

**What are the perspectives of a Ngāti Rākau community  
towards a potential digital repository for urupā records?**

**by**

**Caroline Kauri**

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## Abstract

**Research problem:** Little is known about management of urupā records. The objective of this research was to explore the need for a digital repository. This research project explored how Ngāti Rākau urupā records are currently managed in terms of discoverability, accessibility and sustainability, how records should be managed and potential barriers to a digital repository.

**Methodology:** This research project used an indigenous Kaitiakitanga framework to understand a Māori world view. A Kaupapa Māori paradigm and a co-design approach were also used for the design to appropriately conduct research with Māori participants. A qualitative methodology was used to gain attitudes and opinions from Ngāti Rākau participants.

**Results:** No written records exist through Mōtuiti Marae. Urupā records are currently managed through oral and kanohi ki te kanohi assimilation. Participants support documentation of Ngāti Rākau urupā records. Clarifications around digital protection of urupā records will need to be communicated before a digital repository is created. Potential barriers include generational views, modern Māori perspectives versus traditional perspectives, the desire to uphold cultural traditions and a fear of shared records.

**Implications:** The study was restricted to one hapū and only five participants. Further research could explore how information should be presented and how other hapū and iwi feel about the digitisation of urupā records for more generalised findings.

**Keywords:** Urupā records, digital repositories, indigenous perspectives towards, Māori cultural studies.

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## Research Problem

Mai i tō upoko ki ō waewae, titi atu ki te whenua e mōhio ana koe te tangata e whakapuaki ana i te whakapapa ko wai koe, nō hea koe, he aha tōu tātai, he aha ōu pānga ki ngā whenua, he aha tōu pānga ki te marae, he aha tōu pānga ki te whānau, ki te hapū, ki te iwi, he aha tōu pānga ki ngā whenua, e mōhio ana koe i nōhia e ō mātua, tīpuna, he aha tōu pānga ki te urupā.

From your head to your feet, to the ground you know the person who is telling the genealogy of who you are, where you are from, what your plans are, what your connections to land are, what your relationship is at the marae, what impact you have on your family, hapū, iwi, and your impact on the land of your parents, grandparents and your relationship with the cemetery

(Kāretu & Milroy, 2018, p.49).

Whakapapa are an integral part of Māori culture. Urupā are commonly referred to when reciting whakapapa, along with your iwi, hapū, marae, grandparents and parents. Whakapapa is often recited at tangihanga and this is why tangihanga is one of the most important ceremonies that Māori hold dearly to for Māoritanga. Whakapapa and urupā information go hand in hand. Urupā records are a part of who you are - but what if you do not know this information?

It is not rare for there to be graves without headstones at Māori cemetery (urupā) in the Horowhenua region, even years after a burial. Oral records may be the only urupā records that exist and are passed down through generations. Looking for where Māori whānau are buried is not as simple as searching for information online. Instead, Māori may need to contact elderly

relatives, travel to the burial site and be shown where the ones they seek out are buried. This is an area that certainly needs investigating. The literature examines related topics such as tribe (iwi) repositories, genealogy (whakapapa) records, cultural repositories and community records, yet does not address urupā records. The gap in the literature demonstrates that an evaluation of a potential digital repository for urupā records - in terms of identity, discoverability, accessibility and sustainability - is necessary as a possible solution to uphold urupā records for future generations.

## **Research Objectives**

This study will explore the need for a digital repository to support effective and efficient management of urupā records so they are discoverable and accessible. In order to assess this, it will consider perspectives from participants who affiliate with Ngāti Rākau hapū - a Ngāti Raukawa subtribe - towards the significance of urupā records, current management of urupā records, cultural implications and issues that may arise through the digitisation process. This study aims to focus its research in the Horowhenua region because of my existing knowledge of a lack of documentation of urupā records through whānau (family) connections. I affiliate with Ngāti Rākau hapū through my paternal lineage. If the proposal of a digital repository for urupā records is found to be a suitable solution to help appropriately manage urupā records, it may allow recommendations to be made for the creation of a suitable and culturally responsible repository.

## Research Questions

This study will examine the following research questions:

- 1) How does Ngāti Rākau currently manage urupā records?
- 2) How do Ngāti Rākau create a digital repository for urupā records in regard to discoverability, accessibility and sustainability?
  - 2a) What challenges may the community face regarding the possible creation of a digital repository for urupā records?

## Review of the Literature

A review of the literature related to Māori cemetery (urupā) records has clarified that there has been no specific research on these sort of records and whether there is a need for a digital repository. Titus's (2008) explored the design aspects involved in creating a geographic information system to preserve cemetery records and enhance retrieval in the United States. Titus (2008) recognised how cemetery records reflected cultural values. Cemetery records are not the only reflection of cultural values, however. Ihimaira-Smiler (2002) primarily explained the significance of iwi identity. Ihimaira-Smiler (2002) stated that "Iwi ties are the main identifiers used by Māori today" (p.3). Ta'ala (2006) evaluated "the management of whakapapa records as a way of assessing Māori records management and documenting the changes that whakapapa is undergoing" (p.5). Ta'ala (2006) acknowledged that "whakapapa continues to be the backbone to Māori identity, of establishing one's ties to marae, hapu and iwi" and very

much revolved around Māori cultural identity (p.5). These related studies identify important factors that surround iwi, whakapapa, cultural and community records such as identity, discoverability and accessibility as well as sustainability yet no studies examine urupā records management issues.

## **Identity**

Researchers such as Ihimaira-Smiler (2002) acknowledged the inseparable relationship between iwi resources, whakapapa records and identity. These studies deserve a research focus because of the positive impact they may have on increasing one's sense of identity. Although these studies are not recent, they are still relevant and worth reviewing because of the non-existent literature on urupā records. Ngāti Raukawa participants for this study will be asked about the connection between iwi and whakapapa records and cultural identity. Tamaira's (2007) research focussed on whakapapa yet it differed in the way she investigated "the use of public libraries in New Zealand by researchers into Māori family history, or whakapapa" (p.6). Tamaira (2007) used Ta'ala's (2006) research as an example to emphasise the close relationship between identity and whakapapa. Like iwi resources and whakapapa records, a study of urupā records which describe people, family ties and iwi connections will also lead to an increased sense of belonging and identity.

### *Oral Records*

Oral transmission is not an effective way of retaining cultural information not only in New Zealand but in other international communities. Within an oral culture records may be lost over generations. Poelina-Hunter (2009), for example, explored why the Nyikina community

from Western Australia did not make the transition from an oral to written language to help prevent generation loss in comparison to Mediterranean communities, such as the Minoans and Etruscans, who did. Poelina-Hunter (2009) pointed out that if the Nyikina language were to die, a huge part of their cultural identity would also be lost because of the cultural similarities that exist. It is also appropriate to review literature on communities outside of New Zealand such as Poelina-Hunter's research; there are many cultural similarities that exist. The Nyikina community provides an example of cultural identity. Because their language is endangered, their cultural identity is also at stake (Poelina-Hunter, 2001). Iwi must seek more suitable methods of recording urupā records to ensure that this information is not lost and to uphold cultural identities.

### **Discoverability and Accessibility**

Discoverability and accessibility is a common issue that is associated with cultural resources and cemetery records. Ihimaera-Smiler's (2002) noted "... there is a need for access to information resources that describe and discuss iwi culture, history and conditions in New Zealand and this need is not being met" (p.3). The findings from Ihimaera-Smiler's (2002) study showed that material was either not available to be discovered or were not easily accessible due to design factors. Heavey and Dorner (2014) found that the number of available Māori digital resources proves to be useful since Ihimaera-Smiler's study was conducted in 2002, yet he also acknowledged that "digital technologies still have a long way to go to effectively disseminate traditional knowledge and create efficient digital systems for Māori learners to use" , (p.9, as cited in Hunter, 2005; Tella, 2010). The organising and cataloguing of Māori information sometimes fails to take on a Māori world view. For instance, Ihimaera-Smiler (2002) found that

searching for “Te Atairangikaahu, the Maori Queen” produced no information, however, a search for “Maori Queen” produced lots of information (p.10). Heavey (2014) noted that it is important that traditional indigenous knowledge and Māori treasures are carefully selected and digitised to suit the community who will be using them. Heavey (2014) also found that Māori learning is successful when being Māori is acknowledged when learning about cultural heritage. It would be ideal for a national digital repository to be managed by Māori to ensure that they are meeting the needs of Māori users. Ta’ala’s (2006) research project on whakapapa records centred around shifting accessibility control from traditional bicultural initiatives to iwi/rūnanga. Ta’ala (2006) applied qualitative methodology with “Kaupapa Māori principles within a Kaupapa Māori theoretical framework” to better meet the needs of Māori users (p.6). Concepts of responsibility will be explored through the data collection process as well as Māori perspectives on management and ownership.

Access was also a point of discussion for Poelina-Hunter and Titus. Poelina-Hunter (2009) portrayed that having “access to and influence over collective stories, is a powerful resource” (p.38, as cited in Rappaport, 1995). Even if urupā records are discoverable, they may not be easily accessible, for instance, if relatives live overseas or if they need to travel a long way to receive a record. Poelina-Hunter (2009) used a culturally appropriate “Nyikina framework for understanding concepts of myth and storytelling” to assist in the case studies (p.14). A culturally relevant framework for a Māori community will be used in this study to assist in data collection and analysis.

Titus (2009) acknowledged the value in discoverable and accessible cemetery records for research purposes; retrieval of records was a major focus. Titus (2009) also used a case

study of “The Fairmont City Cemetery” and a quantitative methodology was used (p.11, 20).

Case studies would not be suitable for this project because there is no need to gather data regarding record keeping processes over a period of time. Gathering key stakeholder’s opinions on current record keeping practices will be most informative.

## **Sustainability**

Sustainability is another important factor that is pertinent to effective management of records. Newman (2010) stated that “Archives held within structures or environments which are not sustainable are potentially as much at risk as those which are never identified and preserved” (p.1). In terms of urupā records, it is almost disrespectful not to adequately manage records: “If collecting and preserving certain records constitutes construction of memory, not doing so equates to forgetting (Newman, 2010, p.1, as cited in Jimerson, 2009). Ihimaera-Smiler (2002) stated that an electronic database would make iwi resources more permanent through transferring Māori information to an electronic format. Ihimaera-Smiler (2002) found that there is a need for such a database and it is possible. Ta’ala (2006) conveyed how iwi can preserve Māori heritage through taking on Western recordkeeping practices. Ta’ala (2006) found that iwi “have capitalised on their positions of power to equate identity with iwitanga” (p.101). Tamaira’s (2007) findings indicated that a popular reason for whakapapa research was “for posterity (to keep a record for future generations)” (p.32, as cited in Kuglin, 2004). Poelina-Hunter (2009) portrayed that the Nyikina community began writing down oral narratives to preserve their culture. Poelina-Hunter (2009) also found that religious practices influenced the transition from oral to written literature. There have been concerns with recording cultural information. Thompson Darling (2018) pointed out that the Māori “spoken word was kōrero

tuku iho, a symbol of thought and the means by which ‘reliable information and knowledge were expressed’” (p.8, as cited in Haami, 2004, p.15). Thompson Darling (2018) pointed out that “Those Europeans who encountered te reo Māori before 1815 and who tried to transcribe what they heard had to rely on their own interpretations” (p.8). In other words, written records before 1815 may not have been reliable because of different world views. Transcribing oral information does have its risks in the way information can be interpreted differently. Management of urupā records by Māori should mitigate these issues. Fortunately, urupā records mostly consist of names and dates rather than stories or opinions which will lessen the risk of recording incorrect information.

Capturing urupā records through technology does seem practical. Wiggs (2005) demonstrated how cemetery records were captured through photographs in the process of moving the location of graves. Titus (2009) came to the conclusion that historic cemetery records can be preserved through a virtual system for future generations. In order for communities to make records sustainable, they must adopt modern recordkeeping practices either through technology or simply through writing records down. Methods of formalising recordkeeping practices will be explored through this research project.

In summary, although there is no specific literature on urupā records, there are certainly aspects of certain studies that are especially relevant. Urupā records contain information about whakapapa and iwi so they can also strengthen personal and collective identity much like whakapapa and iwi records do. Availability of urupā records and accessibility to information is in need of improvement in terms of better meeting Māori users’ needs. Because Ihimaera-Smiller’s research topic closely aligns with a review of Māori cemetery records that are

connected to iwi records, collecting data through interviews to determine users' needs is also most appropriate for this study. This research project will also draw on Ta'ala's research in the way a kaupapa Maori perspective will be used. An exploration of related studies has found that documenting records, through transferring oral records to written records or through digitisation, can sustain the management of cultural records.

## Theoretical Framework

For this research, Kamira's (2003) depiction of a Kaitiakitanga framework was used to analyse how urupā records are managed at Motuiti Marae. Cultural concepts were used to provide an understanding of Māori perspectives towards information as well as ownership and governance. Concepts such as matauranga, hinengaro, tiaki, tapu and rahui were significant for this study and determined how closely the hapū's perspectives towards management of urupā records aligned with a Māori world view. "Matauranga refers to education and intuitive intelligence, and is linked to the divine. Hinengaro is the mind, the thinking, knowing, perceiving, remembering, recognising, feeling, abstracting, generalising, sensing, responding and reacting" (Kamira, 2003, p.3, as cited in Pere, 1991, p.32). Information about Māori has enormous spiritual and cultural significance so needs to be given extra care and consideration (Kamira, 2003). Kamira (2003) also mentioned how Tane-nui-a-rangi retrieved the baskets of knowledge from a "celestial abode" amongst many dangers and took on the great responsibility of protecting it which reiterates the spiritual nature of urupā records (p.3).

In terms of governance and ownership, “kaitiakitanga” stems from the word “tiaki” which means to guard or protect (Kamira, 2003, p.5). It is a responsibility rather than a right of ownership (Kamira, 2003). Kamira (2003) emphasised that kaitiakitanga is a collective and inter-generational responsibility which is closely entwined with spiritual mechanisms such as tapu (restriction) and rahui (protection) (p.4). Intellectual property can easily become trampled on and governing boards need to ensure that the purpose behind collecting information is mana enhancing as a precautionary method against continued negative Māori statistics (Kamira, 2003, p.5). The Kaitiaki framework suggests that the sharing of information also needs to be given careful consideration.

These characters give some explanation to why urupā records at Motuiti are not easily accessible and why there has not been written records in past years. The Kaitiakitanga framework suggests that Māori will not easily part with information, especially if that information is personal and culturally sensitive. Māori may only willingly part with information if it is clear that policies and procedures are in place and that information will be protected (Kamira, 2003).

## **Research Design**

A Māori research paradigm has been used in this study to inform the design process. Ta’ala (2006) explained how kaupapa Māori research “applies to Māori ways of thinking and doing things” (p.12). Adopting a Māori perspective, as opposed to a Western perspective, through all stages of the research project will ensure that the outcomes will not be treated with suspicion

and mistrust by Māori but will rather be advantageous for the intended Māori audience (Ta'ala, 2012, p.12). According to Hudson, Milne, Reynolds, Russell and Smith (2010), kaupapa Māori research works when the focus of the study is a Māori kaupapa (subject) and “involves Māori as co-constructors of the project, supports kaupapa Māori theory and uses Māori research methodologies as appropriate” (p.10).

A co-design approach has also been used for this study. A co-design process involves “customers and users of products or services in their development” (NSW Council of Social Service, 2017, p.1). It is fitting to use this approach alongside a kaupapa Māori research paradigm and Kaitiakitanga Framework in the way both concepts encourage the involvement of key Māori stakeholders of Ngāti Rākau descendants for their perspectives on a possible service they may use (NSW Council of Social Service, 2017). Although a co-design process usually consists of four parts - “understanding and clearly defining the issue, developing potential solutions, implementing/testing ideas/solutions and outcomes” - this study has only focussed on the beginning aspects of the process to gain a better understanding of the issue and gather whether participants view a digital repository as a possible solution (NSW Council of Social Service, 2017, p.1).

## **Methodology**

A qualitative methodology was used for this study to capture detailed perspectives on the concepts involved in digitally storing urupā records. Tamaira (2007) used a quantitative method and analysed data from a questionnaire. Her framework was based on an existing study on

genealogists' behaviour to compare her results (Tamaira, 2007). Tamaira (2007) set out to gain knowledge around how to improve accessibility for researchers searching for whakapapa information in public libraries. Although both Ta'ala and Tamaira's research relate to whakapapa, their focus was very different. Ta'ala's (2006) research heavily relied on people's opinions on managing whakapapa records so a qualitative approach to collecting data was practical. On the other hand, Tamaira (2007) focussed on people's information seeking behaviour while searching for Māori whakapapa so a quantitative approach was more suitable to study patterns in behaviour. A large proportion of the data I collected involved using people's opinions on documenting urupā records so a qualitative approach was more suitable. A qualitative methodology was more suitable to explore reasons behind how urupā records are currently managed and why participants may be hesitant about documenting or sharing urupā records.

## **Research Sample**

The study was carried out using a convenience sample of five Ngāti Raukawa descendants who affiliate to Motuiti Marae (**see Appendix A**). This number was both manageable and yielded enough information to analyse data in regard to identity, preserving oral records, discoverability, accessibility, sustainability, sensitive cultural information and digitising urupā records. Leedy and Ormrod (2015) stated that convenience sampling "takes people or other units that are readily available" (p.182). It was appropriate to gather opinions on matters associated with Motuiti Marae from relatives that already have a close connection to urupā records through their time spent at the marae and through ancestral ties; it was also useful to know that these relatives could be easily contacted. All participants are either knowledgeable

about management of urupā records, family history, or Māori tikanga which ensured that information gathered from interviews was authentic and reliable. All participants were over the age of 40. Leedy et. al (2015) noted that “in nonprobability sampling, the researcher has no way of predicting or guaranteeing that each element of the population will be represented in the sample”, yet “such information may be all you need for your purpose” (p.182). Knowledge about urupā records, whakapapa or Māori tikanga is retained and added to over a substantial period of time and thus, it is probable that interviewing a younger relative for the sake of gaining a wider representative of the population would not have been advantageous. The following criteria has been followed: 1) Each participant is a Ngāti Rākau (sub-tribe) descendent of Ngāti Raukawa iwi and affiliates to Motuiti Marae and 2) Each participant holds considerable knowledge on any one of the following: Motuiti urupā sites in terms of where people are buried, organisational roles and practices at the marae or Māori cultural knowledge related to sensitive topics such as whakapapa information and the deceased. Participants confirmed that they met both criteria before interviews were conducted. The criteria ensured that the sample more fairly represented a Ngāti Raukawa community. Relatives whom I was confident about meeting this criteria were approached. Participants also needed to confirm that they were interested in participating in the study. A small group of five to seven relatives were initially approached however many of these people did not wish to partake in the study due to their confidence in the topics raised, they could not be contacted or did not communicate about whether they wished to participate or not.

Snowball sampling was also used in this study. Valerio, Rodriguez, Winkler, Lopez, Dennison, Liang and Turner (2016) described how snowball sampling occurs when “a small

number of recruits (seeds) meeting eligibility criteria and after consenting to participate then receive a small incentive for recruiting others from their social network who also meet eligibility criteria” (p.4). In this study, the incentive was merely supporting the research on a topic that was considered to be important for the hapū. Valerio et al. (2016) demonstrated how the “‘seeds’ identified others with desired characteristics and then those individuals identified others until either the sample size goal was achieved or the timeframe for recruitment ended” (p.4). Snowball sampling took place until the timeframe ended. Snowball sampling was advantageous in the way names of experts were mentioned who I did not initially consider and were able to be contacted in a short amount of time. Some names were mentioned more than once which validated that these people were worth contacting. Two out of the five participants took part as a result of snowball sampling.

### **Data Collection**

Data collection consisted of using semi-structured interviews. Ihimaera-Smiler (2002) conducted surveys and interviews to gain requirements from key stakeholders who would be most likely to use her proposed database. Interviews, rather than surveys, were more suitable for this study to gain unknown information on how urupā records are currently documented. Surveys would have only been suitable for this project if more information was known about documenting urupā records.

Semi-structured interviews can be described as the interviewer perhaps asking standard questions but may follow up with “one or more individually tailored questions to get clarification or probe a person’s reasoning” (Leedy and Ormrod, 2015, p.160). Semi-structured interviews have been more appropriate than structured interviews as interviewees were more

knowledgeable than myself on topics that revolve around urupā records and were able to steer responses to share their knowledge, opinions and stories.

Interviews were especially appropriate for Māori participants. Heavey (2014) illustrated that “several authors have noted that collecting data through interviews for Māori participants is the best method because individual experiences and opinions can be captured easily in a natural setting” (p.16, as cited in Cram, 2013; Smith, 2012). The semi-structured interviews were planned to take place either at my home or at a relative’s house. It was likely that an alternative public meeting place would not have been necessary because of the family connection and participants should feel comfortable in either setting. Because of Covid-19 government restrictions during the lockdown period, however, face-to-face interviews were not allowed. Instead, the only options were to conduct interviews through the Zoom application for video calls and through telephone calls. A kaupapa Māori research paradigm, which takes on a Māori perspective, generates research designers to involve culturally acceptable methods of collecting data such as face to face interviews or kanohi ki te kanohi interviews. Ta’ala (2006) portrayed that “as Māori have come from an oral tradition, kanohi ki te kanohi enables Māori to interact within a medium that is culturally familiar and one in which it is considered culturally acceptable” (p.53). Face to face interviews would have allowed me to have more insight into whether participants were uncomfortable about particular topics; they would also have allowed me to more effectively gauge whether or not to probe for more detail. Zoom meetings were preferred over telephone calls so the interviewer and interviewee could see each other however sometimes video calls could not take place because of technical difficulties. Three out of the five interviews took place through video (Zoom) calls.

A co-design approach, which has been used to complement the kaupapa Māori research paradigm, largely affects data collection in the way participants are used to define the issue and develop potential solutions. Critical stakeholders “are respected as equal partners sharing expertise in the design of services and products” (NSW Council of Social Service, 2017, p.1). Sun (2013) used a co-creation approach for “understanding value co-creation in cross-border business relationships” (p.10). A co-creation design was especially helpful for this research to understand Chinese attitudes towards small and medium enterprises outside of Western cultural contexts (Sun, 2013). The study found that a co-creation design has many benefits including deeper relationships, stronger overall capabilities and wider coverage of the networked market (Sun, 2013). Widyanta (2019) used a co-creation experience to enhance the tourism foodscape through engagement, personalisation and co-production. A co-design approach for the creation or improvement of a service, which incorporates users’ needs in the design process, can enhance user experiences through pinpointing key elements that users perceive to be important. A co-design approach was used for this study to pinpoint what potential users of a digital repository for urupā records considered to be important in regard to efficient and effective user experience. Heavey (2014) portrayed that it is important that traditional indigenous knowledge and Māori taonga (treasures) are carefully selected and digitised to suit the community who will be using them. It was, therefore, crucial to gather information on what will suit this particular Māori community regarding cultural sensitivities, discoverability and access issues as well as preservation issues.

A set of key questions were used for each interview however the wording of questions may have differed slightly for each participant (see **Appendix B**). Cram (2013) suggested that

“whakawhanaungatanga was a culturally-appropriate way of establishing connections” at the beginning of an interview. Whakawhanaungatanga occurred before interview questions were asked to make the interviewee comfortable. Cram (2013) also suggested beginning the interview with a general question to allow interviewees to open up about a topic whether their response is positive or negative and following with more specific questions. Additionally, beginning an interview with a general question also allows the interviewer to get an idea of the participant’s environment and perspectives (Cram, 2013). The first question presented to participants was “What is your knowledge of urupā records?”. Remaining interview questions identified current issues regarding current management of urupā records and future issues that may arise in the digitisation process as well as the cultural implications attached to urupā records. The questions also helped identify whether digitising urupā records would be a suitable solution to assist in the preservation and management process. Although participants were given a copy of the questions prior to the interview to help them prepare, sensitive topics may have still arisen - especially since the subject revolved around burials and the deceased. Participants were informed that at any time, they could stop the interview. Interviews were recorded via handwritten notes. All interviewees indicated that they were comfortable being identified in the final report.

### **Pilot Interview**

A pilot study was conducted to test interview questions with a relative. Some questions were edited for clarity and others were edited to improve conversational flow. After the interview, I was confident about the content that I would attain from each question for analysis.

## Ethics

Before the data collection process could go ahead, approval was given by the Pipitea Sub-Committee of the Human Ethics Committee at Victoria University of Wellington. It was outlined that participants would be asked about Māori burial records which could be a sensitive topic for individuals. To minimise discomfort, participants were informed that they would receive a copy of the questions before the interview to help them mentally prepare. Participants were also informed that they could stop the interview at any time, for example, if discussing the deceased became overwhelming. The main focus of the research, however, is urupā records. If participants did show signs of discomfort during the interview, it would have ended immediately and no further questions would have been asked.

Because this project specifically targets Māori descendants, it upholds Victoria University of Wellington's Treaty of Waitangi Statute. It specifically upholds two principles from the Statute: Participation (Whai wāhi) is supported in the way attitudes from Ngāti Rākau Māori descendants have been incorporated into the analysis of a possible repository for urupā records, to decide whether the idea is feasible and what positive and negative attributes are involved in the task (VUW, 2019). Equality (Rite tahi) is supported as the project encourages equal opportunities for a Māori community to effectively and efficiently manage urupā records as opposed to a regional council (VUW, 2019). Te Ara Tika's four principles have also been incorporated into the study in line with the Treaty of Waitangi's four principles (partnership, participation and protection) (Hudson, Milne, Reynolds, Russell, & Smith, 2010). Tika (research design), manaakitanga (cultural and social responsibility), whakapapa (relationships) and mana (justice and equity) have guided this research project to ensure that it follows culturally

appropriate procedures for Māori participants and acknowledges a Māori worldview through a kaupapa Māori research paradigm (Hudson et al., 2010).

## **Data Analysis**

Thematic Analysis was employed to analyse data for this study due to its flexibility and suitability for qualitative research projects (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is “a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun et al., 2006, p.77). Braun et al. (2006) stated that it is important to know what type of data analysis will occur prior to analysing the data in terms of a “rich description of the data set, or a detailed account of one particular aspect” (p.83). This study will evaluate a detailed account of a group of themes within the data set rather than a thematic description of the entire data set (Braun et al., 2006). In other words, the analysis will focus on particular themes which relate to people’s perspectives about the nature of urupā records and how they should be managed as opposed to all content related to urupā records. Braun and Clarke’s five step guide assisted in the data analysis process.

The first phase involved transcribing the semi-structured interview handwritten notes by creating manually typed summaries. Braun et al. (2006) described how transcribing data in an interactive way allows the researcher to gain prior knowledge before formally engaging with the data. Transcriptions were then checked by participants for accuracy. Participants were given the opportunity to add to transcriptions or clarify information.

The second phase consisted of generating codes. Codes are interesting features across the entire data set (Braun et al., 2006). A long list of codes emerged from the data. Coding was

mostly “semantic” in the way I was not looking for anything beyond participants’ descriptions but merely identifying interesting and common topics (Braun et al., 2006, p.84).

The next step involved collating codes into overarching themes (Braun et al., 2006). Codes were tabulated in regard to the associated themes. Themes were somewhat theoretical as they related to the Kaitiakitanga framework and the review of the literature. Braun et al. (2006) specified that theoretical thematic analysis “provides a more detailed analysis of some aspect of the data” (p.84).

Phase four consisted of reviewing whether themes and codes aligned. Braun et al. (2006) mentioned that themes may be collapsed at this stage and codes may be rearranged. Data was rearranged into four tables that reflected an overriding topic such as “Cultural Themes” which included the sub-theme “Identity” and “Whakapapa Knowledge” code.

The names of themes were further defined in the fifth phase to more accurately reflect the related codes (Braun et al., 2006). Māori named themes were altered in accordance with Ngā Upoko Tukutuku, “standardised terms for subjects in te reo Māori” and aligned with a Māori world view (National Library of New Zealand, n.d.).

Lastly, the sixth phase included reviewing whether there was enough data extracts for themes to be discussed at length (Braun et al., 2006). Constructing a list of definitions for each theme against the entire data set ensured that each theme was worthy of discussion.

The data analysis process revealed Ngāti Rākau participants’ views towards current and future management of urupā records.

## Results

After analysing the data, it became clear that participants appreciated an investigation of the management of urupā records at Motuiti Marae and supported the need for documentation.

Participants interviewed were familiar with tangihanga proceedings at Motuiti, the histories of the urupā there and cultural aspects associated with urupā records. They have been encouraged to retain their knowledge about urupā records from older family members and have deepened their awareness through personal experiences. The importance of addressing urupā records at Motuiti was reflected through corresponding answers about non-existent written records, the small number of experts in this area and the benefits of documenting information for future generations. The data collected provided descriptions about the stark reality of how urupā records are currently managed, the concepts involved in creating a repository for discoverability, accessibility and preservation and barriers that may affect the potential project.

### **Ngāti Rākau's descriptions of how records are currently managed**

The following section will detail the data analysis relevant to answering the first research question:

- 1) How are urupā records currently managed at Motuiti Marae in Foxton?

Table 1 and 2 shows how records are currently managed in terms of cultural themes as well as accessibility and discoverability (see **Appendix D**).

Table 1A: Oral

Code (codes connected to an oral theme)	Definition (participants' understandings of each code in relation to urupā records)
Kōrero Tuku Iho	Words passed down.
Expertise Within Each Whānau	Chosen experts within each whānau learn about urupā records through oral assimilation.

All participants recognised the cultural significance of urupā records. Ngāti Rākau urupā records are associated with the following cultural themes: oral tradition, identity, a ao Māori perspective and responsibility. A partial reason for a lack of documentation of urupā records at Motuiti Marae is oral tradition. Jack Paki conveyed the significance of oral assimilation for Māori “They are important to hold our uniqueness. It is what makes us different”. Oral tradition concepts include kōrero tuku iho and expertise within each whānau. Kōrero tuku iho can be translated as “myths, ancient legends, or stories passed down through generations and whakapapa (genealogy)” (Kingi, Russell, Ashby, 2017, p.137). Data extracts confirm that Ngāti Rākau records are currently managed through oral transmission.

*Table 1B: Identity*

<b>Code (codes connected to the identity theme)</b>	<b>Definition (participants' understandings of each code in relation to urupā records)</b>
Whakapapa Knowledge	Knowledge about family and connections.
Feeling Connected	A feeling of belonging.
Spiritual Fulfillment	The spiritual feeling felt when visiting urupā sites.

Participants discussed the inseparable relationship between identity and urupā records.

Whakapapa knowledge, feeling connected and spiritual fulfillment is enhanced through urupā records. George Davis portrayed the importance of gaining a personal connection from urupā records: “Self-wealth maintains your health, self-worth keeps you on earth”. Stephen Kauri compared the spiritual fulfillment of visiting urupā sites to going to Gallipoli for pākehā: “You feel it”. Data extracts regarding identity reinforced the importance of effectively managing urupā records.

Table 1C: Te Ao Māori Perspective

Code	Definition
<b>Code (codes connected to the ao Māori theme)</b>	<b>Definition (participants' understandings of each code)</b>
Upper and Lower Jaw Concepts	The upper jaw represents spiritual and sensitive topics. The lower jaw represents practicality, intelligence, safety and unrestricted notions. The balance between the two is a feeling of calmness or mauri tau (absence of panic).
Sensitivity	Urupā records are thought to be extremely culturally sensitive.
Records May Be Too Sacred/Tapu to Record	Urupā records are so sacred that some people may perceive that they should not be documented through written or digital mediums.

All participants discussed the ao Māori perspective towards urupā records. Te ao Māori topics include upper and lower jaw concepts, sensitivity and the idea that records may be too sacred/tapu to record. One participant described the phenomenon through upper and lower jaw concepts (te kauae i runga and te kauae i raro); urupā records belong in the upper jaw as they are sensitive and spiritual whereas the lower jaw represents practicality concepts, intelligence and safe unrestricted notions (noa). Paki explained that the balance of both concepts is known as mauri tau (absence of panic). The sacredness of urupā records means that they are not readily shared - they need to be safeguarded and treated with extra care. Other

participants alluded to the upper jaw concept associated with urupā records and the need for extra protection in various other ways. The ao Māori perspective towards urupā records illuminates the shared attitude of protection against urupā records and it can also be seen as another explanation for a lack of documentation.

*Table 1D: Responsibility*

<b>Code (codes connected to the responsibility theme)</b>	<b>Definition (participants' understandings of each code in relation to urupā records)</b>
Collective/Shared	All Ngāti Rākau members are responsible for the management of urupā records.
Mārae Committee	The marae committee holds some responsibility for future management of urupā records.

Most participants mentioned that the responsibility of urupā records are shared collectively with the entire hapū. Delia Kauri said, “Isn’t it all our responsibility? Just as it’s all our responsibility to maintain and support the marae”. The marae committee also holds some responsibility for urupā records at Motuiti Marae. Mere Woon shared that, “The marae committee should set up a working party for the urupā records. All Ngāti Rākau members are responsible for upholding urupā records.

Table 2A: Current Discoverability

<b>Code (codes connected to the current discoverability theme)</b>	<b>Definition (participants' understandings of each code in relation to urupā records)</b>
No Written Records	No written records exist through Motuiti Marae.
Some Unmarked Graves	Some graves have no gravestones at Motuiti.
Some Mass Graves	Some people are buried together due to tragedies like the Spanish Influenza.
Some People are Buried Together	Some family members are buried together.
Information Gaps	Information gaps exist, where information about urupā records is lost, for a variety of reasons.
Individual Whānau Know Where Their Loved Ones are Buried	Individual families have some input in the burial and tangihanga of their loved ones, so are more knowledgeable about where their loved ones are buried.
People Hold onto Information	Some people selfishly do not share information about their knowledge of urupā records.
Specific People Know Information	There is a small number of people that are knowledgeable about urupā records at Motuiti Marae.

Memory	People rely on memory to discover urupā records however this is not a reliable source. Some individuals who are knowledgeable about urupā records have Dementia or Alzheimer's disease.
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All participants were adamant that no written records exist through the marae. Other factors affecting discoverability include some unmarked graves, some mass graves, the fact that some people are buried together, information gaps, individual whānau know where their relatives are buried, people hold onto information, specific people know information and a reliance on memory. Two participants mentioned that relatives have been buried in mass graves due to the Spanish Influenza. Delia Kauri portrayed that information gaps exist for a variety of reasons: "A lot of the information has already been lost, with the passing of elders, or the onset of Dementia or Alzheimer's". Davis stated "Some people didn't get on, some didn't share information". Stephen Kauri described how individual families know where their whānau are buried in the way they have an idea about where they want the deceased to be buried before the burial; individual whānau also hold death certificates. Participants mentioned a number of names of people who knew about urupā records at Motuiti Marae. All of these people mentioned were approached. Some of these people are participants in this study. The number of names mentioned, however, was small. The collected extracts revealed that Ngāti Rākau urupā records at Motuiti Marae are not easily discoverable.

Table 2B: Current Accessibility

<b>Code (codes connected to the current accessibility theme)</b>	<b>Definition (participants' understandings of each code in relation to urupā records)</b>
Tangihanga	Participants find information on urupā records through processes at tangihanga.
Communication Through Family/People	Participants prefer to access urupā information through family/people.
Wānanga	A meeting where people meet to discuss, deliberate and consider particular topics.
Social Media Networking	Participants use social networking, such as Facebook, as a last resort to seek information on urupā records.

Participants prefer to access urupā records through *kanohi ki te kanohi* (face to face) means over social media networking. Accessing information regarding urupā records through social networking is usually a last resort. Preferred mediums are through tangihanga, communication through family/people and wānanga. Paki described how he has gathered information on urupā records from a tangihanga: “After the service, people walk around. There will be people hovering over a grave. You mihi to them and ask who it is”. Mere Woon claimed, “The only way to learn about whānau is to call a wananga. People talk about what they know. They share information. People link that up to everyone there. Everyone there shares whānau information”. Data analysis revealed that access to urupā records is carried out in a traditional

sense. Participants acknowledged that accessing records through kanohi ki te kanohi communication can be time consuming, however it is guaranteed that they would find out more information than they had originally set out to, for instance, details about connections and relationships. Participants also acknowledged that kanohi ki te kanohi communication is not ideal for whānau that live far away from their marae setting such as Australia.

In summary, Ngāti Rākau urupā records are not easily discoverable and no written documentation exists through Motuiti Marae. Because of the spiritual nature of urupā records, they are not readily shared. When records are shared, transmission occurs through oral and kanohi-ki-te kanohi communication. The significance of addressing how Ngāti urupā records are managed is validated through participants' statements about their ability to enhance one's feeling of identity and sense of belonging. Management of urupā records is a shared responsibility of the hapū. Data analysis discloses that current management of Ngāti Rākau urupā records is not particularly effective and efficient yet is in line with traditional norms.

### **Ngāti Rākau's descriptions of preparatory steps for a digital repository**

The following section will detail the data analysis relevant to answering the second research question:

- 2) How do Ngāti Rākau create a digital repository for urupā records in regard to discoverability, accessibility and sustainability?

Table 2 and 3 shows Ngāti Rākau participants' attitudes towards how urupā records should be managed for future generations (see **Appendix D**).

*Table 2C: Future Discoverability*

<b>Code (codes connected to the future discoverability theme)</b>	<b>Definition (participants' understandings of each code in relation to urupā records)</b>
Recordkeeping	All participants support recordkeeping of Ngāti Rākau urupā records by means of documenting records.
Written Records	Records that are recorded by writing records down.
Digitisation	Records that are recorded through digital mediums.

Every participant supported future recordkeeping for improved discoverability. All five participants felt that there should be written records to refer to. Four out of five participants supported the digitisation of urupā records. Two participants discussed their knowledge of existing digitised cemetery records. Stephen Kauri referred to his knowledge of public cemetery records that are online and are easily discoverable. Paki communicated that another iwi they affiliate to has private digitised urupā records. The participant that did not support digitisation of urupā records reiterated that they should not be openly available for the public. The possibility of putting restrictions on digitised material will need to be clarified and discussed further. Participants also discussed the benefits of digitising records. Davis stated that digitised resources would save space. Stephen Kauri mentioned that digitised resources would be beneficial to prove one's identity when applying for Māori scholarships. Delia Kauri stated that

digitised resources would also help counteract the hindrance of memory failure and Alzheimer’s disease. The hapū should absolutely improve discoverability of urupā records through written records. There are many benefits that will result from digitised records however clarifications around safeguarding information will need to be communicated with the hapū.

*Table 2D: Future Accessibility*

<b>Code (codes connected to the future accessibility theme)</b>	<b>Definition (participants’ understandings of each code in relation to urupā records)</b>
Permission	The public should be granted permission to access Ngāti Rākau urupā records.
Restricted to Whānau/Hapū	Only the whānau/hapū should have access.
Improved Access Through Digitisation	Digitisation will improve access in the way people residing overseas will not need to travel.
Marae Visits	The hapū should continue to visit the marae to access urupā records.

All participants felt strongly about two things in relation to future accessibility: urupā records should be made available to the hapū and the public should only be granted access through strict controlled procedures. Suggestions revolved around the public only being

granted permission once hapū representatives are satisfied with people’s intentions.

Participants’ suggestions were relatively similar. Stephen Kauri suggested that “They should go to the family, get permission and so on”. Paki said, “You’ll have to come to the hapū. You’ll have to request it. It should not be open but closed to Ngāti Rakau”. Participants acknowledged that digitised records would improve access in the way people residing overseas could be able to retrieve records online without having to travel. Not all participants agreed that they would use the internet to access records online if they were available; these participants prefer that the hapū continue to visit the marae as a means of upholding traditional methods of retrieval. Future accessibility of Ngāti Rākau urupā records must, therefore, be restricted and processes should promote the continuity of traditional methods of access.

*Table 3A: Content*

<b>Code (codes connected to the future accessibility theme)</b>	<b>Definition (participants’ understandings of each code in relation to urupā records)</b>
Two Other Hapū Connect to Motuiti Marae	Ngāti Turanga and Ngāti Te Au also affiliate to Motuiti Marae which raises considerations around what will be recorded.
Information Gaps	Information gaps exist, where information about urupā records are lost, for a variety of reasons.

Participants raised some fair points in regards to the content of preserved urupā records. Delia Kauri mentioned that there are two other hapū that are affiliated with Motuiti

Marae - Ngāti Turanga and Ngāti Te Au. There are also information gaps in regards to where people are buried. Discussions will need to be made around what information will be recorded.

*Table 3B: Data Collection*

<b>Code (codes connected to the data collection theme)</b>	<b>Definition (participants' understandings of each code in relation to urupā records)</b>
Accuracy	How information will be validated and cross-checked needs to be determined.
Trust in People	The majority of participants trust the information from people they know.
Buy-In	People will need to see the value in providing information and supporting documentation of urupā records. They will also need to be ensured that data will be kept safe.
Kanohi ki te Kanohi	Face to face communication.
Appropriate Time Frame	There will need to be an appropriate time frame to allow for information to be brought forward.
Wānanga	A meeting where people meet to discuss, deliberate and consider particular topics.

There were many suggestions made by participants in terms of data collection. A data collection topic included accuracy of information, for instance, Davis questioned how will

accuracy of information be validated? How will it be cross-checked? How is someone's credibility determined? The majority of participants trust information from people they know. In order to effectively collect data, there would need to be buy-in, an appropriate time frame, wānanga and kanohi ki te kanohi communication. Data collection steps for preservation of urupā records should, therefore, involve setting tikanga around accuracy of information and creating appropriate time frames for data to be collected through kanohi ki te kanohi mediums.

*Table 3C: Future Burials*

<b>Code (codes connected to the future burials theme)</b>	<b>Definition (participants' understandings of each code in relation to urupā records)</b>
Maps	Maps of the urupā could outline where relatives are buried.
Whānau Plots	Relatives should be buried within their whānau plot.

An unforeseen theme that emerged from the data analysis was that urupā records would assist with future burials. Urupā records would assist with the creation of maps of the urupā and whānau plots. Delia Kauri explained how preserving urupā records would help prevent people making the mistake of burying outside of their whānau plot or beginning to dig without consulting with a kaumātua and hitting a coffin or tūpāpaku. Data analysis accentuated that urupā records would be an efficient and effective source for the hapū to know where to bury the dead.

*Table 3D: Management*

<b>Code (codes connected to the management theme)</b>	<b>Definition (participants' understandings of each code in relation to urupā records)</b>
Set Tikanga	Correct procedures and practices.
Transparency	There should be no hidden management practices in regards to urupā records.
Reviewed Processes	Management of urupā records should be regularly reviewed to improve processes.
Selected Kaitiaki	There should be selected kaitiaki or guardians to oversee the management of Ngāti Rākau urupā records.

Lastly, participants identified a number of suggestions for management of urupa records. Participants identified there would need to be set tikanga to protect the spirituality and sensitive nature of urupā records. Davis portrayed that “If there were no criteria, it would be like coming into someone’s house, taking a photo and leaving”. There would need to be transparency so the hapū are aware of what takes place in relation to records. Reviewed processes would continue to improve management and there should be selected kaitiaki to oversee urupā records. For effective management of urupā records, set tikanga is essential.

In summary, clarifications around safeguarding information will need to be communicated with the hapū. Accessibility must be restricted and processes should promote the continuity of traditional methods of access. Discussions will need to be made around what information will be recorded. There will need to be tikanga around accuracy of information and creating appropriate time frames for data to be collected through kanohi ki te kanohi mediums. Processes should be regularly reviewed and it has been suggested that selected kaitiaki oversee urupā records. For effective management of urupā records, set tikanga is essential.

2a) What challenges may the community face regarding the possible creation of a digital repository for urupā records?

Table 4 shows Ngāti Rākau participants' attitudes about particular barriers that could hinder the progression of a possible repository (see **Appendix F**).

*Table 4A: Changed Environment/ Te Ao Hurihuri*

<b>Code (codes connected to the changed environment/te ao hurihuri theme)</b>	<b>Definition (participants' understandings of each code in relation to urupā records)</b>
Loss of Old Traditions	Some old traditions are no longer performed, for example, learning about whakapapa and urupā records through a tohunga.

Diluted Tikanga	Even though we attempt to perform old traditions, they are not a hundred percent authentic.
Modern Māori	Modern Māori refers to urbanised Māori who may not be familiar with cultural traditions and may have lost contact with whānau.
Technological Advances	Digital methods of recording information, such as a digital repository, may be seen as further steering away from cultural traditions.

All participants recognised the effect that our changed environment has had on cultural practices. A changed environment, or otherwise known as te ao hurihuri, as resulted in a loss of old traditions, diluted tikanga and modern Māori. Technological advances have also added to how society has changed. Paki stated that in the past, records were passed down through a tohunga ahurewa to someone from each family; information passed down would include whakapapa knowledge and where people lay however colonisation got rid of tohunga. Stephen Kauri expressed that we now have a different way of learning and are doing things the pākehā way. Davis stated, “Because of how our society is, we are diluting tikanga. We are only doing about three quarters of it”. A barrier towards creating a possible repository is the perception that modern technology could further steer away from assimilating information through traditional methods.

Table 4B: Potential Setbacks

<b>Code (codes connected to the changed environment/ te ao hurihuri theme)</b>	<b>Definition (participants' understandings of each code in relation to urupā records)</b>
Generational Attitudes	There may be differing attitudes towards managing urupā records, depending on one's age.
Traditional Māori Attitudes Versus Modern Māori Attitudes	Traditional Māori can be described as Māori who are actively involved with their marae and are familiar with cultural traditions. Modern Māori refers to urbanised Māori who may not be familiar with cultural traditions and may have lost contact with whānau.
Fear About Shared Records	People may fear the sharing of records because of their sensitive nature and other people's intentions.
Fear About Record Seeking Intentions	People may have sinister intentions about urupā records. They may want to manipulate data for their own gain or simply be being nosy.

Other factors that participants have perceived as potential setbacks were generational attitudes, traditional Māori attitudes versus modern Māori attitudes, fear about shared records and fear about record seeking intentions. Woon communicated that “Some people my age may not like it to happen. The younger generation would benefit. We would not like it. The older generation may not like it”. The data analysis process has highlighted that the older generation may oppose the creation of a digital repository for urupā records whereas the younger generation may welcome it. A similar analogy is the differing attitudes of traditional Māori

versus modern Māori. Stephen Kauri stated that traditional Māori frown upon digital records. Woon also stated that modern Māori, on the other hand, may support it. In terms of sharing of records, Paki stated that “People fear that it might get shared around and people could get upset”. Participants also communicated that it would be wise to be wary of people’s intentions: Stephen Kauri communicated that “People may have a negative agenda”. Davis shared that it could be as sinister as “manipulating documents”, for instance, people have tried to change whakapapa in the past to claim land or “People could simply be being nosy”. One solution to minimising setbacks is ensuring that there is robust criteria to put people’s mind at ease.

In summary, a considerable challenge is the perception that modern technology could further steer away from assimilating information through traditional methods. Other challenges are generational attitudes, traditional Māori attitudes versus modern Māori attitudes, fear about shared records and fear about record seeking intentions. A solution to minimising setbacks, nonetheless, is ensuring that there is robust criteria to put people’s mind at ease.

## **Discussion**

Ngāti Rākau participants have disclosed that current management of urupā records is not ideal. Management of urupā records is achieved through oral assimilation. Current management of urupā records also closely aligns with identity and a Māori world view. Kamira’s (2003) asserted that “The implementation of Kaitiakitanga must take into account Te Tiriti as a tool by which we can measure benefits, make use of existing structures within Māori societies, and consider the

roles and responsibilities of Kaitiaki boards and their members” (p.2). The data is rich in cultural insights which provides a guide for creating a digital repository for Ngāti Rākau urupā records.

### **Kamira’s (2003) Kaitiakitanga Framework**

#### *Cultural Elements*

There are many similarities between the data extracts and Kamira’s (2003) portrayal of the Kaitiakitanga framework. There is a distinct parallel, however, between Kamira’s (2003) portrayal of a Māori world view towards information and one participant’s description of the upper and lower jaw concepts. Paki illustrated how spiritual and intellectual concepts belong in the upper jaw, akin to Kamira’s (2003) description of “Matauranga” which refers to “education and intuitive intelligence” (p.3). Paki also described how intelligence and practical concepts belong in the lower jaw which ties in Kamira’s (2003) description of “Hinengaro” - thinking, knowing and perceiving (p.3). Kamira (2003) also referred to the concepts of “tapu” and “rahui” which would belong in te kauae i runga (the upper jaw) (p.4). Paki conveyed that the opposing concept of restrictions (tapu and rahui) is noa. Participants shared their awareness of the sacredness, spirituality and sensitivity attached to urupā records in line with how Kamira (2003) acknowledged that Māori perceive knowledge to come from a “celestial abode” (p.3). An interesting element raised by participants was that urupā records may be too sacred or tapu to record. Hirini Moko Mead (2003) deliberated on this idea and explained the negative impact of labelling taonga (treasures) as being too sacred. Mead (2003) stated, “Our people became frightened of themselves, frightened of their culture, frightened of their tikanga, frightened of their spirituality and pushed them aside, even their reo” (p.33). We must not let “kehua” or

“evil spirits” get in the way of preserving information so it is not lost (Mead, 2003, p.33). A balance of acknowledging both spiritual and practical aspects is a must. Mead (2003) explained how Māori history involves kuia (grandmothers) saying to their mokopuna (grandchildren) that te ao Māori is of no benefit to them and they should learn the pākehā way - “your future is the pākehā way” although the parents’ belief is to speak Māori to their children so it is not lost (p.33). Mead (2003) believed this way of thinking needs to be undone and we need to “win” it back (p.33). The hapū will also need to define the balance between using digital technology as a tool to preserve information and how they will uphold a traditional Māori world view.

Another cultural element that is described by both the participants in this study and in Kamira’s portrayal of the Kaitiakitanga framework is that ownership of Māori intellectual property should be shared. Kamira (2003) mentioned that those who take on the responsibility of overseeing information (kaitiaki), take on a “collective” responsibility (p.4). Collective ownership is another cultural concept to consider for the possible creation of a digital repository. Participants’ cultural perceptions towards information which aligns with the Kaitiakitanga framework, entwines with management and digital preservation of urupā records.

### *Management of Urupā Records*

There were many similarities between the data and the Kaitiakitanga framework in terms of management. Data extracts revealed that urupā records are currently discoverable through people’s memory. According to Kamira’s (2003) depiction of the Kaitiakitanga framework, records that are stored in the mind can be categorised as information technology. Participants discussed the spiritual and sensitive nature of urupā records however Kamira (2003) stated that all data is considered to be sensitive for Māori: “data - anonymous or not - has enormous

spiritual and cultural significance for Māori so may require more attention and protection than generally given” (p.4). All participants strongly felt that urupā records should only be made available to the hapū. Participants’ strong feelings about restricted access surprised me at first because I initially felt that public access would be beneficial. I have now realised that although public access may be beneficial for some people, its sensitive implications will be upsetting for others. In Boskovic’s (2020) article titled “Native American groups take issue with Library of Congress posting tribal stories” chief of the Rappahannock tribe expressed, “They have no idea what they have...It would just be music to them, but to the tribes, it could be something sacred”. It is, therefore, best to limit access to the hapū and allow the public to seek permission to urupā records.

### *Digital Preservation of Urupā Records*

There are a number of similarities between the data and Kamira’s (2003) portrayal of the Kaitiakitanga framework in terms of preservation. Woon suggested that there be a working party to oversee management of urupā records which aligns with the Kaitiakitanga framework. Kamira (2003) also suggested that “Kaitiaki groups would have overview roles to look after data, information and knowledge sourced from, or about, Māori. These groups would set ethical, value and quality guidelines” (p.7). Kamira (2003) stated that “Ideally, participation of a Kaitiaki group would begin at the initiation stage of an IT project through to implementation and post-implementation” (p.7). Kamira (2003) also made reference to the Treaty of Waitangi in her discussion on kaitiaki as the Kaitiakitanga framework stems from Treaty values: “Article II guarantees Māori control and enjoyment of their valued possessions - tangible and intangible” (p.6). Management of urupā records that are overseen by selected kaitiaki from the hapū of

Ngāti Rākau, rather than the government, should help mitigate fears about shared records. Kamira (2003) communicated that Māori do not usually have control over collective information. The hapū are in the position to take control of urupā records and have the opportunity to manage them according to their attitudes and opinions. According to Article 31 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, “Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions...including human and genetic resources” (Hudson, Garrison, Sterling, Caron, Fox, Yracheta, Anderson, Wilcox, Arbour, Brown, Taulii, Kukutai, Haring, Te Aika, Baynam, Dearden, Chagne, Malhi, Garba, Tiffin, Bolnick, Stott, Rolleston, Ballantyne, Lovett, David-Chavez, Martinez, Sporle, Walter, Reading & Carroll, 2020, p.378). Kukutai and Taylor (2016) echo that indigenous control over their information has positive results.

Participants raised other matters of concern regarding preservation of urupā records. There may be questions about what data will be recorded since two other hapū are affiliated to the marae. Tikanga around accuracy of information will need to be decided on, for instance, who is credible? How will information be cross-checked? Davis communicated that an appropriate timeframe to collect information will allow for perceptions to be collected from “the deepest darkest corners”. One participant also suggested that tikanga be regularly reviewed to improve practices. There are a number of matters to be clarified before the creation of a digital repository can take place.

Participants mentioned that a barrier to creating a digital repository for urupā records is a fear of shared records. Participants portrayed that people could have a negative agenda, they

could manipulate documents for their own benefit or simply could be being nose-y. Kamira (2003) also acknowledged that information can easily become trampled on. Another barrier identified by participants included the fear that recording and accessing records digitally could undermine the promotion of cultural traditions. Suntikul (2018) explored the difficulties of cultural sustainability. Suntikul (2018) discussed the impact of tourism on attempting to uphold cultural traditions in Bhutan and “dealing with the ‘recovery and protection of cultural identities’ (p.2103, as cited in Farsani, Coelho, & Costa, 2012). Suntikul (2018) communicated that “With the commodification of heritage in the context of tourism, cultural narratives may be ‘sanitized’ in order to create marketable products and desirable tourist experiences” (p.2103, as cited in Wong, 2013). Paki stated that is the 4th industrial revolution and we need to be “on our toes with those tools”. There is a push-pull scenario with the onset of adapting to technology and upholding traditions. Other barriers included opposing views between traditional and modern Māori as well as differing generational views towards recording and digitising urupā records. Betts, Hill and Gardner (2019) mentioned the existence of a digital divide between the young and older generations. The Kaitiakitanga framework can help alleviate these fears in many ways. A kaitiaki group can ensure the hapū that they are in control of records rather than the New Zealand government. Additionally, the framework provides guidelines for digitally managing information in line with te ao Māori perspectives: “There are two factors when considering ownership and information technology: a) The physical ownership (ie. the computer system, equipment, database, etc). b) The intellectual ownership (ie. the knowledge and information)” (Kamira, 2003, p.5). Once again, this scenario resonates with te kauae i runga and te kauae i raro. The “physical ownership” belongs in the lower jaw

while “intellectual ownership” belongs in the upper jaw. As long the kaitaiki group manages urupā records with these two concepts in mind, it should also put the hapū’s mind at ease. Giglitto, Ciolfi, Claisse, Lockley, (2019) stated that “Whatever form it takes, technology should embed and represent the idea of safety” (p.8). Even though a digital repository may not necessarily endorse kanohi ki te kanohi communication, it can definitely entail a Māori way of thinking to uphold traditional perspectives. A digital repository could also act like a more reliable and secure storage solution for urupā records so traditional methods of assimilation can still take place.

Evidently, participants’ perspectives very closely align with a Māori world view and Kamira’s (2003) portrayal of the Kaitiakitanga framework. In keeping with the framework, if the hapū were to go ahead with the creation of a digital repository for urupā records, they should use participants’ suggestions and opinions as points of reference.

## **Implications of Findings**

There are several conclusions that can be drawn from this study. First, Ngāti Rākau urupā records are not easily discoverable or accessible. No written records exist through Motuiti Marae. Participants felt that oral assimilation is not a reliable method of preserving information for future generations due to aging relatives who are knowledgeable about urupā records. Some of these people have Dementia and Alzheimer’s disease.

All participants saw the value in addressing future management of urupā records and supported the need for documentation. Not all participants supported digitising records as they

preferred that records were not made available to the public. All participants felt strongly that urupā records should not be publicly available but should be restricted to the hapū. If the hapū was to go ahead with the creation of a digital repository, clarifications will need to be made about restrictions to protect the very spiritual nature of urupā records.

Potential barriers to creating a possible digital repository for urupā records were identified as differing perspectives of various groups such as intergenerational views and whether or not digitising records will continue to promote tikanga Māori.

Kamira's framework was effective for this study because of the cultural significance of urupā records and it provided insight into Māori perspectives towards information. Kamira's (2003) Kaitiakitanga framework will be appropriate for future researchers because of the similar perspectives between the participants and the ao Māori world view. The framework allows for a better understanding of current and future management of urupā records.

Leedy et al. (2015, p.137) stated that "sometimes the research problem is specific enough that the researcher can identify, in advance". Furthermore, Leedy et al. stated, on the other hand, that "in other situations, however, the research problem is less precise, such that initial data analysis involves an open minded perusal of the data for ideas about significant characteristics to consider". Some codes and themes were somewhat predetermined from the literature review and Kaitiakitanga framework. In other words, data analysis was not totally unbiased as I was sometimes searching for particular themes.

## Delimitations

- This study is confined to an evaluation of one hapū's urupā records - Ngaāti Rākau. Some generalisations may be able to be made from the findings however a study of more hapū will make findings much more generalisable.

## Limitations

- Because of the time limit of six months, I have been limited by the number of interviews I was able to conduct which may have restricted the information I received about attitudes towards the management of urupā records.
- The number of Ngāti Rākau participants (five) that were knowledgeable about urupā records, marae practices or Māori tikanga was reasonably small.
- Face to face interviews were not able to be conducted due to Covid-19 government restrictions. Interviews took place through Zoom video conferences or through audio calls. Participants may have been more comfortable through face to face interviews. I could have more ably read participants' body language and facial expressions to probe for information differently and I may have received more information.

## Further Research

Ngāti Rākau participants support the need for documentation of urupā records but are hesitant of digitising records. Urupā records are deeply spiritual and fortify feelings of identity. They are transmitted through oral assimilation and are collectively owned although no written records exist through this hapū. An unforeseen finding was that urupā records will assist in where to

bury the dead. Participants have suggested that records be restricted to the hapū. Suggestions that may need further clarification are how urupā records will be validated as authentic, how people's credibility will be judged and what content will be recorded in terms of two other hapū that affiliate with the marae.

This project could initiate further study in this area to identify the scope of the problem iwi-wide or even nation-wide and clarify whether there is a need for an iwi/national digital repository for urupā records. It may lead to iwi collectively applying for government or lottery funding to create a national repository. An analysis of existing finding aids, which allow users to search for urupā records, could be evaluated in regard to their practicality in terms of identity, cultural sensitivity, discoverability, accessibility and sustainability. It could give an indication of existing finding aids' strengths and weaknesses to clarify whether there is a need in this domain. This study could also instigate research regarding a focus on specific digital requirements for a potential repository for urupā records such as presentation elements and metadata.

## **Conclusion**

The research has found that exploring the idea of a digital repository for urupā records has sparked an interest in documenting urupā records for future generations. There is a need for documentation of records. The hapū will need to be assured that urupā records can be safely and securely protected through digital means before a digital repository can be created. Access

must be restricted to the hapū. A possible repository will enhance identity, be a reliable source of information for individuals and will assist in future burials.

Urupā records are currently managed through oral transmission and through kanohi ki te kanohi communication. No written records exist. Records are extremely sensitive in nature and are collectively shared. Barriers to creating a digital repository could include conflicting views between older and younger generations as well as traditional Māori views versus modern Māori views. Another barrier is the perception that Māori are trying to regain control of their tikanga and reo (language) and use of digital technology could further inhibit Māori from learning about cultural traditions.

Findings have correlated with existing research and the Kaitiakitanga framework. Research about oral communication, kaitiaki groups, the balance between spiritual and practical concepts as well as face to face communication as the preferred communication method has aligned with findings.

This project will contribute to hapū long-term planning in regard to appropriately maintaining historical cultural records and will benefit the hapū as a whole. It may even lead to the hapū applying for government or fishery funding to create such a repository. The study will benefit individual hapū members as it will raise awareness about appropriate and effective management and accessibility of urupā records and as a result, will also increase hapū individuals' sense of belonging and identity.

**“Toi tu te kupu, toi tu te mana, toi tu te whenua”.**

**Hold fast to our culture, for without language, without mana (spirit), and without land, the essence of being a Maori would no longer exist, but be a skeleton which would not give justice to the full body of Māoritanga (Māoridom).**

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## Appendix A: Interview Questions

- 1) What is your knowledge of urupā records?
- 2) What do you know about urupā records at Motuiti Marae?
- 3) What are the cultural implications involving urupā records?
- 4) What are the benefits and disadvantages of keeping urupā records?
- 5) How do oral traditions tie in with urupā records?
- 6) How are urupā records currently managed at Motuiti Marae?
- 7) Whose responsibility is it to manage urupā records at Motuiti Marae?
- 8) Are you aware of their duties?
- 9) How do you or people known to you currently find information on urupā records?
- 10) How is information about urupā records at Motuiti Marae currently made available?
- 11) Do you think urupā records should be made available to the public?
- 12) Do you use the internet to search for cultural information?
- 13) Would you use the internet to search for cultural information such as urupā records, if you knew it was available?
- 14) How do you feel about digitising urupā records?
- 15) How would digitising urupā records be beneficial?
- 16) What would some challenges be in digitising urupā records?
- 17) What do you see as a barrier to digitising urupā records?

## Appendix B: Participants

### Participants

Theme	Roles
George Davis	Chairman of the Motuiti Marae Committee
Stephen Kauri	Secondary school teacher
Delia Kauri	Ministry of Social Development
Jack Paki	Education Consultant for the Ministry of Education
Mere Woon	Motuiti Marae Kaumātua

## Appendix C: Definition of Terms

**Hapū:** Hapū are groups of inter-related whānau joined together by a streamline of whakapapa and distinguished rangatira, and formed under a kaupapa of survival (National Library of New Zealand, n.d.).

**Hinengaro:** Hinengaro “ is the mind, the thinking, knowing, perceiving, remembering, recognising, feeling, abstracting, generalising, sensing, responding and reacting (Kamira, 2003, p.3, as cited in Pere, 1991, p.32).

**Iwi:** Māori communities are commonly known as iwi. Ihimaera-Smiler (2002, p.3) stated that “Māori do not identify themselves as Māori, they identify themselves through a complex set of family groups, with the iwi as the largest unit”.

**Kaitiaki:** Guardian/caregiver.

**Kaitiakitanga:** The exercise of stewardship by the tangata whenua (National Library of New Zealand, n.d.).

**Kanohi ki te kanoni:** Face to face.

**Kaumātua:** Koroua/elderly men and kuia/women within society (National Library of New Zealand, n.d.).

**Kaupapa:** A deliberate plan or course of action to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes (National Library of New Zealand, n.d.).

**Kehua:** Ghosts/spirits (National Library of New Zealand, n.d.).

**Kōrero tuku iho:** Words passed down (Kingi, Russell, Ashby, 2017, p.137).

**Kuia:** A general heading used to describe female elders, including grandmothers and grandaunts (National Library of New Zealand, n.d.).

**Mana:** Spiritual authority and power derived from the gods delegated to humans to act on their behalf and in accordance with their revealed will (National Library of New Zealand, n.d.).

**Māoritanga:** Māori culture, practices, and beliefs (National Library of New Zealand, n.d.).

**Marae:** The space in front of the meeting house, traditionally enclosed (National Library of New Zealand, n.d.).

**Matauranga:** Matauranga “refers to education and intuitive intelligence” (Kamira, 2003, p.3, as cited in Pere, 1991, p.32).

**Mauri tau:** Absence of panic (J. Paki, personal information, May 5, 2020).

**Mokopuna:** Grandchildren.

**Noa:** Unrestricted notions (J. Paki, personal information, May 5, 2020).

**Pākehā:** New Zealanders of European descent (National Library of New Zealand, n.d.).

**Rahui:** Protection (Kamira, 2003, p.4)

**Runanga:** Council/tribal counsel.

**Tane-nui-a-rangi:** He helped separate Rangī-nui and Papa-tū-ā-nuku.

**Tangihanga:** Māori funerals.

**Taonga:** Something highly prized, or invaluable (National Library of New Zealand, n.d.).

**Tapu:** Restriction (Kamira, 2003, p.4).

**Te ao hurihuri:** Contemporary times, post-European times, after contact with Europeans (National Library of New Zealand, n.d.).

**Ao:** world

**Te kauae i runga:** Upper jaw concepts (J. Paki, personal information, May 5, 2020).

**Te kauae i raro:** Lower jaw concepts (J. Paki, personal information, May 5, 2020).

**Tiaki:** To guard/keep

**Tikanga:** The correct and true way; customs and traditions that have been handed down through time (National Library of New Zealand, n.d.).

**Tohunga:** A student of the source and a master of impeccable skill and talent who has the ability to perform specific incantations and rites correctly and to teach others (National Library of New Zealand, n.d.).

**Tohunga ahurewa:** An expert priest of the highest class (National Library of New Zealand, n.d.).

**Tūpāpaku:** Corpse

**Urupā:** an urupā is a burial place (Solomon & Thorpe, 2012, p.260). They are often found near marae and are controlled by the associated sub-tribe.

**Wānanga:** Learning through discussion to nurture and maintain traditional Māori knowledge, particularly at iwi and hapū level (National Library of New Zealand, n.d.).

**Whakapapa:** Whakapapa is genealogy however Ta'ala (2006, p.19, as cited in Royal, 1990; Barlow, 1991; Metge, 1995; Hemara, 2002) conveyed that “whakapapa is a receptacle that extends to deeper levels than genealogy and it is a source of spiritual, historical and cultural knowledge”.

**Whakawhanaungatanga**

**Whānau:** Whānau describes family, including extended, may not be blood ties (Hudson et al., 2010, p.19).

## Appendix D: Tables to Answer Question 1: Current Management of Urupā Records

**Table 1: Cultural Themes**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Codes</b>
Oral Tradition	Kōrero Tuku Iho, Expertise Within Each Whānau
Identity	Whakapapa Knowledge, Feeling Connected, Spiritual Fulfillment
Te Ao Māori Perspective	Upper and Lower Jaw Concepts, Sensitivity, Records May Be Too Sacred/Tapu to Record
Responsibility	Collective/Shared, Mārae Committee

**Table 2: Discoverability and Accessibility Themes**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Codes</b>
Current Discoverability	No Written Records, Some Unmarked Graves, Some Mass Graves, Some People are Buried Together, Information Gaps, Individual Whānau Know Where Their Loved Ones are Buried, People Hold onto Information, Specific People Know Information, Memory

Current Accessibility	Tangihanga, Communication Through Family/People, Wānanga, Social Media Networking

## Appendix E: Tables to Answer Question 2: Future Management of Urupā Records

**Table 2: Discoverability and Accessibility Themes**

Theme	Codes
Future Discoverability	Recordkeeping, Written Records, Digitisation
Future Accessibility	Permission, Restricted to Whānau/Hapū, Improved Access Through Digitisation, Marae Visits

**Table 3: Preservation Themes**

Theme	Codes

Content	Two Other Hapū Connect to Motuiti Marae, Information Gaps
Data Collection	Accuracy, Trust in People, Buy-In, Kanohi ki te Kanohi, Appropriate Time Frame, Wānanga
Future Burials	Maps, Whānau Plots
Management	Set Tikanga, Transparency, Reviewed Processes, Selected Kaitiaki

## Appendix F: Tables to Answer Question 2a: Barriers

**Table 4: Barriers**

Theme	Codes
Changed Environment/ Te Ao Hurihuri	Loss of Old Traditions, Diluted Tikanga, Modern Māori, Technological Advances
Potential setbacks	Generational Attitudes, Traditional Māori Attitudes Versus Modern Māori Attitudes, Fear About Shared Records, Fear About Record Seeking Intentions