



Māori Employees’ Experiences in the Workplace Survey

**Nga tūmahi wheako
e nga Kaimahi Māori
i roto i te Wāhanga Mahi**

March 2021

INTRODUCTION

Mauri Tū, Mauri Ora

Flourish through the unleashing of positive energy and strategies to affect change

Background

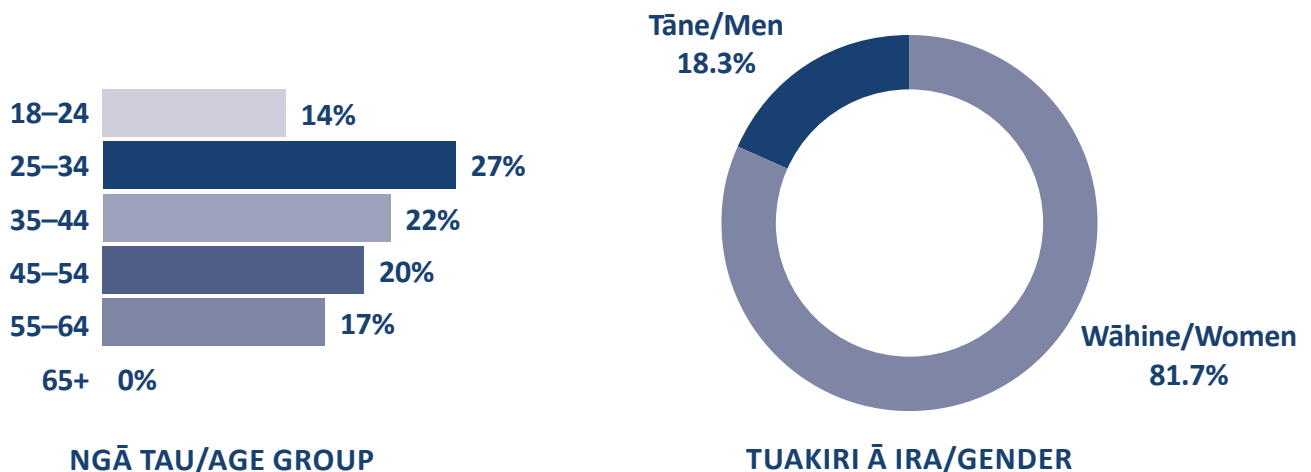
This research is part of the Mental Health Foundation's Working Well programme and focuses on the needs and issues for Māori at work. It aims to document insights into what is needed in workplaces to create mentally healthy work environments for Māori. This report also explores how employers are meeting the needs of Māori in relation to te taha hinengaro/mental wellbeing, te taha wairua/spiritual wellbeing, te taha tinana/physical wellbeing, and te taha whānau/family wellbeing.

In March 2020, the Mental Health Foundation conducted an online survey of Māori who work for kaupapa Māori organisations or mainstream organisations with a high number of Māori employees. 180 individuals responded to the survey about their experiences as Māori in the workplace. In addition to this, the MHF held a kanohi-ki-te-kanohi/face-to-face consultation with 19 Māori individuals from a roopu called Te Awaroa O Kahu of Tauranga Moana, who work in various industries.

These findings will inform the development of a second resource that will provide recommendations for workplaces on how to be more culturally responsive to kaimahi Māori.

Demographics

The age and gender of Māori employees who participated in both the survey and the consultation hui are shown in the following charts.



Community affiliation – Ngā hapori

Most online survey respondents did not identify (or chose not to identify) with any specified community group. Of the people surveyed online, 3.91% identified as members of the takatāpui/rainbow community and 2.81% identified as members of the hauātanga/disability community. Of those surveyed through community consultation, 5.9% were kaumātua/elderly, 5.9% were from the takatāpui/rainbow community and 5.9% were from the hauātanga/disability community.

QUICK STATS

Industry – Mahi

Respondents mainly worked in healthcare and social assistance, and education and training. 24.7% also identified as working for kaupapa Māori organisations.



ENVIRONMENT – WĀHI MAHI

Wellness and support mechanisms in the workplace

Whanaungatanga/a sense of connection with others at work was important to participants. 54% of participants enjoyed the people they worked with, whether that was their colleagues, service users, communities, clients or students. Respondents otherwise enjoyed learning new things, the values of their organisation, working at a kaupapa Māori organisation and the opportunity to work flexibly.

- The majority of respondents practise wellness by eating well and having good sleep hygiene.
- Many survey respondents practise karakia, live by te maramataka – the Māori lunar calendar, and practise waiata at work.
- Many identified that Western support strategies such as access to employee assistance programmes, counselling and supervision have a place in ensuring positive wellbeing, safety and work experiences for Māori. However, they also felt a strong need for te ao Māori wellbeing practices at work alongside these, such as karakia, waiata and adhering to the maramataka.
- Many also highlighted hauora initiatives such as gym memberships and gym facilities at work as valuable, but considered exercise less important than te ao Māori approaches.
- Some respondents also wanted meditation, mindfulness and yoga made available at work.

Te Tiriti ō Waitangi

Respondents said some workplaces had no or very little integration or recognition of Te Tiriti ō Waitangi/The Treaty of Waitangi partnership or cultural practices.

Māori employees expressed that Treaty obligations along with cultural safety, cultural inclusion, cultural supervision, access to local elders and hauora initiatives were vital to wellbeing.

Negative impacts of work

45% of respondents said the biggest barrier at work is time:

- Time away from whānau
- Not enough time in the day
- Long and busy work hours.

32% of respondents experienced stress and anxiety as a result of work. A smaller number said the stress derived from personal circumstances.

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Safety practices

Of the total number of participants, the majority felt safe at work when:

- They had access to kuia and kaumātua;
- Participating in te ao Māori kaupapa and working within a kaupapa Māori organisation that valued tikanga, and was inclusive of Māori culture and values;
- Working in an organisation that addressed conflict through hui/meeting and kōrero/conversation.

People did not feel safe when:

- Tikanga and kawa were not respected (values, protocol, etiquette or processes in the workplace);
- Management applied cultural values selectively;
- Confidentiality was not respected, and counselling rooms were not sound-proof;
- Tikanga was not appropriately implemented and upheld.

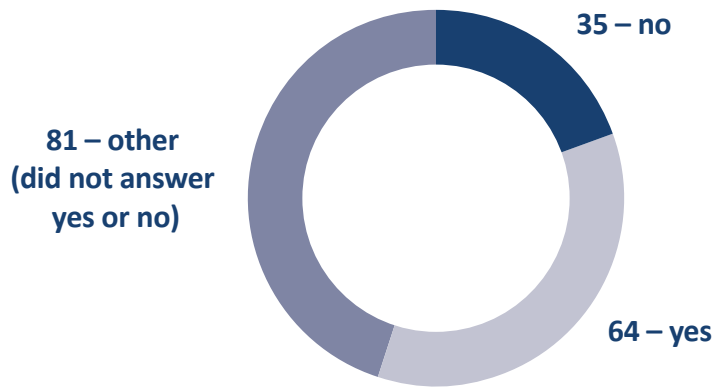


The majority of people felt safer when working in an organisation that addressed conflict through hui and kōrero.

TE AO MĀORI PRACTICES AND INCLUSION AT MAHI

Tikanga at work

- Karakia and waiata were the most common forms of tikanga implemented by workplaces. Whanaungatanga and manaakitanga were also identified, as well as incorporating Te Reo Māori in the workplace.
- Some stated that although their workplace did not consistently practise tikanga, they were making efforts to do so.



TIKANGA PRACTISED AT WORK



WHĀNAU

60% of respondents identified the importance of whānau at work as critical to their wellbeing. Some felt workplaces did not understand the tangihanga process for Māori, namely the length of time off from work needed for someone who has lost a close relative or friend – tangihanga for some Māori could last for days. Some participants mentioned their non-Māori workplaces supported the need for tangihanga leave, though most did not understand what this looks like for Māori.

The majority of respondents said staff needed to be educated on the importance of whānau and collectivism. Those who said their workplace understood the importance of whānau mainly worked for Māori organisations where tikanga and kaupapa were already embedded. Some mainstream organisations prioritised flexible policies that allowed whānau at work.

Respondents cited the following as having a negative impact on their whānau:

- Long hours at work;
- Less time with whānau;
- Stress on whānau.

And the below as having positive impacts on their whānau:

- Benefits and rewards for whānau, e.g. more financial freedom to support and do more recreational activities with whānau;
- Flexible hours for whānau commitments;
- Financial gain;
- Having the ability to role-model to whānau, and to show the benefits of working.

