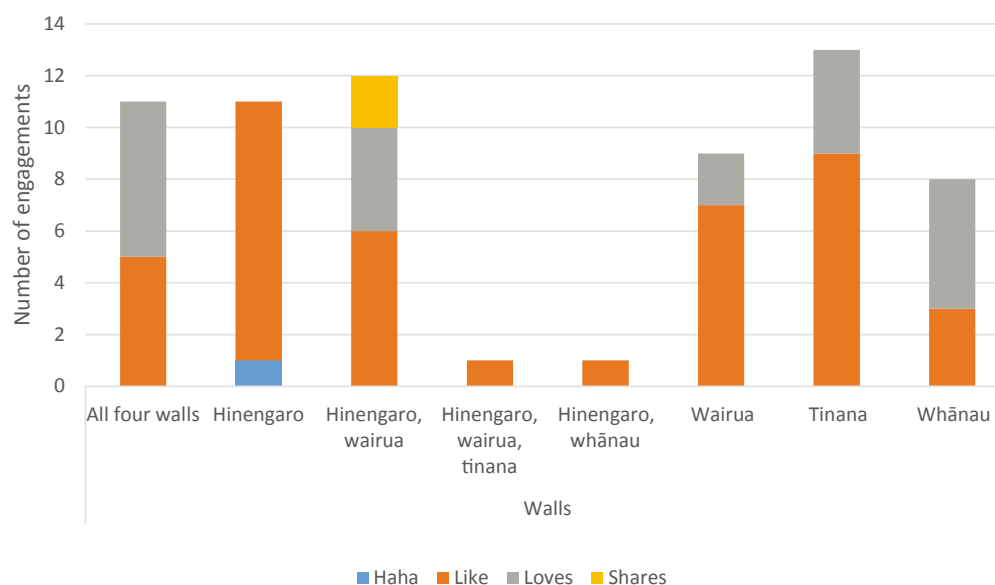


FIGURE 2 Number and type of engagement elicited by posts referencing the Te Whare Tapa Whā walls

Level 4. On March 18, in anticipation of the Level 4 lockdown, the Adviser used this time to shift equity programmes online. She commented that “while information about Level 4 was available the detail was not. Therefore, students had queries and questions around what Level 4 would look like and what they would and would not be able to do.” She decided to use the Facebook page “as a platform to share information, provide new information as well as offer pastoral support and promote online equitable programmes to try and lessen the feeling of isolation for Māori postgraduates during the pandemic.” Her first post (on March 18) read: “Kia ora e te whānau, In light of the current COVID-19 situation, I will be posting more information and a bit of light relief on our Facebook page. Keep your eyes peeled for these posts. Nā Rachel.” Directly after this initial post, the Adviser added a second post to introduce her dog Jagi (Figure 3); she would subsequently introduce her cat Easta as well.

The Adviser explained her reasoning behind the use of her pets in her posts:

Initially I chose to use my pets in Facebook posts because they were part of my whānau bubble in Lockdown. I also needed something to catch the attention of my students to the Facebook posts. . . .

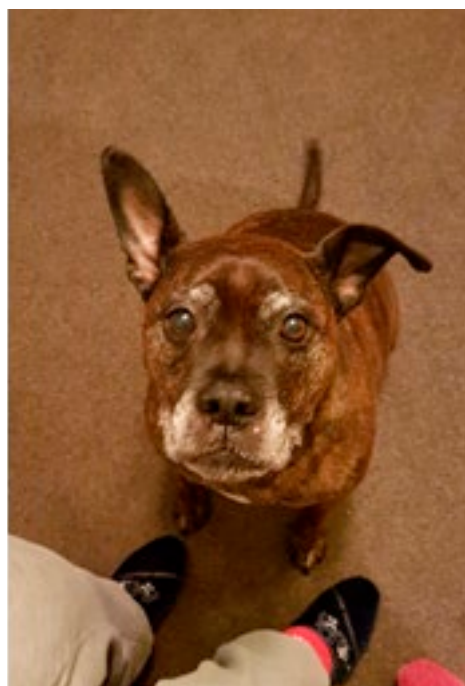


FIGURE 3 The Adviser’s dog, Jagi. The following text accompanied this image in a Facebook post: “Introducing our honorary Māori Postgrad Jagi (pronounced Yargie). Jagi is going to be helping me with posts on Facebook. Feel free to share pics of your furry companions below” (posted March 18, 2020).

Creating this Facebook page acted as a distraction for me and I wanted to share my experience of Lockdown with others to try and normalise it. I got a lot reassurance, love and attention from my pets while in Lockdown. They acted as a type of distraction from what was happening outside of my bubble. Students have told me on more than one occasion that they miss their pets while they are studying so sharing my pets virtually with them in my Facebook posts also helped to maintain a common ground during Lockdown and a feeling of whānau.

The post introducing Jagi was one of the most popular posts, reaching 88 people and generating 22 engagements. Not only did it communicate the intention of the page; its number of reactions was among the highest over the lockdown period. These included five comments (see Figure 4), five loves and two likes. All five comments were pictures of other people's pets, three from students and two from staff. Interestingly, Jagi posts resulted in the highest number of comments by post type and alert level. Comments across all alert levels were low, but the posts of Jagi instantly connected students to the Adviser, with people asking for more Jagi and Easta posts.

Instigating engagement through comments helped create a platform to launch the page with a whānau focus at its centre. The Jagi post was aligned to the Te Whare Tapa Whā wall of whānau,

and, as Figure 5 shows, whānau produced the highest number of comments relating to all walls or combinations of walls.

Introducing Jagi instantly created a sense of whānau, togetherness and unity online, something which the Adviser had not anticipated. The other posts in pre-lockdown were mainly of Jagi and continued to cement the feeling of whānau.

Level 4: March 25–April 27, 2020

Upon entering Level 4 on March 25, the focus of the posts changed to providing information. These posts addressed all four walls of the whare (whānau, tinana, wairua and hinengaro) by providing students with information on how to look after themselves in lockdown and how to keep up their studies. It is therefore no surprise that information posts were the most common type of post across alert levels (Figure 6), with 12 during Level 4. During Level 4, there was the highest number of such posts (22) and the page reached more people than those who had physically engaged before lockdown, or interacted with or reacted to the page, indicated by commenting, liking, haha-ing, loving or sharing (Figure 1).

At Level 4, only essential workers (e.g., maintenance staff) were allowed on campus. So the second week of Level 4 focused on getting into a routine and working from home. By week 3 of Level 4, students were getting used to lockdown but were also experiencing tiredness and feeling

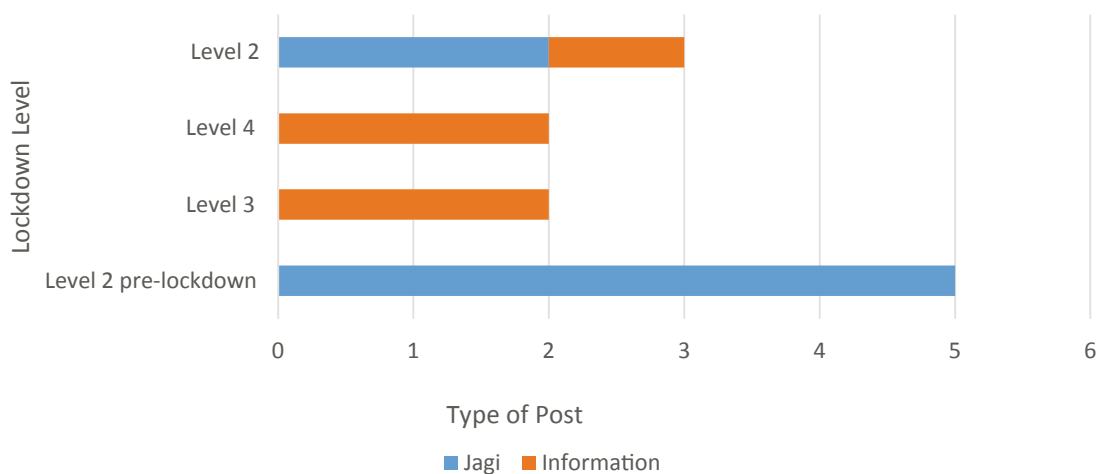


FIGURE 4 The number of comments elicited by type of post (Jagi or information) and alert level

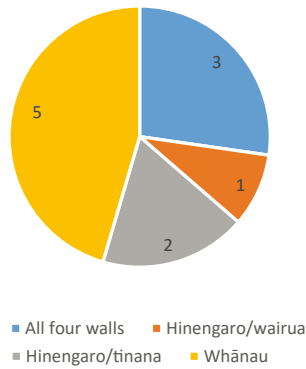


FIGURE 5 The number of comments elicited by Te Whare Tapa Whā wall

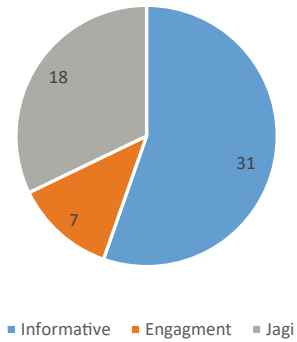


FIGURE 6 Number and type of posts for the study period

drained by the upheaval and fast transition into it. Students with tamariki had some interruptions to their work as their tamariki were also shifting to online learning at home. The Adviser commented: “It was clear to me that students did not know how to prepare for their studies to be online, to rescope their research or move things around so that field work would take place later once lockdown was over.”

Consequently, the Adviser generated a post with a lockdown plan consisting of three parts: the self-plan, the whānau plan and the neighbourhood plan (Figure 7). This plan incorporated all four pillars of Te Whare Tapa Whā, particularly the importance of connectedness to whānau or whānau groups such as supervisors and research

teams. Addressing all four whare walls in the plan created balance for students and the Adviser during uncertain times at the beginning of the Level 4 lockdown. The Adviser noted that the use of Te Whare Tapa Whā in her posts “was as much for myself as for the students as I recognised that for me to be of help to students I also needed to look after my own well-being.”

The self-plan guided students to examine their research, rework their current plan to be able to work in lockdown, possibly rescope their research, contact their supervisors, hold regular meetings and revisit their plans when Level 4 ended. While the self-plan was in place to help students manage their research during and after lockdown, the other two plans—the whānau plan and the

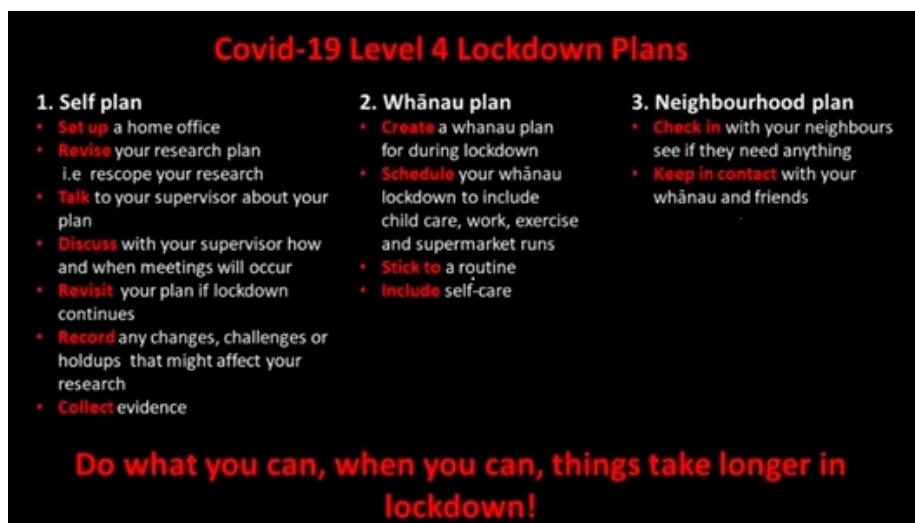


FIGURE 7 Image from a Facebook post describing a self-plan, whānau plan and neighbourhood plan for students to follow during lockdown (posted March 26, 2020)

neighbourhood plan—were more about looking after the well-being of oneself and others and added to the holistic approach taken. The importance of this post is reflected in 371 people being reached, 22 engagements, three loves and two likes. This post was also shared twice on the Otago Graduate Research School's Facebook page and on wider forums.

The remainder of the Level 4 posts were a mixture of Jagi posts and information posts. Information posts tended to cover all four walls of Te Whare Tapa Whā, or a combination of them. Information posts were used at the times of greatest need or when levels changed. The Jagi posts, on the other hand, continued to be steeped in whānau but also became health-related reminders in Level 4. These addressed students' tinana and hinengaro around things like social distancing, washing your hands and getting daily exercise. For example, Easta the cat was introduced for the first time to maintain interest in the page and create an antagonist for Jagi, whilst conveying the need for social distancing (Figure 8). Images of other dogs from the Adviser's whānau were also used to reinforce a point, statement or piece of information, normally in a more positive light, as illustrated in Figure 9.

Level 3: April 28–May 12, 2020

At Level 3, access to the university was heavily restricted. If students needed to get back into laboratory or fieldwork, they were able to do so with

social distancing, hand sanitising and scheduling in place. During this period there was a total of 15 posts, all of which contained Jagi and/or Easta. Three embraced all four walls, while six related specifically to looking after students' hinengaro and the other six to the students' tinana. In Level 3, students consistently engaged with posts (see Figure 1), with the highest level of engagement occurring on April 29 in relation to a post on motivation (Figure 10). That post reached 413 people and inspired three loves and two likes. At Level 3, many posts were about looking after yourself in response to COVID fatigue. By this stage the Adviser was creating posts that combined Jagi posts with information posts, with an underlying message of long-term well-being and particularly hinengaro.

Level 2 (May 13–June 7, 2020) and Level 1 (June 8–August 11, 2020)

At Level 2, restrictions were eased and most post-graduate students were allowed back on campus. The number of comments on posts increased again, and engagement included likes, loves, hahas and shares.

Level 1 started on June 8, 2020. At this level, all restrictions were lifted except those on the border, which remained closed. People were encouraged to sign or scan into places of businesses using a COVID Tracer app. Reactions to the Facebook page remained constant but were mainly made up



FIGURE 8 Jagi and the Adviser's cat (Easta) displaying the importance of social distancing. The following text accompanied this image in a Facebook post: "Today's Te Whare Tapa Whā tip is looking after our tinana! Jagi says 'practice socially distancing, especially with cats'" (posted March 25, 2020).



FIGURE 9 Jagi and the Adviser’s relative’s dog Jazz emphasising the importance of connecting with whānau. The following text accompanied this image in a Facebook post: “Looking after our hinengaro and wairua in Lockdown is important particularly over Easter as we can’t see our whānau. Jagi says ‘make sure you catch up with your whānau over the break, even if it isn’t in person’” (posted April 4, 2020).

of likes and loves (see Figure 1). Te Whare Tapa a Whā was used in posts up to June 8, 2020. After that posts continued; however, they were mainly information posts advertising events. During Level 1, the need for posts waned so the Adviser emailed students asking them whether posts should continue. Due to a lack of demand, posting for the first wave of COVID-19 in Aotearoa was ended on July 9, 2020.

Discussion

The aim of this article was to evaluate the effectiveness of the Adviser’s communication via Facebook to determine if there were clear lines of communication regarding administrative information, online services, and health and well-being for Māori postgraduate students during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in Aotearoa. The existing face-to-face programmes for Māori postgraduates were already steeped in the Māori kaupapa of whānau and based on Sir Mason Durie’s (1985) Te Whare Tapa Whā pedagogy. Therefore, converting face-to-face hui into an online Facebook page was relatively straightforward. The Adviser’s inclusion of her dog Jagi in posts not only served

as a form of introduction to the Adviser’s whānau; it made an instant connection with people and was a focal point of online interest.

Aotearoa’s first dogs, kurī, are now extinct, but they played an important role in Māori society. They are the only domesticated species successfully introduced to Aotearoa (Greig et al., 2015). Māori used kurī as guard dogs, for hunting, and as companions. Once dead, kurī were consumed as food in some cultural ceremonies. Teeth, bones and hair were used. Their skins were prized and made into dog skin cloaks which were worn by rangatira to imbibe them with mana (Greig et al., 2015). This suggests that kurī held their own mana and symbolised power.

The fact that kurī were useful to Māori would add to their mana and that of their owner. The importance of kurī in Māori culture is alluded to in several pūrākau involving kurī. The deity of kurī is Irawaru, who was turned into a dog by his brother-in-law and demigod Maui (Keane, 2008). The explorer Kupe brought kurī to Aotearoa. It is said he left a kurī waiting so long in the Hokianga harbour that it turned to stone (Keane, 2008). Young Nick’s Head was originally named Te Kurī-a-Pāoa,

Motivation killers

- Fewer rewards when at home
- Lack of team spirit, no one to spur you on!
- Micromanagement from your supervisor or...
- No management from your supervisor
- Identity crisis/wairua crisis
- Anxiety about delays, money
- Distractions: home school, whānau, the internet!!!

Motivation starters

- Be kind to yourself
- Limit covid news
- Tap into your purpose/wairua
- Work out what motivates you
- Establish a routine
- Just do 5 min, and repeat..
- Take breaks
- Tell someone your plan and let them know when you finished it
- Set yourself deadlines!!

FIGURE 10 Facebook post on information pertaining to motivation, featuring both Jagi and Easta (posted April 29, 2020).

after Pāoa, the captain of the Horouta canoe, lost his kurī (Keane, 2008). The importance of companionship with kurī is described in the pūrākau of Houmaitawhiti's dog Pōtaka Tawhiti. The chief Uenuku saw Pōtaka Tawhiti eat his discarded bandage so he killed and ate him. Houmaitawhiti's son Tamatekapua heard Pōtaka Tawhiti's spirit howl inside of Uenuku. This led to skirmishes and eventually warfare. As a result, Tamatekapua left Hawaiki and came to Aotearoa in the Te Arawa canoe (Keane, 2008).

Based on historical records and pūrākau it could be said that kurī were considered important enough to be part of the extended whānau structure. The Adviser considers her dog and cat part of her whānau, so they could be considered mōkai, which can be defined as pet. Through this autoethnographic analysis, the Adviser inadvertently realised that she had based the Facebook page on whānau by including her pets as her extended family. The value of whānau was continually reinforced throughout the alert levels by posting photos of Jagi, Easta and Jazz (a dog of the Adviser's relative), while additionally conveying information about working online at home and health and well-being.

Te Whare Tapa Whā was effective on Facebook as it allowed the Adviser to convey up-to-date

information in a holistic manner. Te Whare Tapa Whā is a proven model that is well established in te ao Māori, and is used in other areas, most commonly health. The decision of which walls to emphasise in each post was based on the alert level at the time of posting, as well as feedback from students. The Adviser used her own experiences living through lockdown and what she felt she personally needed at the time as a further resource in the creation of Facebook posts. This was a natural process for the Adviser because she is Māori, and has a background in science and an understanding of te ao Māori. Underlining all of these posts was a sense of whānau established by using the Adviser's pet family. Whānau is considered one of the hardest Te Whare Tapa Whā pillars to recreate in an online environment (Karakā-Clarke, 2020), but perhaps the use of pets provides an opportunity to garner engagement.

The number of people reached, and the level of engagement that was evident from the Facebook statistics, showed that this type of online communication can be effective. Facebook not only worked as a communication tool; it also allowed people to engage with the page. The shares, likes, loves and comments show people reacted to the page and replied to the posts positively, indicating the page to be a true platform for two-way

communication. Receiving feedback in the form of comments, likes, loves and shares informed the Adviser about what posts were needed and what worked.

As noted above, the Adviser was unable to determine which engagements were coming from Māori postgraduates, as university staff could also interact with posts. Staff also shared posts more widely to other staff members and non-Māori students. This had not been anticipated and was particularly true for posts such as setting up your workspace at home, as it was relevant to all postgraduate students, not just Māori, since all students were struggling with the impacts COVID-19 (Hume & Soar, 2020). This brought to mind the Kaupapa Māori approach of He Kākano, a school-based professional development programme that focuses on improving culturally responsive leadership and teacher practices to ensure Māori learners enjoy educational success as Māori. The mantra of He Kākano (n.d.) is “What works for Māori works for everyone. But what works for everyone does not necessarily work best for Māori.” Overall, it was clear that this communication platform, inspired by Te Whare Tapa Whā, could be useful in the future for a variety of communities and situations.

With pandemic fatigue setting in during Levels 3 and 2, it became important to keep students engaged (Corbera et al., 2020), so communications from the Adviser used Jagi and Easta to promote hinengaro and tinana. While messages were based on holistic well-being and providing information to students, they also had a storytelling marketing element to encourage students to keep engaging with the page. As mentioned above, the Adviser did not initially realise the added value of using animals in communications. Nor did she anticipate the marketing power dogs held. Animals, especially dogs, have been used in marketing campaigns and have been found to effect positive feelings in humans towards adverts (Lancendorfer et al., 2008). The marketability of dogs in particular is founded on the idea that social bonding between dogs and humans has a positive outcome on human health, well-being and physiological state (Garrity et al., 1989; Ory & Goldberg, 1983; Serpell, 2003).

The Adviser’s Facebook communications contained historical, cultural and marketing concepts, and appealed to intrinsic human behaviours. Using a holistic Māori health approach to convey information in a culturally appropriate but also relevant way assisted Māori postgraduate students with their studies during lockdown. Although the posts

reached over 400 people at times, initially 41 people were regularly reading the posts; this figure decreased over time to 2.5. Only 0 to 5 people were engaging with the content on average. For online communications to be successful, the *te ao Māori* value of *whanaungatanga* needs to be an underlying value. *Whanaungatanga* creates a sense of commonality between a peer group who are geographically dispersed, have different circumstances, and yet are engaging in an online programme (Karaka-Clarke, 2020). Generating a sense of *whanaungatanga* is challenging in an online environment because you do not get the same sense of connection with people virtually as you do in person, and carrying out the physical forms of *tikanga*, like *hongi*, is not possible. This may be why engagement was low compared to the postgraduate population.

The Adviser used Facebook to communicate with students in specific ways to complement the ongoing emails and *panui* that the Adviser sent prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic. One challenge of this study, however, was not being able to separate out the number of people engaged/reached into staff and students due to the limitations of Facebook statistics. This meant that the effectiveness of communication solely with Māori postgraduate students had to be evaluated from students’ reactions to posts. I was able to identify how many Māori postgraduate students reacted to posts by checking individual posts for names. It would be beneficial to evaluate the effectiveness of communication further using other forms of data collection, such as focus groups, exit surveys or comparing the effectiveness of Facebook to other social media platforms such as Instagram to triangulate the success of the communications.

Conclusion

A countrywide lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic led to the Adviser adapting the University of Otago Māori postgraduate student Facebook page into a communication platform based on the principles of Te Whare Tapa Whā. The Adviser evaluated the effectiveness of communications via Facebook through analysis of the posts and how the audience engaged and reacted. Despite the limitations of Facebook statistics, the Adviser was able to determine that her posts were successful in delivering clear lines of communication. The posts reached a high number of people—well beyond the Māori postgraduate population at times—and inspired reactions, engagements and comments, albeit limited in number. The use of Te Whare Tapa Whā to promote engagement with the page and

the sharing of information was intended to convey messaging that was familiar to Māori students and representative of te ao Māori at a time when much of daily life had become unfamiliar.

The most important Te Whare Tapa Whā wall appeared to be whānau, despite it being the hardest wall to recreate in an online environment. Although unpremeditated by the Adviser, the use of the her pets in posts created a sense of whānau. Future research could explore whether pets can be used to help generate whānau values in other online settings for Māori. The culturally responsive benefits of Te Whare Tapa Whā will be applied to other postgraduate services provided by the University of Otago. The Adviser plans to use the model's walls as underlying tenets for online activities, such as writing programmes for distance students. As this article has demonstrated, online platforms like Facebook can be used in culturally appropriate ways to communicate effectively with Māori students, even in situations like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Glossary

Aotearoa	New Zealand
Hawaiki	ancient Polynesian homeland
hinengaro	mental well-being
hongī	pressing noses in greeting
Hono MAI	an online conference for Māori doctoral students
hui	meeting
kanohi ki te kanohi	face-to-face
karakia	blessing
kaumātua	male elder
kaupapa	platform
Kaupapa Māori	Māori approach
kuia	female elder
kurī	Māori dog
MAI	Māori and Indigenous programme
MAI ki Otago	the Māori and Indigenous doctoral support programme at the University of Otago
mana	mana
manaakitanga	hospitality
mōkai	pets
Pākehā	New Zealander of European descent
panui	newsletter
pūrākau	myth/traditional story
rangatira	chief
tamariki	children
te ao Māori	the Māori world

te kanohi kitea	the seen face
te reo Māori	the Māori language
Te Whare Tapa Whā	Māori health model developed by Sir Mason Durie; lit. "the four walls of the house"
tikanga	custom
tinana	body
waiata	song
wairua	spirit
wairuatanga	spirituality
whare	house
whānau	family
whanaungatanga	creating a sense of family

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