





RESEARCH ARTICLE

A study of Aotearoa New Zealand enterprises: how different are Indigenous enterprises?

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Abstract

Indigenous literature suggests Māori businesses are distinct within Aotearoa New Zealand, due to facing unique challenges and having different operating preferences. It could also be argued that Māori and non-Māori enterprises in the private, public and not-for-profit sectors are identical as a function of operating in similar markets. However, there is a paucity of empirical evidence, and the present article rectifies this with a study of 230 Aotearoa enterprises, including 24 Māori. We test differences and find Māori enterprises report higher cultural capital, which relates to employees' knowledge and skills towards working with and respecting cultural values. However, we find no differences across human capital, relational capital, entrepreneurial culture, and organisational performance. The findings suggest that apart from a culturally specific factor, Māori and non-Māori enterprises appear to be similarly enabled, which provides a useful benchmark for understanding Māori business. We discuss the implications for research.

Key words: Cultural capital; entrepreneurship; intellectual capital; Māori; organisational performance

Introduction

The Māori economy has grown in prominence, size and significance in the economic landscape of a post-Treaty settlement era in Aotearoa (Māori name for New Zealand). The economy of Aotearoa is predominantly agriculturally based, but there has been intense growth in the technological and service sectors. The Māori economy asset base is valued at \$68.7 billion and the Māori economy is estimated at contributing \$34 billion annually to New Zealand's GDP (Nana, Reid, Schulze, Dixon, Green, & Riley, 2020). Amoamo, Ruwhiu, and Carter (2018) highlight that the Māori economy may have distinctive aspects and thus greater attention is needed to 'more accurately represent the rich diversity of Māori enterprise that has evolved' (p. 66). Despite this growth in attention towards the Māori economy and the comprising enterprises that might deliver such growth, we still understand little about Māori enterprises. Are they similar to other Aotearoa enterprises? Given that Māori represent one of the fastest-growing ethnicities in Aotearoa, understanding the attributes, operations and impacts of Māori enterprises is an increasing priority (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). Given the identification of Māori enterprises might be difficult, we follow the Statistics New Zealand approach, whereby enterprises self-identify as Māori (Statistics New Zealand., 2016).

Other factors make the exploration of Māori enterprises compelling. Recent attention towards Māori leadership has identified important lessons that can be learned from its practices and philosophy (Haar, Roche, & Brougham, 2019a; Roche, Haar, & Brougham, 2018; Ruwhiu & Elkin,

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2016). Studies have indicated an increased focus on Māori business activities, from tribal entities (Barr & Reid, 2014) to private entrepreneurship (Henry & Dana, 2019; Mrabure, Ruwhiu, & Gray, 2018). There is an active investigation on the role of Māori in science, technology and innovation (Ruckstuhl et al., 2019) and studies have shown that Māori employees might react differently to otherwise established relationships from workplace phenomena (Haar & Brougham, 2013, 2016; Haar, Roche, & Taylor, 2012). For example, in a cross-cultural study of six countries and seven samples, Māori employees reported the highest work-life balance (including greater than New Zealand Europeans), and this is important because greater balance is linked to superior job and wellbeing outcomes (Haar, Russo, Sune, & Ollier-Malaterre, 2014).

Beyond these observations, scholars have suggested that indigenous people, such as Māori in Aotearoa, have a unique world view that helps shape the way enterprises are formed, and the type of activities they engage in (Henry & Pene, 2001). Henry and Wolfram (2018) note that Māori have some of the oldest forms of social technology surviving into the 21st century, potentially providing fresh insights into how enterprises are formed and managed. Amoamo, Ruwhiu, and Carter (2018) agree that more research is needed to understand potential differences in Māori enterprises. Whereas Mika and O'Sullivan (2014) noted there are likely to be similarities between Māori and non-Māori enterprises. Thus, it could be that Māori organisations take a different focus on the construction of organisational forms, and perhaps have different focus areas. For example, Māori enterprises are likely to have a *kaupapa* (purpose) that aligns more strongly with Māori values, and this might lead to different strengths such as treating the employees at the organisation with care and having a sense of responsibility towards each other (Haar & Ghafoor, 2021). A potential weakness might include unacceptance of such culture and values from some employees or reluctance to practice these values within the enterprise. Further, it has been suggested that Māori are especially entrepreneurial (Frederick & Chittock, 2006), although the empirical evidence has been criticised (see Haar and Delaney, 2009). Specifically, individuals who were asked about their intent to create an enterprise were not followed to confirm whether they subsequently established one.

The present study makes three main contributions. First, there is a lack of empirical evidence comparing measurable attributes of Māori businesses (with non-Māori business), and we here report the first study that captures enough data to detail potential differences and similarities. First, we examine existing enterprises across a range of sectors and enterprise sizes, to determine whether self-identified Māori enterprises are different from non-Māori enterprises, and if so, in what ways. Second, we test a range of enterprise factors to test for these potential differences specifically. These factors are intellectual capital dimensions (human and relational capital), and we extend this to include a new factor in cultural capital. We also include entrepreneurial culture and organisational performance. Third, our analysis provides important insights into understanding Māori businesses and thus their potential valuable contributions to the Aotearoa economy.

Study factors

The next section focuses on the various factors being examined regarding a number of key enterprise factors, and we define and highlight their importance towards understanding the potential impact on organisational performance. Finally, we provide a section where we develop hypotheses around expected differences and similarities between Māori and non-Māori enterprises.

Intellectual capital

Intellectual capital is broadly defined and widely incorporates a number of different enterprise factors, with Aramburu and Sáenz (2011) highlighting two main categories used across the literature: (1) the *knowledge perspective*, including human-, social- and organisational-capital, and (2) the *holistic perspective*, which focus on human-capital, plus the internal- and external-structures

of the organisation. Singh and Rao (2016) defined intellectual capital as ‘the sum of all organizational knowledge resources, which resides in aspects within as well as outside the organization’ (p. 132). This builds off the arguments of Galbraith (1969), who characterised intellectual capital as the entirety of an organisation’s workforce, and their related brainpower activity, knowledge, skills and intellect that are used to create value for the enterprise. This makes intellectual capital knowledge that is accessible within and outside the enterprise including known and potentially useful information that can be gained through effective HR practices and promoting knowledge contained within human capital.

Ullah, Hameed, Kayani, and Fazal (2019) argued that intellectual capital comprises three key elements. And beyond the typical human- and structural-capital, they included relational-capital. They argued that relational-capital was interchangeable with social-capital and thus should be also considered. Hence, enterprises with a more skilled workforce should create value that is superior to competitors whose workforce is less skilled. Consequently, enterprises become driven to recruit, select, and retain better quality human resources because they have the potential to enhance performance. Further, enterprises with better relationships internally may be able to leverage these to achieve superior performance. Overall, enterprises that maximise the utilisation of these resources are expected to outperform competitors that do not have such superior intellectual capital (Teece, Pisano, & Schuen, 1997).

Theoretically, Singh and Rao (2016) note that knowledge can be understood as being a *product* of intellectual capital, which can create unique processes that competitors cannot replicate easily. Thus, higher intellectual capital is valued because it suggests that a superior mixture of resources (people, processes, partnerships) that enterprises have is harder for competitors to acquire or copied and thus can lead to superior performance (Barney, 1991). These unique combinations of resources keep renewing an enterprise’s ability to outperform competitors (Hsu & Wang, 2012). The present study examines three forms of intellectual capital and acknowledges that this approach encompasses the broader and holistic perspective (Aramburu & Sáenz, 2011): (1) human capital, (2) relational capital and (3) cultural capital. This latter factor is unique to this study but fits our focus on Māori business and the business context of Aotearoa, whereby Māori are guaranteed certain rights due to their relationship with the Crown (government), via the Treaty of Waitangi (ToW) which ‘is a broad statement of principles on which the British and Māori made a political compact to found a nation state and build a government in New Zealand’ (NZ History., 2021). We briefly define these below.

Human capital

Human capital is foundational to all forms of intellectual capital arguments (e.g., Aramburu & Sáenz, 2011; Singh & Rao, 2016; Ullah *et al.*, 2019). Dakhli and De Clercq (2004) noted that enterprise human capital is essentially entrenched in their workforces’ knowledge, skills, and expertise. Importantly, these factors are not seen as being static: a workforce can be developed and enhanced through formal or on-the-job training, as well as specific experience. As Apple develops additional models of iPhones and iPads, its design workforce has the expertise and experience to build on existing products. Something a new competitor would automatically lack in. Youndt and Snell (2004) argue that it is the human resources of enterprises that are key to performance through their knowledge, stating ‘organizations, in and of themselves, do not create knowledge, people do’ (p. 332). Overall, human capital reflects an enterprise’s workforce, and the associated Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs) it has.

Youndt and Snell (2004) note that human capital can be enhanced through a combination of hiring (and retaining) highly skilled workers (e.g., hiring top graduates or poaching top talent from competitors) and/or internally, through various processes such as training (e.g., MBA and leadership programmes, etc.). As such, human capital is not static and can be continuously enhanced. Given these are potentially expensive activities, they are not available to all enterprises.

Overall, human capital, which represents an enterprise's human resources side, is viewed as a core and fundamental aspect of an enterprise's intellectual capital. That said, the human capital operates best when structures are most beneficial and not detrimental to, say, knowledge sharing, collaboration and innovation. The next factor focuses on the ability of an enterprise's workforce to work together and forge relationships.

Relational capital

Hitt, Bierman, Uhlenbruck, and Shimizu (2006) note that relational capital reflects the shared benefits to a workforce through its strong relationships, such as between co-workers, but also beyond that to include work units and departments, and even work sites (where applicable). Relational capital has been defined by Carmeli and Azeroual (2009) as 'quality relationships formed and maintained between people and entailing shared meaning, commitment, and norms of reciprocity within a particular work unit and between people of one unit with people in other units in an organization' (pp. 85–86). Thus, relational capital reflects the way employees in an enterprise can develop, share, help and respond to each other towards achieving organisational goals. The relational side of this factor is cemented in the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), whereby relationships are built on 'give and take' exchanges between employees that ultimately leads to greater employee attitudes and behaviours (Haar & Spell, 2004). This give and take of information is important to senders and recipients and they act accordingly. As suggested by Ensign and Hebert (2010), employees remember the exchange of information they have in their work settings and 'those who have taken more than given are less likely to receive information' (p.79).

Kale, Singh, and Perlmutter (2000) note that relational capital captures the mutual trust and respect that arises out of close workplace friendships between employees (teams, units, etc.) and other stakeholders (suppliers, customers, etc.) outside the enterprise. These mutually shared ties lead to better performance through shared meaning, enhanced commitment and communal understanding of goals, deadlines and processes. For example, being able to receive frank but insightful advice from a key client could help an enterprise create better products or services. Yang and Lin (2009) highlight that relational capital refers to knowledge resources an enterprise has, both internally (embedded) and externally (through networks).

Cultural capital

In addition to human capital and relational capital, the present study also creates a new factor around cultural capital. We define cultural capital as employees' knowledge and skills towards working with and respecting Māori cultural values. Māori cultural values are based on respect and balance in all aspects important to Māori. These aspects include health, family, spiritual connection with land and surroundings and the feeling of kinship (Durie, 1998; Haar & Ghafoor, 2021). Hook (2007) notes that there are contrasting cultures in Aotearoa between Māori and non-Māori, although there is legislative support for engagement with Māori culture (see Harmsworth, 2005). Durie (2006) notes the Treaty of Waitangi (ToW) Act acknowledges the rights of, and protection of, Māori, and has included financial settlements to tribes, to address social, psychological and economic disparities (Roche, Haar, & Brougham, 2018). Haar and Delaney (2009) argue that 'as indigenous populations become more influential in western economies, it is important to study the key drivers of their motivation to establish and run successful enterprises' (p. 25). They noted that ToW settlements have enhanced the Māori economic base.

Indeed, as noted early, there is much positive rhetoric around the value of the Māori economy (Nana et al., 2020) including positive media coverage (e.g., Gibson, 2021). Our conceptualisation of cultural capital follows Hitt et al.'s (2006) approach around relationships within and beyond an

enterprise, but specifically targeting cultural values, processes, and follow Carmeli and Azeroual (2009) around quality relationships. We also draw on Dakhli and De Clercq (2004) around having resources (people) with specific knowledge and expertise and focus this towards *te ao Māori* (the Māori world view). Thus, we expect cultural capital to be captured by the way an enterprise has resources regarding knowledge of ToW, the ability to engage with and understand different cultures (e.g., Māori), and the respect given to the cultural values of others. While our approach applies specifically to Aotearoa, it has potentially wider appeal as other countries similarly seek to deal with their indigenous populations.

Entrepreneurial culture

Miller (1983) suggests an enterprise's entrepreneurial culture reflects the summation of its innovation, risk-taking and pro-activeness, stating an 'entrepreneurial firm is one that engages in product-market innovation, undertakes somewhat risky ventures, and is first to come up with 'proactive' innovations, beating competitors to the punch' (p. 771). This approach to an entrepreneurial culture is widely accepted and recognises an entrepreneurial culture that includes a combination of enterprise behaviours. Another definition of an entrepreneurial culture, with a strong economic focus, is 'a firm's willingness to seek greater opportunities and take higher risks all in the pursuit of increased (sustained) profits' (Haar & White, 2013, p. 110). We suggest that not all entrepreneurial enterprises will be seeking a monetary profit but might seek out positive opportunities to develop the enterprise to be successful.

According to Lumpkin and Dess (1996), the three factors of an entrepreneurial culture are: (1) *innovation* ('tendency to engage in and support new ideas, novelty, experimentation, and creative process', p. 142); (2) *risk-taking* ('incurring heavy debt or making large resource commitments, in the interest of obtaining high returns by seizing opportunities', p. 144); and (3) *pro-activeness* ('taking initiative by anticipating and pursuing new opportunities', p. 146). Hence, an enterprise with an entrepreneurial culture is one where they have a focus on creating new products and processes, take calculated risks, and seek opportunities rather than waiting for new opportunities to present themselves. Covin and Lumpkin (2011) note that when these components are in alignment, they can create a sustainable competitive advantage for enterprises, as they leverage their entrepreneurial culture to outperform competitors. New Zealand evidence supports higher risk-taking and innovativeness leads to superior performance (Gibb & Haar, 2010). Further, a meta-analysis from Rosenbusch, Rauch, and Bausch (2013) found an entrepreneurial culture is positively related to organisational performance, highlighting its desirability in enterprises.

Organisational performance

Our final factor is organisational performance, which is probably the most studied aspect in organisational studies (e.g., Gibb & Haar, 2010; Jiang, Liu, Fey, & Jiang, 2018). Further, some studies extend performance beyond the financial focus towards nonfinancial outcomes like employee retention (Haar & White, 2013). We follow Yang and Lin's (2009) approach and explore organisational performance that is purposefully broad and thus applicable across industries and sectors. They followed Schuler and Jackson's (2005) suggestions around a multi-faceted approach towards organisational performance, which includes the job satisfaction of the workforce, because there is meta-analytic evidence around this being the strongest predictor of job performance (Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001). Similarly, the approach to organisational performance includes other nonfinancial aspects of performance like employee retention (e.g., Haar & White, 2013), which aligns with calls for greater focus on performance beyond sales and profit (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996).

Hypotheses

Haar and Delaney (2009) argued that as the entrepreneurship field grows, 'it is important to encompass a wider perspective from those who are often side-lined from debate by way of their minority status' (p. 25). Here, they specifically focus on Māori and acknowledge that little is known about Māori employees, enterprises or processes. More recently, we have seen academic research including dedicated Māori employee samples (e.g., Haar et al., 2014; Haar & Brougham 2016), with some research finding unique effects within Māori employee samples (e.g., Haar & Brougham, 2013; Haar, Roche, & Taylor, 2012). Despite a paucity of research around Māori business (Haar, Roche, & Brougham, 2019a; Roche, Haar, & Brougham, 2018) and these internal organisational factors especially, current research does provide evidence of Māori business leaders thriving (e.g., Roche, Haar, & Brougham, 2018). Māori leadership styles are found to be one of the key factors in enhancing both employee work outcomes (e.g., Haar, Roche, & Brougham, 2019a) and enterprise outcomes (Ruwhiu & Elkin, 2016). Thus, there is initial evidence to suggest that Māori business might be doing comparably well as other Aotearoa businesses. This might apply to these internal factors as well.

Within this context, we also respond to Smith's (1999) calls around seeking positive stories of Māori, rather than perpetuating or focusing on negative disparities. Amongst our factors, we hypothesise that the aforementioned studies (e.g., Haar and colleagues) show that Māori employees enjoy similar positive workplace experiences to other New Zealanders. However, we acknowledge there are fewer Māori in high-skilled occupations (Roche, Haar, & Brougham, 2018). It might be that despite structural inequality around educational achievements for Māori individuals (Statistics New Zealand, 2015), Māori businesses can still attract and retain employees in terms of skills, abilities and education similar to their non-Māori competitors, thus report similar levels of human capital. Similarly so, the recent positive focus on the Māori economy (Nana et al., 2020), and Māori business success in general, might indicate Māori enterprises are as successful as non-Māori enterprises on performance indicators. Hence, we hypothesise similar results between Māori and non-Māori enterprises regarding performance and suggest Māori organisations will be similar to non-Māori enterprises in Aotearoa. This leads to our first set of hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1: Māori enterprises will report (a) human capital and (b) organisational performance, at similar levels to non-Māori enterprises.

Our next hypothesis is on entrepreneurial culture, and we acknowledge there is some evidence on this topic, with this factor receiving specific attention and exploration at the Māori versus non-Māori level. Mrabure, Ruwuihu, and Gray (2018) suggest that Māori enterprises can have distinct forms of entrepreneurial culture although there is a lack of empirical evidence at present. Frederick and Henry (2004) noted there was a growing interest in Māori entrepreneurship in the New Zealand economy, noting that early Māori had an 'entrepreneurial streak' (p. 116) and traded both within Aotearoa and Australia and beyond. Further, Frederick and Chittock (2006) suggested that Māori are especially entrepreneurial, although the empirical evidence of this appears weak (Haar & Delaney, 2009) and deserves caution. Specifically, Frederick and Chittock (2006) asked Māori and non-Māori about their intentions to start a business within the next year, and thus this question taps into behaviour intentions rather than actual entrepreneurial behaviour. Furthermore, recent data highlight the survival rate of Māori business to be lower than the survival rate of the general population (Statistics New Zealand, 2016). However, the economic success of Māori businesses appears to have improved (Nana et al., 2020), and we suggest that Māori enterprises will create and be entrepreneurial at similar levels to non-Māori enterprises. Thus, we posit the following.

Hypothesis 2: Māori enterprises will report entrepreneurial culture at similar levels to non-Māori organisations.

Next, we also hypothesise that Māori organisations will do better than non-Māori organisations on the other intellectual capital factors of relational capital and cultural capital. The rationale for Māori enterprises scoring higher on cultural capital aligns with the more likely experience and focus on the Māori worldview, as well as greater cultural understanding of other cultures – whether Māori or others. This aligns with Haar and Delaney (2009) around expecting Māori enterprises to embrace Māori cultural factors like *whanaungatanga* (networks), which we suggest means that Māori enterprises are likely to have greater cultural capital. They are also more likely to have these skills within their employees or management or networks, due to easier connections with Māori stakeholders. Mika and O’Sullivan (2014) noted that while Māori enterprises adopt many modern management practices, they are also likely to approach tasks ‘from a cultural lens peculiar to them, informed by cultural imperatives, stakeholder expectations, resource availability, and their particular needs and circumstances’ (p. 655). As Māori culture is rooted in kinship, respect of surroundings, land and connection with family and greater social circle (Haar & Ghafoor, 2021), it is expected that Māori enterprise culture capital will build on these same values no matter how advanced the management practices get over time. Hence, it is expected that Māori will have greater resources within their cultural capital.

Related to these arguments (Haar & Delaney, 2009; Mika & O’Sullivan, 2014) is relational capital, which encompasses shared benefits (Hitt et al., 2006) and quality relationships (Carmeli & Azeroual, 2009). Thus, *whanaungatanga* might also provide insights into expectations of why Māori enterprises might report greater relational capital. In the Science and Technology research sphere, Ruckstuhl et al. (2019) highlighted that Māori have a strong interest in building relationships and relational capacity, which is also likely to permeate the business sphere. Finally, the social exchange aspect of relational capital aligns well with Māori culture, as in the concept of *utu*, which relates to reciprocity, exchange and obligation (King, 2003). Thus, we expect Māori enterprises to have a stronger focus and inherent understanding of developing relationships and thus report greater relational capital. Thus, we posit the following.

Hypothesis 3: Māori enterprises will report higher (a) cultural capital and (b) relational capital, compared to non-Māori enterprises.

Methods

Participants and sample

We recruited participants for this study via a Qualtrics survey panel of Aotearoa enterprise managers. An initial screening question asked about management role and the position held, and those who responded ‘executive/senior manager’, ‘middle-level manager’ or ‘low-level manager’ were included, while those who responded ‘other role (e.g., supervisor)’ were removed. This was to ensure we had respondents who could adequately rate their enterprises on the factors we were interested in. The Qualtrics system ensures that respondents can only do one survey and that those responding too quickly or too leisurely are removed. Such panel data from Qualtrics have yielded positive samples (e.g., Haar, Schmitz, Di Fabio, & Daellenbach, 2019b; Ng, Yam, & Aguinis, 2019).

We used data from 230 respondents, with the majority being non-Māori enterprises ($n = 206$, 89.6%) but with a small and sufficient sample of Māori enterprises ($n = 24$, 10.4%). The sample did not include any large Māori entities associated with ToW claims (e.g., commercial arms of Māori trust boards). Thus, the sample reflects the majority of Māori businesses and excludes potential outliers due to having huge asset bases (e.g., Tainui Group Holdings, 2015 reports assets valued at over \$1.2 billion).

Overall, 78.3% came from the private sector ($n = 180$), followed by the public sector ($n = 36$, 15.6%) and the not-for-profit sector ($n = 14$, 6.1%). Māori enterprises were more likely to be in the private sector ($n = 11$, 45.8%), followed by the public sector ($n = 10$, 41.7%). Respondents were fairly evenly split by gender (55% female), with the majority in the age category 30–40 years. The majority of respondents were executive/senior managers (43.0%), followed by middle-level managers (31.7%) and low-level managers (25.3%). The average tenure was 7.5 years ($SD = 6.4$ years) and hours worked were 41.9 per week ($SD = 10.4$ h). By organisational size, micro (10 or fewer employees) accounted for 34.3% of respondents, followed by small-sized enterprises (30.0%), then medium (51–250 employees) at 16.5%, with large-sized enterprises (251 or more employees) accounting for 19.1% of respondents. By enterprise age, they ranged from 1 to 100+ years, with an average age of 40 years ($SD = 30$ years).

Measures

Human Capital and *Relational Capital* were each measured using three items from Yang and Lin (2009), coded 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree. Sample items for these dimensions were 'Our employees continuously acquire new job-related knowledge' (Human Capital, $\alpha = .71$). A sample item for Relational Capital is 'Our employees discover and solve problems through mutual collaboration' ($\alpha = .76$).

Cultural Capital was measured using four items created for this study, based on the intellectual capital construct from Singh and Rao (2016). The items used, coding and exploratory factor analysis results are shown in Table 1. The construct had good reliability ($\alpha = .78$).

Entrepreneurial Culture was measured using five items by Zahra and Garvis (2000), coded 1 = very untrue about your firm, 5 = very true about your firm. A sample item is 'This company takes bold, wide-ranging strategic actions, rather than minor changes in tactics' ($\alpha = .76$). This short measure has been used effectively in previous New Zealand research (e.g., Gibb and Haar, 2010).

Performance can focus on actual financial data (Zahra & Garvis, 2000), or perceptions of performance (e.g., Gibb & Haar, 2010; Spanos & Lioukas, 2001) in comparison to close competitors. We chose the *Organisational Performance* construct (5-items) by Yang and Lin (2009) because the types of items used are broader than a strictly financial focus, which allows us to compare public and not-for-profit organisations. Items are coded 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree. Sample items are 'Our organization has a low turnover rate' and 'Our employee's skills and the service provided is above the industry average' ($\alpha = .77$).

Māori Enterprises were calculated following the standard Statistics New Zealand classification of asking respondents 'Does your organisation self-identify as Maori?'. Responses are coded 1 = yes and 0 = no.

Analysis

Hypotheses were tested using *t*-tests (Māori enterprises vs. non-Māori enterprises).

Results

Descriptive statistics for the study variables are shown in Table 2.

The mean scores are generally above the middle of the scale with relational capital ($M = 3.81$) and human capital ($M = 3.73$) being quite high, although cultural capital ($M = 3.56$) is lower. Paired *t*-tests confirm that human capital is significantly higher than cultural capital ($t = 3.446$, $p = .001$) and so is relational capital ($t = 5.090$, $p = .000$). In addition, relational capital is significantly higher (albeit a small difference) than human capital ($t = 2.013$, $p = .045$). Finally, the entrepreneurial culture mean score is relatively modest ($M = 3.37$), while organisational performance is higher ($M = 3.69$). Table 2 shows that human capital is significantly correlated with relational capital ($r = .63$, $p < .01$), cultural capital ($r = .44$, $p < .01$), entrepreneurial culture

Table 1. Results of exploratory factor analysis for cultural capital

Questions were coded 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree	FL	ITC
1. Employees are skilled at working with other cultures and respecting cultural values	.817	.647
2. Employees are knowledgeable around the Treaty of Waitangi and its implications for working with Māori	.711	.538
3. Employees interact with different cultures seamlessly and make few cultural errors	.858	.715
4. Employees comprehend the value of understanding other cultures (such as Māori) and work hard to provide culturally positive relationships	.894	.777
Eigenvalues	2.709	
Percentage variance	67.7%	
Number of items in measures	4	
Cronbach's α	.83	

ITC, corrected item–total correlations (item scores correlated with the sum of all other item scores); FL, factor loadings.

($r = .34, p < .01$) and organisational performance ($r = .51, p < .01$). Relational capital is significantly correlated with cultural capital ($r = .49, p < .01$), entrepreneurial culture ($r = .40, p < .01$) and organisational performance ($r = .61, p < .01$). Finally, cultural capital is significantly correlated with entrepreneurial culture ($r = .37, p < .01$) and organisational performance ($r = .38, p < .01$), while entrepreneurial culture and organisational performance are also significantly correlated with each other ($r = .31, p < .01$). We also included some enterprise demographics to better understand the data, especially regarding Māori enterprises. This showed that Māori enterprises are significantly correlated with organisational age ($r = .14, p < .05$) and private sector ($r = -.27, p < .01$) when compared to the samples of non-Māori enterprises. Hence, we find Māori enterprises are likely to be older and not positioned inside the private sector as much as non-Māori enterprises.

The results of the *t*-tests are shown in Table 3.

The results of the *t*-tests show that for human capital, Māori enterprises reported similar levels ($M = 3.83$) versus non-Māori enterprises ($M = 3.72$), and these levels did not differ significantly ($t = .789, p = .431$). Regarding organisational performance, Māori enterprises ($M = 3.58$) reported similar levels as non-Māori enterprises ($M = 3.71$), and again, these were not statistically different ($t = -.942, p = .244$). Towards entrepreneurial culture, Māori enterprises ($M = 3.55$) and non-Māori enterprises ($M = 3.35$) also reported similar levels that were not significantly different ($t = 1.380, p = .169$). Consequently, as expected, Māori enterprises were found to report similar levels of human capital, organisational performance and entrepreneurial culture, indicating that managers in these enterprises assessed the skills of their workforce, the happiness of workers and customers. The climate of risk-taking and opportunity-seeking was also found similar, irrespective of being a Māori or non-Māori enterprise.

The two factors where we expected Māori enterprises to outperform non-Māori enterprises produced mixed support. As expected, cultural capital in Māori enterprises ($M = 3.83$) was significantly higher than that in non-Māori enterprises ($M = 3.45$), and this was statistically supported ($t = 2.130, p = .034$). While we expected relational capacity to be more keenly supported in Māori enterprises, this was not the case, with them ($M = 3.85$) reporting similar levels to non-Māori enterprises ($M = 3.81$), and no significant difference ($t = .282, p = .778$). As such, we find support for Māori enterprises being more strongly focused on cultural factors, and

Table 2. Descriptive statistics and correlations

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Firm age	30.0	29.8	–								
2. Firm size	430.3	1243	.47**	–							
3. Private sector	.78	.41	–.30**	–.17**	–						
4. Māori enterprise	.10	.31	.14*	.13	–.27**	–					
5. Human capital	3.73	.65	–.12	–.10	.03	.05	–				
6. Relational capital	3.81	.68	–.15*	–.03	.01	.02	.63**	–			
7. Cultural capital	3.56	.80	–.01	.07	–.11	.13	.44**	.49**	–		
8. Entrepreneurial culture	3.37	.68	–.11	.07	.06	.09	.34**	.40**	.37**	–	
9. Organisational performance	3.69	.64	–.24**	–.18*	.13	–.06	.51**	.61**	.38**	.31**	–

N = 230. **p* < .05, ***p* < .01.

Table 3. Independent samples *t*-tests

Constructs	Māori enterprises (<i>N</i> = 24)	Non-Māori enterprises (<i>N</i> = 206)	Difference	Hypothesis supported?
Hypothesis 1 (no difference expected)				
Human capital	<i>M</i> = 3.83 (SD = .64)	<i>M</i> = 3.72 (SD = .65)	<i>t</i> = .789 (<i>p</i> = .431)	Yes
Organisational performance	<i>M</i> = 3.58 (SD = .49)	<i>M</i> = 3.71 (SD = .66)	<i>t</i> = −.942 (<i>p</i> = .244)	Yes
Hypothesis 2 (no difference expected)				
Entrepreneurial culture	<i>M</i> = 3.55 (SD = .55)	<i>M</i> = 3.35 (SD = .69)	<i>t</i> = 1.380 (<i>p</i> = .169)	Yes
Hypothesis 3 (difference expected)				
Relational capital	<i>M</i> = 3.85 (SD = .54)	<i>M</i> = 3.81 (SD = .69)	<i>t</i> = .282 (<i>p</i> = .778)	No
Cultural capital	<i>M</i> = 3.83 (SD = .79)	<i>M</i> = 3.45 (SD = .85)	<i>t</i> = 2.130 (<i>p</i> = .034)	Yes

while they reported high levels of relational capital overall, this was similar for non-Māori enterprises. Overall, we find support for all Hypotheses except number 3.

Discussion

The present study sought to provide greater empirical evidence around the factors that shape Māori enterprises, given that there is increased attention to the economic contribution of the Māori economy (Nana *et al.*, 2020), a growth in understanding Māori employees (Haar & Brougham, 2013, 2016; Haar, Roche, & Taylor, 2012, 2014), Māori entrepreneurship (Henry & Dana, 2019; Mrabure, Ruwhiu, & Gray, 2018) and Māori leadership (Haar, Roche, & Brougham, 2019a; Roche, Haar, & Brougham, 2018; Ruwhiu & Elkin, 2016). Indeed, more sophisticated and nuanced attention is being given to Māori, such as in science and innovation (Ruckstuhl *et al.*, 2019); yet there is still a lot we do not know about Māori enterprises. This is surprising, given researchers have noted the unique world view of Māori (Henry & Pene, 2001), and the likelihood that Māori enterprises might offer new insights into enterprises (Amoamo, Ruwhiu, & Carter, 2018; Haar, Roche, & Brougham, 2019a; Henry & Wolfgramm, 2018; Mika & O’Sullivan, 2014).

Fundamentally, this paper argued that Māori enterprises are likely to be similar to other Aotearoa non-Māori enterprises, and this was largely supported. Intellectual capital refers to the sum of organisational knowledge (Singh & Rao, 2016) and we expected an enterprise’s expertise and KSAs of their workforce, which is typically seen as being a key to organisational performance (Youndt & Snell, 2004). We found that Māori enterprises reported similar levels of human capital as that of non-Māori enterprises, which indicates they do not have issues around accessing and recruiting quality and skilled workers. This finding supports the positive notions around the Māori economy and resulting positive media attention (Gibson, 2021). It might indicate that Māori enterprises are viewed as favourably as non-Māori enterprises, although there is likely to be higher employee identification with Māori enterprises from Māori employees, although such a link has not been tested.

The other forms of intellectual capital produced interesting findings. While we expected relationships to be especially key for Māori enterprises, they reported similar and nonsignificantly different levels as non-Māori enterprises. However, when this is put into context, it is clear that all enterprises in our sample had a strong focus on relational capital because this was the highest scored factor amongst all the variables. This highlights the importance of relationships for all businesses. However, we did find that, as expected, Māori enterprises reported higher

cultural capital than non-Māori enterprises. This was in response to arguments that Māori enterprises are likely to have stronger cultural values and ties (Haar & Delaney, 2009; Mika & O'Sullivan, 2014). We created a new construct to adequately capture the nature of relationships within and beyond an enterprise (Hitt et al., 2006), but targeting cultural processes and values that can build positive and quality relationships. Our focus on *te ao Māori* and the ToW relates to a more positive renaissance around Māori culture (Haar, Roche, & Brougham, 2019a; Roche, Haar, & Brougham, 2018) and presents an empirical contribution towards better understanding cultural capital in the Aotearoa context. Overall, Māori enterprises were found to have superior cultural capital, which was also found to be positively related to organisational performance.

This leads to the linkages with organisational performance. We used a generic construct (Yang & Lin, 2009), which included workforce satisfaction and retention, but also customer satisfaction and manager skills. This enabled us to compare Māori and non-Māori enterprises across a wide range of sectors, given we might expect Māori enterprises to be less active in the private sector, which was supported with 45.8% of respondents in that sector. As expected, we found that Māori enterprises reported similar levels of organisational performance, and importantly, this was, on average, reported as indicating positive performance, albeit at not excessive levels. Again, this likely indicates that our sample of Māori enterprises perform well in the economy and thus can engage and retain employees, meet customer expectations, and have skilled managers, at similar levels to other Aotearoa enterprises.

Finally, the present study explored the role of entrepreneurship culture in Māori and non-Māori enterprises. Despite earlier findings around strong entrepreneurship within Māori individuals compared to Pākehā New Zealanders (Frederick & Chittock, 2006), there are potential methodological issues with that study (Haar & Delaney, 2009). Indeed, we expected Māori enterprises might be as entrepreneurial as other non-Māori enterprises because of conflicting voices in the literature around being *more* entrepreneurial but also *less* likely to succeed once in business (Frederick & Chittock, 2006). Overall, we find Māori and non-Māori enterprises in our sample report similar modest levels of entrepreneurial behaviours, which means they seek risk and opportunities at relatively modest levels on average. Given the present study examines entrepreneurship at the enterprise-level and with existing enterprises, we suggest this provides greater evidence of the importance and value of entrepreneurship amongst all business in Aotearoa.

Overall, our paper contributes new knowledge and insights because the empirical evidence on differences between Māori and non-Māori enterprises is exceptionally sparse. Māori enterprises reported solid levels of intellectual capital dimensions, entrepreneurial culture and organisational performance at levels similar to non-Māori organisations. This is evidence of Māori enterprises operating at similar levels as non-Māori enterprises towards business operation.

Implications

The significantly higher scores in cultural capital in Māori enterprises are indicative that Māori enterprises have some distinct characteristic and enhanced capacities. This should encourage researchers to investigate further factors that could potentially be specific to Māori enterprises, perhaps outside traditional organisational factors. For example, the process of entrepreneurship may be different and warrant further exploration. Furthermore, future research might explore the role of non-Māori respondents and non-Māori enterprises around embracing Māori culture and engaging more with Māori. Are these factors that explain such engagement which we are currently unaware of? For example, future research might explore the empathy felt towards Māori culture by non-Māori employees. With regard to entrepreneurship, we conducted additional analysis on the individual items of the entrepreneurial culture scale (Zahra & Garvis, 2000). We found that there is a significant difference on one item only: 'Your organization is usually the first in the industry to introduce new products/services to the market'. We find that Māori enterprises ($M = 3.71$) versus non-Māori enterprises ($M = 3.10$) is significantly higher ($t = 2.903$,

$p = .004$). Hence, Māori enterprises appear to engage in first-mover activities more readily. Thus, exploring organisational strategies might be a useful avenue for future research. However, overall, the levels of entrepreneurship were similar between Māori and non-Māori enterprises.

Limitations

An important limitation of this research is the single-sourced nature of the data, although this is typical of such organisational research. Similarly, while the overall sample size of Māori enterprises is small ($n = 24$), Bartlett, Kotrlik, and Higgins (2001) suggest the overall sample is sufficient ($n = 230$). In defence of our sample, the data are the first to provide sufficient numbers of Aotearoa enterprises to compare and does provide a useful starting point – especially given the sample includes a wide range of enterprises in different sectors. Thus, these results might be considered exploratory until more studies are conducted to determine generalisability. One further issue might be that the data are nonparametric in nature, and we conducted the Mann–Whitney U test and confirmed the effects reported, such that cultural capital is significantly higher in Māori organisations.

Conclusions

The present study sought to empirically test similarities and differences in Māori enterprises. Overall, we find strong support for Māori enterprises having strong intellectual capital around people and relationships, as well as superior cultural capital. They also report similar levels of entrepreneurial culture and organisational performance, indicating that they take risks and seek opportunities as often as non-Māori enterprises, and perform just as well. We hope these findings will begin a stronger study of the potential similarities and differences of Māori enterprises and ultimately push the evidence further to understand what constitutes a Māori enterprise.

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