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### The Impact Of Yoga And Mindfulness On Well-Being Of School Students In New Zealand – Applying The Principles of Te Whare Tapa Whā Model

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#### ABSTRACT: -

This study conducted in a school in New Zealand examined the impact of a yoga program on the well-being of school students. The aim of the study was to explore if yoga could be utilized as a tool to enhance overall well-being as explained in the Te Whare Tapa Whā model. A mixed methods research design was adopted in the design and implementation of this study. Overall, findings of this research have been optimistic with students acknowledging positive changes within themselves physically, mentally and emotionally with additional enhanced self-awareness.

**Keywords:** Te Whare Tapa Whā model, yoga



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## INTRODUCTION

This research commenced due to falling standards of wellbeing such as decreasing living standards highlighted by New Zealand experiencing some of the highest rates of suicide, homelessness, family violence and child poverty. The 2019 Wellbeing budget announced by the New Zealand Government revolutionized Fiscal Policy by recognizing that Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth alone is an ineffective measure of the success of the nation. This is a result in the recognition of data from the Treasury's Living Standards Framework (LSF) Dashboard that gives evidence of the problem areas in New Zealand as outlined by the Treasury, (2019).

As stated by Finance Minister Grant Robinson, "what we are missing is data from children" (Post Budget Wrap up, 2019). The Treasury has also identified there is lack of data regarding Te Ao Māori, children and culture and identity. Data from Living Standards Framework (Treasury, 2019) shows not only these gaps but also highlights these problems regarding suicide rates, mental health and life purpose. The age group between 18-24 years old has statistically been shown to have the highest rates of suicide, psychological distress and depression as seen in recent data from the Ministry of Health.

It is noted that psychological distress is a risk factor for mental illness measured by the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10) (Stats NZ 2017). A score between K10-K12, represents that a person has an anxiety or depressive disorder (Andrew and Slade 2001).

### Need & significance

All areas of education, health and Government have limited resources when intervening with these areas of wellbeing, so this research was implemented to allow prevention (rather than intervention) and assess the impact of teaching students how to manage their own wellbeing.

When looking at past research to see the impact yoga has had, there were very limited studies. One

study though, (a qualitative study) conducted over a 15-week period, revealed results that students who participated became more mindful, compassionate and experienced a heightened sense of psychological wellbeing from practicing meditation (Crowley, Kapitula & Munk, 2020).

As yoga provides emotional balance of mind and body, children and teenagers simultaneously need tools that allow them to listen inward into their own bodies, feelings and ideas, in order to navigate through stress and minimise anxiety. Yoga may first help assist in building physical strength; however, yoga will also contribute to social skills through building resilience and self-reflection, balancing mood and self-regulatory behavioural skills pertaining the emotions of stress and anxiety. "A meta-analysis of articles suggests that a growing body of evidence supports the belief that yoga benefits physical and mental health via down-regulation of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis and the sympathetic nervous system. The use of yoga among children may assist their development, increase their well-being, reduce everyday stress, facilitate weight management, and mitigate emotional and behavioral problems, aside from being a supplement to improve focus and attention" (Hagen & Nayar, 2014).

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

### Research Methods: Tool construction, Validity and reliability of tool

The model that was developed by Sir Mason Durie (1984) in connecting Māori health with wellbeing (Te Whare Tapa Whā), "describes health and wellbeing as a wharenui (meeting house) with four walls. These walls represent taha wairua (spiritual wellbeing), taha hinengaro (mental and emotional wellbeing), taha tinana (physical wellbeing) and taha whanau (family and social wellbeing). Our connection with the whenua (land) forms the foundation." (MHAW, 2020).

This model is significant due to the Ministry of

Health's Māori Health Insights team showing that Māori had higher levels of psychological distress than non-Māori. The model Te Whare Tapa Whā allows a connection to an image frequently used already within the New Zealand schooling system. By integrating the practice of yoga and mindfulness with the model of Te Whare Tapa Whā, it was endeavored to understand if the combination of these wellbeing tools developed further self-awareness and as a result enhanced emotional and mental wellbeing (taha hinengaro).

Therefore, two tools of quantitative methods were used to measure taha hinengaro, which were specifically chosen because of their established reliability in the field.

The first was the Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale which was designed to capture a broad conceptualisation of mindfulness.

The second tool was the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10) which was used by the Ministry of Health New Zealand in assessing psychological distress for nation-wide statistics.

Qualitative measures will be additionally integrated to gather evidence based on the lived experiences of the participants, as it is essential to explore complex, unique experiences to enrich scientific knowledge gained through quantitative measures.

In a multi-facet social system evident within a school environment, it is also helpful to ascertain the students' own personal view regarding the psychosocial effects of the yoga practice.

As at 2017 there have been 8 qualitative studies specifically focused on yoga within a school environment evaluating yoga interventions (Butzer, LoRusso, Windsor, Riley, Frame, Khalsa & Conboy, 2017). These findings were synonymous in finding positive self-reported outcomes.

### **Method of study and sampling technique**

A decile 10 all-girls school in Wellington, agreed to implement yoga and mindfulness as a timetabled subject which worked on a 10-day timetable

rotation. Three classes overall were created where it was compulsory for all Year 11 students. This was put into practice as a result of the noticeable levels of stress, anxiety and depression evident within this age group as they commenced their first year of NCEA studies. Each of the classes had one session over the 10-day timetable with a certified yoga instructor. Each session was 55 minutes long held on-site.

Classes conducted were based on Hatha Yoga and The Eight-Limbed Path where each class varied in detail but embodied the word and meaning of yoga, which means 'to unite' the breath, body and mind.

The focus of each class was predominately in the connection to the breath and breathing deeply to activate the parasympathetic nervous system to elevate stress within the body and mind. This element of yoga is known as Pranayama (breath control) which works by enhancing the life force energy within our nadis and rejuvenating the energy centres (chakras).

Pranayama practices as described above, were combined with basic asanas (postures) which focused on pawanmuktasana series, floor postures, twists and standing postures.

The combination of conscious diaphragmatic breathing and movement of basic body postures was implemented to build subtle awareness and concentration on smaller aspects not usually explored, simultaneously bringing awareness to the internal, reducing the focus of external stimuli.

Classes always began by connecting to the breath, either in a lying down (shavasana) pose or in an upright seated position. Clear indication of where the breath was to be flowing was given as well instruction on letting go of the days' activities, thoughts or worries, to allow full presence in the class. Students were then invited to set an intention (sankulpa), which is something that an individual wishes to work on, towards or aspire too. Students were instructed to repeat their sankulpa to themselves internally three times to allow it to go deeper into their subconscious. Sankulpas are set in a present, positive tense, allowing an individual to

re-structure their neuropathways and possibilities through neuroplasticity and restructuring of belief systems.

The classes would then move into a series of basic warm up asanas, utilising and moving all of the joints with soft movement, based on hatha yoga asanas, leading into deeper yin type postures with explanation of how and why we were doing an asana. Instruction on correct form was given with a more comprehensive and scientific reason of each posture integrated to give deeper purpose and understanding for the students.

Vinyasa or flow, was gradually incorporated to build strength and power being sure not to lose focus on form if the body and breath awareness.

The class was completed with yoga nidra (relaxation) or meditation where students were to lie in shavasana and consciously move their awareness around their body following the instruction given, enhancing and developing their pratyahara (inward focus), dharana (concentration) and dhyana (meditation).

Gratitude practices were included where students were to finish the session with three things that they are grateful for, to develop not only a positive growth mindset but to also develop compassion and recognition and gratitude for what they already have- rather than what they do not have.

This type of yoga is used to find ultimate contentment and peace within.

The population of interest are 15-16-year-old girls located in Wellington, New Zealand. A sample size between 12-20 who represent a variety of social, economic and cultural backgrounds present within a private school. To form an adequate understanding and establish a relationship of trust, the development of early familiarity and engagement with the culture of the school has been ongoing since 2019. This enhances a relationship of trust without influencing professional judgements. Participants are anonymous and portray a mix of backgrounds and cultures.

The sampling procedure that was used included sending out a review survey covering two main

areas that connect to one dimension of the Te Whare Tapa Whā model.

Taha hinengaro looks specifically at the emotional and mental wellbeing of an individual, therefore the Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale (designed to capture a broad conceptualisation of mindfulness) and the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10) (test used by the Ministry of Health New Zealand in assessing psychological distress) were used as well as a qualitative questionnaire for students to voice their opinions.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

### Major findings

#### Survey 1: Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale (CAMS)

When analyzing the results, we can see that higher values reflect greater mindful qualities.

The total possible score is 37, 90% scored above the central point, reflecting a highly mindful quality.

However only 5 of 20 students (25%) are in the top 75% quartile of high scores, resulting in the majority of students remaining in-between 50-75% of the total score range.

What this shows us is that the majority of students (65%) are between 50-75% of the Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness scale, and 25% are in the top quartile with the remaining 10% falling in just under half way.

There are no major outliers in this data even though there are two lower scores, they do not vary far from the central point.

This is positive in regards to the application of the data, showing that after 2 terms of yoga classes every fortnight, has benefited students and resulted in relatively high mindful and cognitively aware abilities. It would be interesting to test this before any yoga commenced to see if there was any progression, which would give more accuracy to the factor of yoga being implemented.

#### Survey 2: Kessler Psychology Distress Scale

This global survey was used as it is also used by the Ministry of Health to measure anxiety and

depressive symptoms which was an initial indicator in the commencement of this project.

Lower scores indicate low levels of psychological distress and high scores indicate high levels of psychological distress.

This is a 10-item questionnaire; however one question was omitted due to being too sensitive to ask school children. Therefore 9 questions were asked with a total possible score of 45. This questionnaire is intended to yield a global measure of distress based on questions of anxiety and

When analysing and evaluating the results, the following number of students (total out of 17) fall in the correlating ranges:

Score	Number of Students	Percentage
10-19	4	23.5%
20-24	5	29.4%
25-29	5	29.4%
30-50	3	17.6%

It is very interesting yet saddening to see that the majority of students have mild to moderate distress, with a high proportion scoring at the severe level. Although the sample size is relatively small, 76.4% of the students who have taken this survey have overall scored over 20 indicating that distress factors are still relevant in their life.

Unknown what these distress factors are however, as it will vary between student to student as well as the actions and events of the day could also play a part in their answering.

It would be useful again to have pre and posttest prior to yoga commencing to test effectiveness of the yoga and mindfulness impact itself. However, it is noted that even though yoga and mindfulness may have a positive impact, it will take longer than a term of yoga classes to restructure deep rooted distress if the problem causing it in the first place is still evident in the students' life.

### Qualitative results

In order to ensure honesty of participants, each person was able to refuse participating in the project to allow only those who are genuinely willing to take part. At the commencement of the study, participants were encouraged to be upfront

and frank about their experiences and may withdraw any time without reason, so they wish.

The scale range used is as follows;

10–19 = likely to be well

20–24 = likely to have mild distress (anxiety or depression)

25–29 = likely to have moderate distress (anxiety or depression)

30–50 = likely to have severe distress (anxiety or depression).

and frank about their experiences and may withdraw any time without reason, so they wish. Questions that were asked were open-ended to allow individual responses to be non-limiting to try to establish the most accurate thoughts and feelings.

Individual answers can be seen below for each question:

As at 2017 there have been 8 qualitative studies specifically focused on yoga within a school environment evaluating yoga interventions (10.) These findings were synonymous in finding positive self-reported outcomes.

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Questions that were asked were open-ended to allow individual responses to be non-limiting to try to establish the most accurate thoughts and feelings.

Individual answers can be seen below for each question:

### 1. How has yoga impacted your academic schooling?

Student 1	It allows me to take time from working and to relax a bit
Student 2	It has been nice to have a more 'relaxing' class every two weeks, and is a nice change. academically, I don't think it has made any difference, possibly because the class isn't often.
Student 3	Yoga has helped me not to think about things that stress me out, this really helps because I am able to complete the day happily and also get good results from it too.
Student 4	Yoga helped me calm down so that I can focus in school.
Student 5	It's a place to be away from it all, so not really. It's a break in my day.
Student 6	Hasn't impacted anything.
Student 7	I think it has taught me about managing stress and things I can and can't control.
Student 8	It has given me something to look forward to and it has helped me set goals for how I want to perceive the rest of my day.
Student 9	Yoga has been something that my peers and I look forward to on a Friday morning. It feels like a safe space to relax, be mindful and be silly, away from work and other worrying things. I think that introducing yoga with Ms Fraser has bought peace and mindfulness to a lot of our school days.
Student 10	I appreciate yoga as it is a chance to take a minute out of my busy day and I find that I am always more productive after.
Student 11	I have found that I am able to relax more, and let go of things that are annoying me- e.g getting a bad grade in a practice exam.
Student 12	I don't really believe that it's impacted my academic schooling but it certainly makes me feel really relaxed afterwards which could I guess get me into a better mindset to tackle work.

The answers to this question overall show the positive impact having yoga at school has had. Although a couple of students have recognized that it hasn't directly impacted academic schooling but have recognized the relaxing component and something to look forward to.

“Yoga has helped me not to think about things that stress me out, this really helps because I am able to complete the day happily and also get good results from it too.”

“Yoga has been something that my peers and I look forward to on a Friday morning. It feels like a safe space to relax, be mindful and be silly, away from work and other worrying things. I think that introducing yoga with Ms Fraser has bought peace and mindfulness to a lot of our school days”.

“I appreciate yoga as it is a chance to take a minute out of my busy day and I find that I am always more productive after”.

### 2. Have you found yoga and mindfulness as a scheduled subject on your timetable useful? Why/why not

Student 1	Yes because stretching the muscles helps distress.
Student 2	I have found it useful because it provides a chance to relax without thinking about our stress (both school and out of school stress). I've enjoyed it more than I thought I would and would really like if it continued into next year.
Student 3	Yes I think it is very helpful, would love to have it every week though.
Student 4	Kind of. I feel that yoga helps relax me which is good however I also feel like it can sometimes me stressful when everyone else around me can do something and I can't in yoga.
Student 5	It's been nice, useful isn't the word I would use. I'm aware enough of mental health to manage my own, but the extra time is nice.
Student 6	No because I could probably use it for studying but it can be useful if you are stressed.
Student 7	Yes because it forces me to spend forty minutes where I don't think about stress and I just focus on myself and my thoughts.
Student 8	Yes because I really enjoy it so it's something to look forward to.
Student 9	I have found the scheduled subject useful because although it's not a subject which people would traditionally think is worth the time and effort, it is healthy and necessary. The subject is also not scheduled too often so that it doesn't become tedious and it is something to look forward to.
Student 10	Yes it has been useful because it reminds me to take care of my mental and also physical health.
Student 11	Yes I have, as I think it has very beneficial for me to really relax my brain and not be thinking about all of the exams I have.
Student 12	It's both useful and stressful, because I know that I'll feel relaxed afterwards, but overthinking is really easy because I tend to run through the tasks that I could be doing instead, and if I've forgotten yoga gear it stresses me out a bit, because I'm not a fan of conflict and it feels as though we're being interrogated whenever we get asked where our gear is. We should be allowed to forget once in a while, it isn't that hard.

Overall the students have found yoga and mindfulness helpful and useful as a timetabled subject due to the taking care and time out of a stressful academic day. A few comments where students believe it wasn't 'useful' and would have preferred the time to study.

"I have found it useful because it provides a chance to relax without thinking about our stress (both school and out of school stress). I've enjoyed it more than I thought I would and would really like

if it continued into next year".

"Yes I think it is very helpful, would love to have it every week though."

"I have found the scheduled subject useful because although it's not a subject which people would traditionally think is worth the time and effort, it is healthy and necessary. The subject is also not scheduled too often so that it doesn't become tedious and it is something to look forward to."

### 3. What new skills and techniques have you learned through attending yoga & mindfulness classes?

Student 1	Its helped a bit to relax but we still have in the back of our minds that work is still due soon.
Student 2	Learning to breathe and relax
Student 3	To approach things calmly so that I can show all my skills, and give everything I have. I have also been sleeping more easily without getting distracted, by using the mindfulness techniques. Also to be grateful for what I have keeps me positive and my outlook on things have been happier.
Student 4	Relaxing, stretching, breathing techniques.
Student 5	Mostly different stretches.
Student 6	Breathing exercises.
Student 7	I have learnt about ways to stop and slow down so I can clear my mind and think rationally.
Student 8	I have improved my balance and learned about chakras.
Student 9	I have learnt more about <u>easy stretching and posture techniques</u> which can help with everyday health and comfort. I have also learnt more about managing my breath and finding calm in different situations (this has been very useful).
Student 10	I have learnt the impact of breathing techniques on the anxiety or nervous energy I have.
Student 11	I have learnt more about balance, and taking time out for yourself. I have also learnt how to relax my brain so that I'm only thinking about yoga and mindfulness.
Student 12	I haven't really learnt anything from a yoga class. I do heaps of <u>physical activity</u> such as pilates and stretching classes for ballet and jazz, so there wasn't really anything for me to learn.

Looking specifically at what the students have individually learned is interesting as some things were not anticipated to be commented on, such as Chakras (which are the energy centres in our body). A lot on learning how to deepen the breath was emphasized - so it was pleasing to see that this was translated into a deeper understanding that they took away.

It was great to see that their perspective had a shift in the way they view life and their schooling such as the comments below.

“To approach things calmly so that I can show all my skills, and give everything I have. I have also

been sleeping more easily without getting distracted, by using the mindfulness techniques. Also to be grateful for what I have keeps me positive and my outlook on things have been happier.”

“I have learnt about ways to stop and slow down so I can clear my mind and think rationally.”

“I have learnt the impact of breathing techniques on the anxiety or nervous energy I have”.

“I have learn more about balance, and taking time out for yourself. I have also learnt how to relax my brain so that I'm only thinking about yoga and mindfulness”.



#### 4. How has yoga & mindfulness class impacted your stress levels this year?

Student 1	Its helped a bit to relax but we still have in the back of our minds that work is still due soon.
Student 2	I don't think it has reduced my stress in any way, as mindfulness etc doesn't work for me in reducing stress. However, it has provided a break from thinking about my stress, which can be hard to do (especially at school), this has been beneficial to me
Student 3	Yes it has, I am approaching things calmly and doing everything I have. And by knowing this able to accept the grades I get.
Student 4	My stress levels this year have been pretty low but I think that's because I don't have much pressure this year. However during lockdown and corona, when my stress levels were through the roof, yoga definitely helped.
Student 5	Not much, I've already been meditating for a few years.
Student 6	It has calmed me down a bit before tests in the next periods.
Student 7	I don't think it has in the long term.
Student 8	It has made me think about changing the way I see tasks, now I think about them as possibilities rather than obligations. This sounds silly but it really has helped me a lot so thank you Ms Fraser.
Student 9	The class has definitely been helpful in de-stressing and finding calm amongst the workload and stress of school. It has taught me new techniques for dealing with stress.
Student 10	When doing them or just after my stress levels go always.
Student 11	I think it has lowered my stress levels.
Student 12	I think it makes me feel really loose after the class, which is great and relaxing if there's nothing due but sometimes I just want to swap it for another study period.

These answers were more mixed as some didn't see the direct correlation on stress levels where as others did through the change in perspective as well as learning new techniques such as relaxation.

"I don't think it has reduced my stress in any way, as mindfulness etc doesn't work for me in reducing stress. However, it has provided a break from thinking about my stress, which can be hard to do (especially at school). This has been beneficial to

me".

"The class has definitely been helpful in de-stressing and finding calm amongst the workload and stress of school. It has taught me new techniques for dealing with stress."

"It has made me think about changing the way I see tasks, now I think about them as possibilities rather than obligations. This sounds silly but it really has helped me a lot so thank you Ms Fraser".

### 5. What are the main benefits you have received from yoga and mindfulness classes this year so far?

Student 1	Helps strength muscles as we don't have as much time to do it after school.
Student 2	I think having the short period of time to just forget about everything that is stressful has been more beneficial than I thought it would. It's helped me learn that I am capable of separating myself from stress occasionally (although it's something I find very difficult). I also think the yoga has been beneficial to my body, as I find that after classes my body feels better than it did before.
Student 3	- Being clam - Not stressing - Keeping on track - How important my physical wellbeing is - How important my mental wellbeing is - Relaxing and making time for myself - Learning how to take school well and not like a burden
Student 4	Being able to calm myself in stressful situations.
Student 5	A break from normal school life.
Student 6	Breathing normally when I am stressed.
Student 7	I would never normally try something like yoga, so it gave me the opportunity to see what is beneficial.
Student 8	I have been given a chance to calm down and relax, while getting in tune with my body and how I'm actually feeling.
Student 9	- Learning about managing my thoughts and breathing - stretching weekly (in the right way) - having a healthy, fun space with my friends and Ms Fray Fray.
Student 10	I appreciate the tools it has given me of how to listen to what my body and mind needs.
Student 11	I have found myself less sore after sports, and a lot less tense. I have also found that I have more flexibility and I am more relaxed at school.
Student 12	What are these mindfulness classes you're talking about I've never had one? Probably just focus and maybe my thoughts are a bit more ordered.

A wide range of answers were given for this question with very reflective answers and reason why. Benefits ranged from physical to mental and emotional which was very pleasing to see. It was also rewarding to see the comfort zone extended and the benefits of doing so noticed.

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forget about everything that is stressful has been more beneficial than I thought it would. It's helped me learn that I am capable of separating myself from stress occasionally (although it's something I find very difficult). I also think the yoga has been beneficial to my body, as I find that after classes my body feels better than it did before.”

“I appreciate the tools it has given me of how to listen to what my body and mind needs”.

### 6. What has yoga & mindfulness classes helped you with?

Student 1	De-stress.
Student 2	- separating myself from stress for a short period of time (school and personal stress) - clears my head/makes me feel a lot better - makes my body feel better afterwards
Student 3	- Being clam - Not stressing - Keeping on track - How important my physical wellbeing is - How important my mental wellbeing is - Relaxing and making time for myself - Learning how to take school well and not like a burden
Student 4	Controlling my temper.
Student 5	Stretching.
Student 6	Breathing when I am stressed.
Student 7	It has brought to my attention the need to deal with stress in life, and the importance of doing so in a healthy way.
Student 8	It has helped me de-stress and identify what issues I need to work on mentally.
Student 9	Yoga and mindfulness has helped me with finding new ways of de-stressing and managing my thought is multiple situations (when anxious, at night, whilst working).
Student 10	My nervous energy.
Student 11	It has helped me to really relax and take my mind of things that are stressing me out.
Student 12	These are all the same questions lol I have a bad ankle so I guess It's good to stretch it but a lot of the exercises put pressure on my ankle so I sometimes have to stop.

The students expressed that yoga and mindfulness has helped them in many ways with majority of answers highlighting that it has helped with stress levels decreasing, controlling their temper and remaining calm, attention to stress and breathing and the nervous system and relaxing. The awareness that has been shown in these answers correlates to high mindful scores in the first survey. “It has brought to my attention the need to deal with stress in life, and the importance of doing so in a

healthy way.”

“Yoga and mindfulness has helped me with finding new ways of de-stressing and managing my thought is multiple situations (when anxious, at night, whilst working).”

“- separating myself from stress for a short period of time (school and personal stress) - clears my head/makes me feel a lot better - makes my body feel better afterwards”.

### 7. Would you like yoga and mindfulness classes to continue as a timetabled subject? Why/why not?

Student 1	Yes because it helps our body's but I believe it should be more on muscle stressing/workout like and not as much on mind relaxing.
Student 2	Yes I would like it to be continued, especially into next year. I would really like it to be once a week instead of once a fortnight in the future, as I think it would allow for a bigger difference to be made to our wellbeing. I think it has been good for me and I enjoy the classes.
Student 3	Yes please, for sure. This is very helpful for me and as school is going to get tougher, it is important to do yoga. I would also recommend it to be there every week.
Student 4	Yes, because it helps me feel calm and composed.
Student 5	I think it should be optional.
Student 6	No because I could use it as a study period.
Student 7	Yes, but I wouldn't want it too often because then it becomes a chore that is less enjoyable.
Student 8	Yes, I look forward to it and I wish it was twice a week rather than once a fortnight.
Student 9	Yes - I think that the classes are really positive for my peers and myself and they work well in their current positions in our timetables.
Student 10	Yes please I appreciate the time we do it.
Student 11	Yes I would, as I think it is really important to have a class that you can really relax and take time for yourself in. I wouldn't have time to do yoga outside of school, so it is really helpful that I can do it in school.
Student 12	I don't really think it's that necessary, but the part where we lie on the floor is really nice because my session is in like period 2 so I can get rid of the sleepiness from the morning.

Out of the participants that answered, 9 out of 12 said a definite yes, that they would like yoga to be a timetabled subject as they found it was helping distress and move their body. Some students also mentioned they would like yoga to be more frequent such as weekly classes instead of fortnightly classes. One student said they would like yoga twice a week!

Other opinions included the class being optional and one answer of no.

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it would allow for a bigger difference to be made to our wellbeing. I think it has been good for me and I enjoy the classes.”

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### 8. What else would you like to do or learn within these classes that would help enhance your wellbeing?

Student 1	More muscle movements to do.
Student 2	Continue with the relaxation exercises, and learning to talk about our feelings would be great.
Student 3	Continue learning new postures, and also how I can do yoga at home maybe some tutorials that we can do at home.
Student 4	I'm not sure.
Student 5	Not sure.
Student 6	I don't know.
Student 7	I think looking at more different strategies that I can do at home.
Student 8	I'd like to learn more poses as sometimes I think we spend too long on relaxations, because relaxations are much easier to do in your own time but we should make the most of having a teacher to correct and modify our poses.
Student 9	Perhaps learning more about positive self-talk and learning techniques for specific problems.
Student 10	More meditation please.
Student 11	More stretching that would help with tight muscles from sport.
Student 12	I don't know, I guess maybe they annoy me a little because I see so many exercises from pilates and it bothers me when these exercises are taught wrong and in a way that it could potentially harm people. Sometimes just saying "don't do it if it hurts" isn't enough.

To know and understand what else the students would like to learn was very interesting as it was broad range of ideas from more movement, to talking about feelings more, how to do yoga at home, positive self-talk, more meditation and posture adjustment. All very reflective on their 'next steps' and certainly helped me to know what they enjoyed.

“Continue with the relaxation exercises, and learning to talk about our feelings would be great”.  
 “Perhaps learning more about positive self-talk and learning techniques for specific problems”.  
 “Continue learning new postures, and also how I can do yoga at home maybe some tutorials that we can do at home.”

### 9. What aspect of wellness have you noticed a change with from attending these classes? eg. mental, emotional, physical or spiritual awareness

Student 1	Physical as I feel stronger and better but not really on the mental as that doesn't really work well for me personally.
Student 2	I think that for me mentally and emotionally it has been beneficial - but only for the short period of time we are in class and afterwards. In the two weeks between the classes nothing really changes, and I think having a higher frequency of classes would change this for the better.
Student 3	My mental health has changed a lot I have been able to realise what stresses me and how I can stop that stress before it can get very serious. Also I am feeling much stronger, and healthier by doing yoga as an exercise too.
Student 4	Spiritual awareness.
Student 5	Physical, it feels good afterwards.
Student 6	Mental.
Student 7	Emotional wellbeing.
Student 8	My physical balance has improved significantly and when stressed I refer back to my goals I made in class
Student 9	I have noticed a change in my mental and emotional wellness during school.
Student 10	Mostly my mental health.
Student 11	I have noticed that I have become less closed minded- and I am able to look at things with a more positive mindset.
Student 12	I like the relaxation and the time to reorder thoughts.

During a lesson on chakras (energy centres), it was observed that the students were very fascinated. All the answers covered a good range of both physical, mental, emotional aspects which was pleasing can be directly related to the Te Whare Tapa Wha model. It was also mentioned that more classes would have more impact.

“I have noticed that I have become less closed minded- and I am able to look at things with a more positive mindset.”

“My mental health has changed a lot I have been able to realise what stresses me and how I can stop that stress before it can get very serious. Also I am feeling much stronger, and healthier by doing yoga as an exercise too.”

“I have noticed a change in my mental and emotional wellness during school”.

### 10. Any other comments, thoughts, additions you would like to add

- “Thanks for being a great teacher, Miss Fraser :)”
- “I'd like to have yoga once every week and maybe some lesson online that our teachers make for us to do at home. So that we can keep the practice of doing it up.”
- “I think it is important that we get changed for yoga because otherwise positions have to be modified for those in uniform. Also people talk constantly which makes it quite difficult to focus. I know that it is hard to deal with this but if some more emphasis could be put on yoga etiquette that would be great”

### CONCLUSIONS

Overall, findings of this research have been optimistic with students acknowledging positive changes within themselves physically, mentally

and emotionally with additional enhanced self-awareness. More specifically, a greater positive and open-minded mindset was also a common theme, which in any educational setting is a key goal for parents and educators alike.

Majority of students enjoyed the sessions, noting that they wanted more relaxation in the sessions and for the number of yoga sessions to be increased to weekly or twice weekly rather than fortnightly.

The introduction of yoga and mindfulness into a school timetable has successfully combined the strengthening of the muscles, conscious awareness of the breath in the body, resulting in flexibility and blood circulation, boosting immunity and calming the nervous system.

It also can be mentioned that strengthening of the spirit was a result, where students noticed a more resilience and less reactive emotional outcome within themselves. It was evident their self-awareness was developed with very reflective observations within themselves in their answers.

Students that have enhanced their self-awareness through yoga, will also flow into all other areas of life, where they may slow down and recognize the beauty around them allowing other conflicting internal issues to reside. Enhanced gratitude stirs compassion within oneself and for the people around you. This can be done through quieting the mind, truly relaxing and learning to laugh when falling down in a standing posture.

When the time is taken to slowly reach the next point in a posture, an individual is developing utmost presence, when one is feeling each toe as you stand, they are learning and developing extended awareness. This development of awareness continues to build from the physical body into mental and emotional where students have shown this awareness develop. With regular yoga practice, students develop self-awareness which can help reduce reactivity in stressful situations.

Potential limitations of this study include the examination of students' personal perceptions of a school-based yoga program either from their own

perception or naturally occurring via a home-based setting.

The school demographics also provide a small sample being only single gender. This makes it more difficult to assess if the results are gender specific or not. Similarly, the majority of the sample are not Māori decent, also allowing for variance in the results as we specifically want to assess the connection to the Te Whare Tapa Whā wellbeing model.

Finally, given that the study took place at a decile 10 private school, it is possible that any results may not compare to public schools which may have a lower socio-economic rating.

Drawing on both empirical research and cognitive science, overall, there is good receptivity of yoga in school.

Delivery of yoga and mindfulness in a school-based setting has appeared to be feasible and acceptable by both the students and senior leadership in helping to reduce stress and anxiety and enhancing mental and emotional wellbeing, supporting other evidence for the effectiveness of yoga.

No matter the skill level, goals or ability, yoga can be adapted and practiced by all, as it isn't about competition, it is about uniting your own body and mind connection. This is the reason why it is called a yoga practice – for it is never truly finished.

“The wise yogi knows that the process itself is the destination. That life itself- perhaps even this very moment is the reward.” (N Isaacs).

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