

# What is the Role of Enterprise Assistance in Māori Entrepreneurship? A Doctoral Study of Māori Entrepreneurs of Aotearoa New Zealand

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## Abstract

This article summarises my doctoral research, which is currently underway at the School of Management, College of Business, Massey University in Palmerston North, New Zealand. The article provides more detailed discussion of the presentation I delivered at the conference between Meiji University Graduate Business School and Massey University's School of Management held 20 November 2012 in Tōkyō, Japan.

My doctoral study investigates the role that publicly funded enterprise assistance (i.e., information, advice, mentoring, training and grants) plays in entrepreneurial activity within Māori enterprises in Aotearoa New Zealand. The purpose of the study is to contribute to knowledge and methods of Māori entrepreneurship research. This is an emerging field within indigenous entrepreneurship, which itself is a subset of entrepreneurship with cross-overs to indigenous and Māori development, among other fields.

The contribution of this study is expected to be in three areas: (i) the role of enterprise assistance in Māori entrepreneurship; (ii) the rationale for public provision of enterprise assistance for Māori entrepreneurs; and (iii) whether an 'ideal' model of enterprise assistance for Māori is discernible. The research may influence how publicly funded

enterprise assistance for Māori is designed, implemented and evaluated.

While the literature on Māori entrepreneurship is evolving, few academic studies focus on Māori participation in publicly funded enterprise assistance. Most existing literature originates from public policy as commissioned evaluations of enterprise assistance. The study addresses this perceived gap in the academic literature by drawing on economic and indigenous perspectives to examine enterprise assistance and Māori entrepreneurship. A theoretical framework for Māori entrepreneurial development showing the linkages between enterprise assistance, Māori entrepreneurial capability, performance and impacts is formulated.

Kaupapa Māori (Māori philosophy) research integrated with Western research philosophy (pragmatist paradigm) is applied in this study. Kaupapa Māori research is the over-riding framework because the research is research about Māori, by Māori and for Māori. The Māori concept of the poutama—a rising staircase pattern symbolising traditional patterns of learning and development—is applied to the research, which coincidentally is the name given to the Poutama Trust, whose Māori business clients will provide the primary source of research participants in this study.

A mixed methods design will be applied to data collection and analysis, combining interviews and a survey. The interviews are with Māori entrepreneurs and key informants (policy makers, providers and Māori business leaders). A pilot study will be used to refine the interview schedules. The interviews will inform survey design. The survey will be disseminated by email to Poutama Trust's Māori business clients. Approval for the interviews has been granted by a Massey University Human Ethics Committee. A follow-up ethics application will be required for the survey.

**Keywords:** indigenous entrepreneurship; Māori entrepreneurship; enterprise assistance; entrepreneurship policy; kaupapa Māori research.

## Introduction

This doctoral study investigates the role that publicly funded enterprise assistance (i.e., information, advice, training, mentoring and grants) plays in entrepreneurial activity within Māori enterprises in Aotearoa New Zealand. The purpose is to contribute to knowledge and methods of Māori entrepreneurship research. This is an emerging field within indigenous entrepreneurship, which itself is a subset of entrepreneurship with crossovers to indigenous and Māori development. While the literature on Māori entrepreneurship is evolving, few academic studies have focused on Māori participation in publicly funded enterprise assistance. Most existing literature originates from public policy as commissioned evaluations. The study addresses this perceived gap in the scholarly literature.

Three research questions drive the research: (i) what is the role of enterprise assistance in Māori entrepreneurship? (ii) what is the role of government in enterprise assistance for Māori entrepreneurs? and (iii), what is the ideal model for enterprise assistance delivery to Māori entrepreneurs?

The first question deals with how Māori entrepreneurs interact with publicly funded enterprise assistance. Of interest are Māori entrepreneurs' perceptions and experiences of the enterprise assistance and the difference they believe this makes to their entrepreneurial capabilities and enterprise performance.

The second question concerns the rationale for public funding of enterprise assistance for Māori entrepreneurs and Māori enterprises. One of the challenges has been maintaining political support for public policy targeting Māori (e.g., Brash, 2004). So understanding the assumptions which underpin government intervention in enterprise policy for Māori is central to this study. For instance, do the conventional reasons of market failure (S. C. Parker, 2009; D J Storey, 1994) or political expediency (Smallbone, 2010) apply to enterprise assistance for Māori, or are other factors at play, for example, indigenous rights and needs based arguments (Cornell & Gil-Swedberg, 1995; Jorgensen & Taylor, 2000; McCabe, 2012; Parata, 1994)?

The third question deals with what an ideal model for enterprise assistance for Māori entrepreneurs might look like? Some of the public policy considerations are: "(i) Who delivers...public, private or quasi? (ii) What "type"...generic, standard, tailored, regulated, face-to-face, e-based? (iii) How is it rationed...time, sector, price, market segmentation? (iv) How

is it integrated...into other economic and social programmes? And (v) how is it funded...by charges, by donations, directly from public funds?" (Mole & Bramley, 2006, as cited in Greene & Storey, 2010, p. 612).

## Literature review

The literature review is multi-disciplinary with the aim to produce a high quality, integrated discussion of the theoretical issues associated with enterprise assistance and Māori entrepreneurship. The literature review focuses on four main themes: (i) defining Māori entrepreneurship and its role in the Māori economy; (ii) enterprise assistance and its role in Māori entrepreneurial development; (iii) the rationale for public provision of enterprise assistance for Māori entrepreneurs; and (iv) design of publicly funded enterprise assistance for Māori entrepreneurs.

## Who are the Māori people?

The Māori people of Aotearoa New Zealand today, who number around 673,500, or 15% of the population according to Statistics New Zealand (2011a, 2011b), are descendants of their ancestral explorers arriving most likely from East Polynesia (the Society, Marquesas, Austral and Cook groups) in ocean-going waka (canoes) in a series of migratory voyages around 1350AD (King, 2003, pp. 46-47) and possibly earlier according to traditional Māori accounts (Buck, 1987, pp. 9-37). Thus Māori enjoyed 'undisturbed possession' of their lands, people and way of life for at least 400 years. During this time Māori owned and controlled all 268,680 square kilometres of the country's landmass, Māori was the only language spoken, Māori values, knowledge and custom regulated daily life and Māori existed within tight-knit social groups of whānau (extended families), hapū (sub-tribes) and iwi (tribes) (King, 2003; Mika & O'Sullivan, 2012; Reilly, 2004).

Today, Māori occupy a completely different world, one which has been transformed by technology (Bridges & Downs, 2000), a mixed market economy predicated upon individual property rights upheld by the rule of law (North, 1990; Te Puni Kōkiri, 1999a), a democratic system of government (Durie, 1998; R. N. Love, 1977; Ministry of Justice, 2001b), cheap high speed travel anywhere in the world (Bedford, Didham, Ho, & Hugo, 2004), and an

unprecedented level of material wealth and credit (Ministry of Consumer Affairs, 2009, pp. 14-17).

In spite of all the good that modern New Zealand affords Māori, Māori have arguably paid a high price. Māori have had to relinquish, one way or another, ownership and control of their lands, waters, language, culture, social, economic and political institutions in the name of largely Western defined aspirations for development (Howard, 2003; Mikaere, 2000; L. T. Smith, 1999). One of the consequences is the persistence of social and economic disparities, gaps in outcomes between Māori and non-Māori that continue to hamper Māori development (Cross et al., 1991; Dalziel, 1991; Durie, 2001; Humpage, 2002; Te Puni Kōkiri, 1998, 1999b).

Māori have been engaged in a process of reclaiming and recovering their language, culture and identity, restoring their mana (power, authority, pride) and rangatiratanga (chiefly authority) (Walker, 1990), in some cases since the Treaty of Waitangi itself was signed in 1840 (Aotearoa Independent Media Centre, 2011), but in a more concerted way since the formation of the Waitangi Tribunal in 1975 (Catalinac, 2004). What Māori want is a greater say over their lives, to live, think, and act as Māori, and to speak Māori (Durie, 2006; G. H. Smith, 1997) and to apply Māori customs in Māori and non-Māori settings (Mead, 2003). In other words, Māori want what was promised them in the Treaty of Waitangi—their tino rangatiratanga or self-determination (Durie, 1995, 2005; Melbourne, 1995; Paora, Tuiono, Flavell, Hawksley, & Howson, 2011). Māori aspirations for participation in commerce—Māori entrepreneurship—are therefore embedded within Māori aspirations for self-determination (Campbell-Stokes, 1998), for Māori-defined development within whānau (family), hapū (sub-tribe), iwi (tribal) and Māori communities (Loomis, Morrison, & Nicolas, 1998; Mika, 2003).

### **What is the Māori economy?**

The pre-European Māori economy (pre-1769) was a subsistence one based on self-sufficiency, within whānau (family) and hapū (sub-tribal) groups, using non-metallurgic technologies (i.e., rat traps, bird snares, and eel traps) to procure the necessities according to seasonal harvests (Waa & Love, 1997b, p. 236). Staple foods were fern root, berries, leaves, kumara, birds, rat and fish, with the diet varying by locality (Buck, 1987, pp. 85-106). Productive capacity within the Māori economy was constrained by the capacity of available technology

and resources to adequately satisfy immediate needs of whānau and hapū. A driving imperative of accumulation as a stimulus for technological innovation was not apparent. Inter-tribal exchange occurred in foodstuffs, valued artefacts, tools and weapons, either by way of muru (confiscation) in war or by gift governed by Māori concepts of mana (power, authority and prestige) and utu (reciprocity) (Firth, 1973, pp. 399-403; Knox, 2005; Waa & Love, 1997b).

The Māori economy during the period of colonisation by the British from about 1769 to 1900 was radically transformed from the one described above (Schaniel, 1985). Māori economic growth was spurred by an explosion in the settler population and its demand for food, materials and land, the introduction of Western agricultural implements and crops, particularly the hardy potato (Waa & Love, 1997a). The Māori economy grew through tribally-based enterprises, with their greater access to a ready work-force, quality land and Māori managerial talent among rangatira (chiefs) (Mika & O'Sullivan, 2012; Waa & Love, 1997a). Māori demonstrated an acute appreciation for the entrepreneurial process, which extended to vertical integration (owning land, crops, mills and shipping) and trans-Tasman trade (Hawkins, 1999). However, the boom in the Māori economy was short-lived, with a sharp decline in Māori exporters and traders between 1850-1900 linked to large scale land confiscations, leaving Māori with just 5.6% of New Zealand's total landmass (Hawkins, 1999; Maori Multiple Owned Land Development Committee, 1998).

The Māori economy of today is defined as the assets owned and income earned by Māori—including collectively-owned trusts and incorporations, Māori-owned businesses, service providers, and the housing owned by Māori (New Zealand Institute of Economic Research, 2003, p. 7). According to research commissioned by the Māori Economic Taskforce (Mika, 2010; Te Puni Kōkiri, 2010a) and conducted by Nana, Stokes and Molano (2011a, p. 7) of economic advisory firm BERL, the Māori economy was estimated in 2010 to be worth \$36.9 billion. BERL explain that the increase of \$20.4 billion from the 2006 estimate of \$16.5 billion is a result of several influences including better data, different assumptions, appreciation in values of capital goods and real growth (Nana et al., 2011a, p. 4).

The \$36.9 billion figure comprises the value of commercial assets held by some 12,920 Māori self-employed enterprises, 5,690 Māori employers, Māori land trusts and incorporations and other governance entities (Nana et al., 2011a, p. 7). In a related report, BERL predicts that the Māori economy has the potential to deliver New Zealand an additional \$12.1 billion in GDP and 148,000 jobs by 2061 (Nana, Stokes, & Molano, 2011b), provided there is increasing

investment in science and innovation within the Māori economy.

While one might instinctively surmise that treaty settlements, given their disproportionate media coverage (Tahana, 2012), and Māori land-based enterprises (Jefferies, 2003; Kingi, Rose, & Parker, 1999), are responsible for recent gains in Māori commercial wealth; this would however be a mistake. The vast majority (71 % or \$26 billion) of Māori commercial wealth is tied up in Māori small and medium enterprises (SMEs) (Nana et al., 2011a, p. 7). Thus, it is the Māori entrepreneurs and Māori SMEs that are likely to produce the economic gains BERL predicts are possible. But they will need help if they are to achieve this level of performance, which is where the matter of enterprise assistance, public and private, comes into view.

### **What is entrepreneurship?**

Who or what is an entrepreneur is a rather difficult thing to define, with attempts on-going since first being documented by Richard Cantillon in 1769 (Casson, Yeung, Basu, & Wadeson, 2006, p. 3; Massey, 2007; O'Sullivan & Dana, 2008). Cantillon defined an entrepreneur as a "specialist in taking risk" (Casson et al., 2006, p. 3), with risk having both manageable and unmanageable qualities (i.e., uncertainty) (Knight, 1921, as cited in Casson et al., 2006, p. 3). Schumpeter later focused on large-scale entrepreneurial forms and described five types of 'new combination' effected by entrepreneurs: new products; new processes of production; the development of new export markets; the discovery of new raw material supplies; and the creation of new forms of institution (Becker, Knudsen, & Swedberg, 2011; Casson et al., 2006, p. 8). Smaller forms of entrepreneurial activity are explained by the Austrian perspective by von Hayek (1937) and Kirzner (1973). They regarded the entrepreneur as a 'middleman', using prices as an invitation to trade, and benefiting from fleeting arbitrages (price differentials) to generate profit. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (Ahmad & Hoffman, 2007; Greene & Storey, 2010) in defining entrepreneurship (see Table 1) has not strayed far these pioneering economic perspectives, with the Schumpeterian idea of 'new combinations' and the concept of (economic) value (Dickson, 2010, p. 11) clearly evident.

Table 1 OECD definitions

Entrepreneur	Are those persons (business owners) who seek to generate value, through the creation or expansion of economic activity, by identifying and exploiting new products, processes or markets.
Entrepreneurial activity	Is the enterprising human action in pursuit of the generation of value, through the creation or expansion of economic activity, by identifying and exploiting new products, processes or markets.
Entrepreneurship	Is the phenomenon associated with entrepreneurial activity.

Source: Adapted from Ahmad and Hoffman (2007).

Community-based 'enterprise facilitator' Dr. Ernesto Sirolli (2011, [Oral presentation]) however laments the preponderance of these economic-oriented definitions, suggesting that an entrepreneur originally simply meant "someone with initiative, someone with the courage to do things a bit differently", whether in business, in the community or in public institutions. Consistent with Sirolli's view, entrepreneurship assumes a distinctly pliable quality, able to accommodate many different forms, including for example: social entrepreneurship (Wood & Wood, 2012); intrapreneurship, extrapreneurship (Frank, Shockley, & Stough, 2008); ethnic and migrant entrepreneurship (Dana, 2007); development entrepreneurship (McMullen, 2011); indigenous entrepreneurship (Hindle & Moroz, 2009); and Māori entrepreneurship (Frederick & Kuratko, 2010; T. R. Love, 2004; Tapsell & Woods, 2008; Tinirau & Gillies, 2010).

Hindle and Lansdowne (2007, p. 9) define indigenous entrepreneurship broadly as:

The creation, management and development of new ventures by Indigenous people for the benefit of Indigenous people. The organizations thus created can pertain to either the private, public or non-profit sectors. The desired and achieved benefits of venturing can range from the narrow view of economic profit for a single individual and to the broad view of multiple, social and economic advantages for entire communities. Outcomes and entitlements derived from Indigenous entrepreneurship may extend to enterprise partners and stakeholders who may be non-indigenous.

They discuss two major themes: (i) 'reconciling tradition with innovation'; and (ii)



the importance of understanding 'non-mainstream' world views and values. Indigenous entrepreneurship theory is evolving which is challenging prevailing orthodoxy (i.e., neo-classical economic theory) about what is the proper concern of entrepreneurs and their role in society (Hjalmarsson & Johansson, 2010; Peredo, Anderson, Galbraith, Honig, & Dana, 2004). Is it possible that indigenous entrepreneurs have a greater contribution to make to humanity than their position at the margins would suggest? Could they possess answers to the 'real' questions of the future, which Sirolli (2011) suggests are about "how to feed, transport, educate, communicate, cure eight billion people in a sustainable way?"

### **Who is a Māori entrepreneur?**

Māori entrepreneurship has variously been described as social entrepreneurship (Henry, 2007), emancipatory entrepreneurship (Henry, 2012), Māori-centred business development (Durie, 2002, 2003), self-employed Māori business people (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2010b), and Māori owners and operators of enterprises (French, 2000). Few however have specifically defined Māori entrepreneur and Māori entrepreneurship.

For the purposes of this thesis, I define Māori entrepreneur as a person of Māori descent, operating within a Māori world view (aronga Māori) and Māori philosophy (kaupapa Māori), who seeks to generate value by identifying and exploiting new products, processes or markets for economic, social and cultural purposes of benefit to themselves, their whānau (family), hapū (sub-tribe), iwi (tribe) and community.

Thus, to be a Māori entrepreneur, the person must have Māori ancestry, for the activity which they undertake to be called Māori entrepreneurship. The definition also implies the adoption of a Māori world view (aronga Māori), which is underpinned by traditional Māori knowledge (mātauranga Māori), Māori values and customs (tikanga Māori), Māori language (reo Māori) acquired by socialisation within whānau (family), hapū (sub-tribe), iwi (tribe) and Māori communities (Black, Bean, Collings, & Nuku, 2012; Gillies, Tinirau, & Mako, 2007; Mead, 2003; Ministry of Justice, 2001a; Royal, 2005). The value and importance of integrating Western knowledge is implicit within the entrepreneurial process of identifying and initiating opportunities for new product, process and market combinations and value creation. Māori entrepreneurship is therefore contextual and purposeful, oriented toward satisfying broader needs than mere profit-motivation, inclusive of family, tribal and

community-wide needs, expectations and purposes, which gives the concept of value creation a distinctly indigenous feel, consistent with Hindle and Landsdowne's (2007) broad view.

Māori enterprise is the organisational context in which Māori entrepreneurship occurs; where Māori entrepreneurs do their work. This does not preclude the possibility that Māori entrepreneurs and Māori entrepreneurial activity cannot happen in 'mainstream', Western or Pākēhā (New Zealander of European descent) owned and operated enterprises; because it can and it does (Mika, 2012). It is acknowledged many other factors may influence what is a Māori enterprise, including the infusion of cultural elements within the enterprise's products and services, and having employees, shareholders and customers who are Māori (French, 2000; Statistics New Zealand, 2012). However, Māori enterprises for the purpose of this study are enterprises 50% or more owned and operated by Māori.

### **What is enterprise assistance?**

The various forms of publicly funded enterprise assistance have previously been classified by Storey (1994) as being either direct or indirect. By direct assistance, Storey (1994, p. 276) means "hard" assistance involving the contribution of outside financial resources from public (i.e., government) sources to supplement internal financial resources of the entrepreneur and their enterprise (i.e., debt, equity or grants). The intention being to "overcome market imperfections" (D J Storey, 1994, p. 286). By indirect assistance, Storey (1994, p. 286) means "soft" forms of enterprise assistance such as information, advice, mentoring, referrals and training, intended to address information imperfections.

Advisory services to SMEs is a multibillion dollar activity (P. Parker, 2005), but is also one for which little research has been carried out as to its theoretical basis (Hjalmarsson & Johansson, 2010, p. 327). Hjalmarsson & Johansson (2010) argue that the theory and operation of public advisory services must be understood at two levels: (i) the macro (institutional) level as a public intervention in the marketplace; and (ii) the micro (firm) level as a consultant-client relationship. Their paper provides a 'counter-discourse' as they argue that "neo-classical theory should be replaced by neo-Austrian theory as a basis for publicly financed advisory services" (Hjalmarsson & Johansson, 2010, p. 336). Their analysis has implications beyond public advisory services.

## Enterprise assistance and Māori entrepreneurs

Battisti and Gillies (2009) of the New Zealand Centre of SME Research and Te Au Rangahau (the Māori Business Research Centre) respectively, were commissioned by Poutama Trust (an independent trust providing Māori enterprises with business advice and grants) in 2008 to investigate clients' business assistance preferences and how clients were coping with the recession. In their study, Battisti and Gillies (2008, 2009) surveyed 500 Māori businesses (achieving a 35 % response rate) and interviewed 25 Māori business clients. The study found that rising costs and economic conditions were the two key constraints on enterprise growth (Battisti & Gillies, 2008). Respondents suggested keeping Poutama's focus on existing enterprises, introducing specialised mentoring (e.g., export advice), inter-firm networking, and retaining advisory services, which clients valued as much as funding (Battisti & Gillies, 2009).

Zapalska, Perry, & Dabb (2003) studied the characteristics of Māori business from a survey and interviews with Māori export oriented enterprises drawn from Trade New Zealand. The study explores the relationship between business environment conditions (e.g., political, economic, and social) and Māori entrepreneurial activity. Zapalska, Perry, & Dabb (2003, pp. 221-222) suggest that enterprise assistance programmes and networks can enhance business capability by providing access to support, motivation, role models, expert opinion, counselling, and access to opportunities and information. However, they also identified that a "lack of management skills" threatened Māori enterprises (Zapalska et al., 2003, p. 229).

Reihana, Modlik, & Sisley (2006) used data from the Global Entrepreneurial Monitor (GEM) study and interviews with twenty key informants to characterise Māori entrepreneurial activity. The GEM is an annual international longitudinal research programme based on a harmonised assessment of the level of national entrepreneurial activity for participating countries (Minniti, 2011; Reihana et al., 2006, p. 112). The GEM defines entrepreneurship as "any attempt at new business or new venture creation, such as self-employment, a new business organisation, or the expansion of an existing business, by an individual, teams of individuals, or established businesses" (Reihana et al., 2006, p. 112).

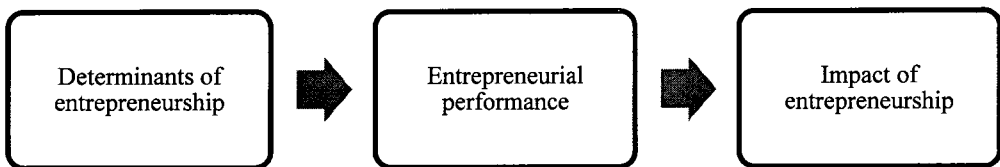
Within the GEM conceptual framework, it is the interaction between entrepreneurial opportunities (e.g., market demand) and entrepreneurial capacity (e.g., skills and motivation) within the context of national and entrepreneurial-level conditions that produces new firms which contribute to national economic goals. These conditions either stimulate or impede

entrepreneurship. The researchers find that social-cultural norms (e.g., confidence) mixed with location-specific (i.e., institutional) factors significantly impact venture creation and sustainability. They argue this necessitates a re-design of financial support and more effective educational and training strategies of relevance to Māori (Reihana et al., 2006, p. 110).

### Theoretical framework

A proposed model of Māori entrepreneurial development has been devised to guide the research in this thesis. The model draws inspiration from the OECD model for public support of entrepreneurs and an indigenous development model based on the poutama (see methodology section). The OECD model (Figure 1) consists of three parts: (i) determinants of entrepreneurship which may be influenced by public policy; (ii) entrepreneurship performance (firm-level outcomes); and (iii) impact of entrepreneurship policy (macro-level outcomes) (Ahmad & Hoffman, 2007, p. 6; D. J. Storey & Greene, 2010, p. 375).

Figure 1 OECD framework of entrepreneurship



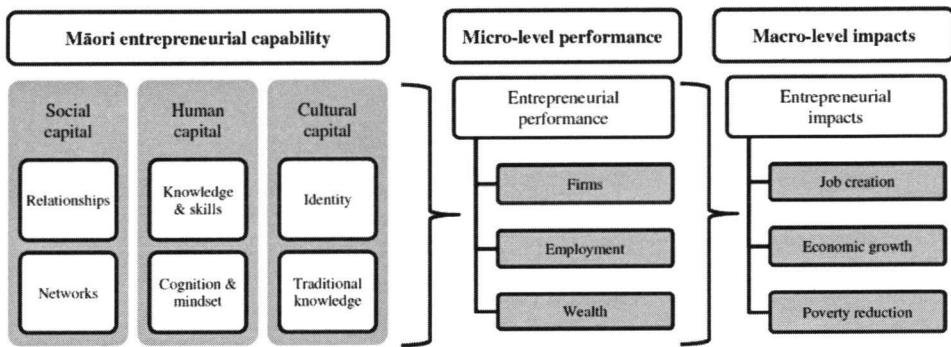
Adapted from Ahmad and Hoffman (2007)

In the OECD model, there are six determinants of entrepreneurship, of which this thesis is concerned with one—entrepreneurial capabilities. Ahmad and Hoffman (2007, p. 16) define entrepreneurial capabilities as the capabilities of the entrepreneur and access to other capabilities within the entrepreneurial infrastructure; in other words, the human and social capital of the entrepreneur. Entrepreneurial capabilities are therefore concerned with the skills, knowledge and relationships of the entrepreneur and how these are adapted and applied within an enterprise and measured in entrepreneurial performance and impact.

The OECD model has been adapted to form a Māori entrepreneurial development model (see Figure 2). At its core, the proposed model consists of three inter-related

dimensions of entrepreneurial capability: (i) social capital; (ii) human capital; and (iii) cultural capital, which are assumed to contribute to building Māori entrepreneurial capabilities. This approach is consistent with the model Reihana et al., (2006, p. 113) applied. Application of the proposed model in this thesis will extend only to Māori entrepreneurial capabilities; entrepreneurial performance and macro-level impacts will not be measured.

**Figure 2 Model of Māori entrepreneurial development**



Source: Adapted from Ahmad and Hoffman (2007).

The logic of the model is that Māori entrepreneurial capabilities are influenced by publicly funded enterprise assistance directed toward building social capital (e.g., valued relationships and networks), human capital (e.g., formal education and entrepreneurial training) and cultural capital (e.g., enterprise culture and cultural identity) within Māori entrepreneurs. Thus, publicly funded enterprise assistance of the following kinds may help build Māori entrepreneurial capabilities: (i) training and experience of entrepreneurs; (ii) business education; (iii) entrepreneurship education; (iv) entrepreneurship infrastructure (public and private); and (v) immigration (Ahmad & Hoffman, 2007, pp. 22-23).

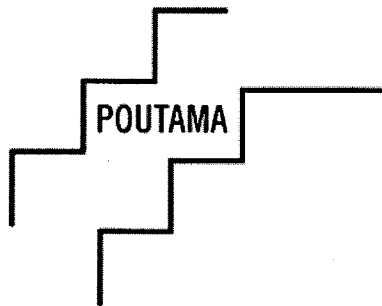
## Research methodology

Studying Māori entrepreneurs using the methods proposed in this study is not new. What is new is that this study takes the connection between public policy and Māori entrepreneurship a step further by specifically seeking to understand the rationale, operation and effect of enterprise assistance on Māori entrepreneurs and Māori enterprises. This

study does this in a particular way; by integrating kaupapa Māori-based research (based on a Māori world view, Māori research ethics and practices) and Western research philosophy (a pragmatist paradigm) and mixed methods research (Creswell, 2009; Crotty, 1998). Thus, the study differs from previous efforts in the objectives, the methodology, the timing and the researcher.

Kaupapa Māori research is the over-riding framework because the research is research about Māori, by Māori and for Māori (G. H. Smith, 1997; L. T. Smith, 1999). A kaupapa Māori framework based on the poutama (developmental tradition) (Wilkie, 2010) informs the approach to this study. The poutama implies that business needs may vary for Māori entrepreneurs as they and their enterprises develop. Coincidentally, poutama is also the name given to the Poutama Trust by its founders, represented in its logo (Figure 3) which depicts the staircase form.

**Figure 3 Poutama Trust logo**



Source: Poutama Trust [www.poutama.co.nz](http://www.poutama.co.nz)

## **Research methods**

A mixed methods design is applied to data collection and analysis, combining interviews with Māori entrepreneurs and key informants followed by a survey. A Massey University Human Ethics Committee has approved the interview procedures. Another ethics application will be needed for the survey.

A pilot study comprising interviews with Māori entrepreneurs and key informants will be used to refine the interview schedules. Subsequent interviews with Māori entrepreneurs will include a cross-section of Māori enterprises from various industries, entity sizes and types, located in Auckland, Rotorua, and Wellington who have recently used (within the last

36 months) some form of publicly funded enterprise assistance. The interviews will explore key themes underpinning the research and identify questions that merit inclusion in a wider survey of Māori entrepreneurs. Interviews will be conducted face to face, either individually or in groups. Participants who prefer to converse in Māori will have the opportunity to do so.

Key informant interviews will be conducted with enterprise assistance providers, policy makers and Māori business leaders. The purpose is twofold. First is to gain insights into the policy objectives (i.e., the rationale and intent) and design (i.e., the form, function and structure) of enterprise assistance for Māori entrepreneurs, including mainstream assistance. Second, is to gain expert opinion on emerging research themes. Key informants will be selected on the basis that they possess relevant knowledge and are willing participants. A likely challenge will be access to participants because of intense demand on their time.

The survey will target Māori entrepreneurs drawn from the Poutama Trust client database. The survey will ask respondents questions related to the three research questions. The survey will be disseminated by email. An intensive follow-up process by email and phone will help maximise the response rate. The design of the survey will be thoroughly tested, but is unlikely to be representative. Two main reasons explain this. First, there is no agreed definition of Māori business for statistical purposes, though one has been in the 'pipeline' for several years (French, 2000; Statistics New Zealand, 2012). Second, there is no single database or national survey of Māori business. Instead Māori business statistics are generally subsumed within official mainstream business statistics (Department of Labour, 2009; Gawith, 1999; Nana et al., 2011a; B. Parker, 1999; Sanderson, Stokes, & Slack, 2009). This is however not viewed as a significant drawback because the survey results should provide a baseline for further research in this area.

## **Conclusion**

This is a study of academic and personal interest to me, which I hope will yield some benefit to Māori entrepreneurs, Māori business scholars, policy makers and providers of enterprise assistance to Māori. The primary motivation is however to complete a high quality thesis and graduate with a PhD. To date, things seem to be going well, thanks much to the support of family and friends and the patience and advice of my supervisors, Dr Annemarie Gillies and Dr Joanne Bensemman of the School of Management, Massey University in Palmerston North, New Zealand, as well as valued support from my iwi (tribes), Tūhoe, Whakatōhea, Ngāti Awa and Ngāti Kahungunu.

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