Tikanga Māori - Lessons in Leading

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This paper explores leadership through the traditional beliefs of the Māori peoples of New Zealand. The indigenous peoples of New Zealand provide a unique opportunity to learn and understand a traditional island value system that has experienced a resurgence among its people and is now being considered among the Pākehā (non- Māori) of the island. This paper calls attention to tikanga Māori, "the Māori way", outside of New Zealand and draws comparisons to virtue ethics and leading. Studying tikanga Māori should prompt western leaders to reflect upon their own value systems and leadership experiences.

INTRODUCTION

There continues to be growing interest in applying ancient philosophy to current leadership discussions. Articles connecting the works of Plato and Kant (Williamson 2008; Price 2008) to modern concepts of leadership provide two examples. Additionally, discussions of eastern philosophy and their influences on leadership have grown with research being completed on Daoist, Taoist and Confucian philosophies (Lee, Haught, Chen & Chan 2013; Lin, Ho & Lin 2013).

Alternatives to the traditional leadership theories of the west are growing in popularity however; little attention is given to that portion of the world that has sustained many traditional ways of life against encroachment from the west, the pacific islanders. Using a key word search through Business Source Complete produced 40 returns when the words 'Māori' and 'leadership' were used as search items. Of these search returns, 10 articles dealt with leadership as related to Māori history, culture or principles (Pfeifer 2006; Katene 2010; Spiller 2016). The remaining articles focused on individual leaders, management and entrepreneurism specific to New Zealand. In contrast, a key word search for 'Confucianism' and 'leadership' produced 1,474 search returns while a search for 'Buddhism' and 'leadership' produced 2,397 search returns. Additionally, a key word search was conducted in the Academy of Management Review, Academy of Management Journal and the Academy of International Business Proceedings as these journals have a high impact rating in the field of management and leadership. This search returned no articles related to Māori and leadership. It is clear that Māori society is under-represented in the discussion of leadership on a global scale.

The native peoples of New Zealand provide a unique opportunity to learn and understand a traditional island value system. While not easy, the Māori peoples of New Zealand have been able to maintain most of their traditional ways of life while also integrating into the western culture of the Pākehā, or non-Māori. Mead (2003) points out that, "there has been a steady movement towards greater acceptance of Māori culture" since the 1960s (p. 3).

The purpose of this paper is to focus attention on tikanga Māori outside of New Zealand. First will be a short review of tikanga Māori to include their value system. This will be followed by a discussion of

relatedness between tikanga Māori, western virtues and leading. Finally, the limitations and implication for this perspective in western society will be presented.

THE TIKANGA MĀORI

It is generally accepted that East Polynesians settled in Aotearoa (New Zealand) during the 13th century (Wilson, n.d.). These peoples travelled to Aotearoa on voyages of discovery using navigation by "reading star paths, swell frequencies, and cloud formations" (Spiller, 201r, p. 27). These individuals travelled by waka, a double-hulled canoe that is still used today. Those who captained the wakas, along with Tohungas (experts of skill or arts) became the first leaders of Aotearoa. Over time, social groupings rose around the family, sub-tribes, and tribes of the island with various tribes maintaining their own territories and developing a specific genealogy or hierarchy.

The early arrivers to Aotearoa were hunter-gathers as well as farmers and anglers. These peoples were considered to have been reasonably successful and it is believed that the population may have reached 100,000 prior to contact with Europeans (Wilson, n.d.). The first European to reach Aotearoa in 1642 was Abel Tasman, a Dutch explorer (Wilson, n.d.). It is also during this time, that the name Nieuw Zeeland (New Zealand) started to appear on maps of the area. On October 6, 1769, James Cook arrived at the shores of New Zealand aboard the Endeavour, one of three voyages to the island. These early voyages led to the eventual settlement of New Zealand by Europeans. It was during these first contacts that the islanders began using the term, Māori to distinguish themselves from the Europeans.

Tikanga Māori is defined in the English Dictionary (n.d.) as "the Māori way of doing things" and is derived from the Māori word tika meaning 'right' or 'correct' (English Dictionary, n.d.). Tikanga Māori, as defined by Mead (2003) "is the set of beliefs associated with practices and procedures to be followed in conducting the affairs of a group or an individual" (p. 10). Mead elaborates that these beliefs aid individuals in understanding right from wrong, that "there is a right and proper way to conduct one's self" (Mead, 2003, p. 12). Being correct in one's conduct is the basic principle behind the practice of tikanga.

Tikanga can be viewed as a macro set of behaviors, in public ceremony for example, and it can be viewed as a micro set of behaviors among family members or individuals. In all instances, tikanga represents the traditions, customs and value system of the Māori that has been built up over generations and, as Mead (2003) points out, "add to the pool of knowledge about a particular tikanga" (p. 13). Mead includes seven main concepts among his discussion, which explain tikanga Māori practices and values:
1. Manaakitanga - hospitality.
2. Mana - prestige.
3. Tapu - the state of being set apart.
4. Noa - neutrality.
5. Take - cause (a breach of tikanga).
6. Utu -reciprocation (equivalent gesture given to a wronged party).
7. Ea - satisfaction (a desired outcome).

Mead elaborates that tikanga is a set of ideas and beliefs that are practiced both in public and private settings. Aspects of tikanga can be meant for large audiences in public events, which allow everyone involved to know what is expected of them. Mannaakitanga is important here, as hosts of ceremonies and rituals must attend to their guests appropriately. Additionally, tikanga provides guidelines for individuals and can be very private; however, individuals should attend to tikanga correctly as if others were present to see their behavior. Ultimately, tikanga carries a form of social validation when others are convinced that one is carrying out acts of tikanga in an appropriate manner. Tikanga is not an absolute or ideally specific set of rules. Rather it evolves through consistency in behavior that is based upon precedents from one's family and culture. Experience and education in tikanga are important for one to learn what acceptable behavior is. Mead (2003) elaborates that three elements are important to understanding tikanga: "background knowledge, the concept, and the practice" (p. 18). To effectively practice tikanga, or any other value system, you need to gain knowledge of the history of the people: their religious,

political and social beliefs, their world-view. The concepts of any value system spring from this world-view and help to formulate the acceptable practices within a society. As these practices are repeated among members of the society over time, they are checked against the concepts developed out of the society's world-view. If they align, they will develop into principles of behavior (tikanga) or virtues within that society as shown in figure 1 below.

FIGURE 1
THREE ELEMENTS OF TIKANGA (VIRTUES), ADAPTED FROM MEAD (2003)
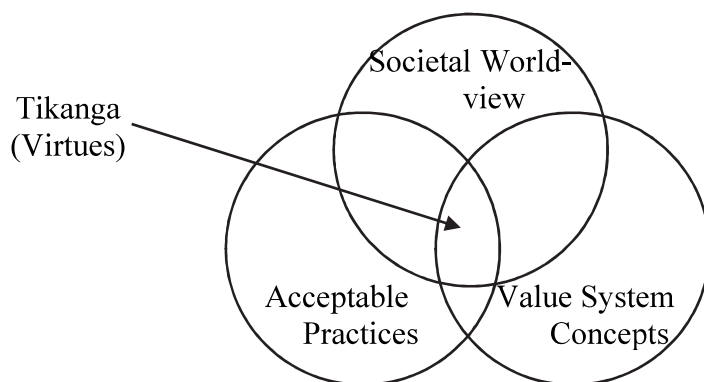
TIKANGA MĀORI AND VIRTUE

Virtue is one of three normative ethics along with consequentialism and deontology. Virtue involves the character of individuals, and in fact is an excellent trait in character. It is a disposition, well entrenched in its possessor (Virtue Ethics, 2016). For Aristotle, virtue is acquired through training and repetition of virtuous acts; one must practice virtue so that it becomes a habit of character. "Excellence, then, being of these two kinds, intellectual and moral intellectual excellence owes its birth and growth mainly to instruction, and so requires time and experience" (Peters, 1893, II. 1, 1). Virtues as defined by Mintz (1996) are "acquired human qualities, the excellence of character, which enable a person to achieve the good life" (p. 827).

Tikanga is also based upon excellence in character. Manaakitanga refers to a set standard, "an ideal that one should aspire to reach" (Mead, 2003, p. 28). This is virtue, an individual at their very best. Manaakitanga focuses on hospitality, on tending to relationships and treating others with respect and dignity. This is an important virtue and is always an important consideration in how one behaves. Additionally, Tikanga requires practice, time and experience to develop in a similar manner as Aristotle's conceptualization of virtue.

Mana refers to the position an individual holds within their social group. Those with high levels of mana are considered leaders in Māori society. High levels of mana are typically derived from family lineage and ancestors but there is also, a "personal increment based on the proven works, skills and/or contributions to the group made over time by an individual that provide human authority (mana tangata)" (Mead, 2003, p. 30). One has value in society based upon their hierarchical position as well as their contributions to the group and this is informed through manaakitanga, excellence in character.

Such hierarchy is not foreign to the likes of Plato who established a clear hierarchy in his discussions of Socrates' Kallipolis. In the Kallipolis, there are three distinct classes: the workers, the auxiliaries (military) and the philosopher-kings. Like all societies, Māori leadership maintains a hierarchy of leadership. Waka (canoe) leaders eventually gave way to three leadership groupings: iwi (tribe), hapū (sub-tribe), and whānau (family) leadership (Katene, 2010). Within these groupings, ascribed roles were important and covered political, spiritual and professional dimensions (Katene, 2010) that follow a similar

line as the division of labor found within the Kallipolis with philosopher kings, guardians and money-makers.

Tapu has various meaning although it is primarily thought of as meaning forbidden and is often expressed through the word taboo - banned on the grounds of morality or taste (Merriam-Webster, 2017, para 1). However, tapu also relates to sacred things, including persons. Mead (2003) points out, "If the level of one's tapu is at a steady state, the individual is well in both a physical and psychological state (p. 45). Tapu implies balance in one's life. In line with western notions of virtue, actions must be done temperately or justly [and hence well] (Cuilla, 2003). To be considered a temperate, just and therefore virtuous action, the individual engaging in this action must make a conscious decision to act accordingly from a temperate and just position. That is to say, they must have appropriate tapu. To have such balance, you need to 'know yourself'. You need to understand your tapu and work to increase it while at the same time respecting the tapu of others.

Mana and tapu are interrelated, as mana increases so should one's tapu. As your group recognizes your achievements and contributions, you will become more sacred within that group, increasing your tapu. Likewise, if you choose to do the wrong things, living a life that is not in balance, you will damage your tapu and lower your mana in the eyes of your group. The danger with increasing tapu is that it can become out of control - out of balance. To restore one's tapu to balance requires noa or neutrality. Gaining a state of noa "indicates that a balance has been reached, a crisis is over, health is restored and life is normal again" (Mead, 2003, p. 32). Noa leads one to 'ea' or satisfaction and restores tapu. Thus, one needs the right balance of mana and tapu in the same way Aristotle would argue that one needs to maintain a balance between vices of excess and vices of deficiency. It is the mean between the two that determines virtue for both Aristotle and tikanga Māori.

For example, if one enhances their mana but does so in a way that does not follow manaakitanga - the set standards - their mana and tapu will increase but in a dangerous way. A take, or breach of tikanga, has occurred in order for mana and tapu to increase. Tapu is thus out of balance. Utu must be given to those wronged by the individual who has abused their position, for only then can noa put one's tapu back in balance and ea, a desired outcome between both parties, be achieved.

As mentioned in the previous section, tika is the right, or correct, way of doing things. This concept is tied to 'pono' which means true or genuine (Mead, 2003, p. 25). This is important, not only to remaining true to the Māori way, but it is important for the individual to approach tika from a position of pono. One should be genuine in their motives for doing the right things.

TIKANGA MĀORI AND LEADING

As discussed above, there are similarities between tikanga Māori and virtue ethics. Additionally, virtue, and ethics in general, has received renewed attention in the past couple of decades (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Brown, Trevino & Harrison, 2005; Steinhauer, Renn, Taylor & Njoroge, 2014) in relation to leadership studies. The introduction to this paper discussed the growing body of literature connecting eastern philosophy to western concepts of leadership. There is a place for the concepts of tikanga Māori among this growing body of literature.

Leadership

Leading and leadership means many things to many people. Rost (1991) uncovered over 200 separate definitions for leadership. Leadership has been defined as "the ability to impress the will of the leader on those led and induce obedience, respect, loyalty, and cooperation" (Moore, 1927, p. 124). It has also been defined as "acts by persons which influence other persons in a shared direction" (Seeman, 1960, p. 53). Burns (1978) defined leadership as "leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations - the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations - of both leaders and followers" (p. 19).

Burns distinguished leadership between the transactional and transformational, with transactional leaders taking "the initiative in making contact with others for the purpose of an exchange of valued

things" (Burns, 1978, p. 19). In this relationship, both the leader and follower recognize each other as ends of their own making coming together in an exchange relationship. Thus, transactional leadership is moral leadership in its pure form but there is not a pursuit of mutual goals. Transformational leadership on the other hand raises both the leader and follower to higher levels of motivation and morality (Burns, 1978, p. 20). Burns (1978) further states, "Whether the leadership relationship is transactional or transforming, in it motives, values, and goals of the leader and led have merged" (p. 21).

Recent definitions of leadership revolve around the practice of leadership more so than defining what leadership is. These practices include authentic leadership, as developed by George (2003), where leaders have a real desire to help others and lead from five dimensions: values, relationships, self-discipline, heart and purpose. Such definitions also include servant leadership, developed by Robert K. Greenleaf, where "leaders place the welfare of followers over their own self-interest and demonstrate strong moral behavior toward followers, the organization and other stakeholders" (Northouse, 2016, p. 226). Finally, adaptive leadership focuses on leading during times of change. Heiftez (1994) stated that these leaders "engage in activities that mobilize, motivate, organize, orient, and focus the attention of others" (as cited in Northouse, 2016, p. 258).

These emerging concepts of leadership focus on ethical behavior in leading including such values as honesty, responsibility, fairness, justice, and equality.

Ethical Leadership - Māori Leadership

By definition, leaders have a responsibility based upon position to behave ethically. Leaders hold power and have resources that others do not, which enables them to exert influence over others. They can set organizational goals and influence the culture of their organizations. Ethics in leadership is integral to ensuring leaders uphold their responsibilities and virtue ethics grounds leaders in what it means to be a person of excellence.

In their study on ethical leadership, Resick et al. (2011) explored the beliefs about ethics-based leadership across cultures including China, Hong Kong, Ireland, Germany and the United States. Thorough their research, they identified six themes related to ethical leadership across all six societies: accountability, consideration and respect for others, fairness and non-discriminatory treatment, character, collective orientation and openness and flexibility (p. 441). Each of these themes is related to Māori concepts of leading as discussed below and presented in table 1.

Accountability

Accountability includes complying with laws, regulations and professional guidelines. In a similar vein, tikanga Māori can be seen as customary law or a body of rules or principles prescribed by authority (Mead, 2003). Viewed in this light, Mead (2003) states that "tikanga Māori is supported by a social and ritual force and people committed to being Māori regard themselves as being bound to upholding tikanga Māori" (p. 7). Tikanga Māori certainly focuses on personal responsibility and in holding others accountable. Mead (2003) elaborates that social validation is an important aspect to tikanga in ensuring it is carried out properly. Everyone shares a responsibility for ensuring accountability.

Consideration and respect for others

Mannaakitanga is important when considering others as nurturing relationships is a cornerstone of tikanga. As discussed earlier, manaakitanga focuses on hospitality, on tending to relationships and treating others with respect and dignity. Therefore, it is important to look after others and ensure they are treated appropriately. Additionally, whanaungatanga, a sense of family connection and relationship through shared experiences, is equally important and extends beyond family members to friends and reciprocal relationships. As Mead (2003) states, "It cannot be stressed enough that manaakitanga is always important no matter what the circumstances might be. These principles are important to human relationships" (p. 29).

Fairness and non-discriminatory treatment

With a focus on family, sub-tribe and tribal roles, it is important for Māori leaders to be fair in their dealings. He kaha kit e whakahaere I nga raruaru is considered one of the talents necessary for success as a Māori leader and is translated as the abilty to settle disputes, to manage and mediate in a way that upholds the group (Katene, 2010). Satisfactory settlement of disputes is important in tikanga and is accomplished through take-utu-ea, which considers a breach in tikanga (take), the determination of an appropriate recompense (utu) that is satisfactory to all parties thus creating a balanced or desired outcome for all (ea) (Mead, 2003). In the practice of tikanga is it important that disputes are revolved and are not lingering issues. As such, it is important for leaders to be fair and non-discriminatory in their actions as it is important for all parties to be able to say 'Kua ea' - the matter is settled (Mead, 2003).

Character

Character is important to Māori leaders as expressed through tikanga Māori, the way of doing things in the right or correct manner and the ideal that one should aspire to reach - manaakitanga. Māori leaders learn values similar to western concepts of character; honesty, respect, compassion, self-discipline, forgiveness, etc. that formulate their personal code of conduct.

Collective orientation

The Māori word for leader is rangatira, translated as, "to weave people together" (Pfeifer, 2006, p. 36). As Pfeifer (2006) discusses, "Modesty is seen as being more important for outstanding Māori leaders" (p. 36). This is in part due to the collective nature of Māori culture. Māori leaders maintain a reciprocal relationship with their followers and are obligated to meet the expectations of their followers. "Reverence depended on success, and success was measured by the well-being and standing of the whānau and hapū" (Katene, 2010, p. 5). Waka captains were considered "experts in the practice of taking care of people and of place" (Spiller, 2016, p. 34). These leaders concern themselves with the betterment of the group and help followers fulfill their potential.

Openness and flexibility

Waka captains also understood the value of openness and flexibility. There is no hiding on a waka owing to the size of the canoe. You could not lock yourself in your office and could not 'leave the office' at the end of the day. A leader necessarily must and is among their followers at all times. Instead of charting a direct path, they allowed the waves to dictate their routes. They continually adjusted to changes in the environment as warranted, often meandering off course and 'bending to the sea'. These leaders were not trapped in their navigation by charts and lines on maps. They let the environment provide insights to opportunities and alternative passages around dangers.

TABLE 1
COMPARISON BETWEEN ETHICAL LEADER THEMES AND MĀORI LEADER THEMES

Themes	Ethical leader themes Resick et al. (2011)	Māori leader themes
Accountability	Complying with laws, regulations, etc.; personal responsibility; holding others accountable; promoting ethical principles.	Tikanga can be viewed as customary law. It is a body of principles prescribed by authority and custom and is binding on its members.
Consideration and respect for others	Treating others with dignity and respect; being approachable; people oriented; being helpful; showing tolerance.	Whanaungatanga: A sense of family connection and relationship through shared experiences; close family ties; friendship; reciprocal relationships.
Fairness and non-discriminatory treatment	Making fair, just and objective decisions; not discriminating against others; not forming in or out-groups; seeking the truth.	He kaha kit e whakahaere I nga raruaru: abilty to settle disputes, to manage and mediate in a way that upholds the group. Take-utu-ea: a correction to a breach of tikanga.
Character	Demonstrating honesty, trustworthiness, integrity, and sincerity; having a personal moral code and a sense of ethical awareness; authentic, courageous, and self-disciplined; leading by example.	The Māori way of doing things in the right or correct manner is tikanga, the personal moral code of the Māori. Manaakitanga is the ideal that one should aspire to reach.
Collectivist orientation	Putting interests of the organization ahead of personal interests; considering sustainability/longer-term impact; protecting interests of organization and society; promoting teamwork and cooperation.	Rangatira: to weave people together is the purpose of leadership. Kaitiaki: expert in the practice of taking care of people and of place. Māori: leaders create mauri ora or wellbeing.
Openness and flexibility	Openness to different opinions and diversity; being a good listener; flexible; communicating; regularly sharing information.	Waka captains: canoe leaders allow for the unfolding process of the world around them.

The similarities between the six themes presented by Resick et al. and Māori leader themes provides insight for the compatibility between tikanga Māori and western views on ethical leadership.

Broader Themes for Leading

Western leadership is viewed as focused on the individual leader and in particular, their character. In their study, Resick et al. (2011) discovered that character was the dominant theme among U.S. managers (90%) (p. 447). Williamson (2008) points out the "third Platonic claim about leadership: that the character of leaders makes a large difference in whether they are able to rule effectively on behalf of the

community" (p. 402). Likewise, tikanga focuses heavily on character as an important consideration for leading and focuses a leader's attention on the success of the community. As Katene (2010) contends, leaders have an obligation for "leading the community forward, improving its economic base and its mana" (p. 11). Leaders must develop virtue built upon their society's history, principles and value system. It is important for western leaders to pursue their version of tikanga.

On the dark side of leadership, Resick et al. (2011) found that deception and dishonesty, and acting in self-interest and misusing power were the dominant themes among U.S. respondents in their study (p. 447). This demonstrates the predatory practices of those Burns (1978) would describe as power-wielders, individuals utilizing their positions for personal gain. Such practices fail to recognize the importance of ethical leadership and the character of individual leaders. From a Māori perspective, such practices reduce the mana and tapu of the leader. As Williamson (2008) points out, a leader from the Kallipolis has the aim of "leading for the good of the whole, not the good of the leaders" (p. 404). This allows everyone in the society to flourish. When leaders lead for themselves, inequity is the result. Likewise, Māori leaders maintain obligations for the care of their iwi, hapū and whānau. Māori leaders are committed to meeting the expectations of their followers. "Reverence depended on success, and success was measured by the well-being and standing of the whānau and hapū (Katene, 2010, p. 5). Leaders must lead for the betterment of others.

As Williamson (2008) attests, "Plato argues that we cannot expect either moral character or knowledge of the good to spring up on their own with any regularity in the absence of a supportive set of social and educational institutions aimed at producing such persons" (p. 407). Educating leaders in this manner is also important to the Māori. They traditionally set up schools for aspiring leaders where they were "immersed in tribal ritual and tradition and underwent rigorous and exacting training" (Katene, 2010, p. 5). Leadership must engage in continual education that focuses on understanding the history, principles and values of one's society. Leaders must nurture a worldview perspective.

LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Tikanga is seeing a rejuvenation in the Māori and Pākehā peoples of New Zealand but Mead (2003) points out that more research is needed to "expand our understanding of the different aspects of tikanga Māori" (p. 2). As more research is conducted, specific themes of tikanga as related to western perspectives of ethical leadership should emerge.

A limitation in attempting to generalize tikanga to western societies arises in the form of communication. Again, Mead (2003) points out that "understanding tikanga Māori is informed and mediated by the language of communication" (p. 2). "One's understanding through te reo Māori is different from one obtained through the English language" (Mead, 2003, p. 2).

A further limitation involves the subtleties found within the cultural aspects of tikanga. As with any culture, there are expectations and practices that come to be known through study of the culture but subtle expectations also require practice and experience within the culture and cannot be easily understood through study alone.

Of course, this paper only begins to scratch the surface of the relationships between western thoughts of virtue and leadership in relation to tikanga Māori. It is simply not possible to do justice to a people's full value system in a paper such as this.

In spite of the limitations presented above, this paper is informative in raising awareness of tikanga Māori philosophy outside of New Zealand. In doing so, a unique opportunity to expand the discussion of leadership is presented beyond traditional western perspectives. Further, as interest continues to increase in Eastern philosophy and its application to leadership studies, there is an opportunity to highlight a portion of the world that has received little attention in the literature. As the Pākehā of New Zealand continue to accept Māori culture the impacts of blending an island value system into a western world-view provides fertile opportunities for future research.

Tikanga offers a unique way to investigate moral character in leaders and how they come to be good citizens within the whānau, hapū and iwi. Tikanga reminds us that as leaders we must understand our

background, value system concepts and practices to have virtue in leadership. In this respect, leadership becomes virtuous in itself and as stated by Levine and Boaks (2014), "should be conceived as a master virtue that, correctly understood, serves human flourishing" (p. 240).

Finally, metaphorical descriptions such as "leader is a waka (canoe)" (as cited in Mead, et al., 2006, p. 6-7) provide subtle but powerful insights into leading. Studying tikanga Māori should prompt western leaders to reflect upon their own value systems and leadership experiences. As with virtue, tikanga Māori leads us to understand that how one leads is based on who one is.

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APPENDIX A

Māori Word Glossary
Aotearoa - Māori name for New Zealand.
Ea - satisfaction (a desired outcome).
Hapū - subtribe.
Iwi - tribe.
Kaitiaki - expert in the practice of taking care of people and of place.
Kua ea - the matter is settled.
Mana - prestige, authority, control, influence, or power.
Manaakitanga - an ideal that one should aspire to reach.
Māori - indigenous Polynesian people of New Zealand.
Mauri ora - wellbeing.
Noa - neutrality.
Pākehā - non- Māori
Pono - true or genuine.
Rangatira - Māori word for leadership, to weave people together.
Take - cause (a breach of tikanga).
Take-utu-ea - a correction to a breach of tikanga.
Tapu - the state of being set apart.
Tika - being correct. The right or correct way of doing things.
Tikanga Māori - the Māori way of doing things and is derived from the Māori word tika meaning 'right'
or 'correct'.
Tohunga - experts of skill or art. Can be religious or otherwise.
Utu - reciprocation (equivalent gesture given to a wronged party).
Waka -canoe.
Whānau - family.
Whanaungatanga - a sense of family connection and relationship through shared experiences; close family
ties; friendship; reciprocal relationships.