Te Whare Wānanga
o Awanuiārangi

MOʻOKŪʻAUHAU: HAWAIIAN-FOCUSED CHARTER SCHOOLS AND IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

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A thesis presented to Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Indigenous Development and Advancement, Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi

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Mary Katie Benioni

Signature: *Mary Katie Benioni*

Date: 8 December 2024

DEDICATION

To my mother, Barbara Phillips Robertson, who has loved learning for as long as she can remember and who, with tremendous determination and resourcefulness, beat the odds for a small-town Hawaiian girl in the 1950s to earn a college degree, fulfilling her childhood dream of becoming a teacher.

I am eternally grateful for all you have done and taught me,

and above all, for being a great example and

spiritual anchor in my life.

This thesis is dedicated to you.

I love you, Mom.

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It is only fitting that I acknowledge and mahalo my kūpuna first. Your inspiration guided me to pursue this research topic, and I have felt you with me throughout this journey. Mahalo for your perseverance in times that were likely far more challenging than my own. I am grateful for the knowledge that we are a forever family and I will see you again.

Mahalo nui loa to my advisor, Dr. Mera Penehira, whose guidance and encouragement have led me to this place. Your commitment to empowering Indigenous communities and individuals is inspirational. Thank you for challenging me both personally and academically and helping me grow in ways that will allow me to serve my community better.

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you come from. You stand on our shoulders and can achieve anything you set your sights on. I must also include thanks to our loyal dog Zorro, who faithfully stayed by my side through every late night of writing.

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ABSTRACT

Hawaiian-focused charter schools were established to nurture the well-being of Native Hawaiian children through educational models that reflect and embrace Hawaiian cultural values and practices. A foundational tenet of Hawaiian culture is that knowledge is acquired from ancestors, both living and deceased. Moʻokūʻauhau establishes ancestral connections and defines Hawaiian identity, providing a place of belonging and a strengthened sense of self. This thesis investigates the role of moʻokūʻauhau in shaping the identity and well-being of students at Kanu o ka ʻĀina New Century Public Charter School.

Utilizing a Kanaka ʻŌiwi research paradigm, the study explores how cultural practices embedded in the school's curriculum, particularly those centered around moʻokūʻauhau, contribute to students' sense of belonging, cultural continuity, and personal resilience. Through qualitative analysis of participant narratives, this research examines the impact of these educational practices on various learner outcomes, including those defined by the Education with Aloha pedagogy, the Nā Hopena Aʻo (HĀ) outcomes framework, and Kanu o ka ʻĀina's specific learner outcomes.

The findings reveal that learning moʻokūʻauhau significantly enhances students' cultural identity and fosters a deep connection to ʻohana and ʻāina, which in turn supports their emotional, social, and spiritual well-being. The research highlights the importance of culturally grounded education in decolonizing learning spaces and reinforcing Indigenous knowledge systems.

This thesis contributes to the broader discourse on Hawaiian culture-based education by demonstrating the long-term impact of moʻokūʻauhau on individual and community resilience. It advocates for the broader implementation of culture-based curricula in educational systems,

emphasizing the role of Indigenous methodologies in achieving holistic educational outcomes. The research underscores the value of maintaining cultural practices in modern educational contexts, offering insights for educators, policymakers, and researchers committed to supporting Indigenous education and identity development.

Keywords: mo‘okū‘auhau, Hawaiian-focused, charter school, Hawaiian culture-based education, Indigenous methodology

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CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

1.0 Kūpuna set the path

‘O wai ‘oe? What waters do you come from, or in other words, who are you? Through mo‘okū‘auhau I answer and begin the mo‘olelo of this research.

‘O keia ka mo‘okū‘auhau ‘o ka ‘Ohana Keli‘iliki mai ka ‘āina momona ‘o Wai‘aka

‘O Keli‘iliki ke kāne, ‘o Kealohapauole Ho‘ohua ka wahine

Noho pū lāua a hānau ‘ia ‘o Ululani Keli‘iliki.

‘O John Keali‘i Ka‘apuni ke kāne, ‘o Ululani Keli‘iliki ka wahine

Noho pū lāua a hānau ‘ia ‘o Mary Kalani Ka‘apuni.

‘O Anthony Vincent Phillips ke kāne, ‘o Mary Kalani Ka‘apuni ka wahine

Noho pū lāua a hānau ‘ia ‘o Barbara Tepa Phillips

‘O Jerry Clayton Robertson ke kāne, ‘o Barbara Tepa Phillips ka wahine,

Noho pū lāua a hānau ‘ia ‘o Mary Katie Kamoanionaonapuaiku‘upoli Robertson

‘O au‘o Mary Katie

‘O Terangi Te-Are-Toa-O-Te-Patoa-O-Marouna-Tama-Pikikaa Benioni ke kāne,

‘o Mary Katie Kamoanionaonapuaiku‘upoli Robertson ka wahine,

Noho pū māua a hānau ‘ia ‘o Roman Tangianau-Terangi-Tama-Pikikaa Benioni, ke kāne

‘O Jessica Elizabeth Kamoanihau‘oliokekaiolohia Benioni, ka wahine

A me ‘o Kenneth Ka‘ikena Arohatahi Benioni, ke kāne.

‘O keia ka mo‘okū‘auhau ‘o ka ‘Ohana Keli‘iliki,

E ola ka hā loa ka ‘Ohana Keli‘iliki!

For Kānaka ‘Ōiwi, introducing oneself through mo‘okū‘auhau honors ancestral lineage and fosters a sense of interconnectedness, emphasizing that each person stands on the shoulders

of those who have come before. These connections help one understand one's place in the world and responsibility to family and community. This thesis aims to comprehensively explore ancestral connections and their influence on identity as experienced by students of a Hawaiian-focused school.

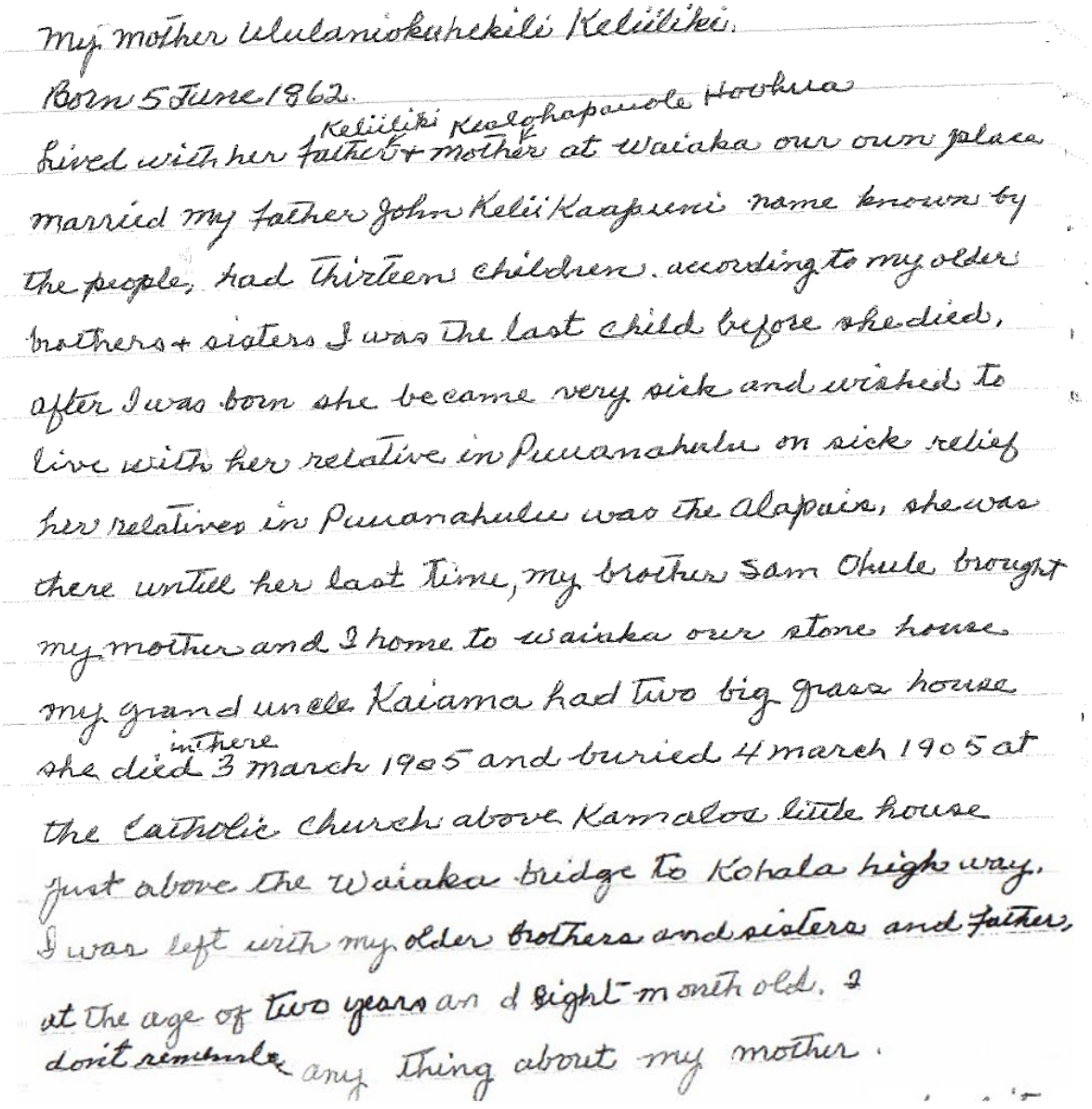
I have begun this thesis with an introduction of myself. Chapter One will continue with my personal connection and motivation for this research, followed by the aim and significance. Chapter Two delves into Indigenous methodologies that align with research on moʻokūʻauhau and identity development, emphasizing approaches that resonate with the cultural context of the study. Chapter Three provides a literature review of identity and moʻokūʻauhau, examining existing theories and frameworks that underpin the study's focus. Chapter Four examines the progression and philosophies of Hawaiian education, tracing historical and contemporary shifts to contextualize the educational setting with a focus on Kanu o ka ʻĀina New Century Public Charter School. Chapter Five presents the data collection and thematic analysis, detailing the manaʻo and moʻolelo shared by participants during talk story sessions and illuminating the lived experiences of kūpuna, kumu, and students. Chapter Six discusses the findings, highlighting how learning moʻokūʻauhau within a Hawaiian-focused school setting aligns with learner outcomes, supported by the qualitative data gathered. Chapter Seven concludes the thesis by synthesizing the key insights from the research, discussing the implications for educational practice and policy, and suggesting directions for future research to explore further the intricate connections between Hawaiian cultural practices such as moʻokūʻauhau and education.

Kanaka ʻŌiwi understand that their ancestors, their kūpuna, exist with them and continue to be of influence even after they have passed on. In my own experience, my doctoral research has been guided by my kupuna, specifically my grandmother, Mary Kalani Kaʻapuni. Her

influence has led to this study, which centers on how moʻokūʻauhau contributes to students' sense of identity and well-being.

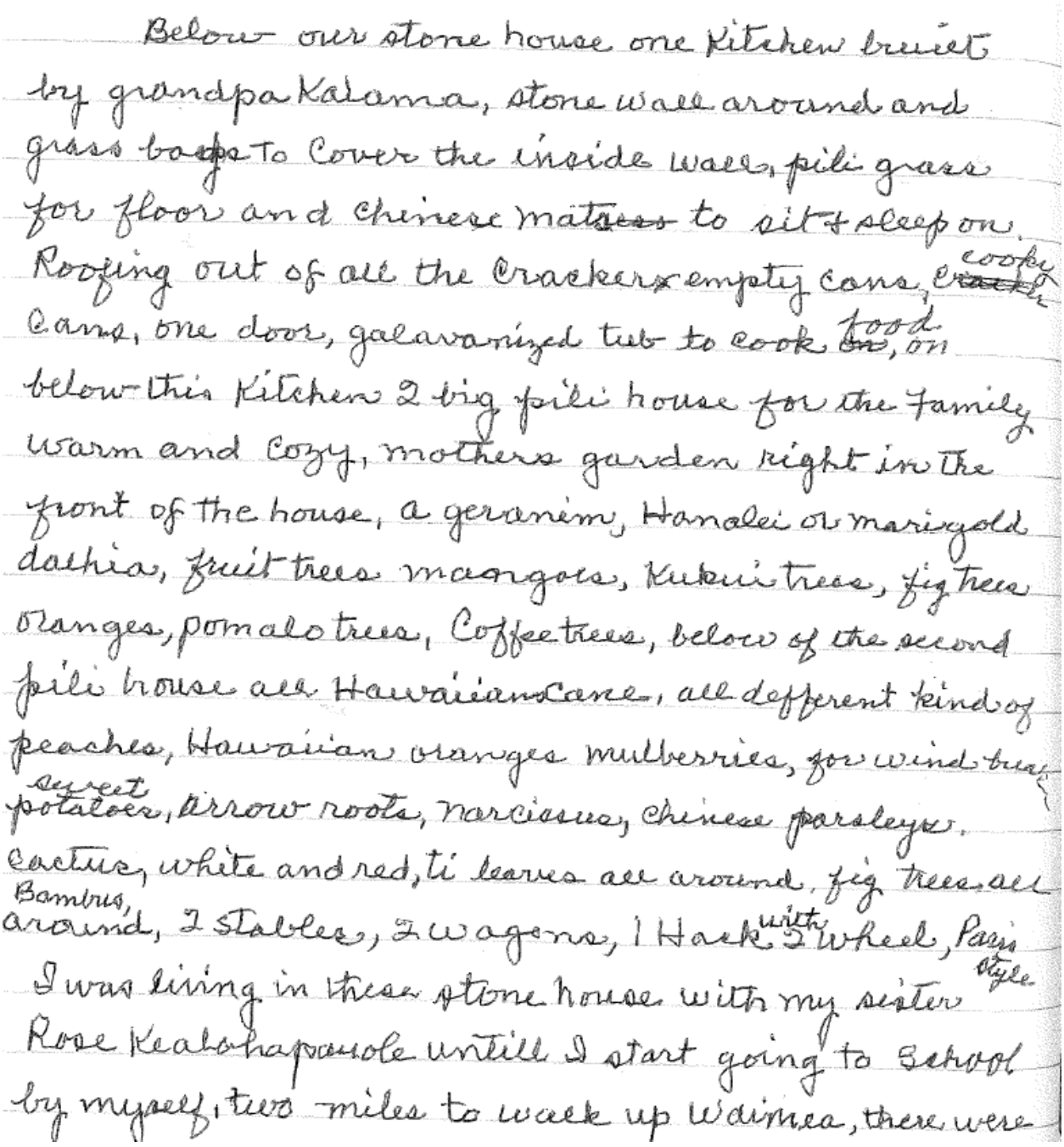
My grandmother's influence was there from the very beginning of this journey. Hōʻailona, or signs, have guided the way; let me explain. I have been fortunate to spend the last two decades working with Hawaiian-focused charter schools. These community-designed schools are grounded in Hawaiian epistemology and are reclaiming Hawaiian rights and practices through traditional and ancestral knowledge instruction. The school campuses are alive with ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi, moʻokūʻauhau, hula, ʻāina based learning, and children who are not ashamed to be Hawaiian or practice their culture and language. My role in supporting this charter school endeavor has been in finance and accounting, far from the day-to-day classroom teaching and student learning. It would have been logical for my doctoral study to be on government policy, school funding, or resource allocation. Right up to the day before our topic proposal was due, I planned on selecting one of those topics to research. Still undecided, I went to visit my mother to talk about my research options. When I arrived at her home, a collection of my grandmother's journals was on her dining table. I felt compelled to open and read these black-and-white, marbled composition books from the 1950s. To my surprise, my grandmother had written pages and pages of moʻokūʻauhau interspersed with ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi, mele, and moʻolelo. She kept notes on some personal aspects of her life, like church meetings, but there are only a handful of personal entries about her childhood and years growing up. These personal entries provide a glimpse into the life of someone who lived through the swift changes of colonization. Through this window in time, I found cultural remnants, highlighting what she believed was worth preserving through the written word. I am thankful that my mother has treasured these records and found value not only in the stories but in the family lineages held within their pages.

As Jonathan Osorio (2004) so eloquently states about our ancestors, “We may treasure our own lives as continuations of theirs and take pride in grafting our stories and our lineages onto the ones that they established” (p. 15). Each of us is a continuation of our ancestors; what a gift! With this mana‘o, I take you back to my grandmother’s mo‘olelo as she recorded it. This is the foundation on which all other mo‘olelo that unfold in this thesis will be built. Her personal account reads:



My mother Ululaniokuhekili Keliiliki.
Born 5 June 1862.
Lived with her father & mother Keliiliki Kealohapaiole Hoohua at Waiaka our own palace
married my father John Kelii Kaapuni name known by
the people, had thirteen children. according to my older
brothers + sisters I was the last child before she died,
after I was born she became very sick and wished to
live with her relative in Punanahulu on sick relief
her relatives in Punanahulu was the Alapaia, she was
there until her last time, my brother Sam Okule brought
my mother and I home to waiaka our stone house
my grand uncle Kaiama had two big grass house
she died in there 3 March 1905 and buried 4 march 1905 at
the Catholic church above Kamaloa little house
just above the Waiaka bridge to Kohala high way.
I was left with my older brothers and sisters and father,
at the age of two years and eight month old. I
don't remember any thing about my mother.

Her introduction purposefully begins with an acknowledgment of her parents, and then the place, Wai‘aka, Hawai‘i, where they resided at her birth in 1902. We note that she is no stranger to tragedy, with her mother dying when she was just two years old, which is not uncommon for that period in Hawaiian history. She is left with no recollection of her mother. She continues:



Below our stone house one Kitchen built by grandpa Kalama, stone wall around and grass ~~bags~~ To Cover the inside wall, pili grass for floor and Chinese ~~mat~~ to sit & sleep on. Roofing out of all the Crackers empty cans, cooky Cans, one door, galavanized tub to cook food on, below this Kitchen 2 big pili house for the family warm and cozy, mothers garden right in the front of the house, a geranium, Hanalei or marigold dahlia, fruit trees mangoes, Kukui trees, fig trees oranges, pomalo trees, Coffee trees, below of the second pili house all Hawaiian Cane, all different kind of peaches, Hawaiian oranges mulberries, for wind break sweet potatoes, Arrow roots, narcissus, Chinese parsleys. Cactus, white and red, ti leaves all around, fig trees all Bamboo around, 2 Stables, 2 wagons, 1 Hack with 2 wheel, Paris style I was living in these stone house with my sister Rose Kealohapauole until I start going to School by myself, two miles to walk up Waimea, there were

few older girls and boys that attend school with me if I meet with them, at times they leave home earlier than me, If the day is clear and no cattles on the way to school I get there early.

Her love for her ʻāina is evident as she beautifully describes their simple, resourcefully built homestead and the plants and flowers that grew around their house. We observe that Waiʻaka is windy since she notes the necessary windbreak for the garden. She is able to attend school, but it is a long two-mile uphill walk to Waimea for an eight-year-old with wild cattle to avoid along the way. You can't help but wonder why her older sister Rose isn't walking to school with her. Maybe since they have no mother, Rose has to assume the homemaker role from a young age. We will see the difficulties that plagued life in Hawaiʻi in the 1900s as she continues:

I became paralized
on my right leg remember one injection from doctor Saint
it was about an year I imagine before I began to walk again
at that year some one made a board of health report that
my sister Rose had leper she was sent to Kalihi leper settle-
ment home, from there to molokai, my older Brother John was
still in molokai at the time, there were no sign of
of Leper in her, but a running sores on her one foot
she died of heart broken, after she was sent to molokai
I was the third child of my parent that was sent
to this leper home I was there in Kalihi for 2 Weeks

test and no sign of leper, I came out and I lived there
for about 2 month before I came back home.
That was in the year between 1913+1914.
I start going school again until
1916 my brother John asked the school to release me

She had contracted polio, a disease common at that time. Sadly, their family experienced death too frequently, along with the pain of losing loved ones to leprosy and the leper colony at Kalaupapa, Molokaʻi. As the ʻōlelo noʻeau describes, "he maʻi makamaka ʻole, the disease that deprives one of relatives and friends" (Pukui, 1983, p. 86). It was a tremendously tragic and scary time. Statistics show that from first contact with foreigners in 1778, the Hawaiian population was decimated from an estimated 683,000 to 24,000 by 1920. My grandmother was one of the fortunate 24,000 Hawaiians in the 1920 census count. Her family had only seven surviving children of 13.

The tragic events of her childhood forced my grandmother to leave school early and become a homemaker at 14. As her first language, she was fluent in ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi, but due to the language being banned from public school in 1896, six years before her birth, she was instructed in English only. It wasn't until she was in her 50's, after raising her family, that she took continuing education classes in ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi. In her journals, we find pages of ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi lessons.

Most of her journals are dedicated to family genealogies, some are her direct ancestral lines, others are from friends, but the majority are aliʻi lines. She doesn't explain the reason for recording pages of genealogy. Still, maybe it was her connection to the cultural practice of moʻokūʻauhau and the kuleana to keep, treasure, and know ancestors. Perhaps the loss of her

mother at the age of two and her sister Rose a few years later left her yearning for family. Whatever her reason, the pages now speak of kuleana, the importance of family, moʻolelo, and knowing one's ancestors. Osorio (2004) reminds us, "And with every story we tell that demonstrates our ancestors living their lives, every splendid and petty pursuit, every gesture of magnanimity and reprisal, we draw closer to one another and celebrate our kinship" (pp.16 -17). The act of telling our ancestors' stories not only honors their lives but also strengthens the bonds between us, weaving a continuous thread of connection through time. ʻŌhai Daniels (2020) shares:

> The moʻolelo of my kūpuna is a composition that has formed over millennia. Each time one of their stories is recalled and retold, it becomes further entwined into the twisted fibers that connect and tie each and every one of us together. As each new story takes shape, another strand is twisted into the ever-lengthening kaula that continues to grow stronger (p. xiv).

I was fortunate to know my grandmother; she was 66 when I was born. She was soft-spoken and hardworking and could usually be found cooking, gardening, or sewing Hawaiian quilts. She was a well-known and skilled lei maker in the small ranching community of Waimea, where she lived most of her life. Her kitchen was always open to anyone who needed to stop in for something to eat or words of wisdom. My cousins and I have fond memories of car rides with her and our grandfather to pick noni for the awful-smelling juice she would keep in the refrigerator and the green pōpolo medicine she would make us drink if we had a cold. Although contracting polio as a child crippled Grandma's right foot and caused her to walk with a limp for the rest of her life, she did not let it stop her. She was a gardener, lei maker, quilter, ranch hand, and lāʻau lapaʻau. At the age of 75, the residual effects of polio tragically caused her to go blind,

and she could no longer quilt or make lei, but her resilient spirit kept her busy, tending to her home, cooking for herself, participating in weekly church activities, and caring for her beautiful garden. She lived to be 90.

My grandmother is a role model in my life, and although she has been gone for over 30 years, I can feel her presence around me. Reading her journals has allowed me to connect with her again and come to know her in a new way. I am reminded that her blood flows through my veins. Her resilience, resourcefulness, faith, charitable nature, and loving-kindness raised the mother who then raised me. Unlike my older cousins, who were practically raised by my grandmother, I had less time and fewer chances to listen to her stories or learn her many skills. Now, as a grandmother myself, I recognize and appreciate her life, her challenges, and her sacrifices so much more.

Her journals remind me of the vital role moʻokūʻauhau has played in my life. From childhood, family genealogies could be found around our home, on shelves, strewn across the dining room table if my mother was working on a particular family line. Hearing moʻolelo of ancestors and visiting cemeteries or a newly discovered relative's home were common occurrences. "How are we related?" discussions were part of regular conversation. These childhood experiences had a profound impact on my identity development. They were a source of reassurance and comfort as I moved into adult life, mainly because I am hapa haole, meaning I am a mix of Hawaiian and Caucasian, which can be a source of identity conflict.

I grew up in the early years of what we now term the Hawaiian Renaissance, that pivotal time when Hawaiians began to reclaim their voice and fight back against the negative persona that had become the prevalent stereotype of kānaka: lazy, poor, and uneducated. Being White or Asian was often seen as more favorable than being Hawaiian. These societal views influenced

my perspective on being Hawaiian. Looking back, I see that as a hapa haole, I was maneuvering my duality based on situation, audience, and circumstance, not knowing or understanding the history that had led to these societal viewpoints.

I know I was not alone in this juggle of ethnic identification because prejudicial behavior is real. What is interesting is when prejudice comes from those who share your ethnicity. This behavior is termed intra-ethnic prejudice. This phenomenon arises from historical or cultural divisions within a group, contributing to stereotypes, discrimination, or biases. Factors such as varying degrees of acculturation, effects of colonization, socioeconomic disparities, or divergent cultural practices contribute to its development. Interestingly, in my experience, I was met with less prejudice from my non-Hawaiian peers. I could never seem to be Hawaiian enough. I failed to meet an unspoken list of qualifiers. I was not brown enough, was born in the mainland, didn't speak pidgin, didn't go by a Hawaiian name, didn't go to public school, and my dad was haole.

I recall a particular experience that made this prejudice blatantly obvious. While living on the mainland in my early 20s, I got a job working with other Hawaiians. Because of my homesickness, I thought this would be ideal. However, I soon found that even on the mainland, I did not qualify as being Hawaiian enough, even though I had grown up in Hawai‘i while many of these Hawaiian co-workers had not. I couldn't understand how my Hawaiian-ness was based on my shade of skin, lack of pidgin usage, and the high school I attended. In those moments of perplexity when I was somehow disqualified from being Hawaiian, I would picture my Grandma sitting in her kitchen, a bowl of poi on the table, a Hawaiian quilt stretched taut on a quilt horse in the parlor, her garden full of ‘ākulikuli that she grew to make lei for my Grandpa's cowboy hat, and I would reassure myself that I was Hawaiian. Then the names I had learned from my childhood, ‘o Ka‘apuni ‘oe, ‘o Kalimaonaona ‘oe, ‘o Keli‘iliki ‘oe, and their ‘āina and mo‘olelo,

would flood my mind, and I knew that the blood of these kūpuna flowed in my veins, and despite what anyone thought, I was Hawaiian.

Fast forward a decade, and I've moved back from the mainland to the town where I grew up. I get a job working with a newly formed Hawaiian-focused charter school. The school resulted from the Hawaiian Renaissance and the many champions who demanded education reform to correct a system that had failed Hawaiian children for too long. The school operates through a values-based, culturally relevant model called Education with Aloha and I'm excited to see how they're breaking the mold of old stereotypes as they embrace all things Hawaiian. Here, students are not ashamed to be Hawaiian or to practice their culture and language. As I work in this environment, I am awestruck by these confident keiki, who are paʻa in their identity as Hawaiians.

I reflected on the keiki I observe at work compared to my experiences growing up in the 1980s as a Hawaiian. Then I thought about the life of my grandmother, who likely never questioned her identity as a Hawaiian; how could she? She wasn't anything else. My grandmother was Hawaiian in every way, and the students I observed at school were exemplifying Hawaiian identity. So, on that day at my mother's home, as I pondered what would be most meaningful to dedicate three years of research to, my grandmother's journals became the hōʻailona. They were the sign that moʻokūʻauhau needed to be my focus.

I began to contemplate the connection between identity and learning moʻokūʻauhau, reflecting on my own personal experiences with it. Being taught about my place within a larger familial context and the influence of my ancestors was significant for me. Hearing the histories of resilient and resourceful forebearers also strengthened my sense of self. These reflections led to questions like, is moʻokūʻauhau influencing identity development today? What research has

been conducted on moʻokūʻauhau and students at Hawaiian-focused charter schools? Now that we are 50 years from the Hawaiian Renaissance, have negative stereotypes of Hawaiians and intra-ethnic prejudice shifted? My mind was filled with these kinds of questions, and as I talked it through with my colleagues, I determined that my focus should be on how learning moʻokūʻauhau influences a sense of identity and well-being.

I know that my kupuna guided me to this research, and I hope that is evident in the moʻolelo shared thus far. The remainder of this chapter will outline the thesis topic and specific research questions. A background section is included and centers on Kanu o ka ʻĀina New Century Public Charter School and its education model. The significance section further builds on the need for this research. It outlines the desired outcomes while noting that research involving Hawaiian-focused charter schools is limited despite the unique contributions their pedagogical approach lends to identity development and the broader Indigenous academia. An overview of methods undertaken in the research process and an overview of all subsequent chapters are also included.

1.1 Background to the Study

It has been 50 years since the Hawaiian Renaissance of the 1970s began. This revival sparked interest in nearly forgotten traditional cultural practices: ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi, moʻokūʻauhau, moʻolelo, hula and oli, voyaging, and much more (Kanaʻiaupuni, 2005). Political activism gained momentum, fueled by land and water rights issues, Hawaiian-language recovery, and lack of governmental representation (Trask, 1999). Kānaka ʻŌiwi gathered, worked together, and advocated for changes to combat social ills that were a century in the making.

At the time, Kānaka ʻŌiwi were among the most socioeconomically disadvantaged ethnic groups in Hawaiʻi. There was an overrepresentation in the criminal justice system, along with the

highest rates of obesity and other chronic health issues. Education data was no better with longstanding gaps in educational outcomes, ranging from lower achievement and poor graduation rates to underrepresentation in post-secondary education (Kamehameha Schools, 1983). These desperate circumstances, coupled with the tides of change in the late 1970s, spawned the first Hawaiian immersion school in 1984, followed by the first Hawaiian-focused charter school in 2000 (Goodyear-Kaʻōpua, 2013). School founders knew that education was the key to changing the life trajectory for Kānaka ʻŌiwi and improving the quality of life for generations.

Hawaiian-focused charter schools (HFCS) are decolonizing the public education sector while reclaiming Kanaka ʻŌiwi identity for students. These community-designed schools prioritize the inclusion of ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi, ʻāina based instruction, and traditional cultural practice (Goodyear-Kaʻōpua, 2013). Kanu o ka ʻĀina New Century Public Charter School (Kanu) is one of the17 HFCS founded on the belief that "when Hawaiian culture, language, and values are incorporated into the pedagogical process at all levels, education suddenly has relevance and meaning for Hawaiian children, and as a result, students are able to learn, to grow and to excel, both in the academic setting and in life outside of school" (Kanu, 2000).

Kanu originated from a series of innovative and culturally grounded educational initiatives led by Dr. Kū Kahakalau (Kahakalau, 2003). In 1992, she co-founded Kumukahi, the educational arm of the Edith Kanakaʻole Foundation, to provide Hawaiian children with opportunities for educational success through traditional Hawaiian teaching methods. This effort evolved into Kūkulu Kumuhana, a series of Hawaiian immersion summer camps that taught cultural practices and fostered physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual growth. These camps inspired a pilot program, Kanu o ka ʻĀina Hawaiian Academy, launched in 1997 as a

school-within-a-school at Honoka‘a High School. Despite its success in integrating Hawaiian values with academic rigor, the program faced challenges due to limited systemic support and the instability of operating within a public-school setting.

Recognizing the need for a more sustainable model, Dr. Kahakalau convened a meeting in 1998 with local Hawaiian parents and community members to explore creating a K-12 charter school. Their shared vision led to the establishment of the Kanu o ka ‘Āina Learning ‘Ohana and in the same year, the chartering of Kanu o ka ‘Āina New Century Public Charter School. Drawing on lessons from the Hawaiian Academy and inspiration from charter school models, Kanu was designed to provide curricular freedom, long-term stability, and a culturally rooted, multi-age learning environment. This foundational effort laid the groundwork for , the first K-12 culturally-driven, family-oriented, and community-based public charter school in the State of Hawai‘i. The school opened with 127 students. As explained in the school’s first accreditation self-study:

> Kanu o ka ‘Āina is a short form of the proverb “kalo kanu o ka ‘āina,” which literally translates to “taro planted on the land” and figuratively refers to “natives of the land from generations back.” We chose to name and identify ourselves as “plants of the land” because, as native Hawaiians, we are an intricate part of our environment. Our cosmogonic genealogies directly link us to the land. We come from the land; it is part of our ‘ohana. Like Hawai‘i’s natural environment, our Hawaiian learning ‘ohana is made up of diverse, yet like-minded individuals with a wide range of skills and strengths. Together we have agreed to pool these strengths to aloha, nurture and care for all members of our extended ‘ohana, as we advance Hawaiian culture, language and traditions into the future. (Kanu, 2009)

With little financial support from the State and no facilities, Kanu established a school in tents and off-campus learning labs. In 2012, the school moved to its new Kauhale ʻŌiwi o Puʻukapu campus located in the Hawaiian Homes community in Waimea on Hawaiʻi Island. Annually, Kanu serves over 600 students in grades K- 12 and 28 in Mālamapōkiʻi, its preschool affiliate. Over 72% of Kanu's population is Native Hawaiian.

From the outset, Kanu established itself as an Indigenous values-based model of education grounded in the ethics of Hawaiian ancestors. Kupuna values found in Hawaiian proverbs, or ʻōlelo noʻeau, were used to guide all aspects of the school. The school's mission comes from the Hawaiian proverb "Kūlia i ka nuʻu, i ka paepae kapu o Līloa," which means "strive to reach the summit, the sacred platform of Līloa" (Pukui, 1983, p. 205). Līloa was revered as a righteous or pono person and was one of the most respected and beloved chiefs because he cared for the gods, the people, and the environment. The sacred platform of high chief Līloa was near his home in Waipiʻo Valley, and to share his platform, one also needed to be pono, virtuous, and honorable. Kanu's mission is to instill these principles in students so they can strive for excellence in all they do. This philosophy and culture of excellence promotes evaluation of the schools' design and curricular implementation to continuously improve quality in their culturally-driven model of education (Kanu, 2009).

Designed as a Hawaiian education model, the school continues to perpetuate Native Hawaiian language, culture, and values. After 24 years, their vision remains consistent: "As a community-based learning ʻohana, Kanu is steadfast in cultivating compassionate, empowered, highly competent learners of all ages, grounded in Native Hawaiian culture and language" (Kanu, n.d.). The school is able to achieve this vision through specific learner outcomes that include:

- Perpetuate a desire for learning and maintaining relationships to the environment and community.
- Demonstrate a connection to place through observation, identification, and independent inquiry.
- Embrace the kuleana of contributing to the community.
- Establish self-identity by honoring one's genealogy

The school's accreditation report of 2009 states:

> KANU believes that given such a Hawaiian-focused foundation, students can fearlessly enter any world of their choice, secure in their identity, their abilities, and their responsibilities as 21st century citizens. We also believe that such a cultural foundation sets students up as life long learners continuously seeking wisdom, continuously trying to reach their highest level. (p.16)

Kanu's intentional inclusion of ancestral knowledge and their placement of moʻokūʻauhau as a founding practice at the school is a testament to their belief in its power to strengthen the identity of keiki. Jonathan Osorio (2004) asserts that ancestry is the root of Indigenous knowledge and identity, and Hawaiians must protect these ancestral connections so as not to lose their sense of self. Thus, moʻokūʻauhau, the learning of genealogy and familial connections, plays a vital role in the reclamation of identity due to its significance in traditional Hawaiian epistemology and ideology.

Research on the practice of moʻokūʻauhau related to identity development in Kānaka ʻŌiwi appears to be non-existent in English language sources. Similarly, research with Kanu or other HFCS on the impact of specific Hawaiian knowledge and culture pedagogy is extremely limited. The most extensive research with a HFCS has been the work of Dr. Noelani Goodyear-

Kaʻōpua and Hālau Kū Māna public charter school, documented in her 2013 book *The Seeds We Planted*. Regarding the influence of moʻokūʻauhau, she notes:

> As I engaged people in interviews… I noticed kumu frequently talking about their genealogies… and how these genealogies shaped them. I began paying close attention to the ways that genealogy was more than just contextual information but was still a form of Hawaiian intellectual production. It was when people spoke of their moʻokūʻauhau that they often became most clear about their own kuleana, their learning objectives, and their visions of potential futures. Hawaiian genealogical narratives remind us to always be concerned with power and the ways it is exercised. Kanaka maoli genealogical practices also rely on stories and metaphors rather than static, prescriptive models. That is, they leave open the space for new action in the present, informed by the past." (p.45)

She describes her book as this type of present-day moʻokūʻauhau, "written in the hope that many more will be recorded" (p.45). It is my hope that this research moʻolelo will serve as another present-day Hawaiian genealogical narrative informed by the past.

1.2 Aim and Research Questions

This study aims to understand the impact of one foundational cultural practice implemented in HFCS since their establishment twenty-four years ago. Although there are a variety of Hawaiian cultural practices, moʻokūʻauhau is the focus of this study, specifically its use with students of Kanu and the impact of that use.

The key question of this study is:

1. How has learning moʻokūʻauhau at Kanu o ka ʻĀina New Century Public Charter School influenced students' sense of identity and well-being?

The research examines how moʻokūʻauhau is included in Kanu's culture-based curriculum and

where opportunities may exist to enhance its application in the culture-based model at Kanu. It is the intention that this research will encourage Kanu and other HFCS to evaluate their Hawaiian knowledge and culture pedagogy, particularly around mo‘okū‘auhau, to optimize its successful inclusion in curricula for Kanaka ‘Ōiwi keiki.

1.3 Significance

Reflection and assessment were an ordinary process in Hawaiian society since livelihood depended on successful execution, whether in fishing, planting, or constructing: “‘Ike ‘ia no ka loea i ke kuahu. An expert is recognized by the alter he builds. It is what one does and how well he does it that shows whether he is an expert” (Pukui, 1983, p.131). It is no different today. Programs and models designed for Kanaka ‘Ōiwi, especially keiki, must be studied to assure quality and benefit. This study collected reflections of Kanu o ka ‘Āina New Century Public Charter School graduates and provided a forum for them to share firsthand experiences with what is still considered a new approach to learning through Hawaiian culture-based pedagogy. Due to the depth and breadth of knowledge and cultural practice included in culture-based instruction, this study concentrated on mo‘okū‘auhau and how, from the graduates’ perspective, it was woven into their educational experience. Participants could convey its impact on them individually and their identity development, validating the school’s founding assertion that including Hawaiian culture and values in education strengthens personal identity. This study adds to our understanding of Hawaiian culture in education and encourages consideration of the findings to review school climate, including curriculum and teaching approaches. It also contributes to the growing body of knowledge across Indigenous peoples regarding the inclusion of genealogy understandings and practices in Indigenous curricula where research remains limited.

Two significant aspects of this study are the persistent loss of ancestral knowledge and the need to address the gaps in research on HFCS: “He pohō na ka pohō, o ke akamai no ke hana a nui. Sinking is to be expected where it is naturally found, but one should use as much skill as possible [to avoid it]. Losses come easily; it requires skill and wisdom to avoid them” (Pukui, 1983, p.97). Our ancestors recognized the importance of preserving and sharing knowledge.

There are limited studies of HFCS; Kamehameha Schools conducted most of this research in the early years of charter schools between 2003 and 2010. Their studies include 1) youth development through an assets survey administered to students, 2) the relationship between Hawaiian culture-based educational strategies and student outcomes through teacher and student surveys, and 3) a comparison of academic achievement and engagement outcomes of Hawaiian students in charter and mainstream public schools (Kamehameha Schools, n.d.). Other research on HFCS has included student achievement demonstrated through hōʻike, Hawaiian leadership, and food sovereignty. In my analysis, fewer than ten studies were dedicated to HFCS, and only one was conducted with graduates. A study of HFCS is timely.

Ancestral knowledge is the foundation of Hawaiian culture-based education (HCBE). However, it is often devalued due to colonization and the privileging of Western education systems. HFCS are striving to capture the wisdom and lessons of past generations while also protecting and passing on these knowledge resources. This study, in a small way, assists in recording ancestral knowledge by incorporating interviews with kūpuna who have the kuleana of moʻokūʻauhau.

Lastly, this study examines if learning moʻokūʻauhau positively impacts identity development. Indigenous research in this area is primarily found amongst Māori scholars. The literature review within this thesis will reveal the gaps in Hawaiian research on this topic.

This examination comes at a time when data in Hawai‘i and the United States shows that mental health in teens has worsened compared to a decade ago. The Ka Huaka‘i 2021 assessment found that Kanaka ‘Ōiwi youth are more likely to experience suicidal thoughts than their peers (Kana‘iaupuni et al., 2021). Furthermore, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2023), teens reported increasing suicidal thoughts, experiences of violence, and mental health challenges, with girls faring worse than boys across nearly all measures. The report raises the urgency for schools to help struggling youth. This study could inform a potential strategy for assisting in this effort: “E lawe i ke a‘o a mālama, a e ‘oi mau ka na‘auao. He who takes his teachings and applies them increases his knowledge” (Pukui, 1983, p. 40).

1.4 Overview of Methodologies

This research adopts a Kanaka ‘Ōiwi model as its methodological framework, drawing inspiration from the influential work of Manulani Meyer and her māka‘a o ka na‘auao framework in Hawaiian epistemology. The chosen methodologies of mo‘olelo and mo‘okū‘auhau align with cultural practices, honor Indigenous research principles, including decolonization, and resonate with the pedagogy of the school under study. Grounded in a Kanaka ‘Ōiwi research paradigm that reflects a Hawaiian worldview, the study utilizes the qualitative methods of talk story and group discussion with kūpuna, kumu, and school graduates for information collection. The research design emphasizes the significance of pilina in participant selection and the role of loina.

1.5 Preview of Thesis

This thesis primarily draws on the ‘ike of Kānaka ‘Ōiwi, Native persons of the Pae ‘Āina ‘o Hawai‘i. Due to the evolution of identifying terminology, the terms Kanaka ‘Ōiwi, Kanaka Maoli, Hawaiian, and Native Hawaiian are used interchangeably. The use of the words

“tradition” and “traditional” within this thesis refers to original or ancestral understandings. It is acknowledged that cultural knowledge and practices are not static, and that the use of these terms does not imply otherwise. Similarly, this thesis acknowledges that identity and culture are dynamic, complex, and everchanging. There is no intention for this thesis to oversimplify their true nature. Hawaiian language, or ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi, is interspersed throughout the document, prompting the inclusion of a glossary to assist the reader. The glossary can be found following Chapter Seven. ʻŌlelo noʻeau, proverbial sayings, are intentionally included in the text for multiple reasons: 1) as we use the phrases of our kūpuna, we breathe life into them; 2) they were used as founding principles of the school in this study; and 3) to educate the reader on Hawaiian ideology.

Following the conclusion of this chapter, Chapter Two contextualizes this study within a Kanaka ʻŌiwi research paradigm while acknowledging the foundational work of scholars dedicated to bringing to the forefront Indigenous methods, methodologies, and epistemologies. It delves into the specific applicable methodologies of moʻokūʻauhau and moʻolelo. To effectively address the research inquiries and stay true to the methodologies, this study embraced ‘talk story’ sessions with participants as its primary inquiry method. The methodology and methods chapter intentionally precedes the literature review to furnish the reader with the lens guiding the selection and utilization of literature.

Chapter Three surveys the existing literature on identity and moʻokūʻauhau to contextualize this study. It offers an overview of existing research, theories, and scholarly works related to the influence of moʻokūʻauhau on identity development, particularly within Hawaiian culture-based schools. This exploration assisted in identifying gaps, inconsistencies, and areas requiring further investigation, thereby justifying the significance of this study.

Chapter Four explores the progression of the Hawaiian education movement, focusing on educational philosophies and methodologies that shape student identities within Hawaiian culture-based schools. It analyzes the role of HFCS, particularly Kanu o ka ʻĀina New Century Public Charter School, in identity development and highlights research gaps, with an emphasis on K-12 education as experienced by the study's participants.

Chapter Five captures the moʻolelo and ʻike of this study's ten participants, documenting their individual interaction with and perspective on moʻokūʻauhau and its impact on their personal lives and sense of identity. It also highlights their learning and teaching experiences in a Hawaiian culture-based school. Thematic analysis was used to explore and understand the rich, contextualized meanings present in the data provided by participants. The data is organized by the five core values of Kanu. Organizing the qualitative data by the school's values is beneficial for aligning the research with the school's mission, supporting identity development, and ensuring findings are culturally relevant and applicable to educational practice.

Chapter Six provides an interpretation of the findings, emphasizing their significance and implications within the context of the study. A reflection on the chosen research methodology and its application, including its strengths and limitations, is discussed. Comparative analysis of learner outcomes discussed in the literature reviews is undertaken to contextualize the findings within the broader academic landscape. The chapter acknowledges the challenges and constraints encountered during the research, providing insights into potential areas for improvement. Lastly, it explores the prospects of the study on current practices at the school.

Chapter Seven concludes the thesis with a concise summary of the primary findings aligned with the initial research question. The contributions of the research to culture-based education and Hawaiian scholarship are highlighted, elucidating how the study fills gaps in

existing knowledge. Additionally, limitations are identified, suggestions for future research are proposed, and recommendations for the school are given. The conclusion culminates with final thoughts and personal reflections on the research journey.

1.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter began with the moʻolelo of kupuna, who guided the path of this research. It also presented the background, significance, and aim to ascertain if a correlation exists between moʻokūʻauhau and identity development in students educated at a Hawaiian-focused charter school. Insight into the founding principles of HCBE was provided along with the specific pedagogy of Kanu o ka ʻĀina New Century Public Charter School. A brief description of the research methodology and methods was included, providing the theoretical stance of the research. The chapter concluded with an overview of each subsequent thesis chapter. An in-depth explanation of the methodology and methods applied to this research is provided in the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO - INDIGENOUS METHODOLOGIES AND METHODS

2.0 Chapter Introduction

The research approach should honor both the participants and ancestors alike. Furthermore, Indigenous research must be worthwhile for those participating in the study, clearly define ownership of the research, and maintain transparency regarding the individuals involved and the methods employed in the research process (Smith, 2021). This chapter presents Indigenous methodologies and methods that align with the research of moʻokūʻauhau and identity development within a Hawaiian-focused charter school.

Charter schools are a recent attempt by Indigenous communities to decolonize the public education sector. These schools prioritize the inclusion of ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi, ʻāina based instruction, and traditional cultural practice. One such practice is moʻokūʻauhau, or the learning of genealogy and familial connections, which plays a vital role in this reclamation of identity due to its significance in traditional Hawaiian epistemology and ideology. Methodologies and methods utilized in this research must support this reclamation effort.

This chapter begins with a discussion on the importance of worldview and theoretical stance, followed by the critical work on Hawaiian epistemology by Manulani Meyer. Meyer's work informs a Kanaka ʻŌiwi paradigm, which serves as the framework to approach this research. A review of Indigenous methodologies, Kaupapa Māori, and Kanaka ʻŌiwi follows. The focus then narrows to moʻokūʻauhau and moʻolelo methodologies as applicable to this research on Hawaiian identity. An explanation of the link between methodology and method is provided. The research design and method are laid out, with a subsequent section discussing specific data collection methods. The chapter concludes with a summary of applied methodology and methods.

2.1 Theoretical Stance

Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2021) defines research methodology as "a theory and analysis of how research should proceed" (p. 144). However, prior to selecting an appropriate methodological approach, it is essential to identify one's theoretical stance. In her book *Doing Educational Research*, Carol Mutch explains, "Before you try to determine the most relevant theory to support your research or help determine your methodological choices, you should pause a moment and think about who you are and where your influences have come from" (p. 64). Mutch lists the following areas to examine: cultural, social, and familial influences; childhood and life experiences; political, religious, and cultural views; the impact of work and career; and in-depth study of the research topic. After undertaking a personal inventory and establishing one's fundamental beliefs and influences, Mutch encourages the researcher "to start reading more widely to see how these ideas have found substance in social or educational theory" (Mutch, 2013, p. 64).

Reading the works of early Hawaiian scholars such as Kameʻeleihiwa, Trask, Osorio, and Meyer has dramatically influenced my stance and worldview. Books dedicated to Hawaiian research methodologies, *Kanaka ʻŌiwi Methodologies* and *The Past Before Us: Moʻokūʻauhau as Methodology,* have impacted my research approach and design. Other influences include my work with a Hawaiian-focused charter school and the corresponding exposure to Hawaiian research and student learning.

Early life experiences with moʻokūʻauhau are also influential. Both my mother and grandmother treasured family records. They would spend hours working on their own family records and assisting others in piecing together family trees. The numerous times I helped my mother create scrolls of family names to be taken to family reunions stand out as one influential

life experience. These scrolls would be displayed for family members to add new names to the ever-growing and expanding family tree. Their reverence for and modeling of kuleana for moʻokūʻauhau made a lasting impression on me. My mother is 88 and still spends most of her time organizing family records and helping others trace their lineage. Experiences like this solidify the importance of knowing my moʻokūʻauhau, and I have developed a great love for these relationships with ʻohana, both living and deceased.

Our views are constantly being influenced. A recent reading of the dissertation *The Resilience and Resurgence of Aloha ʻĀina* by Peralto (2018) brought forward this quote from a column dedicated to publishing moʻokūʻauhau in the 1896 Hawaiian newspaper *Ka Makaainana*:

> Aole hoi e kakauia ana keia i mea kilohi wale iho no, aka, i mea na ka hanauana hou e hoomaopopo iho ai ma ka hoopaa ana ma ka puuwai, a maopopo ka moolelo o na kupuna o Hawaii nei. Ua oleloia, he kuaaina ka mea ike ole i ke kuauhau; a o ka mea ike, he alii no oia, a i ole, he kanaka no ke aloalii. Ma Europa hoi, he hupo maopopo ke kanaka ike moolelo ole a nele hoi i ke kuauhau o kona aina hanau a me na aina malamalama e ae. Nolaila, pehea la, e hoololiia ana anei ka hanauna hou o Hawaii nei ma ka papa o na poe kuaaina a me hupo? Ina aole pela, alaila, e imi koke a hoomaopopo i ka moolelo oiaio a me ke kuauhau o Hawaii nei. (*Ka Makaainana* April 20, 1896)
>
> *This is not being written as something to simply glance at, but rather, this is something for the next generation to come to know by fixing it in their hearts an understanding of the moʻolelo of the kūpuna of Hawaiʻi nei… Therefore, how shall it be? Will the next generation of Hawaiʻi nei become of the class of the kuaʻāina and the ignorant? If not, then we must quickly seek out and come to know the true moʻolelo and kūʻauhau of Hawaiʻi nei.*

Kupuna wisdom such as this reinforces my conviction of the relevance of moʻokūʻauhau. It also encourages exploration of the writer's powerful warning for future generations to understand moʻokūʻauhau and moʻolelo.

Another example of kupuna wisdom that impacts my theoretical stance is the following chant, which I hear recited daily at Kanu o ka ʻĀina Charter School:

Nā ʻAumākua

Nā ʻAumākua mai ka lā hiki a ka lā kau	*Ancestors from the rising to the setting sun*
Mai ka hoʻokuʻi a ka hālāwai	*From the zenith to the horizon*
Nā ʻAumākua iā Kahinakua, iā Kahinaʻalo	*Ancestors stand at our back and at our front*
Iā ka ʻākau i ka lani	*You who stand at our right hand*
ʻO kīhā i ka lani	*A breathing in the heavens*
ʻOwē i ka lani	*An utterance in the heavens*
Nunulu i ka lani	*A clear, ringing voice in the heavens*
Kāholo ia ka lani	*A voice reverberating in the heavens*
Eia nā pulapula a ʻoukou o ka poʻe Hawaiʻi	*Here are your descendants, the Hawaiians*
E mālama ʻoukou iā mākou	*Care for us*
E ulu i ka lani	*That we may flourish in the heavens*
E ulu i ka hōnua	*That we may flourish on earth*
E ulu i ka pae ʻāina o Hawaiʻi	*That we may flourish on Hawaiian lands*
E hō mai i ka ʻike	*Grant us knowledge*
E hō mai i ka ikaika	*Grant us strength*
E hō mai i ke akamai	*Grant us intelligence*
E hō mai i ka maopopo pono	*Grant us understanding*
E hō mai ka ʻike pāpālua	*Grant us insight*
E hō mai ka mana.	*Grant us power.*
ʻAmama, ua noa	*The prayer is lifted, it is free.*
	(Malo, 1971)

This chant affirms for students and kumu the daily acknowledgment of ancestors and their active role in our lives: "It is in the doing, the practice, the memorizing, the repetition where the core of Hawaiian knowledge derives from" (Meyer, 2018, p. 150). These influences and experiences form my theoretical stance and Kanaka ʻŌiwi Worldview.

2.2 Kanaka ʻŌiwi Paradigm

According to Lisa Kahaleole Hall, "The research design must reflect the worldview of those at the centre of the research" and "the research design must be based on Indigenous knowledge systems" (2014, p. 381). Paradigm is a valuable tool for advancing the understanding of a Hawaiian worldview. Shawn Wilson (2001) explains that "a research paradigm is a set of beliefs about the world and about gaining knowledge that go together to guide your actions as to how you're going to go about doing your research" (p. 175). In his article "My Turakawaewae:

A Review of Learning," Ray O'Brien (2019) provides the following Figure 1 to illustrate four elements of a research paradigm.

Figure 1:

The four elements of a research paradigm.

O'Brien credits (Lincoln & Guba, 2005) and (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017) for their conceptual work of the four elements, their application as a paradigm, and their relevance to education research. O'Brien (2019) describes the elements as follows:

> Epistemology is concerned with the basis of knowledge. Ontology is concerned with the assumptions we make in order to believe that something is real. Axiology relates specifically to decisions based on ethical or aesthetic values. Methodology is concerned with the research design, methods, approaches and procedures used in an investigation. (pp. 15-17)

These philosophical elements or foundations of human knowledge have been viewed primarily through a Western societal lens. Wilson (2001) champions their application in an Indigenous paradigm. He also provides the following explanation of the four elements:

> What you believe is real in the world: that's your ontology…epistemology, which is how you think about that reality…methodology, how you are going to use your ways of thinking (your epistemology) to gain more knowledge about you reality…axiology,…a set of morals or a set of ethics. (p. 175)

These four elements can be viewed through a Hawaiian lens and utilized to design a Kanaka ʻŌiwi paradigm.

Much of the philosophical foundations which Kānaka ʻŌiwi stand on today were formed through ʻike kupuna passed down to cultural practitioners and Hawaiian intellectuals who emerged following the Hawaiian Renaissance of the 1970s, such as Haunani-Kay Trask, Jon Osorio, Lilikala Kameʻeleihiwa, and Pua Kanakaʻole Kanahele. Wright & Balutski (2016) refer to "this legacy as our ʻike Hawaiʻi grounding" (p. 88). Meyer (1998) significantly shaped this philosophical foundation by substantially contributing to defining Hawaiian epistemology: "My purpose for attempting to understand philosophical concepts of knowledge is to strengthen our identity as Kānaka ʻŌiwi so that we can better direct our educational future in these changing times" (Meyer, 2018, p. XVI). Meyer's doctoral thesis, *Native Hawaiian Epistemology: Contemporary Narratives*, provides a crosswalk between Western terminology and what she terms mākaʻa o ka naʻauao, the view plane of Hawaiian intellect and wisdom. The table below provides a synopsis (Meyer, 2018, pp. 77-79).

Table 1:

Crosswalk of Western terminology to Meyer's Hawaiian view plane

Term	Western Definition	Meyer's Explanation
Epistemology	The nature of knowledge and truth	Engaging Hawaiian ontology relative to understanding and knowing
Ontology	The nature of being and reality	What it means to be Hawaiian, essence, the whole

		host of cultural beliefs, practices, and values
Cosmology	Philosophy branch that deals with the universe as a totality of phenomena (space, time, eternity)	The framework to discuss ontological facts. Ex: Taro is part of a Hawaiian cosmology because it infers the origin of how space, time, and change are viewed
Empiricism	Experience is the sole source of knowledge	Redefine notions of experience to include instinctive, innate, or ancestral knowledge
Objectivity	To be without bias, detached	Objectivity is an illusion when taking into account values, contexts, and judgments

Meyer's extensive literature review demonstrates that culture shapes knowledge. Her collection of stories, values, proverbs, vocabulary, and beliefs shaped a distinctly Hawaiian philosophy and ontology. Meyer outlines this in seven epistemological themes or categories, the first of which is "spirituality and knowing - cultural contexts of knowledge" (p. 92). This theme is the foundational context on which all other pieces are built. It is the understanding that Hawaiians acquired knowledge through spiritual, temporal, sensory, and extrasensory means. Knowledge and experience were gained from the natural world and from ancestors, both dead and alive. Thus, as Wilson (2010) contends, "mo'okū'auhau is fundamental to Hawaiian epistemology, to our sense of knowing and being in the universe" (p. 44).

Two fundamental Hawaiian beliefs or practices substantiate the acquisition of knowledge from ancestors, 'aumākua and kumupa'a: "'Aumākua and kumupa'a highlight the link Hawaiians made with their environment, both visible (i.e., rock, fish) and invisible (i.e., past relatives, wind). 'Aumākua and kumupa'a, then, were manifestations of the environment and used as mediums from which to interpret the world" (p. 94). Subsequently, Hawaiians devised

over 28 terms for knowledge or ʻike. For example, ʻike ao - knowledge gained from the clouds, ʻike naʻau - knowledge that comes from the gut, and ʻike moe ʻuhane - insight gained from dreams. The table below briefly describes the seven categories of mākaʻa o ka naʻauao (Meyer, 2018, pp. 92-127).

Table 2

Mākaʻa o ka Naʻauao – Categories of Epistemology

Category	Description
Spirituality and knowing - cultural contexts of knowledge	Knowledge gained from the natural world and from ancestors, both dead and alive (ʻaumākua, kumupaʻa, ʻike)
That which feeds - physical place and knowing	Environment is the structure and process for knowledge acquisition, natural world is not separate from a moral one (Ex. Hāloa & taro)
Cultural nature of the senses - expanding notions of empiricism	All of life is alive and filled with meaning and metaphor (Ex. Rock has spirit)
Relationship and knowledge - notions of self through other	I-Thou concept of relationality to nature, man, and spiritual beings which influences knowledge and information gathering
Utility and knowledge - ideas of wealth and usefulness	Knowing is based on need and life purpose; survival depends on personal utility and full participation (hana noʻeau)
Words and knowledge - causality in language	Words hold spiritual power and are laden with hidden meaning; they direct proper action (hana pono, hoʻopāpā, kaona)
The body/mind question - alternatives to the illusion of separation	Thinking and feeling are not separate, the head is the door for spirits, and the stomach region is the seat of intellect and emotion (naʻau, naʻauao)

Although Meyer does not explicitly define axiology in her work, it is interwoven in the form of ʻōlelo noʻeau. Kahakalau (2019) explains that ʻōlelo noʻeau are:

> An invaluable resource of almost three thousand Hawaiian proverbs, representing the collective wisdom of our ancestors, their dreams and aspirations, their values, standards, and non-negotiables. These proverbs, which are saturated with metaphorical language,

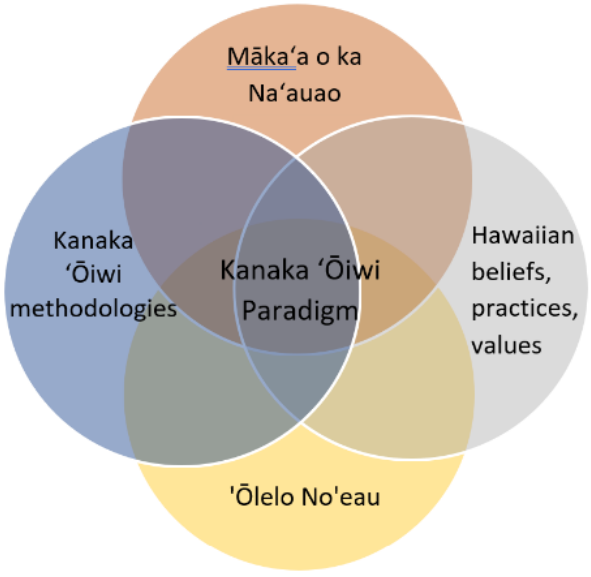
> convey our ancestral virtues and attitudes and constitute our behavioral guidelines, by telling us how to think, how to talk, and how to act. (p. 11)

‘Ōlelo no‘eau are not only found in research and scholarship but are guiding principles for Kānaka ‘Ōiwi, Hawaiian organizations, schools, government, etc. (Kaulukukui, 2016; Oliveira & Wright, 2016; Tibbets, Kahakalau & Johnson, 2007; Wilson-Hokowhitu, 2019). Frequently referenced ‘ōlelo no‘eau (Pukui, 1983) that serve as core behavioral values include:

- Aloha kekahi i kekahi (Love one another)
- Mālama i kou kuleana (Take care of your responsibilities)
- Kōkua aku kōkua mai (Give help, receive help)
- Mahalo i ka mea loa‘a (Be thankful for what we have)

The prevalence of ‘ōlelo no‘eau in contemporary Hawaiian society substantiates their use within a Kanaka ‘Ōiwi research paradigm. When we overlay a Hawaiian worldview onto O’Brien’s research paradigm, a new Kanaka ‘Ōiwi research paradigm emerges, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2: *Kanaka ‘Ōiwi research paradigm.*



Note. By M. Benioni, 2023

The paradigm manifests a theoretical knowledge system that can govern the research and communicate to Western academia while allowing the customization of methodologies that fit the tribal group (Kovach, 2009). This profile aligns well with a range of emerging Kanaka ʻŌiwi methodologies. It also aligns with my theoretical stance, Hawaiian-focused education settings, and research on moʻokūʻauhau and identity development.

2.3 Indigenous Methodologies

Known for her pioneering work in research related to Indigenous peoples, Smith's first edition of *Decolonizing Methodologies* helped pave the way for Māori scholars and other Indigenous researchers to advocate for theories grounded in their respective ontologies and epistemologies (Chilisa, 2020; Kovach, 2009; Oliveira & Wright, 2016; Wilson, 2008). Decolonized methodologies continue to correct the historical bias and proliferation of Western research models.

Decolonization promotes Indigenous communities to determine their own societal trajectory. Some early notable scholars in this field include Smith (1997), Meyer (1998), Bishop (1999), and Pihama (2001). Bagele Chilisa's (2020) book *Indigenous Research Methodologies* describes the decolonizing movement taking place in research today: "Social science research needs to involve spirituality in research, respecting communal forms of living that are not Western and creating space for inquiries based on relational realities and forms of knowing that are predominant among the non-Western Others" (p. 2). Indigenous knowledge should guide the research process, and expertise should be found within these Indigenous communities.

In the 2009 *Qualitative Inquiry* Journal, Canadian scholars at the University of British Columbia declared, "Indigenous Methodologies (IM) have become a near necessity for the implementation of research in Indigenous communities." They further explained that "IM can be

summarized as research by and for Indigenous peoples, using techniques and methods drawn from the traditions of those peoples" (Evans et al., 2009, p. 894). The use of Indigenous methodologies enables "Indigenous researchers to be who they are while they are actively engaged as participants in the research process" (Lum, 2017, p. 45). One of the leading Indigenous methodologies is Kaupapa Māori theory.

Mera Penehira (2011) states: "Kaupapa Māori by literal definition is simply 'about Māori'" (p. 21). Leone Pihama (2001) further explains that "Kaupapa Māori theory is a theoretical framework that is organically Māori" (p. 98). She notes that Māori ontology and epistemology are not new, but "the academic terminology of Kaupapa Māori research and theory" is new (p. 79). Since its theoretical development in the 1990s, Kaupapa Māori theory has inspired other Indigenous communities to seek self-determination through research approaches and methodologies that are uniquely theirs. Smith (2021) declares that "the strength of the movement is to be found in the examples of how communities have mobilized locally, the grassroots development" (p. 127). Hawai‘i is one such community where scholars are actively creating methodologies unique to their own epistemological, ontological, and axiological worldviews. These efforts are crucial to research empowerment in Hawai‘i and the larger Indigenous community. Native Hawaiians continue to make strides in this area, publishing two books dedicated to Hawaiian research methodologies: *Kanaka ʻŌiwi Methodologies* and *The Past Before Us: Moʻokūʻauhau as Methodology*.

2.4 Kanaka ʻŌiwi Methodologies

Kanaka ʻŌiwi scholars are reshaping the research landscape with methodologies grounded in ʻike kupuna, ʻāina, kuleana, and Hawaiian metaphor (Oliveira & Wright, 2016). *Kanaka ʻŌiwi methodologies: Moʻolelo and metaphor* (Oliveira & Wright, 2016) is the first

published compilation of Hawaiian research methodologies. Although the methodological frames differ, Kanaka ʻŌiwi epistemologies, ontologies, and axiologies ground each study. Methodologies used include aloha ʻāina, Hawaiian studies, ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi, Kanaka ʻŌiwi critical race theory, and mele. Moʻolelo and metaphor are the interrelated concepts of each contribution to this book. The book aims to "generate dialog around Kanaka ʻŌiwi research methodologies and to explore the different ways in which Kanaka ʻŌiwi scholars engage in the research process" (p. x).

Similarly, *The Past Before Us: Moʻokūʻauhau as Methodology* (Wilson-Hokowhitu, 2019) is a collection of scholarship by Kanaka ʻŌiwi researchers exploring the utility of moʻokūʻauhau while being "a vehicle for expanding consciousness" (p. 4). Nālani Wilson-Hokowhitu emphasizes that "Indigenous peoples are moving beyond a colonizing mentality to join the growing voices that assert our unique epistemologies survivance and futurities" (p. 3).

In his journal article titled "What is an Indigenous Research Methodology," Shawn Wilson (2001) explains that Indigenous methodologies are about relational accountability, and knowledge is gained to fulfill the researcher's obligation to the relationship. For Kānaka ʻŌiwi, this obligation is termed kuleana. Noelani Goodyear-Kaʻōpua (2016) posits that "Hawaiian studies methodologies take kuleana with the utmost seriousness" (p. 14). In their development of a Kanaka ʻŌiwi Critical Race Theory, Erin Wright and Katrina Balutski (2016) acknowledge that "kuleana is another feature of traditional society that plays a significant role in the contemporary lives of Kanaka ʻŌiwi" (p. 102). Their research with higher education students documented these key elements of Kanaka ʻŌiwi methodologies; ʻāina, ea, moʻokūʻauhau, moʻolelo , and ʻike Hawaiʻi. These elements are found throughout new and emerging Kanaka ʻŌiwi research methodologies such as:

- Aloha ʻĀina (Maunakea, 2016)
- Hawaiian Studies (Goodyear-Kaʻōpua, 2016)
- Kā ʻAʻaha (Daniels, 2020)
- Kanaka ʻŌiwi critical race theory (Wright & Balutski, 2016)
- Kuamoʻo ʻŌiwi (Peralto, 2018)
- Moʻokūʻauhau (Wilson-Hokowhitu, 2019; hoʻmanawanui, 2019; Chang, 2019)
- Moʻolelo (Zeug, 2017)
- Oli & Mele (Lipe, 2016; Saffery, 2016)
- Papakū Makawalu (Nuʻuhiwa, 2019)

Smith (2021) reminds us that "Indigenous methodologies tend to approach cultural protocols, values and behaviours as an integral part of methodology" (p. 16).

Meyer (2018) asserts that experiences with the environment shaped the Hawaiian worldview. Furthermore, Hawaiians trace their ancestry to ʻāina through Wākea and Papa, their first parents (Hanohano, 2001; hoʻomanawanui, 2007; Archer, 2016). This genealogical connection solidifies an integral relationship between Kānaka ʻŌiwi and ʻāina (hoʻomanawanui, 2007). Edward Kanahele (1991) captures this distinct relationship in the following statement:

> For Native Hawaiians, a place tells us who we are and who is our extended family. A place gives us our history, the history of our clan, the history of our ancestors. We are able to look at a place and tie in human events that affect us and our loved ones. A place gives us a feeling of stability and of belonging to our family—those living and those who have passed on. A place gives us a sense of well-being, and of acceptance of all who have experienced that place. (pp. ix-xiii)

ʻĀina methodologies and the inclusion of ʻāina as an interwoven element of other Kanaka ʻŌiwi research methodologies directly result from this distinctive Hawaiian epistemology (Maunakea, 2016; Vaughan, 2019). Papakū Makawalu methodology is also grounded in experiences with the environment (Nuʻuhiwa, 2019). Kalei Nuʻuhiwa explains that Papakū Makawalu "works best for the Hawaiian researcher who has been engaging with the Hawaiian environment for long periods of time by means of traditional practices and customs passed down from one generation to the next" (p. 48).

The passing of generational knowledge is called ʻike kupuna and is a practice within many Kanaka ʻŌiwi research methodologies (Maunakea, 2019; Peralto, 2018; Saffery, 2016). ʻIke kupuna is most often shared through moʻolelo. hoʻomanawanui (2017) emphasizes that "moʻolelo Hawaiʻi is a foundational part of Kanaka Maoli culture" (p. 52). Margaret Kovach (2009) states that "knowledge is transmitted through stories" (p. 27). Matsuda (2021) further asserts, "It is through 'talk story' with kupuna coupled with extended interactions with ʻāina (also kupuna) that we gain access to our stories and build strong epistemological foundations" (p. 42). Hawaiian scholars are documenting ʻike kupuna through interviews and interactions with elders while also bringing historic mele, oli, and archival records to impart this ancestral wisdom to the current generation. Goodyear-Kaʻōpua (2013) advocates for the surrounding of the younger generation with kūpuna voices, mele, and oli to inspire positive change in our communities. ʻIke kupuna and moʻolelo are not only critical components in the transmission of generational knowledge but are vital to the acquisition of new knowledge revealed through research.

For Kānaka ʻŌiwi, moʻolelo and moʻokūʻauhau are intertwined and allow for building relationships, past and future (Hall, 2019). Moʻokūʻauhau as a methodology provides a lineal

framework that enables the researcher to trace origins, view information in succession, and build connections. David Chang (2019) views moʻokūʻauhau methodology as a decolonizing endeavor that strengthens identity and liberates Kānaka ʻŌiwi through kinship practices. In her application of moʻokūʻauhau methodology to Hawaiian literature, kuʻualoha hoʻomanawanui (2019) connects text, writers, publications, historical knowledge, and genealogies. Through her analysis of the Pele and Hiʻiaka saga, hoʻomanawanui identifies the use of moʻokūʻauhau and metaphor.

The use of metaphor is commonly found in Kanaka ʻŌiwi research methodologies (hoʻomanawanui, 2007; Nuʻuhiwa, 2019; Zeug, 2017). This practice is a return to the traditional metaphoric and poetic nature of Hawaiian ontology and linguistic construction: "The world to a Hawaiian is alive and filled with meaning and metaphor" (Meyer, 2018, p. 102). The optimal source for realizing the utilization of metaphor lies within the compilation of ʻōlelo noʻeau, gathered in the early 1900s by Mary Kawena Pukui. The preface to her text *ʻŌlelo Noʻeau: Hawaiian proverbs & poetical sayings* (1983) notes that these sayings "reveal with each new reading ever deeper layers of meaning, giving understanding not only of Hawaii and its people but of all humanity" (p. viii). Given the prevalence and importance of ʻōlelo noʻeau and metaphor in traditional Kanaka ʻŌiwi communication, it is appropriate for them to be incorporated into Kanaka ʻŌiwi research methodologies.

Like the weaving of a lei, Kanaka ʻŌiwi research methodologies braid together foundational ontology, epistemology, and axiology unique to Hawaiʻi. ʻIke kupuna, moʻolelo, and ʻōlelo noʻeau are primary sources for this foundation. Examples are found in Kanaka ʻŌiwi scholarship. Alencastre's 2017 dissertation illustrates how the traditional wisdom and values of ʻike kupuna can shape a pono research methodology. Shavon Matsuda (2021) developed the Ao research framework with moʻolelo as a central component. Moreover, Kahakalau (2019)

anchored her Maʻawe Pono research methodology in ʻōlelo noʻeau, recognizing their capacity to communicate ancestral virtues and attitudes, thereby forming the basis for behavioral guidelines. Emerging Kanaka ʻŌiwi methodologies such as these demonstrate the vital role ʻike kupuna, moʻolelo, and ʻōlelo noʻeau play in Hawaiian research. This has direct application to the current study of moʻokūʻauhau and identity development.

2.5 Moʻokūʻauhau Methodology

Within the broader domain of Kanaka ʻŌiwi methodologies are moʻokūʻauhau and moʻolelo. These two approaches are commonly entwined due to their reliance on each other in capturing the depth and breadth of ʻike kupuna. These methodologies can be found in different Indigenous cultures; for Māori, it is whakapapa and pūrākau; for Aboriginal people, it is kinship and yarning.

hoʻomanawanui (2019) establishes that moʻokūʻauhau "is a central, integral cultural concept that underpins Kānaka Maoli society, community, and culture, past and present. As such, it is adaptable to other culturally derived applications aside from just recounting one's personal ancestry" (p. 51). Moʻokūʻauhau, in its simplest definition, means biological lineage, but in exploring its deeper meaning, a Hawaiian worldview becomes evident: "It is the genealogical starting point of all things Hawaiian, the piko (center, navel, origin, point of origin)" (Kanahele, 2011 as cited by hoʻomanawanui, 2019, p. 54). From the piko, all people, land, elements, and living things are genealogically connected. These connections link Kānaka ʻŌiwi to their ancestors' wisdom and the ʻāina. Wilson-Hokowhitu (2019) terms this "kupuna consciousness," a "long lineage of understanding and knowing" (p. xii). Noenoe Silva (2017) refers to it as "moʻokūʻauhau consciousness," the preservation of ancestral knowledge for the benefit of future generations (p. 22). Aaron Salā (2021) identifies it as "genealogical consciousness…honoring

the past in the present" (p. 8). Moʻokūʻauhau becomes an underlying principle of Kānaka ʻŌiwi thought in the same way that identity is a principle in Western law of thought.

Noenoe Silva (2017) states, "Moʻokūʻauhau consciousness also means a connection to ʻāina and implies both aloha ʻāina and mālama ʻāina" (p. 23). In its simplest form, aloha ʻāina means love for the land. Emalani Case (2021) broadens our understanding by explaining that aloha ʻāina is "an unwavering commitment and a fierce, active, and constant loyalty to all that the ʻāina represents: our sources of sustenance, our health and well-being, our political freedom, our stories and histories" (p. 11).

Kānaka ʻŌiwi are genealogically connected to ʻāīna as documented in the kumulipo and moʻolelo of Hāloa. The ʻāina possesses mana and is a living source. Kamanaʻopono Crabbe, Fox, and Coleman (2017) provide the following context: "Mana was part of a vibrant system that intertwined with many other important foundations of Hawaiian culture and identity, and was evident to Native Hawaiians through akua, and in their aliʻi, themselves, and their environment" (p. 23). Kanu asserts, "Mana is all around us, in people, places, and the ʻĀina (environment)" (2013, p. 13). Mana fosters a spiritual connection to ʻāina and an inherent responsibility to care for it. The kuleana to mālama ʻāina originates from both mana and familial relationships, with moʻokūʻauhau preserving these connections.

In terms of Hawaiian research, moʻokūʻauhau is a primary ethical principle. hoʻomanawanui (2019) highlights the varied qualities of moʻokūʻauhau and the correlation of those qualities when applied as a methodology. First is the interwoven nature of moʻokūʻauhau. In the way that genealogies are inter-connected yet made up of unique individuals, a moʻokūʻauhau methodology allows for multiple perspectives or makawalu. Differing and even opposing views can be respected and included. Makawalu also means that it honors multiple

sources of knowledge and looks to the education of future generations. The Hawaiian term for the future, ka wā ma hope, becomes relevant to the makawalu perspective because ka wā ma hope literally means that which is behind (Pukui & Elbert, 1971). Thus, for Kānaka ʻŌiwi, to move into the future requires looking to the past first. Moʻokūʻauhau, as a methodology, looks to the past to determine future steps. It is sequential and ordered in nature, identifying essential connections in research.

hoʻomanawanui (2019) explains that there are three different types of moʻokūʻauhau: pili koko (blood relations), ʻike (knowledge), and hālau ʻike (disciplinary schools of knowledge). These various forms of moʻokūʻauhau underscore the significance of relationship and connection in Hawaiian culture. Wilson (2010) further elaborates that "connectedness is established through traditional and contemporary genealogies and experiences" (p. 128). These experiences can be physical or spiritual as moʻokūʻauhau methodology allows for either or both. As Wilson (2010) notes, "moʻokūʻauhau acknowledges an extended lineage of spirit and intention" (p. 134).

Moʻokūʻauhau was traditionally an oral practice of reciting lineage. As a methodology, it gives place and authority to oral traditions. It is unlike Western methodologies that assume written tradition is superior. Maya Saffery (2016) posits that moʻokūʻauhau methodology applies the viewpoint that through genealogy: 1) people understand relationships to the world, including the environment, 2) identity is strengthened, and mana acquired as ancestors are remembered, 3) knowledge and traditions are passed down, and 4) reawakening occurs as layers of colonization are lifted.

Kuleana is inherent in the art of reciting moʻokūʻauhau. The speaker has responsibility for the content of the moʻokūʻauhau. First, the speaker must assume a position of authority, claim their place to speak, and make their knowledge evident. These behaviors are applicable

when applied to moʻokūʻauhau as a methodology. The researcher has kuleana for those included in the research process while also having kuleana to accurately and respectfully share the Indigenous view of the group. Second, the participant is given authority and kuleana to share what feels most appropriate for them, making their personal knowledge evident. In this exchange, kaona or hidden meaning may be present, adding a level of kuleana to the listener. If the hidden meaning is to be derived, the listener needs to be familiar with the shared knowledge, the style in which it is delivered, and in tune with the person sharing the moʻokūʻauhau. In addition, what is shared may not necessarily be family lineage; it may be a moʻokūʻauhau of ʻāina or life experiences, so the listener needs to pay close attention.

The exchange that occurs in the sharing of moʻokūʻauhau is an example of relational accountability, which is an Indigenous approach to research. Referring to relational accountability, Wilson (2001) proposes that Indigenous researchers reflect on the following questions: "How am I fulfilling my role in this relationship? What are my obligations in this relationship?" (p. 177). He further explains that if the researcher's perspective aligns with the notion of gaining knowledge to fulfill their end of the research relationship, this orientation is indicative of an Indigenous methodology. Due to the emphasis on relationships, moʻokūʻauhau methodology is an Indigenous approach and is applicable to this study.

2.6 Moʻolelo Methodology

Moʻolelo is innately intertwined with moʻokūʻauhau: "The past does not exist as place or time until it has been narrated through story" (Nicolaisen, 1990, as cited by hoʻomanawanui, 2019). The ʻōlelo noʻeau, "i ka ʻōlelo no ke ola, i ka ʻōlelo no ka make" [in the word there is life, in the word there is death] demonstrates the immense power Hawaiians attached to words (Pukui, 1983, p. 129). Daniels (2020) explains that, "Moʻokūʻauhau refers to both the ancestry

and the accompanying moʻolelo that are attached to the ancestry. It is from these moʻolelo that the ancestry derives context, meaning, and relevance" (p. 23). In a Kanaka ʻŌiwi framework, moʻolelo encompass much more than written stories. They include oral histories, songs, chant, moʻokūʻauhau, poetry, and koʻihonua, genealogies that recount the creation of land.

Noteworthy in moʻolelo is the literary device of including a character's genealogy called meiwi moʻokūʻauhau. The importance of the meiwi moʻokūʻauhau within moʻolelo reflects the cultural significance of recognizing ancestral connections. In Western literature, the main character is typically the focus from the story's start and throughout. Hawaiian literature acknowledges that the main character would not be present had it not been for those who came before; thus, the meiwi moʻokūʻauhau is stated at the beginning of the moʻolelo or prior to the main character's introduction. This practice sets an ancestral context from which to move forward in the present moʻolelo.

Moʻolelo capture memories, thoughts, feelings, experiences, lessons learned, prophecies, and warnings. Through moʻolelo, Hawaiians have maintained their history, culture, values, and way of life. Lipe (2016) posits, "The livelihood of the Hawaiian people – our entire knowledge system – depended on the continuity of moʻolelo as spoken and taught to the next generation" (p. 54). Thus, moʻolelo can be viewed as a method for documenting and preserving knowledge.

Pertinent to this research are mele as forms of moʻolelo methodology: "Mele embody and reveal Hawaiian ways of knowing and existing in the world" (Saffery, 2016, p. 118). Mele are not only songs, but chants and poetry as well. In her study of Hawaiian place-based education, Saffery (2016) cited various Hawaiian scholars and musicians who wrote about the power and complexity of mele, including their use in connecting with the spiritual realm. Salā (2021) explored this complexity in musical legacy, stating, "genealogical consciousness is a deliberate

action on behalf of an innate awareness of familial, professional, and musical genealogies whereby a performance has the intended outcome of honoring the past in the present" (p. 10). He further explains that "genealogical consciousness is continually and constantly reified through mo‘olelo that are mnemonically driven, and thereby solidified in memory, through the composition and performance of song" (p. 10). Mele allow students to practice mnemonic mo‘olelo, genealogical consciousness, and honoring the past in the present. A relevant example of this is the following excerpt from the repertoire of protocol oli performed each morning by students of Kanu.

Hea Mai

Hea mai ka leo aloha	*Voices of aloha are calling*
Eia nō mākou ē	*Here we are*
Kalo kanu o ka ‘āina	*Natives of the land from generations back*
Mamo a Līloa ē	*Descendants of Līloa*
Me ka leo ho‘okupu	*Our voices are our gifts*
Kupu ka ‘ōlelo ē	*Which cause the language to grow*
Pūpūkahi e holomua	*Together we will progress*
Pua a Hāloa ē	*Children of Hāloa*
Kūlia i ka nu‘u!	*Let’s strive to reach our highest level*
Aloha ē,	*Greetings*
Aloha ē,	*Greetings*
Aloha ē,	*Greetings*

(Kū & Nālei Kahakalau, Kanu o ka ‘Āina, 2020)

This oli exemplifies all four elements of the Kanaka ‘Ōiwi research paradigm. First, the methodology is mo‘olelo, specifically mele. Second, the mele functions as an epistemology by transmitting knowledge, cultural expression, and sense-making. Third, axiology is found in the phrases "reach our highest level" and "together we progress." Finally, ontology, the reality of reciprocating relationships and ancestral connections, is evident in the references to Līloa and Hāloa.

As a methodology, moʻolelo offers a culturally responsive approach wherein participant narratives can convey knowledge, experiences, and perspectives (Taira & Maunakea, 2023). It recognizes the storyteller as an expert in their own life and allows for interpretation within Hawaiian cultural and historical contexts. In the study of moʻokūʻauhau and identity development, moʻolelo serves as a vital tool, enabling individuals to explore the influence of ancestral connections on their personal histories.

2.7 Connecting Methodology to Method

The preceding sections serve as their own moʻokūʻauhau, tracing the conceptual frameworks that supported and directed me to moʻokūʻauhau and moʻolelo as methodologies selected for this study. Moʻokūʻauhau methodology initially stood out as a logical choice based on its name and direct correlation to the research topic. However, as I studied the extensive work by Indigenous scholars in bringing Native intelligence to the forefront and decolonizing research approaches leading to self-determination, my understanding and appreciation grew exponentially. Moʻokūʻauhau methodology as the approach to this research resonated in my naʻau.

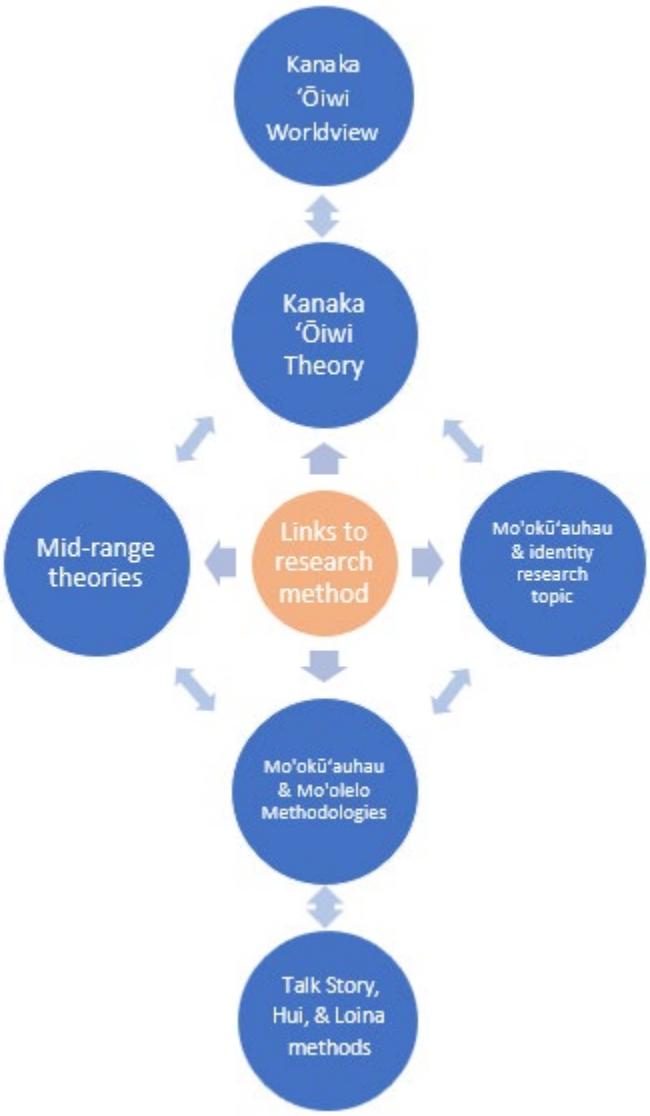
Moʻokūʻauhau and moʻolelo, as Kanaka ʻŌiwi methodologies, emulate other decolonized approaches and include the Indigenous values of respect, trust, relationality, humility, spirituality, and generosity. They connote a storytelling method that is appropriate for my research design. Kovach (2009) reminds us that Indigenous research shows agreement on:

> the following broad ethical considerations: (a) the research methodology be in line with Indigenous values; (b) that there is some form of community accountability; (c) that the research gives back to and benefits the community in some manner; and (d) that the researcher is an ally and will not do harm. (p. 48)

Having established the theoretical standpoint, worldview, and Kanaka ʻŌiwi paradigm, the next step involved connecting these elements with a congruent research method. Mutch provides this, stating: **"**Methodologies link theoretical frameworks to methods, and methods are a coherent set of strategies or a particular process that is used to gather data" (2013, p. 126). Figure 3 illustrates this linkage in a diagrammatic format, adapted from a similar diagram crafted by Mutch (p. 66).

Figure 3

Link between world view and selection of research methodology/methods.



Note. By M. Benioni, 2023

The research focus on moʻokūʻauhau and identity is in harmony with the Kanaka ʻŌiwi worldview. During the research process, mid-range theories were uncovered to elucidate findings and interpret data. Decolonization Theory is a mid-range theory relevant to this research. Deconstructing colonial ideologies and practices, particularly in education, allows students to reclaim and prioritize Indigenous knowledge. Hawaiian-focused charter schools are decolonizing education by integrating Hawaiian cultural practices and knowledge systems. Cultural Resilience Theory is also evident. This theory posits that cultural identity and practices can buffer against adverse outcomes and promote well-being.

The chosen methodologies, moʻolelo and moʻokūʻauhau, were selected for their interdependence in capturing the extensive knowledge or ʻike of kūpuna. These methodologies connote a storytelling method appropriate for the research design, and as Kovach (2009) states, "one's methodological choice should encompass both theory and methods" (p. 122). Elements of these two Kanaka ʻŌiwi methodologies relevant to this research include looking to the past, oral traditions, ʻike kupuna, honoring multiple perspectives, kuleana to documenting and sharing, and relationality.

2.8 Research Design and Methods

In Kanaka ʻŌiwi research, particular methods position well with a Kanaka ʻŌiwi worldview. Kovach (2009) affirms, "there are distinctive means of gathering outward knowledges that align with tribal epistemology" (p.123). Examples of methods relevant to Hawaiian research include moʻolelo, observation, ʻāina experiences, ethnography, and interviews that privilege relationships such as talk story. Kovach (2019) notes the following characteristics of conversational methods in research:

a) it is linked to a particular tribal epistemology (or knowledge) and situated within an

Indigenous paradigm; b) it is relational; c) it is purposeful (most often involving a decolonizing aim); d) it involves particular protocol as determined by the epistemology and/or place; e) it involves an informality and flexibility; f) it is collaborative and dialogic; and g) it is reflexive. (p. 128)

For this study, a qualitative design was chosen to honor participant contributions of story and genealogy while remaining true to the theoretical frameworks, Kanaka ʻŌiwi, moʻokūʻauhau, and moʻolelo. Coleman (2020) states that "a qualitative research design allows participants to interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds and identities, what meaning they attribute to their experiences, and allows the researcher to ask informal questions to build upon the different themes" (p. 38). Mākaʻa o ka naʻauao, the epistemological theory underpinning this research, promotes sensory and ancestral experiences. Therefore, capturing these experiences with participants can serve as scholarship data.

Participants were selected through existing relationships with kūpuna and the Kanu school community. Smith (2021) emphasizes that relationships must be genuine, reciprocal, and respectful, especially when working in Indigenous communities. Pilina is the Hawaiian term for relationship, but it also means joining or connection and emphasizes a respectful, reciprocating interaction. At the core of Indigenous identity lies this relational way of being (Wilson, 2008). Pilina offers a secure environment; this environment facilitates openness, vulnerability, and sharing of thoughts and feelings from the participant's naʻau.

Given the focus on Kanu, purposive sampling aligned well with the goals of this research. Purposive sampling, also known as criterion sampling, involves selecting a sample population for a specific reason, as explained by Kovach (2009, p. 126). Since the emphasis of this research is to ascertain the impact of moʻokūʻauhau on students of Kanu, collecting perspectives from

school graduates was necessary. Purposive sampling allowed participation by those capable of offering substantial and meaningful data relevant to the research focus.

According to Kovach (2009), "The privileging of story in knowledge-seeking systems means honoring 'the talk.' To provide openings for narrative, indigenous researchers use a variety of methods such as conversations, interviews, and research/sharing circles" (p. 99). She further explains, "for many tribal cultures, the act of sitting in circle, as a collective means of decision making, is familiar. This form of knowledge gathering is based upon cultural tradition and has been adapted to contemporary settings as research" (p. 124). It is "referred to among Hawaiians as 'talk-story,' or the transmittal of culture through the spoken word" (Beamer, 1984 as cited in Yong, 2012, p. 10). Ito (1999) validated talk story as a uniquely Hawaiian form of conversation and describes it as "a relaxed, rambling, sometimes intense commentary or conversation. This form of communication most likely derives from the vast and rich oral tradition of Hawaiian culture" (p.12). Steele (2012) utilized talk story as a methodology in her study of May Day celebrations in Hawai‘i.

Researchers have applied talk story as a method in semi-structured interviews on various topics (Garcia, 2021; Heck, 2017; Ito, 1999; Lebrun, 2020; McMullin et al., 2010). Carol Mutch (2013) defines semi-structured interviews as "a set of key questions that are followed in a more open-ended manner" (p. 119), and Heck asserts, "The semi-structured interview allowed for the flexibility of a talk-story interview style but kept conversations focused on the project's purpose" (2017, p. 36). Nicole Garcia (2021) reflects that "though they were semistructured [sic], because of the nature of previous relationships with the interviewees they tended toward a 'talk story' format as is more customary in Hawai‘i" (p. 105). A talk story method of qualitative data

collection respects the participants by providing a familiar forum, allows for co-joint reflections, and advocates for Hawaiian ways of being and knowing.

Collecting data through hui or focus groups is another method used in Kanaka ʻŌiwi research. This method is well suited for Indigenous research because much of the work is about community empowerment. Smith (2021) describes community action research as emancipatory, aiming to improve people's lives. A hui method allows for community input, multiple perspectives, and collective problem-solving. Talk story is also applicable when participants gather as a hui. As Sing, Hunter & Meyer (1999) state, "'talking-story' is how we as Hawaiians best approach an issue. It includes all our voices and the nuance of group energy, group mana" (p. 4). Erin Thompson (2017) designed her study to focus on collecting views of Native Hawaiian students through hui, moʻolelo, interviews, and qualitative surveys. A study on Hawaiian health conducted by Odom, Jackson, Derauf, Inaba, and Aoki (2019) resulted in the development of an Indigenous framework titled Pilinahā. This method utilized listening, story collection, and group discussion. This framework also respected the customs and cultural protocols of the participants: beginning with aloha and welcoming circle, calling an ancestor to be present, connecting to ʻāina, sharing meals, and establishing trusting relationships.

Cultural protocols are known as loina. Loina is defined as the rules, customs, and manners of Hawaiian society. In the research setting, this would manifest as pule, meaʻai, makana, and an environment of aloha. Peter Hanohano's 2001 research on Native families and education produced the following guidelines for conducting research in Hawaiian communities:

1. Begin or start with Pule (Prayer)
2. Makana (giving and sharing of gifts)
3. Before beginning, build and establish relationships of trust

4. Be humble and approach in a humble way
5. To gain knowledge, you need to acknowledge that you lack some
6. Talk story
7. Follow the Spirit, and listen to what the person has to say
8. Before closing, express gratitude and commitment to preserving the voices and intent of those involved in sharing their knowledge. (p. 65)

Hanohano prefaces his research by explaining the importance of relationships: "Every Hawaiian knows within his or her heart that all Hawaiians are related" (p. 6). Wilson (2008) further states, "Identity for indigenous peoples is grounded in their relationships" (p. 80). He points out that Indigenous researchers agree on the correlation between relational ways of being and what it actually means to be Indigenous. Daniel Lipe's 2013 research on Indigenous knowledge systems found that when relationships are at the forefront, the researcher can honor necessary cultural protocols.

2.9 Data Collection – Talk Story, Hui, and Loina

The research was organized into four phases: Phase 1 identified traditional knowledge and understandings of moʻokūʻauhau through historical records and talk story sessions with kūpuna. Two Kanaka ʻŌiwi kūpuna actively engaged in keeping and sharing moʻokūʻauhau were selected through established relationships. One kupuna was chosen from the school community. The second kupuna was chosen from the broader Hawaiian community to enrich the research by connecting the school's practices to the larger cultural context, highlighting the far-reaching significance of moʻokūʻauhau.

Phase 2 involved individual and hui talk story sessions with six Kanu graduates and two kumu. Graduates and kumu were Kanaka ʻŌiwi and chosen through purposive sampling and my

relationship with the school community. Pilina was important in the selection process, not solely pilina between the participants and me but also pilina between participants and the school. Consequently, kumu, who had been teaching at the school for at least ten years, were selected along with graduates who had attended the school for at least three years, with the exception of one graduate from the first graduating class. Each kumu understood moʻokūʻauhau and had years of experience teaching it to students. The number of participants was pre-determined to allow for an in-depth exploration of the research questions within the study's constraints, ensuring that the data collected would be rich and meaningful. Additional criteria for graduates were for each to be from a differing graduation year, be out of school for a minimum of five years, thereby yielding a pool of 155 to choose from, and have equal representation between kāne and wahine. This careful selection process was designed to achieve a deep understanding of the influence of moʻokūʻauhau on identity and well-being, aligning with the goals of qualitative research.

Initial contact with participants was made in person, by phone, or by text. After briefly explaining my research endeavor and their potential role in the project, I asked if they would like to be included. All initial contacts accepted the invitation, and in-person meeting times were arranged. Participants resided on the island of Hawaiʻi with the exception of one kupuna who lived on Oʻahu. The meeting location was at the discretion of the participant, but all graduates and kumu felt most comfortable meeting at the school. Participants received an information sheet with key details about the study. It included the purpose, methods, confidentiality measures, and their rights as participants. Additionally, participants received a confidentiality agreement and consent form. The consent form offered choices for participants to select audio and video recordings of the interview and to permit identification by name or pseudonym.

Individual talk story sessions were held with each kupuna, each kumu, and the two oldest graduates; two hui sessions using a talk story format were held with the remaining four graduates. Although all sessions were talk story, they were semi-structured because an interview guide (see Appendix) was used. Three separate interview guides were created, each with questions most relevant to the three participant groups. The interview guides helped focus the conversation on moʻokūʻauhau but allowed for flexibility in the flow and direction of the conversation. Talk story sessions averaged 1.25 hours in length. All participants agreed to have their talk story session recorded. Recordings were transcribed, and copies of the transcripts were returned to participants. Any portion of participants ʻike included in the research analysis was reviewed with each person to ensure accuracy and to gain consent for its inclusion in the final thesis.

All forms of data sourcing centered on moʻokūʻauhau as well as identity development. The process of data collection was respectful of Kanaka ʻŌiwi methodology and included loina: 1) beginning with aloha, honi, and makana, 2) hoʻolauna or introductions through moʻokūʻauhau or the format most comfortable to the participant, 3) mea ʻai, and 4) establishing a trusting relationship for open dialogue. While the initial plan involved a blended group discussion involving both kūpuna and graduates, the individual talk story sessions revealed that each participant possessed a wealth of knowledge and perspectives. It became apparent that a more practical approach would be to collect information in smaller, more intimate settings.

Phase 3 employed thematic analysis and qualitative coding to find meaning in the data. The process began by coding the data to identify patterns and create descriptive codes, which were then refined into twelve focused categories that captured key themes. Through axial coding, the relationships between these categories were explored and contextualized within a thematic

framework based on Kanu's five core values. This organization ensured that the findings aligned with Kanu's mission and provided a culturally significant, holistic view of student development, making the results more applicable to educational practice.

Finally, Phase 4 synthesized the data using a comparative analysis with the Nā Lei Naʻauao Education with Aloha framework, the Nā Hopena Aʻo framework, and Kanu's Student Learner Outcomes. These values-based, culturally relevant, and student-centered frameworks provided a robust lens through which various dimensions were examined. This deliberate effort to bring multiple tools or lenses to the analysis provided a more comprehensive understanding of the research subject. It allowed for cross-verification, increasing the robustness and depth of the analysis. The significant influence of learning moʻokūʻauhau on students' sense of identity and well-being was highlighted, while key implications and challenges for future educational practices were identified.

2.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter focused on the methodology and methods framed within a Kanaka ʻŌiwi model that have been applied to this research. The pivotal work of Meyer in Hawaiian ontology and epistemology through her mākaʻa o ka naʻauao framework provided the foundation for the methodological approach and research design. The inclusion of explanations on ʻike kupuna, ʻāina, moʻolelo, and moʻokūʻauhau gives contextual understanding to a Hawaiian worldview.

A Kanaka ʻŌiwi research paradigm illustrating a Hawaiian worldview has emerged and serves to underpin the qualitative methods of moʻolelo and moʻokūʻauhau used for information collection. Talk story and group discussions were the primary data collection methods used with kūpuna, kumu, and Kanu graduates. Decolonization moves in the background of both methodology and method.

Kanaka ʻŌiwi, moʻokūʻauhau, and moʻolelo methodologies have proven best suited for this study. These methodologies align with the cultural practice of moʻokūʻauhau, honor Indigenous research practices, including decolonization, and align with the pedagogy of the school that is part of the study. Support for these methodologies has come from scholars working in Hawaiian communities with culture-based endeavors. In their individual ways, these scholars have documented that Hawaiian epistemology is alive and growing. Each cited scholar substantiated a KanakaʻŌiwi approach while justifying the Hawaiian perspective of spirituality and knowing. Oliveira and Wright (2016) remind us that "we are a reflection of all of our ancestors and our ancestral homelands; thus, we have an obligation to conduct our research in a way that is ethical, culturally appropriate, and beneficial to our community" (p. 81). The methodologies and methods selected for this research have attempted to honor that obligation.

The research design and methods include talk story as the primary method for data collection. The importance of pilina in selecting participants is explained along with the role of loina. The chapter concludes with a description of the applied research methods. Each phase of the process is outlined, including participant selection and data collection through talk story.

CHAPTER THREE – IDENTITY AND MOʻOKŪʻAUHAU

3.0 Chapter Introduction

The literature examined in this chapter is relevant to the research aim of exploring the relationship between moʻokūʻauhau and identity development in Hawaiian culture-based education settings applying Indigenous methodologies and methods. Interest in and exposure to moʻokūʻauhau through kupuna relationships and HCBE settings for almost two decades lends context to this literature review.

The two areas for review are Hawaiian identity and moʻokūʻauhau. The first section examines Hawaiian identity and well-being, a historical look back, present status, and its relationship to culture. Second, literature on moʻokūʻauhau: what it is, where it exists in studies of and by Hawaiians, and its relevance to identity and well-being. Emphasis is placed on the discovery of moʻokūʻauhau in educational settings using Hawaiian culture-based strategies. It is important to note that there is very little scholarly literature on HCBE and, more specifically, moʻokūʻauhau in instruction.

Nonetheless, this literature review intends to discover if research exists correlating identity, well-being, and the learning of moʻokūʻauhau in education while also revealing where knowledge voids may exist. This review's source of information comes from free literature not locked behind a paywall and includes books, dissertations, peer-reviewed articles, journals, reports, internal school documents, and other online sources. State and university libraries using ERIC and EBSCOhost provided access to documents, as did general online searches. In keeping with Indigenous research approaches, priority was given to Hawaiian and Indigenous scholarship.

3.1 Identity, Well Being and Belonging

Reclaiming identity

Identity and belonging are deeply interconnected concepts, each influencing the other in significant ways. This sense of self is often developed through relationships with others. Sense of identity and feelings of belonging are reinforced through affiliation with communities, schools, or groups that share similar beliefs and values (Paringatai, 2014; Poata-Smith, 2013). The common understanding of the term identity is how a person sees themselves and the values, beliefs, and personal characteristics that define them (Psychology Today, 2024).

Reclaiming and redefining identity is a process that many Indigenous societies undergo in their effort to decolonize (Meyer, 2018; Penehira, 2011; Smith, 2021). This is not a uniform undertaking due to each society's unique historical, cultural, and social contexts. However, there are some key aspects through which Indigenous societies may define their identities, such as culture and language revitalization, historical reinterpretation, political sovereignty, education reform, land reclamation, and economic independence.

Cultural identity plays a crucial role in the health and well-being of Indigenous children. Today's children are navigating the complexities of their identity amidst the swift currents of globalization, the lasting impacts of colonization, and the erosion of Indigenous cultures. These factors present significant obstacles for Indigenous youth as they strive to connect with their ancestral roots, understand their place in the contemporary world, and envision their future selves (Fatima et al., 2022). Michelle Garcia-Olp's (2018) research among Indigenous Mexican-Americans on the generational impact of colonization on identity found that family, place, and culture were key in the process of decolonization and, in what she terms, "finding face," finding one's identity. Her work showcased the negative influence colonized education models have on

identity development and the need in her community for education reform. Navigating colonized systems can result in compromising one's identity, as explained in Michael Paki's (2017) research:

> Statements abound highlighting the dismal achievement of indigenous peoples within the systems of the colonizing empires of the world and at the same time, when indigenous people do begin to achieve in those systems, they actually have to give up something of themselves, strip away the layers of identity and sense of being so they can succeed. (p. 259)

Revitalization of cultural practices and identities can serve as protective factors that buffer Indigenous communities against the negative impacts of colonization. This is referred to as Cultural Resilience Theory. This theory asserts that cultural resilience is a process through which Indigenous communities draw on their cultural strengths to adapt to and thrive amidst adversity (Kirmayer et al., 2011; Lalonde, 2006). By sustaining traditional practices and values, Indigenous peoples can reinforce their sense of identity and community, thereby enhancing their overall resilience.

Supporting and building a healthy identity among students through culture has been a goal of HCBE. Kanu's 2009 Accreditation Report is clear on this: "KANU is helping hundreds and potentially thousands of young native Hawaiians to find their own sense of self-identity and self-esteem in the world today, based on a firm foundation of thousands of years of cultural knowledge" (p. 107). This research endeavor will discern Kanu's impact on identity development within a learning environment dedicated to decolonization.

Hawaiian Identity

Research documents that for far too long, Hawaiians have been fed a narrative of their inadequacy. This narrative has significantly impacted their self-perception, leading to a diminished sense of identity, as evidenced by various studies conducted by Hawaiian researchers (Kanaʻiaupuni & Ishibashi, 2003; Kanaʻiaupuni et al., 2021; McCubbin & Marsella, 2009; Osorio, 1996; Serna, 2006). Particularly poignant is this quote from Kekuni Blaisdell, shared with Meyer (2018):

> The term kanaka was often used during my childhood as one of derision with an adjective like dumb kanaka, dirty or lazy kanaka. So the message was clear in both households: We should not be like our cousins who were out fishing or in the loʻi. We should go to school and get a job. (p. 147)

In a 1983 federal report to Congress, Native Hawaiians were described as having "low self-image" (Native Hawaiian Education Act, 1994). Efforts within Hawaiian communities, led by educational institutions, social programs, and community initiatives, have primarily centered around reshaping this narrative. The focus has been reclaiming cultural practices and narratives, aiming to facilitate healing, strengthen identity, and promote the well-being of Native Hawaiians.

Wilson (2010) theorizes that colonization and the establishment of Western educational institutions that dismissed beliefs in nā akua, ʻaumākua, ʻāina, and other deeply held ideologies caused the separation of Kanaka Maoli spirit and identity. Through the erosion of cultural practices, spiritual and communal bonds integral to Kanaka Maoli identity were weakened.

Interestingly, there is no singular word in ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi for identity. It is described in the Hawaiian dictionary as "ʻike e hoʻomaopopo ai," which literally translates as "knowledge to be remembered" (Pukui and Elbert, 1971). From a Hawaiian worldview, this is understandable

because remembering who you came from, the skills and attributes you learned or inherited from your family, and your connection to the place in which you were raised define who you are. Leilani Kupo's (2010) research on identity further explains:

> Hawaiian identity lies in a genealogical relationship to the ʻaumākua [ancestral spirit], ʻāina [the land], and kānaka [other Hawaiians]. Hawaiians are linked through ʻaumākua, ancestral spirits, and through mākua, [adults/parents]. Hawaiians have a responsibility to mālama the ʻāina [care for the land] and the ʻāina [land] thus cares for us. Genealogies explain relationships to other Hawaiians and—most importantly—where they came from. (p.13)

This means that moʻokūʻauhau connections to ʻaumākua, mākua, kānaka, and ʻāina are the ʻike e hoʻomaopopo ai, knowledge to be remembered. This concept is significant to this research because it outlines potential themes to look for in participant responses. It also identifies the cultural practices that influence identity.

Culture strengthens identity

The restoration of Indigenous identity for Native Hawaiians is directly related to the resurgence of traditional cultural practices over the last four decades. According to Jonathan Osorio (2001), "Identity is the foundation on which Native cultural studies is based" (p. 361). The title of Osorio's work, "What Kine Hawaiian Are You?" captures the essence of the Hawaiian struggle to understand who we are after over a century of colonization. His article challenges Hawaiians not to take their Hawaiianness for granted and says that studying their culture is survival, not just mere academic exercise. In his 1996 dissertation, Osorio reminds Hawaiians of the vitality of their culture and its survival while also calling them to take action in creating a society where their customs, laws, and leadership reflect Hawaiian desires and

aspirations. As these societal constructs are rebuilt on Hawaiian terms, corresponding cultural standards are established. These standards offer a framework for individuals to understand themselves within the context of their community and serve as a cornerstone in shaping an individual's sense of identity.

For Kānaka Maoli, identity is closely tied to ancestral lands, practices, and the preservation of Hawai‘i's unique cultural heritage (Burgess, 2020; Kana‘iaupuni & Malone, 2010). Meyer (2018) declares, "Culture strengthens identity. Hawaiian culture strengthens Hawaiian identity" (p. 144). Her declaration is substantiated by the twenty Native Hawaiian mentors she interviewed in her research on Hawaiian epistemology. The mentors all shared a common understanding "that cultural practice, values and beliefs are fundamental to restoring, maintaining and advancing a Hawaiian sense of health, identity and efficacy. Mentors also assumed that a strong identity linked positively with all facets of knowledge, understanding and learning" (p. 144). Cultural knowledge creates a sense of belonging, which affirms a person's identity (Brayboy, 2005). A comprehensive review of literature on cultural connectedness from 1997 to 2017 demonstrates that culture positively influences physical health and social-emotional well-being across Australia, Canada, the United States, and New Zealand while reducing risk-taking behaviors (Bourke et al., 2018).

As described in the 2021 Ka Huaka‘i publication on Native Hawaiian education and well-being:

> Connections to ‘ohana (families), kaiāulu (communities), ‘āina, and pili ‘uhane (spirituality) form the foundation on which an individual's identity is grounded. These connections are elevated by mana (life force, energy found in all things) and reinforce a deep kuleana (responsibility, obligation) to mālama (care for) others and our honua

(world). For Native Hawaiians, individual identity is rooted in collective identity; personhood is peoplehood; and the health of the land is the health of the people. A rich social fabric—which weaves together ancestry and genealogy, traditions and culture, relationships and obligation—contributes to Kanaka Maoli social well-being. (p. 8)

The profound connection Kānaka Maoli have with ʻāina and culture and their deep-rooted sense of collective identity greatly influences how Hawaiian youth develop their sense of self during adolescence.

Schools and Identity Development

Adolescence is a pivotal time in the development of identity or sense of self. Youth are reconciling their personal and social functioning, and for Hawaiian youth, this reconciliation is exacerbated by the effects of historical trauma still present in families today. A Western worldview has dominated the educational landscape, with little relevance to home life and academics. The 2006 "*Nā Lau Lama Community Report"* explains:

> Many Western cultural and educational practices that were brought to Hawaiʻi beginning in the early 1800s have had the effect of suppressing our cultural knowledge both in content and context, which has alienated generations of Hawaiians and made many of us strangers in our own land. This approach has created a growing disconnect between learning and the relevant application of knowledge in contemporary times. This is not to say that all Western educational models are irrelevant. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that, especially as it applies to Hawaiian children, the state's current education system has failed to successfully establish a practical, innovative, spiritual, and necessary connection to Hawaiian students' unique and vibrant culture. (part 2, p. 19)

Alienation from Hawaiian culture has resulted in adverse social outcomes for Native Hawaiian youth (Ledward and Takayama, 2009).

Furthermore, schools have not been safe environments for students due to experiences with discrimination. Meyer (2018) describes it as a "structure that is set up to assimilate" (p. 192). Anderson et al. (2023) posit that "experiences of racism and discrimination are stressors that adversely affect the well-being of marginalized populations, including Native Hawaiians" (p. 1). Research on ethnic bias and stereotyping in Hawai‘i schools identified that Polynesian children, including Hawaiians, felt unfairly treated due to their ethnicity. Their peers and teachers stereotyped them as academic underperformers uninterested in school (Mayeda et al., 2001, as cited in Kana‘iaupuni & Ishibashi, 2003). Kana‘iaupuni & Ishibashi found that children forced to learn in discriminatory environments begin to devalue education and may engage in oppositional behavior, asserting that "experiences with discrimination, perceived or otherwise, have very real psychological consequences for students" (p. 2). Furthermore, negative stereotyping and discrimination result in Hawaiian children being at greater risk for anxiety, substance abuse disorders, depression, and suicide (Andrade, 2003, as cited in Kana‘iaupuni & Ishibashi, 2003). Kana‘iaupuni & Ishibashi advocated for creating schools by Hawaiians for Hawaiians to address this discriminatory environment. Again, in 2005, Kana‘iaupuni called for a strengths-based educational paradigm that rejects the prevailing view of Native Hawaiians failing to succeed in Western society.

The research findings of Kana‘iaupuni & Ishibashi are supported by Alethea Serna (2006), who studied the effects of cultural worldview on Native Hawaiian students from traditional public schools. The study found that self-esteem increases when cultural standards are obtained. In her research on the psychological explanatory framework, Terror Management

Theory (TMT), and its application to the current status of Native Hawaiians, Serna maintains that Hawaiian culture can serve as a psychological buffer against anxiety. TMT suggests that when people see themselves achieving the cultural values and standards in which they have faith, their self-esteem increases. Culture-based programs provide an ideal environment for values instruction and cultural worldview. According to Serna (2006),

> If we allow Hawaiian students who identify with being Hawaiian to reestablish a cultural worldview that they have faith in and help them achieve its standards/values, this will help them build anxiety-buffering self-esteem and lead them to exhibit adaptive instead of maladaptive behavior. These positive behaviors may affect academic achievement, reduce health risk behaviors, enhance prosocial behavior, and facilitate greater community involvement. (p. 142)

Serna recommended that future studies using TMT be undertaken to evaluate identity development and the practice of cultural values in Hawaiian programs. She believed these studies could provide helpful information in designing and implementing cultural and educational interventions.

Hawaiian immersion and culture-based schools were established for this very purpose: to teach Hawaiian culture and language and optimize success in Hawaiian identity development: "These approaches are consistent with the concept of cultural advantage, revealing 'funds of knowledge' where others have only seen deficits. Reframing Indigenous identities as cultural advantage creates counterhegemonic opportunities by giving voice to the expertise of elders and other cultural sources of community, familial, and individual strengths" (Kana'iaupuni et al., 2017, p. 314S). Further research by Kana'iaupuni, Ledward, and Jensen (2010) on the relationship between culture-based education and student outcomes found that culture-based

educational strategies positively impact students' socio-emotional well-being. According to Kaiwi (2006), grounding learners and teachers in cultural perspectives and teaching Hawaiian students who they are as Hawaiians honors their ancestors and provides the lens through which to view the world: "Our Hawaiian identity stays in our DNA!" (Kaiwi, 2006, p. 33). Culture-based education is helping students realize these ancestral connections.

Values

The literature indicates that advocates and initiators of the Hawaiian education movement believed firmly in the transformative potential of incorporating Hawaiian values, language, and cultural practices for the positive development of Hawaiian students' identities (Kanu, 2009; Kawatachi, 2023; Matsu, 2018b). Values are guiding principles shared by members of a culture and are often taught indirectly through moʻolelo. Chandler (2020) provides the example of Hawaiian creation stories as a means of values transference. Due to the reciprocal and genealogical connection to ʻāina, these moʻolelo strengthen belief in origin and teach values such as mālama, kuleana, and hoʻomana.

Kaulukukui & Nāhoʻopiʻi (2008) determined that "a common set of Hawaiian values is difficult to identify given the near annihilation of the culture" (p. 101). The lack of a standard set of values motivated Kanahele (1986) to poll individuals in the Hawaiian community, asking them to identify what they thought were Hawaiian values. He compiled a list of twenty-five values, ranked by participants, that included aloha, haʻahaʻa, hoʻomana, and lokomaikaʻi. Hawaiian scholars acknowledge that Western contact and colonization have influenced the choice of values, and some have contended that a list of values from the 1700s may have prioritized koa and kela (Serna, 2006).

Values form an integral part of human identity, guiding decisions and actions. These core values shape behaviors and play a pivotal role in facilitating successful learning experiences. In Hawaiian culture-based education, there is a unique opportunity to cultivate an environment that instructs in values and fosters meaningful relationships grounded in Hawaiian values. For example, mālama is often incorporated into environmental education, teaching students the importance of sustainability and respect for nature. Kuleana is emphasized in group projects and community service, instilling a sense of duty and accountability.

Moreover, these core values serve as a shared philosophical bedrock, essential in shaping the development of educational institutions and the keiki that attend such schools. Kamehameha Schools has undertaken a significant portion of the research on this subject; however, the breadth of research remains limited. It is plausible that Hawaiian-focused schools have faced constraints in time and resources, hindering their ability to conduct research on the efficacy of values-based instruction. This limitation is regrettable, considering that existing studies showcase the benefits for students when values, culture, and language are integrated into instruction.

Mauli Ola and Well-Being

‘Ano and mauli are future terms associated with identity. ‘Ano means disposition or character, and mauli means the center or heart and soul of someone. Mauli can be interpreted as the most profound sense of identity. When mauli is combined with the word ola, it means the distinguishable life force that emanates from a Hawaiian person. Founders of the ‘Aha Pūnana Leo education model developed a core philosophy incorporating these concepts called Kumu Honua Mauli Ola. This philosophy centers on ancestral connections. When mauli is cared for and nurtured, it is like a fire that burns brightly (‘Aha Pūnana Leo, & Ka Haka ‘Ula O Ke‘elikōlani College of Hawaiian Language, 2009). There are four elements to a person’s mauli:

1. Ka‘ Ao‘ao Pili ‘Uhane – the spirit with which we are all born and which is seated in the head, the most sacred part of the body, that recognizes right from wrong, good from bad, and that creates a relationship with everything in the universe.
2. Ka ‘Ao‘ao ‘Ōlelo – the language element found in the ears, the mouth, and the tongue. Language can be used in many different ways, but perhaps its greatest strength lies in its ability to transmit mauli to future generations.
3. Ka ‘Ao‘ao Lawena – the physical behavior element found in the limbs of the body, in gestures, in the way one stands, in the way one moves the feet when walking, in a facial expression, in a smile.
4. Ka ‘Ao‘ao ‘Ike Ku‘una – the traditional knowledge element seated in the intestines, where knowledge and emotions lie, and that is expressed in traditional values and practices like hula, poetry, and prayer.

Mauli can be nurtured in three honua: family, community, and the universe. Within these honua, a person connects to other people and places, anchoring their cultural identity. The body also has connection points called piko. Each person has three piko that allow for a physical connection to spiritual beliefs, ancestors, and future generations. Kawai‘ae‘a (2014) explains that the connections to piko enable Hawaiians to understand past knowledge. This knowledge sets a foundation for the present and encourages identity development, creating a legacy for future generations. Kawai‘ae‘a (2014) states that “A sense of spirituality, family, place, and legacy are maintained through these piko connections” (p. 7).

Kumu Honua Mauli Ola aligns with the views of psychoanalyst Erik Erikson, who studied healthy identity development. He “considered identity to be psychosocial in nature, formed by the intersection of individual biological and psychological capacities in combination

with the opportunities and supports offered by one's social context" (Erickson, 1968, as cited by Kroger, 2017). When taught to children, mauli ola combines both biology and psychology in the social setting of the school and has the potential to nurture a healthy Hawaiian identity.

Scholarship on Kumu Honua Mauli Ola is limited and primarily focuses on its initial development. Studies on its implementation and effectiveness were not evident. This is an area of opportunity for future research. The most consistent research on the broader term, mauli ola, has been provided by the *Ka Huaka'i Native Hawaiian Educational Assessments* published by Kamehameha Schools. Volumes exist for the years 2005, 2009, 2011, 2014, and 2021. *Ka Huaka'i* assesses trends in the Native Hawaiian population and the areas of economic, physical, social, emotional, cultural, and cognitive well-being (Kana'iaupuni et al., 2021). Collaborators on the project created the pua model (see Figure 4) to illustrate Native Hawaiian well-being.

Figure 4

A Native Hawaiian Perspective on Well-Being.

Note: The Pua Model. From "*Ka Huakaʻi: Native Hawaiian educational assessment.*," 2021, p. 7.

Although all aspects of the pua model are factors in identity development, those most relevant to this research are Hawaiian identity and HCBE. Concluding points of the 2021 Ka Huakaʻi assessment state that "Kanaka Maoli continue to live rich, spiritual, and cultural lives – with greater access to cultural knowledge and practices than in past years. At the same time, Kanaka Maoli youth are more likely than their peers to live in poverty, experience suicidal thoughts, and realize lower educational attainment" (p. 500).

A robust sense of well-being serves as a crucial safeguard against suicidal ideation, suicide, and poor mental health outcomes in Indigenous communities (Dudgeon et al., 2014). Research consistently underscores the critical role of cultural identity in fostering well-being and resilience. A longitudinal study involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait children investigated social-emotional well-being by gauging how significantly cultural identity minimizes the risk of social-emotional problems. The study found that "attachment to Indigenous culture, clan, and community, alongside cultural identity, serve as personal strengths enhancing children's health and overall well-being" (Fatima et al., 2022, p. 66). Chandler and Lalonde's (2008) research, which demonstrated significant reductions in youth suicide and the number of children in care when Indigenous women worked within family services, served as the catalyst for the work of Dudgeon et al. (2021). Their report to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare promotes the view that strong cultural connections and kinship ties are vital for social and emotional well-being, as they transmit intergenerational cultural knowledge often marginalized through assimilation. The report concludes: "Policy must be guided by Indigenous knowledge of what works. Only then can we improve understandings of the protective benefits of connection to

family and kin in suicide prevention to strengthen resilience" (p. 54). LaFromboise et al. (2006) further emphasize that cultural identity, reinforced by family, community, and school environments, is vital in promoting resilience among American Indian adolescents. Cultural connections to land and family cultivate a strong sense of well-being and cultural identity (Jackson-Barrett and Lee-Hammond, 2018). The findings from these studies collectively demonstrate that attachment to culture strengthens identity but also serves as a protective factor that enhances Indigenous children's overall health and well-being.

Numerous Māori scholars have written on the significance of whānau and whenua to identity. This is evident in the traditions of marae and tūrangawaewae (Boulton et al., 2021; Carlson et al., 2022; Walker, 2013; Paki, 2017). As a tradition, "Tūrangawaewae is one of the most well-known and powerful Māori concepts and is translated as a 'place where one has the right to stand' and a place where one has rights of residence and belonging through kinship and whakapapa" (Boulton et al., 2021, p. 4). Similarly, Hawaiians have a genealogical connection to ʻāina, a source of healing and well-being (Crabbe & Fox, 2016; Goodyear-Kaʻōpua, 2013).

Research by Wong-Wilson (2016) further supports the idea that Native Hawaiian well-being is deeply connected to cultural identity, ʻohana, and relationship to ʻāina. Her study at Hawaiʻi Community College examined the lasting effects of colonial educational policies, such as the suppression of Hawaiian language and culture, on Native Hawaiian students' academic achievement and sense of self. Through kūkākūkā (talk-story) sessions and a well-being survey, she found that familial support, cultural engagement, and a strong connection to ʻāina contribute to students' resilience and educational success.

This literature illuminates the profound ways in which identity development is interconnected in Hawaiian culture, particularly through the concept of mauli and its nurturing

within the Kumu Honua Mauli Ola framework. Emphasizing the importance of ancestral connections, language, and cultural practices substantiates the role of identity as central to the well-being and resilience of Indigenous people. Furthermore, it highlights the potential of cultural education models to foster a robust sense of identity, which not only preserves tradition but also supports future generations' psychological and social health.

3.2 Moʻokūʻauhau

Historical overview of moʻokūʻauhau

Moʻokūʻauhau is a foundational tenet of Hawaiian culture because it traces the lineage of every Hawaiian to the beginning of time and the beginning of the Hawaiian race (hoʻomanawanui, 2013). The word moʻokūʻauhau means "genealogical succession" (Pūkuʻi & Elbert, 1971, p. 234). Kēhaulani Kauanui (2008) explains in her book *Hawaiian Blood: Colonialism and the Politics of Sovereignty and Indigeneity* that

> Moʻo is also the word for lizard and lizard-like supernatural beings. The imagery of the moʻo lizard with visible vertebrae and kua moʻo (vertebrae backbone, or to link something together) "is apt and obvious as a simile for sequence of descendants in contiguous unbroken articulation," where one traces his or her genealogy in steps, just as one can follow the vertebrae of the spine (Handy and Pukui 1972, 197; Kaeppler 1982, 85). It is interesting to note that the word ʻauhau is used to mean an assessment, tribute, levy, or tax, which indicates the reciprocal relationship between the common people, the chiefs, and the land. (p. 37)

A Dictionary of the Hawaiian language (Andrews, 2002) defines ku-au-hau as "to have the knowledge of genealogies; to know the path of the descent of chiefs; e ike i ke kuamoo kupuna

alii mai kahiko mai." Peralto (2018) explains that knowledge of moʻokūʻauhau and moʻolelo imbued kūpuna with wisdom and "a strong sense of right and wrong" (p. 25).

Hawaiian scholar Lilikala Kameʻeleihiwa (1992) describes moʻokūʻauhau as an "unbroken chain that links those alive today to the primeval life force – to the mana (spiritual power) that first emerged with the beginning of the world. Genealogies anchor Hawaiians to our place in the universe" (pp. 19-20). Likely the most widely recognized moʻokūʻauhau is the Kumulipo, a two-thousand-line cosmogonic genealogy chant.

The Kumulipo is the most comprehensive of the creation or Hawaiian genesis chants (Kilikoi, 2012). Due to its singular significance to the Hawaiian race, it is often referenced by Hawaiian scholars, including Kikiloi (2012), Kameʻeleihiwa (1992), Crabbe & Fox (2017), and Abad (2000), to name a few. Traditionally, the Kumulipo was an oral record until King Kalakaua possessed a written Hawaiian manuscript. In 1897, his sister, Queen Liliʻuokalani, translated it into English while under house arrest at Iolani Palace (Beckwith, 1972).

A more thorough explanation of the Kumulipo is essential in setting the context for its relevance to Hawaiian identity. As described in various Hawaiian works, the Kumulipo is divided into sixteen wā or time periods beginning with darkness and sequentially describing the coming forth of light, plants, animals, gods, and humans. This sequence, which explains the world of gods and their relationship to human descendants, is an essential aspect of the Hawaiian belief system. The greater portion of the chant is the enumeration of thousands of Aliʻi or ruling chiefs, as outlined in the research of Abad (2000) and Kikiloi (2012). Aliʻi could trace their direct lineage to the gods and subsequently inherit power from that relationship. Handy & Pukui (1972) explain, "The paramount chief was not regal, he was divine" (p. 198).

Chiefly knowledge in the court of aliʻi included moʻokūʻauhau: "All Native scholars have agreed that Aliʻi are Chiefs because they know their genealogies" (Kameʻeleihiwa, 1992, p. 22). So imperative was this knowledge that in the court of aliʻi, a specific position was dedicated to this kuleana. The kākāʻōlelo or genealogist, also referred to as the poʻe kūʻauhau, was skilled in the art of oratory and was the keeper of the moʻokūʻauhau and moʻolelo of the aliʻi. Some aliʻi would construct a house called a Hale Nauā where the kākāʻōlelo could decide on family claims of kinship. According to Kameʻeleihiwa (1992), the kākāʻōlelo also assisted the aliʻi in decision-making by recounting the pertinent moʻolelo of the ancestors. The mōʻi or ruler would look for stories of success and then know what decision might bring him the most desired outcome. Handy and Pukui (1972), in their book *The Family System in Kaʻu, Hawaiʻi,* refer to Hawaiian genealogy as a "carefully and critically guarded historical science" (p. 197).

Hawaiians established their social and political structures on the foundation of moʻokūʻauhau. In her dissertation, *The Evolution of Hawaiian Socio-Political Complexity: An Analysis of Hawaiian Oral Traditions*, Abad (2000) asserts that Hawaiians built a complex and predominantly peaceful society over twenty-three generations of aliʻi lineage, leading up to the reign of Kamehameha I. Kikiloi's (2012) research on ritual power claims that all chiefly lines descend from Hāloa, the firstborn Hawaiian man. Questions that arise from Abad's (2000) and Kikiloi's (2012) research are: What is the role of moʻokūʻauhau in personal and societal stability? Did individual spirituality and genealogical knowledge contribute to ancient Hawaiian society's peaceful, cooperative nature? What understanding of identity can be gained from further study of Hawaiian history before Kamehameha I? How can positive chiefly characteristics manifest in present-day Hawaiians as they learn their connection to aliʻi? These

in-depth studies of lineage illustrate the gravity of moʻokūʻauhau in traditional Hawaiian society and remind us of the spiritual and divine connections moʻokūʻauhau bestows on Hawaiians.

The arrival of foreigners beginning in the late 1700s, leading to the eventual illegal annexation of Hawaiʻi and dissolution of the aliʻi system in the 1890s, brought the treasured oral tradition of moʻokūʻauhau to an end. Before this, however, King Kalakaua, recognizing the impending loss of tradition, was inspired to establish the Board of Genealogy of Hawaiian Chiefs through the Hawaiian legislature (State of Hawaiʻi, n.d.). The Board was responsible for collecting genealogical books and the history and genealogy of Hawaiian chiefs as known by the older people of the time.

Today, the Hawaiʻi State Archives and Bishop Museum retain most Hawaiian genealogical records, with smaller collections held in church archives, books, and individual families. Realizing the limited access to these historically and culturally significant records, The Office of Hawaiian Affairs created the Papakilo Database, which allows access to the general public and is an excellent resource for Hawaiians to research their heritage.

It is evident from this historical overview that moʻokūʻauhau was a significant component of Hawaiian society. Therefore, in cultural reclamation, personal connection to moʻokūʻauhau is impactful; Kameʻeleihiwa (1992) states that it "defines our identity and our relatedness" (p. 322). Osorio (2004) asserts that ancestry is the root of Indigenous knowledge and identity, and Hawaiians must protect these ancestral connections so as not to lose their sense of self. From our ancestors, we are able to draw inspiration and allow their characteristics to influence our lives. Kameʻeleihiwa (1992) supports this view with her statement, "Ancestors deeds of courage inspire our own; their thoughts and desires become the parameters of our ambitions. They are the models after which we Hawaiians have patterned our behavior" (p. 19).

Knowledge of one's moʻokūʻauhau affords access to the qualities and characteristics of our forebears. As the ʻōlelo noʻeau states, "I ulu no ka lālā i ke kumu – The branches grow because of the trunk. Without our ancestors we would not be here" (Pukui, 1983, p. 137). Kameʻeleihiwa (1992) reminds us that "our indomitable ancestors live in us; we are the descendants of those who survived the disease and degradation of the West. Our moʻokūʻauhau give us mana, and we can rejoice in our survival" (p. 322).

Aaron Salā (2021) explains that "moʻokūʻauhau are meant to be performed and are performative such that the sound of the name not only conjures (at least) the (spirit of a) person into a space but also brings mana (spiritual power) thereto" (p. 13). Kamanaʻopono Crabbe and Kealoha Fox's (2016) work in the field of psychology posit that "mana is both inherited and acquired. Inherited mana … comes from the genealogy of our people and our ancestors before us. The past we have inherited includes the resilience to pull us forward as a collective" (p. 254). It is clear that understanding one's moʻokūʻauhau is not just about tracing lineage but is fundamentally linked to mana and identity within Hawaiian culture.

The historical depth provided by this review conveys the significance of moʻokūʻauhau in shaping social structures and personal identity for Kānaka ʻŌiwi over generations. This deep-rooted significance underscores the potential for research on moʻokūʻauhau to inform schools on identity formation, emphasizing the enduring influence of ancestral connections in contemporary Hawaiian life.

Role of moʻolelo

For Kānaka ʻŌiwi, moʻolelo are the gateway to connecting to ancestors; thus, a brief literature review on moʻolelo is warranted. Moʻokūʻauhau served as a mnemonic device that facilitated the recollection of moʻolelo. These genealogies, dedicated to aliʻi, recounted their

adventures and instructed the listener on the behaviors and traditions of ancestral aliʻi (Kameʻeleihiwa, 1992). Osorio (2004) submits that stories are how Hawaiians draw close to their ancestors and each other in kinship. From his perspective as a history teacher, ancestors come to life through story. This ability to visualize ancestors verifies their identities and, subsequently, the identities of the generations that come after. He cites specific examples of this realization regarding Hawaiian aliʻi, whose characters, attributes, and decision-making are contextualized through the memories of ancestors. According to Kameʻeleihiwa (1992), the sum total of aliʻi identity was the character of their ancestors, and it is futile to study figures in Hawaiian history without first carefully examining their genealogy.

The dissertation *Pele's Appeal: Moʻolelo, kaona, and hulihia in "Pele and Hiʻiaka" literature (1860-1928)* by hoʻomanawanui (2007) is an excellent example of the personal connections made possible by moʻolelo. This research compared thirteen different versions of the Pele and Hiʻiaka saga. hoʻomanawanui sets the context of her study by explaining her genealogical lineage to Pele and documents which versions of the moʻolelo included genealogy. Two realizations from her in-depth study are "Pele is a role model because she is a kūpuna, an ancestor who sets a foundation for nā pulapula (the descendants)" and "nā moʻolelo, particularly of akua and aliʻi, do indeed provide inspiration for kanaka conduct" (p. 431). She further explains that because Pele and Hiʻiaka are our ancestors, they connect us to our deeply held traditions, including ʻāina, hula, nature, and other cultural practices. They are inspirational and the "epitome of hope" (p. 430). As moʻolelo like this are taught, Hawaiians are bolstered to meet their personal challenges as they remember these ancestors and their abilities to face great uncertainty.

Other cultures recognize the importance stories play in identity development. In the edited book *Family Stories and the Life Course Across Time and Generations*, Pratt and Fiese (2004) explore the impact of family storytelling on individual development, proposing that stories aid in the creation of personal identity. Adolescents can examine roles and ideals through family history activities and family history stories. Notably, personal stories are embedded in deep family histories. Our own stories are fashioned by frames provided by our families. The research of Fivush, Duke, & Bohanek (2010) found that "families that share stories, stories about parents and grandparents, about triumphs and failures, provide powerful models for children" (p. 2).

Psychologists at Emory University studied how storytelling in families affects social-emotional health in teenagers (Fivush et al., 2010). By recording family dinner conversations, researchers identified how frequently family history stories were shared. Based on this information, they created a "do you know" scale. Participants were measured and scored against the scale. Findings showed that "adolescents who report knowing more stories about their familial past show higher levels of emotional well-being, and also higher levels of identity achievement" (p. 1).

This section substantiates the importance of moʻokūʻauhau and identity development by demonstrating how moʻolelo serve as critical pathways for Kānaka Maoli to connect with their ancestors and, through them, to their own identities. By exploring the narratives of figures such as Pele and Hiʻiaka, the review reveals how ancestral stories preserve historical and cultural knowledge and foster personal and community resilience. Furthermore, it parallels findings from broader psychological research, illustrating that storytelling within families promotes emotional

well-being and identity formation across cultures, thereby underscoring the universal power of stories in shaping and reinforcing identity through generations.

Genealogy in education

Hawaiian research on the inclusion of moʻokūʻauhau in education is limited; thus, it is worth looking to other sources from Indigenous communities for work in this area. The following is a synopsis of relevant scholarly works.

Guerrero et al. (2006) studied Filipino adolescents from immigrant families of lower socioeconomic status in Hawaiʻi. These adolescents were at greater risk for academic, emotional, and behavioral challenges. The study found that a strong protective factor against these risks was created by increased family support, notably learning genealogy. The research encouraged further investigation into the role of cultural identification as a protective factor.

Whakapapa, the Māori concept of genealogy, is an essential aspect of Māori identity and culture. Rauna Ngawhare (2019) posits, "Whakapapa tradition is the backbone of Māori identity" (p. 10). It is a system of thought that goes beyond mapping kinship and establishes connections with ancestors and the environment, fostering culturally appropriate behaviors through inherited obligations to past and future generations. It embeds individuals within a complex set of interrelationships that position Māori within the world but also nurtures a spiritual connection (Pihama, 2001; Forster, 2019). Shane Edwards's (2009) examination of whakapapa and whether it enhanced the life of Māori concluded that whakapapa knowledge and korero support "positive cultural identity and well-being" (p. 378). This is further supported by the research of Taingunguru Walker (2013): "Whakapapa gives individuals their identity, their sense of belonging, their mana, and their association and kinship with the land; it also confers access to marae, knowledge, rights, and responsibilities" (p. 7).

Māori Professors Melinda Webber and Angus Macfarlane (2018) researched the benefits of instructing Māori students using whakapapa and iwi (tribal) knowledge. Their article "The Transformative Role of Iwi Knowledge and Genealogy in Māori Student Success" summarizes the results of their Ka Awatea Project in which successful Māori secondary students were interviewed on the conditions of their success through an iwi lens. Webber and Macfarlane believed that Māori students could find success on their own pathways by looking to the key qualities of their ancestors, who made outstanding societal contributions in their own era. Their findings specific to genealogy were the following:

> All participants also agreed that knowledge of one's whakapapa (genealogy) was critical. Kāretu (1990) has described whakapapa as the glue that connects individuals to a certain place or marae, locating them within the broader network of kin relations. According to the participants in this study, whakapapa is not simply about having "Māori blood" but knowing about that descent and having a meaningful relationship to it. Knowledge of whakapapa had a major part to play in the resilience of the Māori students and their ability to stay focused, as well as committed to achieving their aspirations at school for the collective benefit of their whānau, hapū, and iwi. (p. 11)

This study serves as an example of how incorporating genealogy into instruction can yield positive results for students.

Similarly, a study conducted by Awanui Te Huia (2015) found that Māori language learners are able to negate the effects of discrimination when they possess knowledge of whakapapa and have support from whānau and others within the language community. "Feeling good about being Māori within Māori contexts may enhance individuals feelings of belonging which in turn have a positive impact on health and well-being" (p. 25). Research by Kimai

Tocker (2017) on Māori immersion schools found that these educational settings foster a strong sense of belonging and cultural pride, which is crucial for identity development. The scholarly works of Jennifer Martin (2012) explore how Māori identity is constructed and expressed within educational and community contexts. They emphasize the importance of Māori language, cultural practices, and educational success in fostering a strong sense of identity among Māori individuals.

Although Māori research on whakapapa is readily available, research on moʻokūʻauhau is limited and predominantly focuses on its importance in ancient Hawaiʻi. Little is written on its specific use and application in present-day education and curriculum. Studies of the use of moʻokūʻauhau in HFCS appear non-existent in English language sources. In recent Hawaiian scholarship, the term has been used more broadly to describe the historical development of something rather than literal ancestral descendancy. For example, the book *The Past Before Us Moʻokūʻauhau as Methodology* describes it as "a philosophical construct for understanding other kinds of genealogies; conceptual; intellectual; aesthetic; and power" (Wilson-Hokowhitu, 2019, p. VIII).

3.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter delves into the interconnections between moʻokūʻauhau and identity development within HCBE. It is structured around two main themes: the role of Hawaiian identity and well-being and the significance of moʻokūʻauhau in education. The first section of the chapter explores how identity and well-being are perceived and influenced within the context of Hawaiian culture. It discusses the process of reclaiming identity amidst the impacts of colonization and the importance of cultural identity for the health and well-being of Indigenous children.

The literature review discusses the specific concept of moʻokūʻauhau and emphasizes its role in HCBE. Moʻokūʻauhau is not just about tracing genealogical lines but is deeply intertwined with cultural identity, spirituality, and the communal responsibilities of Kānaka Maoli. This section details how moʻokūʻauhau informs identity through historical narratives, linking individuals to their ancestors and the broader Hawaiian community.

The chapter highlights how schools play a crucial role in students' identity development and outlines the challenges posed by predominantly Western educational frameworks that often alienate students from their culture. The literature suggests that integrating moʻokūʻauhau into the curriculum fosters a stronger sense of identity among students by connecting them to their cultural roots and community.

The chapter concludes by calling for more research into the implementation and effectiveness of moʻokūʻauhau in educational settings, suggesting that such studies could provide valuable insights into improving educational strategies. Gaps in the literature lead to the following questions: How has learning moʻokūʻauhau impacted students' sense of identity? How is moʻokūʻauhau included in a culture-based curriculum? Where are the opportunities to strengthen the application of moʻokūʻauhau in culture-based education?

The next chapter presents a chronological review of the literature on HCBE, with a particular emphasis on research conducted on this growing educational reform movement. Additionally, the chapter narrows its focus to examine Kanu o ka ʻĀina Charter School, providing an in-depth look at its unique pedagogical approach and educational strategies. By bridging the broader historical context with a specific case study, this literature review aims to provide a robust framework for interpreting the research findings on moʻokūʻauhau practices and their impact on student identity formation.

CHAPTER FOUR – HAWAIIAN EDUCATION

4.0 Chapter Introduction

This chapter explores the progression of the Hawaiian education movement, a key element of this research. It aims to contextualize the educational philosophies and methodologies that significantly shape student identities within Hawaiian culture-based schools. The following review delves into the foundational aspects that bolster this educational approach by underscoring the principle of kūlia i ka nuʻu, a core value imparted to students involved in this study. Furthermore, this chronological review systematically analyzes the role of HFCS and, more specifically, Kanu o ka ʻĀina New Century Public Charter School in identity development, pinpointing existing gaps in research. Despite the variety of Hawaiian education efforts, this literature review focuses on those related to kindergarten through 12th-grade (K-12) schools, as participants of this study are reflecting on their experiences at such a school.

4.1 Hawaiian Culture-Based Education

The key to the reclamation of Hawaiian identity is Hawaiian culture-based education. Kaiwi (2006) describes it as a "philosophy rooted in a sense of indigenous being" (p. 29). Numerous programs, models, measures, and approaches have developed since the 1970s, both in English and Hawaiian medium, with the common goal of nurturing a healthy, educated lāhui. The following section describes these efforts in a general chronological order, allowing the reader to glean the similarities, themes, and evident literature on HCBE. Also, for the purposes of this section, the term Hawaiian culture-based includes Hawaiian language.

Culture is defined as a way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs of a particular group of people at a particular time. In his article, "Towards a New Oceania," Albert Wendt, Polynesian poet and scholar, describes culture as never static but like a tree "forever

growing branches" (p. 12). He further expounds that "our quest should not be for a revival of our past cultures but for the creation of new cultures which are free of the taint of colonialism and based firmly on our own pasts" (p. 12). Hawaiian scholars have reminded us of the rich culture of our kūpuna: innovative, practical, spiritual, and resilient (Goodyear-Kaʻōpua, 2013; Kameʻeleihiwa, 1992; Osorio, 1996).

Interest in HCBE, also referred to as Hawaiian education, began to grow following amendments to the Hawaiʻi State Constitution in 1978. Article XV, Section 4 established Hawaiian as an official language of the State, and Article X, Section 4 added:

> The State shall provide for a Hawaiian education program consisting of language, culture and history in the public schools. The use of community expertise shall be encouraged as a suitable and essential means in furtherance of the Hawaiian education program.

To meet these new requirements, the Hawaiʻi Department of Education, with the assistance of the Queen Liliʻuokalani Children's Center, piloted a program in which kūpuna would aid elementary school teachers with small doses of Hawaiian language and culture instruction (Kawakami, 2004). These kūpuna were native speakers, mānaleo. The program was first introduced in two elementary schools with high populations of Native Hawaiian students. The initial program goals were:

> The goal of the language component is to provide all students with exposure to the proper pronunciation, enunciation and phrasing of Hawaiian names of people and places, expressions and songs that play such an important part in the lives of all people living in Hawaiʻi. The emphasis of the Hawaiian Studies program was to help students develop knowledge, understanding, appreciation and internalization of fundamental aspects of Hawaiian culture, including values, concepts, practices, history and language which will

> be of value to people trying to live happy, productive and culturally enriched lives in harmony with our island environment (Kawakami, 2004, pp. 116-117).

According to Kawakami (2004), however, "the programs did not exert enough pressure to effect substantive change" (p. 117). Although the literature shows that these initial efforts at incorporating culture were not substantial enough, the acknowledgment of ʻike kupuna value and the knowledge that was collected and preserved continues to benefit Hawaiian education today.

Hawaiian Immersion Schools

Modeled after the Māori Kōhanga Reo schools of New Zealand, the ʻAha Pūnana Leo preschools were next in the evolution of Hawaiian education (ʻAha Pūnana Leo, n.d.). These community-driven schools were established to preserve and perpetuate the Hawaiian language. Wilson & Kamanā (2001) recorded fewer than 200 Hawaiian-speaking kūpuna at the start of the 21st century. In their 2006 article, Wilson and Kamanā state that "assuring personal cultural connections" and "maintaining the identity of Hawaiians as a distinct people" are two benefits of Hawaiian-medium education (p. 155). They further assert, "Without Hawaiian, much of the wealth of unique knowledge and culture that is expressed and recorded in Hawaiian remains out of reach" (p. 157).

In the process of creating language reclamation schools, ʻAha Pūnana Leo developed a philosophy of education in 1998 known as Kumu Honua Mauli Ola (ʻAha Pūnana Leo, n.d.). Its purpose was to clarify the basis for schooling through Hawaiian (ʻAha Pūnana Leo & Ka Haka ʻUla O Keʻelikōlani College of Hawaiian Language, 2009). As discussed in the preceding chapter, mauli ola and strengthening a person's mauli or life force are central to this holistic culture-based philosophy.

The Papahana Kaiapuni Hawaiian Language Immersion Program was another effort by the Department of Education to meet the state mandate to include Hawaiian language and culture in schools. Established in 1986, this K-12 program is active within twenty schools (Hawai‘i State Department of Education). According to Kawakami (2004), the goal of Kaiapuni schools is “to assist students in developing high levels of proficiency in comprehending and communicating in the Hawaiian language, developing a strong foundation of Hawaiian culture and values, and becoming empowered individuals who are responsible and caring members of the community” (p. 118). Inconsistent state funding and the lack of dedicated school facilities have affected the success of Kaiapuni schools. These issues have resulted in communities losing Kaiapuni programs, leaving families without options for Hawaiian immersion instruction for their keiki.

A strength of language immersion schools is the inclusion of families in the learning community. A study by Yamauchi, Lau-Smith, and Luning conducted in 2000 assessed the differences between family involvement in traditional public schools and Kaiapuni schools while also looking at the barriers to involvement. Through semi-structured interviews, participants identified that families actively communicated with the school in a familial style, involvement by volunteering was prevalent, families participated in school decision-making, and families learned Hawaiian language and culture along with their children.

This brief synopsis of Hawaiian immersion schools captures three important elements relevant to existing culture-based schools: the central role of Hawaiian language in instruction; the Kumu Honua Mauli Ola philosophy, which shaped school missions, curriculum, and assessment; and the importance of including ‘ohana in the school community.

Hawaiian-Focused Charter Schools

In 1994, following the resolution to apologize for the United States' overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom in 1893, the U.S. Government amended the Native Hawaiian Education Act of 1988 to "provide for the creation of community-based education learning centers" (Native Hawaiian Education Act, 1994). The Act acknowledged the following:

> Despite the consequences of over 100 years of nonindigenous influence, the Native Hawaiian people are determined to preserve, develop, and transmit to future generations their ancestral territory and their cultural identity in accordance with their own spiritual and traditional beliefs, customs, practices, language, and social institutions (para. 20).

The Act also established the Native Hawaiian Education Council. At their 1997 convening, the Council examined participation in the existing system of colonial education and pleaded for transformation (Meyer, 1998). They crafted the following vision statement: "I lāhui naʻauao Hawaiʻi pono, I lāhui Hawaiʻi pono naʻauao. There will be a culturally enlightened Hawaiian nation; there will be a Hawaiian nation enlightened" (Native Hawaiian Education Council, n.d.). The Council advocated in 1999 for institutional change within the existing public school system and the establishment of a separate Native Hawaiian educational system (Federally funded Native Hawaiian programs, 1999). The government's recognition of the need for education programs developed by Native Hawaiians, coupled with federal financial support, was instrumental in the genesis of HFCS.

Research by Manu Meyer was also foundational to the development of culture-based public schools. In her qualitative research study, *Native Hawaiian Epistemology: Contemporary Narratives*, she collected the perspectives of twenty Hawaiian education and cultural leaders. Seven epistemological themes emerged, and five philosophic threads. Those most relevant to this

review are 1) spirituality and knowledge – cultural contexts of knowledge; 2) relationship and knowledge – notion of self through others; and 3) the role of place, history, and genealogy in knowledge exchange. Meyer wrote:

> We are beginning to understand that Hawaiian education is not something in relation to a Western norm, but something we must define in relation to our own understanding of ourselves, our past, and our potential. It is something more organic, more real, and more tied to place (p. 146).

Her work questioned whether Hawaiian identity could be restored in a non-Hawaiian epistemological system. Meyer further questioned if separate Hawaiian schools that "focus on a more 'Hawaiian' context and process for knowledge acquisition" (p. 143) should be developed. She declared, "It is a time to redefine the priorities of what Kanaka ʻŌiwi believe are best practices for us as a group" (p. 191).

Proponents of education reform found further encouragement at the World Indigenous Peoples' Conference on Education held in Hilo, Hawaiʻi, in 1999. A key document circulated at the conference was the Coolangatta Statement (WIPCE, 1999), which articulated the educational rights of Indigenous peoples:

> Indigenous peoples across the world are demanding and, in some cases, achieving the establishment of systems of education which reflect, respect and embrace Indigenous cultural values, philosophies and ideologies – the same values, philosophies and ideologies which shaped, nurtured and sustained Indigenous peoples for tens of thousands of years (p. 231).

The statement was ratified at the 1999 conference and became a pivotal instrument to inform and shape the education provisions of the 2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

That same year, the Hawai‘i State Legislature passed Act 62 authorizing the creation of charter schools, “the legislature supports the concept of new century charter schools” (Hawai‘i State Legislature, 1999). Advocates for education reform recognized the opportunity this new law provided and swiftly mobilized to establish the first Hawaiian-focused charter schools. The schools were established in communities with high concentrations of Hawaiian keiki, where the students academic performance was among the lowest.

Many of the initial founders were parents of ‘Aha Pūnana Leo preschoolers and participants in cultural programs sponsored by organization like the Queen Lili‘uokalani Trust. Although the state authorized the creation of charter schools, it failed to allocate sufficient financial resources. Kamehameha Schools and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs stepped in to provide crucial funding for these fledgling schools to remain open.

The initial intersection of the Hawaiian education movement with national charter school reform was not primarily motivated by the charter school model and its educational reform aspects. Instead, early proponents for change described their efforts as fulfilling “a kuleana to find better ways to nurture the well-being of Hawaiian youth, communities, and culture into the future” (Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua, 2013, p. 68). Educators and families were keenly aware of the state’s failure to provide a public education system where Indigenous students could receive meaningful and fair educational opportunities (Kamehameha Schools, 2008; MacKenzie et al., 2015). This kuleana extended beyond individual responsibility to encompass the “genealogy and land” relationship (Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua, 2013, p. 64). The initiation into charter school reform was seen as an act of Indigenous autonomy and empowerment, focusing on creating and implementing education systems designed and managed by Hawaiians. These reform efforts initially led to the creation of twelve HFCS between 2000 and 2005.

Nā Lei Naʻauao

ʻAnakē Malia Craver gifted the name Nā Lei Naʻauao to the community members who envisioned education reform in Hawaiʻi. She prophesized that communities throughout the islands would align, grounded in the values of kūpuna, and would birth schools that would be like individual flowers and when laced together, would form the lei that would transform the existing educational system (T. Wise, personal communication, August 25, 2015). The original twelve HFCS schools were a manifestation of this vision. Representing schools from Hawaiʻi, Oʻahu, and Kauaʻi, they formed the Nā Lei Naʻauao Native Hawaiian Charter School Alliance. The mission of the Alliance is "to establish, implement, and continuously strengthen models of education throughout the Hawaiian islands and beyond, which are community-designed and -controlled and reflect, respect and embrace ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi, ʻike Hawaiʻi and Hawaiian cultural values, philosophies and it's practices" (Na Le Naʻauao, 2016, p. 1). The Nā Lei Naʻauao schools work closely together, sharing best practices in culture-based and language instruction and continually advocating for support from the state government. Today, seventeen Nā Lei Naʻauao schools serve more than 4,000 students on five islands with an average student demographic of 81% Hawaiian ancestry. The following is a list of the schools and their missions: (Hawaiʻi State Public Charter School Commission, 2024):

- Hakipuʻu Academy - an innovative, community-based school rooted in the traditional wisdom of Hawaiʻi.
- Hālau Kū Māna - foster a sense of esteem, stewardship and kuleana to the ʻāina, through grounding in the ancestral knowledges and practices of Hawaiʻi.

- Ka Waihona o ka Naʻauao - create socially responsible, resilient, and resourceful young men and women, by providing an environment of academic excellence, social confidence and cultural awareness.
- Ka ʻUmeke Kāʻeo - a Hawaiian language immersion pre K-12 learning community where haumāna and their families are safe, nurtured, and challenged.
- Kamaile Academy- prepare self-directed, self-aware, college-ready learners who will embrace the challenge of obstacles, experience the pride of perseverance and accomplishment, and demonstrate the strength of ʻohana and community.
- Kanu o Ka ʻĀina - collectively design, implement, and continuously evaluate a quality, culturally-driven, intergenerational Hawaiian model of education with Aloha.
- Kanuikapono - nurture lifelong learners able to embrace the world of their ancestors and the 21st century; skilled and community-minded with aloha and respect for self, family, and the environment.
- Kawaikini - through the medium of the Hawaiian language, create a supportive learning environment where indigenous cultural knowledge is valued, applied, and perpetuated.
- Ke Ana Laʻahana - recognize, nurture, and foster cultural identity and cultural awareness in an environment that has historical connections and lineal linkage to student.
- Ke Kula Niihau O Kekaha - perpetuate and strengthen the language and culture of Niihau among the children and youth of the Niihau community living on Kauai.
- Ke Kula ʻo Nāwahīokalaniopuʻu - committed to securing a school community built upon culturally rooted principles that reflect love of spirituality, love of family, love

of language, love of knowledge, love of land, love of fellow man, and love of all people.

- Ke Kula ʻo Samuel M. Kamakau - foster success for all members of our learning community by providing a culturally healthy and responsive learning environment.
- Kua o ka Lā - provide Ka Pae ʻĀina o Hawaiʻi with the knowledge and skills, through Hawaiian values and place-based educational opportunities, that prepare receptive, responsive, and self-sustaining individuals that live "ke ala pono."
- Kualapuʻu - build a strong foundation for lifelong learning, keiki will be able to discover and grow, develop skills and confidence, and, like the ʻuala, withstand adversity and thrive in an ever-changing world.
- Kula Aupuni Niihau A Kahelelani Aloha - educate our youth so that they may lead the direction for their own future and that of the Niihau community.
- Mālama Honua - provide an education that cultivates the caring, compassionate, and astute "mind of the navigator" by the appropriate application of indigenous Hawaiian values.
- Waimea Middle School – provide students with a quality, standards-based education in a creative, challenging, and nurturing environment.

Culture, language, foundation, nurture, resilience, and lifelong learner are just some of the common themes shared by the schools.

Nā Lei Naʻauao terms their educational pedagogy "Education with Aloha." In a white paper the Alliance circulated in 2006, characteristics of HFCS include:

- initiated, supported, and controlled by a Hawaiian community;
- offer Hawaiian culture-based curriculum, instruction, and assessment;

- be committed to perpetuating Hawaiian culture, language, values, and traditions;
- actively contribute to the growth of Hawaiian-focused education through participation in ongoing research and dissemination of best practices.

Integral to their school design is place and inquiry-based instruction and a caring environment where aloha is continually practiced, "this feeling of aloha permeates all Hawaiian-focused charter schools and has been identified by the students themselves as the defining factor for their success in education" (Nā Lei Na‘auao, 2006). Students and teachers interact as an ‘ohana, setting them apart from traditional learning environments and inspiring students to care about their families, communities, and the world around them.

Ancient is modern is another foundational tenet of Nā Lei Na‘auao schools. Tibbets, Kahakalau, and Johnson (2007) clarified that "Hawai‘i's traditional values and ways of learning must shape modern models of Hawaiian education" (p. 150). Their work illustrated this concept through the alignment of ‘ōlelo no‘eau and contemporary educational paradigms.

Table 3

Ancient Hawaiian proverbs align with contemporary educational best practices

Ancient	Modern
Aloha kekahi i kekahi— Love one another	Pedagogy of the heart (Freire & Freire, 1997) Affective education (Society for Safe & Caring Schools & Communities, n.d.)
Ma ka hana ka ‘ike— Through work comes knowledge	Experiential education (Association for Experiential Education, n.d.)

E ʻimi i nā au nui a me nā au iki o ka ʻike— Seek the large and the small currents of knowledge	Inquiry-based education (Inquiry Research Group, 2007)
He aliʻi ka ʻāina— The land is chief	Place-based education (Sobel, 2004)
Kūlia i ka nuʻu— Strive to reach your highest level	Academic rigor (National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine, 2004) Meeting and exceeding standards (Lefkowits & Miller, 2005)
Kōkua aku, kōkua mai pēlā ihola ka nohona ʻohana— To give and receive help, such is family life	Relationships (National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine, 2004)
E kanu ka huli ʻoi hāʻule ka ua— Plant the taro stalk while the rain is falling	Relevance (National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine, 2004)
Hōʻike— To demonstrate	Performance-based assessment to authentic audiences (Wiggins, 1998)

Note: Ancient Hawaiian proverbs align with contemporary educational best practices. From "Education with aloha and student assets" by K. A. Tibbetts, K. Kahakalau, and Z. Johnson,

2007, *Hūlili: Multidisciplinary Research on Hawaiian Well-Being, 4*, p. 151. Copyright 2007 by Kamehameha Schools.

To measure the effects of Education with Aloha on adolescent development, Tibbets et al. (2007) administered the assets survey (Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors) to middle and high school students of Nā Lei Naʻauao. The survey was the first use of the assets survey in a Hawaiian culture-based setting. Participation in the survey was voluntary, and 198 students completed the survey. The findings showed that despite the prevalence of risk factors in the lives of participating students, Nā Lei Naʻauao students measured near the benchmark group in all categories and exceeded in the area of values (honesty, caring, and responsibility) as well as parent involvement and caring school climate. The authors' concluding perspective asserts:

> We believe the findings suggest that the Nā Lei Naʻauao schools contribute to the healthy development of our ʻōpio. We also believe that the strengths-based approach implicit in the study of student assets will continue to provide insights into the positive effects of these schools and enhance our capacity to generate actionable knowledge to support their continuous improvement. If we can speak definitively about the contributions of Education with Aloha to the development of student assets, we add one more reason for increasing support for Hawaiian culturally based education within the public school system and potentially helping more children to be successful in school. (pp. 166-167)

This study demonstrates how Education with Aloha has a positive impact on the healthy development of Nā Lei Naʻauao ʻōpio.

Due to the lack of governmental support for Nā Lei Naʻauao, schools have had to engage in advocacy work since inception to overcome systemic challenges. Students have actively participated in those efforts through petitions, marches, lobbying, and legislative bills. Through

those experiences students have developed skills in persuasive communication and public speaking while learning the importance of civic engagement to shape their communities and future. The World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education, held in 2014, provided a forum for students to utilize these skills in crafting the first Declaration of Indigenous Youth. The Declaration affirms the rights Indigenous youth demand regarding liberty, culture, education, land, government, and economics. It powerfully states:

> We live by the values and principles embedded within our cultures, languages, and traditions. We stand carrying the future of our history while remaining grounded in the knowledge taught to us by our ancestors of old. As we voyage forward in time, we will not forget who we are: native youth of the world. (WIPCE International Council, 2014, p. 1)

Related specifically to education, it lists the following affirmations:

- We affirm that all indigenous peoples have an equal right to a quality education at all levels
- We affirm the right to learn and perpetuate our culture, to have control over how those things are taught, and to provide education through native language and a cultural lens
- We affirm the right to establish and manage our own schools and education system, in our own language
- We affirm the right to build educational facilities and programs to educate other cultures about what is unique to our own we advocate that indigenous knowledge/education systems be given value and weight equal to those of the western world

- We support the transmittance of indigenous knowledge as part of the educational legacy of native peoples, including but not limited to song, chant, dance, arts, crafts, and navigation

The Declaration stands as a testament to the profound influence culture-based education can have on students.

Reaching beyond charter schools

Opportunities for collaboration have been an important element of the HCBE movement. As it relates to this study, which centers on the intersection between identity, well-being, and education, literature on the broader academic landscape is relevant because it provides a comparative backdrop. Leaders and teachers of HFCS contributed to these documented events and the cultural pedagogies underpinning the models and policies developed. These particular models and policies center on student well-being.

In 2002, Nā Lei Na‘auao hosted their first Ku‘i ka Lono Indigenous Education Conference, which remains an annual event. This student-led conference provides a unique venue to share best practices in Indigenous education and to celebrate student achievement, proving that “Education with Aloha” is highly effective (Tibbets et al., 2007). This type of event contributes to identity development by empowering students, providing validation, fostering self-awareness, practicing communication skills, and reminding them that they belong to a supportive learning community. Ku‘i ka Lono also allows educators to share and discuss innovative curricula, instruction and assessment practices, organizational advances, fundraising strategies, and fiscal, bureaucratic, and legislative challenges.

The Nā Lau Lama conference held in 2006 was another opportunity for collaboration. The conference brought together 250 leaders and teachers to identify and validate education

practices working for Native Hawaiian learners (Nā Lau Lama, 2006). Attendees were divided into five working groups: strengthening families and communities, culture-based education, Indigenous assessment, professional development, and advocacy. Groups met throughout the following year, gathering research from their area of focus. The culture-based education working group determined that Hawaiian culture, inherently present within Hawaiian children and pervasive in their surroundings, offers unique perspectives and a distinct worldview or epistemology that holds significant value, particularly for Hawaiian learners. Findings were compiled in the Nā Lau Lama report (p. 13).

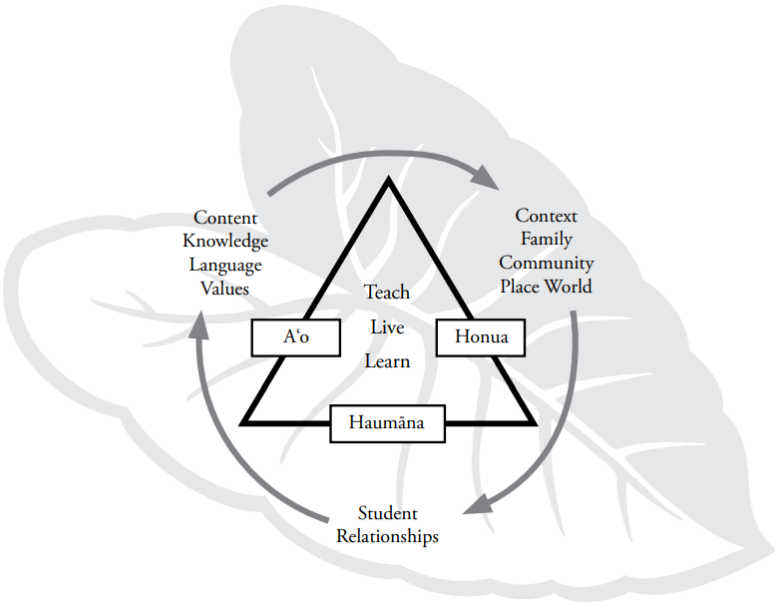
Successful culture-based education practices identified in the report include:

- Use the resources of the communities and places in which haumāna (students) live.
- Incorporate community service that empowers haumāna to make a difference in their community.
- Create opportunities for haumāna to learn by doing.
- Integrate Hawai‘i content & performance standards and Na Honua Mauli Ola guidelines to enhance the relevance of curriculum and learning.
- Ensure rigor as a critical component of culture-based learning experiences.

As shown in Figure 5, the group created a model to illustrate the four critical components of successful culture-based learning experiences for students: 1) focus on the haumāna first, 2) exchange relevant knowledge, 3) provide the proper context for learning, and 4) fully integrate spirituality as depicted by the kalo leaf.

Figure 5

A Model of Hawaiian Culture-Based Education.



Note: A Model of Hawaiian Culture-Based Education. From "*Nā Lau Lama Community Report*," 2006, p. 14.

The working group wanted to implement culture-based education fully in Hawai'i's education system so that more students could benefit from the model.

In 2013, thirty-five years after the mandate for Hawaiian culture and language inclusion in the public education system, the Board of Education created Ends Policy 3, Nā Hopena A'o (HĀ). The policy aims to "provide a comprehensive outcomes framework to be used by those who are developing the academic achievement, character, physical and social-emotional well-being of all our students to the fullest potential" (Hawai'i State Department of Education, 2015).

HĀ is founded on Hawaiian values, language, culture, and history. HĀ, meaning breath in English, outlines six outcomes that strengthen a student's sense of Belonging, Responsibility, Excellence, Aloha, Total well-being, and Hawaii (BREATH). Each outcome has an associated

ʻōlelo noʻeau and a description to help educators understand how to teach and observe these behaviors in students. Related to identity and well-being is the following outcome as an example:

> Strengthened Sense of Belonging: He pili wehena ʻole (A relationship that cannot be undone). I stand firm in my space with a strong foundation of relationships. A sense of belonging is demonstrated through understanding lineage and place and a connection to past, present, and future. I am able to interact respectfully for the betterment of self and others. (Hawaiʻi State Department of Education, n.d.)

Figure 6 illustrates all six of the outcomes.

Figure 6

Nā Hopena Aʻo Handout.

Note: Nā Hopena Aʻo Handout. From "*Hawaii State Department of Education*," 2015, p. 3.

Significant to the development of HĀ was the collection of cultural education standards from the following: Native Hawaiian Education Council, Nā Lei Naʻauao Charter School Alliance, Kamehameha Schools, Navajo Nation, Alaska Native Knowledge Network, and the cultural standards developed by William Demmert. The standards had many similarities. They were compared for common themes and sorted by area of focus. Keywords and concepts emerged that comprised the final six outcomes of HĀ.

Having served on the committee for the development of HĀ, it was a spiritual experience with many hōʻailona that reaffirmed the importance of this work in addressing the needs of Hawaiian children and all children attending public schools in Hawaiʻi. That experience also highlighted the concept that:

> What makes Hawaiʻi, Hawaiʻi – a place unlike anywhere else – are the unique values and qualities of the indigenous language and culture. ʻO Hawaiʻi ke kahua o ka hoʻonaʻauao. Hawaiʻi is the foundation of our learning. Thus, the following learning outcomes, Nā Hopena Aʻo, are rooted in Hawaiʻi, and we become a reflection of this special place. (Hawaii State Department of Education, n.d.).

Including culturally relevant education reform literature such as HĀ within this review enriches the analysis of identity development within HFCS students. It also enhances the relevance and applicability of the research findings to the broader school system in Hawaiʻi. To date, the only study conducted on HĀ is a single basic qualitative study that explored educators' perceptions and experiences with incorporating the framework into the instruction and learning environment (Leslie, 2023). Semi-structured interviews were held with nine educators working with students in kindergarten through 6th grade from one school. Findings indicated that the HĀ

framework supports Native Hawaiian students' learning and is creating opportunities to enhance student success.

Concurrently with the development of HĀ, HFCS were engaged in the formulation of student success indicators (Hawai'i State Public Charter School Commission, 2014). Based on their cultural approach, the Nā Lei Na'auao schools created three success indicators:

- Place, culture, and connection - students know a place as a piko and a foundation for making larger connections
- Engagement, achievement, and cultural commitment - students engage in learning and are able to articulate and demonstrate the integration of knowledge and skills of our ancestors to make a positive difference to future lives and contribute to the well-being of the community as a whole
- College, career, and community readiness - students are able to plan to attain current and future goals, understand and manage the complexities of our world, and possess the skills and attitudes they need in order to take responsible action for the future

Also termed "Vision of the graduate," the indicators, as shown in Figure 7, were aligned with HĀ and adapted into culturally relevant assessment tools used by HFCS (Hawaiian-focused Charter School Culturally Relevant Assessment, n.d.).

Figure 7

Hawaiian-focused Charter School Vision of the Graduate.

Cultural Knowledge, Responsibility to ʻOhana, Community and Environment:
Demonstrate, understand, apply Hawaiian values, respect and honor genealogy, recognize and accept leadership roles to manifest cultural knowledge, know a place (history, resources) as a piko and a foundation for making larger connections, understand importance of reciprocal relationships and responsibilities in a cultural context

College, Career, and Community Readiness:
Communicate effectively (verbal, oral, technologies), a lifelong learner for future competence, able to plan to attain current and future goals, provide adequately for self and family

Note: From "*Hawaiian-focused charter school hōʻike: a demonstration of student achievement of the Hawaiian-focused charter school vision of the graduate.*" by C. Keehne, 2017, p. 3.

Assessments such as these are more holistic and illustrate the breadth of student growth and development. Reviewing the literature on such assessments reveals another area where micro-level educational reform and related research can impact macro-level educational policy and practice.

Research in Hawaiian-Focused Education

Hawaiian-focused schools know that demonstrating the effectiveness of their education model is crucial to their longevity. Schools must administer annual standardized assessments, but these tests focus on math and English proficiency from a solely Western context and "convey an incomplete story of student growth and success" (Keehne, 2017).

Much of the data collection and analysis of Hawaiian-focused schools has been conducted by Kamehameha Schools. Shawn Kanaʻiaupuni and Koren Ishibashi (2005) conducted the first analysis of Hawaiʻi Charter Schools to understand achievement and student engagement outcomes. Based on math and reading test scores, along with attendance rates, Native Hawaiian students in charter schools were performing better. As the authors state, "Efforts to develop and pursue alternatives outside the conventional public school classroom

have yielded promising results and strong prospects for the future of Native Hawaiian education" (p. 12).

Kana‘iaupuni and Kawai‘ae‘a (2008) define culture-based education as "the grounding of instruction and student learning in the values, norms, knowledge, beliefs, practices, experiences, places, and language that are the foundation of a culture" (p. 71). Their research operationalized culture-based teaching through an Indigenous framework and revealed five critical components to culture-based education: language, family and community, content, context, and assessment and accountability. They developed a Hawaiian Indigenous Educator Rubric from these components, which could aid schools and teachers in including cultural strategies in the classroom, stressing that "the objective of the tool is not to devalue non-Hawaiian indigenous approaches to teaching and learning but to define and articulate teaching behaviors and philosophies specifically from a Hawaiian indigenous education perspective" (Kana‘iaupuni & Kawai‘ae‘a, p. 77). Kana‘iaupuni, in later research with Ledward (2013), added relevance as a hallmark of culture-based education, declaring it the cognitive glue leading to educational success. Empirical research and increasing numbers of case studies on culturally relevant education support its effectiveness.

In 2006, Kamehameha Schools spearheaded a study of Hawaiian Cultural Influences in Education (Ledward, Takayama & Elia, 2009). It was the first large-scale empirical study of its kind among high school students. This collaborative effort between Kamehameha Schools, the Hawai‘i Department of Education, and the Nā Lei Na‘auao Alliance collected survey data from conventional public schools, charter schools, schools with Hawaiian immersion programs, and private schools. Participation included 600 teachers at 62 participating schools and over 2,000

students and parents, respectively. The following relationships between culture-based educational strategies and student educational outcomes were identified:

> First, culture-based education (CBE) positively impacts student socio-emotional well-being (e.g., identity, self-efficacy, social relationships). Second, enhanced socio-emotional well-being, in turn, positively affects math and reading test scores. Third, CBE is positively related to math and reading test scores for all students, and particularly for those with low socioemotional development, most notably when supported by overall CBE use within the school. (Kanaʻiaupuni, Ledward, & Jensen, 2010, p. 1)

The survey also showed that students taught with culture-based strategies exhibited increased civic engagement, Hawaiian cultural affiliation, and academic motivation compared to their peers who were not. Students also reported higher levels of trust with teachers and staff, which promoted a deeper sense of belonging at school. In summary, results were "consistent with prior qualitative studies, indicating that culture-based educational strategies positively impact student outcomes, particularly Native Hawaiian student outcomes" (Kanaʻiaupuni et al., 2010, p. 1).

Measuring student outcomes through authentic assessment has been a practice of Hawaiian-focused schools since their inception. One such measurement tool is a performance-based assessment called hōʻike. Hōʻike assesses students' cultural competence and academic understanding. Chelsea Keehne (2017) studied hōʻike at four charter schools through interviews with over 50 stakeholders. The study explored the role of hōʻike in embodying the success indicators within the Vision of the Graduate framework. The research revealed principal themes centered around cultural knowledge, academic synthesis, and readiness for college, career, and community. The findings acknowledge hōʻike as a key method for preparing students for the

future, underlining the value of culturally integrated education in fostering holistic development and success.

Research has also been undertaken with teachers of HCBE. Christy Mishina (2017) conducted a mixed methods study with 48 teachers from a private school committed to integrating Hawaiian language and cultural practices. Surveys and interviews were used to better understand how teachers used a Hawaiian culture-based framework to create more culturally inclusive learning environments that resonated with students. The findings underscored the significance of cultural relevance in education and the need for innovative strategies to enhance community engagement and educator training within Hawaiian culture-based schools.

A 2020 study by Ebersole and Kanahele-Mossman investigated pre-service teachers enrolled in a mainstream teacher education program and their articulation of the word aloha. By qualitatively analyzing teachers' self-reflections and questionnaires, positive shifts were observed in their understanding of the word aloha. Shifts in understanding such as this can influence classroom practices and support efforts in the successful implementation of cultural frameworks such as HĀ. Hawaiian education reform for keiki is a more considerable systemic change, and studies such as this can inform and encourage changes that bring the entire learning community along with aloha.

In the *Ka Huaka'i: 2021 Native Hawaiian Educational Assessment* (Kana'iaupuni et al., 2021), many of the educational efforts listed in this review were recognized for their contributions to the "(re)normalization of Kanaka ways of knowing and being" (p. 334). However, the assessment shows that efforts have not yet materialized into a population-level impact. Social inequities, such as limited economic opportunity and unemployment, continue to

be barriers along with lingering effects of historical injustice. The assessment does, however, endorse the continuance of HCBE.

This section provides an overview of HCBE's historical and philosophical underpinnings, tracing its evolution and highlighting its pivotal role in shaping student identity. The narrative begins with the integration of Hawaiian culture, language, and history into public education. It summarizes the efforts that led to Hawaiian-focused Charter Schools and the visionary Nā Lei Naʻauao Alliance, which have been instrumental in nurturing a culturally enriched educational environment. This historical context is essential for understanding the current academic landscape and its impact on the identity development of students involved in Hawaiian-focused education and participants in this research. The literature also provides a solid foundation for the research and a reference point for future findings.

4.2 Kanu o ka ʻĀina New Century Public Charter School

This section centers on the educational approach of Kanu o ka ʻĀina New Century Public Charter School (Kanu), focusing on the integration of Hawaiian values and cultural practices. Additionally, it highlights the school's educational ethos and student outcomes in preparation for investigating the potential effects on identity and well-being.

ʻŌlelo Noʻeau

Kanu is a founding member of the Nā Lei Naʻauao Native Hawaiian Charter School Alliance and is committed to community-designed education that embraces Hawaiian cultural values, philosophies, and ideologies. The school is guided by ʻōlelo noʻeau as described in their 2009 Accreditation Report:

> The most comprehensive wisdom upon which we draw to guide our instruction of the whole child comes from our ʻōlelo noʻeau, which establish core values and behavioral

> guidelines for KANU's children and adults. Students in grades K-12 are continuously exposed to the wisdom of this proverbial knowledge in all of their settings. The transfer of Hawaiian knowledge is firmly rooted and preserved in an oral tradition. (p. 99)

Five ʻōlelo noʻeau were chosen to foster a secure, nurturing, and positive atmosphere that supports the educational, social, and personal growth of haumāna, kumu, and the broader learning community (Kanu o ka ʻĀina New Century Public Charter School, n.d.). These proverbs are also found in school curricula, instruction, and assessment:

- Aloha kekahi i kekahi (Love one another)
- Mālama i kou kuleana (Take care of your responsibilities)
- Kōkua aku kōkua mai (Give help, receive help)
- Mahalo i ka mea loaʻa (Be thankful for what we have)
- Kūlia i ka nuʻu (Strive for the highest potential)

All school community members are expected to practice and uphold these values.

ʻŌlelo Noʻeau are featured in the school's Hunehune Kalo newsletter. This form of kupuna wisdom reinforces Kanu's pedagogy of aloha. The monthly newsletter has been published yearly since the school opened in 2000. The Hunehune Kalo shares recent haumāna projects, achievements, and upcoming events, encouraging ʻohana participation.

The school sets a theme to guide its curricular focus and collective learning each year. These themes are often inspired by or directly drawn from ʻōlelo noʻeau. For example, the 2024-2025 school year theme is Nānā ʻĀina. This phrase, which was used by paniolo as they surveyed their landscape, reflects the rich paniolo heritage of Waimea, where the school is located. Nānā ʻĀina was an everyday practice for paniolo who had to adapt to changes in the environment and also had to make decisions that were best for the ʻāina and for themselves as stewards. During

the school year, students will have opportunities to use the skill of nānā, observation, and to implement environmental stewardship on land and in the ocean.

Piko

The 2009 Accreditation Report elaborates on the fundamental purpose of the school, emphasizing the central role of student connectedness within the educational framework:

> Student connectedness is inherent in all of our programs as well as our efforts to come together as an interconnected learning ʻohana. Helping students recognize who they are, where their talents lay and how they are connected to Hawaiʻi's people and places is KANU's purpose. (p. 107)

Fostering a sense of connectedness among students is fundamental at Kanu. This connectedness builds a unified learning community, or ʻohana, where students can develop their identity. Professor David Sing (2000) asserts, "A person's 'being' is built around a strong connection of 'self' as it relates to family, culture and his/her community" (p. 14).

Kanu creates a strong sense of community through piko (Matsu, 2018b). Piko is the navel, center, or linking point. Thompson (2017) provides a deeper understanding of piko:

> Nā Piko ʻĒkolu is a Hawaiian construct that describes three metaphysical points on the human body (i.e., Piko Poʻo: Piko Waena; and Piko Maʻi) that connect kānaka ʻōiwi to those who come before us, those who are with us now, and those who will succeed us. (p. 35)

At the center of the Kanu campus is the physical piko. Each morning before the start of school, there is a gathering, also called piko. As a form of centering and linking, morning piko involves the entire student body and faculty gathering to welcome the day through oli, seek permission to be present in the learning space and open themselves to learning. The protocol of oli connects the

group to ancestors, each other, and the ‘āina. Protocol involves calling upon ancestors or kūpuna for guidance, centering the participants within a Hawaiian cultural context. School-wide announcements, recognitions, and celebrations are also part of this daily ritual, emphasizing the community’s collective engagement and readiness for educational and personal growth (Kanu o ka ‘Āina New Century Public Charter School, 2016).

Hui

Classroom practices at Kanu are grounded in values, with kumu and haumāna forming an ‘ohana-like bond that fosters a supportive and nurturing learning environment. Classes, referred to as hui, emphasize collaborative learning. In middle and high school, students of varying ages and skill levels work together on interdisciplinary projects. These projects are carefully planned in advance of the school year by the administration and kumu, based on available community resources and the intended educational objectives.

The curriculum integrates place-based and project-based learning, where students actively engage with their surroundings through activities like studying local ecosystems, preserving cultural sites, and perpetuating cultural practices such as makahiki and hula (Hansen, 2011). Daily lessons often blend subjects like math, science, and language arts into projects that connect historical knowledge with contemporary issues. Kumu guide each hui in developing inquiry-based skills, encouraging students to take ownership of their learning and connect their education to real-world challenges. This hands-on, culturally rooted approach, combined with the collaborative hui structure and community-driven projects, ensures that students experience education not as isolated subjects but as a living, interconnected journey that honors their heritage and prepares them for the future.Moʻokūʻauhau is seamlessly integrated in the place-based and project-based curriculum at Kanu. As previously mentioned, moʻokūʻauhau is not

limited to human relations but extends to lineages of land, plants, waʻa, and more. This enables students to learn and practice moʻokūʻauhau repeatedly throughout the school year. Specifically related to family ancestral lines, students begin tracing their genealogy in kindergarten, aiming to build their moʻokūʻauhau to at least six generations, provided records are available. At graduation, each student individually hōʻike their moʻokūʻauhau, a proud moment for both the graduates and their ʻohana.

Ka lei piko is an annual practice for kindergarten through 5th-grade hui that teaches moʻokūʻauhau, fosters unity and broadens community connection by involving families. At the beginning of the year, students and teachers contribute symbolic native Hawaiian plants or flowers to a collective lei, signifying their hopes for the new school year. Each mea kanu woven into the lei holds significance for the contributor. This activity is not only about creating a lei but also about each participant sharing their moʻokūʻauhau, which strengthens the bonds within the group and connects them with their ancestors. This tradition is particularly meaningful in elementary classes, where parents and kūpuna are encouraged to participate, assisting their children in selecting the mea kanu and practicing their moʻokūʻauhau. Upon completion, the lei piko is placed in the classroom, symbolizing unity through shared manaʻo and a collective commitment to the school's mission, vision, and purpose. **ʻOhana**

ʻOhana are an integral part of other Kanu events as well, including makahiki, kani ke ʻō, and hula drama. The support for keiki is evident in the hours spent making lei, sewing costumes, providing food and security, and many other ways. Kanu's annual Hula Drama requires the most support from ʻohana. The multi-day event is a culminating hōʻike, or performative assessment, for the entire student body and is based on the school's curricular theme for the year. The first Hula Drama performed in 2001 was themed Hawaiʻi Pono Ī. Since then, themes have included E

Hoʻi I Nā Kūpuna (Return to the ancestors), Pūpūkahi I Holomua (Together we will progress), and Mālama Honua (Care for the world - honoring Hokuleʻa's worldwide voyage). Moʻokūʻauhau is interwoven into each Hula Drama due to the nature of the performed oli and mele. In particular years, there is a heavier focus on it, such as the 2013 theme Kuʻu Ēwe, Kuʻu Piko, Kuʻu Iwi, Kuʻu Koko (My umbilical cord, my navel, my bones, my blood). At Hula Drama, students showcase what they have learned throughout the year through dance, chants, and narratives based on the theme. As an authentic assessment, the event honors the ancestral practice of mastery demonstration and encourages students to kūlia i ka nuʻu, seek excellence in their pursuits.

Relevant ʻohana and ʻāina-based experiences deepen students' connection, fostering a sense of responsibility and belonging. Kanu's supportive, culturally affirming environment promotes positive identity formation through "traditions that feel sacred to students, staff, and ʻohana. These recurring rituals and traditions capture the essence of the school's identity" (Kanu o ka ʻĀina New Century Public Charter School, 2016, p. 58). Matsu (2018a) conducted research at Kanu specific to the stories that form the school's collective identity. Through observations and interviews with both adults and students of the school, the research unveiled a strong foundational narrative born from the school's inception story. The inception story described the crucial role of Hawaiian cultural education in nurturing an environment where Hawaiian children flourish. The study found that the school community's widespread embrace of this core narrative was significantly fostered through various opportunities for recalling and sharing these narratives, reinforcing a robust sense of belonging among staff and students. The school's practices and traditions further enriched this sense of belonging and identity, fostering a unique educational ecosystem deeply intertwined with Hawaiian cultural values.

ʻĀina

The school identifies itself as "plants of the land," symbolizing its deep connection to the environment. This concept reflects the belief that Kānaka ʻŌiwi are intricately linked to the land through their moʻokūʻauhau, which trace their origins directly to the ʻāina. The school embraces this relationship, viewing ʻāina as part of their extended ʻohana, emphasizing the responsibility to care for and sustain it as a vital part of their identity and cultural heritage. In light of this connection, ʻāina-based instruction is a core part of the school's curriculum.

Students engage with ʻāina through projects that involve maintaining native plants and landscapes, learning about the cultural and historical significance of these practices, and applying knowledge to sustain the natural environment around them. This is part of a broader commitment to mālama ʻāina, which aligns with the school's learner outcomes to perpetuate a desire for learning and maintaining relationships with the environment and community.

All students are actively involved in maintaining green spaces around the campus. A farm-to-school program with a farm-to-table focus provides hands-on agricultural education, teaching students about raising animals, sustainability, and food systems. Students learn about the entire food cycle, from growing and harvesting food to preparing and consuming it. Through these relevant programs, students put mālama ʻāina into practice, preparing them to be responsible stewards of the environment. They are equipped with practical skills and a deeper understanding of sustainability to carry into their future communities and careers.

Learner Outcomes

Based on Kanu's described educational approaches, it is crucial to highlight the intended outcomes for students. Kanu's original detailed implantation plan submitted to the State

explained their mission of kūlia i ka nu‘ū, an aspiration to have students reach their highest potential (Kanu, 2000). The plan also included the following learner outcomes:

- Active participant in the perpetuation of Hawaiian language, culture, and traditions
- Complex thinker, lifelong learner
- Collaborative problem solver, effective communicator, and user of technology
- Responsible to self and others, leadership, and cooperative skills
- Able to transform neighborhoods into sustainable communities, preserving Hawai‘i’s natural resources
- Positive concept of self, develop physical and emotional health, career development

The school used these student outcomes through its 2009 accreditation by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).

Kanu pioneered the work with the Nā Lei Na‘auao Alliance on culturally relevant assessments and school-specific measures, which began in 2013 and led to the Vision of the Graduate competencies. The competencies, built from Kanu’s original student outcomes, were adopted and included in their 2016 accreditation self-study. The revised student outcomes became:

- Cultural Knowledge, Responsibility to ‘Ohana, Community, and Environment: Demonstrate, understand, apply Hawaiian values, respect and honor genealogy, recognize and accept leadership roles to manifest cultural knowledge, know a place (history, resources) as a piko and a foundation for making larger connections, understand the importance of reciprocal relationships and responsibilities in a cultural context
- College & Career Readiness: Communicate effectively (verbal, oral, technologies), a

lifelong learner for future competence, able to plan to attain current and future goals, provide adequately for self and family

Kanu continued to refine the Vision of the Graduate competencies, producing their own distinctive Kanu Ideal Graduate outcomes used by the school today. Their most recent accreditation committee report states, “The successful Kanu graduate exemplifies Kūlia i ka Nuʻu i ka paepae kapu o Līloa; values learning through an applied growth mindset with the confidence and discipline to transform their world (kanaka, ʻohana, kaiāulu, lāhui, honua)” (Western Association of Schools and Colleges, 2023). The school-wide learner outcomes include:

- Demonstrate cultural perseverance through oral and visual communication.
- Value and examine Indigenous and global perspectives through leadership and community engagement.
- Formulate and critically apply the skills necessary to activate positive change in society.
- Identify and observe traditional knowledge systems in relation to natural and community cycles.
- Apply and analyze traditional practices and behaviors to cultivate community awareness and engagement.
- Address community issues and create culturally responsive solutions.
- Perpetuate a desire for learning and maintaining relationships with the environment and community.
- Demonstrate a connection to place through observation, identification, and independent inquiry.
- Embrace the kuleana of contributing to the community.

- Establish self-identity by honoring genealogy.

After 24 years, the outcomes have remained relatively unchanged, focusing on cultural perpetuation, community, environment, responsibility, life-long learning, and positive self-identity. This sustained commitment to the original student outcomes reflects its educational model's enduring relevance and effectiveness. The continued success in improving student performance and cultural identity underscores the robustness and visionary nature of the school's foundational goals.

This section of the literature review underscores the role of Kanu in integrating Hawaiian cultural values and practices into its learning environment. Through an examination of the school's foundational philosophies, learner outcomes, and the practical application of ʻōlelo noʻeau within its curriculum, the section illustrates how Kanu nurtures a connection between students, ʻohana, and culture. The school's emphasis on community and cultural connectedness also plays a pivotal role in developing students' self-awareness and sense of belonging, which are integral to their identity formation. This exploration is particularly relevant to the broader discourse on the potential impacts of such educational practices on student identity.

4.3 Chapter Summary

Through the compilation of literature on Hawaiian culture-based education, a moʻokūʻauhau has emerged, capturing the evolution from a political movement to the establishment of schools dedicated to culture and language revitalization. Although population impact has not yet been attained, this fifty-year lineage has realized Hawaiian pride and cultural vibrancy. Central to this chapter was an examination of Kanu o ka ʻĀina New Century Public Charter School, showcasing how its pedagogical approaches and educational strategies influence students' identity development and well-being.

Despite the rich history and philosophy detailed in the literature, there remains a critical gap in empirical studies that assess the effectiveness of these educational reforms. The evidence suggests that such reforms have beneficially influenced students' identity and well-being. However, it also underscores the ongoing need for robust research into specific cultural integration methods essential for Hawaiian education's continued advancement. Additionally, while this chapter has shed light on the profound contributions of Kanu, more focused studies are required to understand and enhance the school's impact on student identity and community well-being.

Having explored the existing body of knowledge surrounding Hawaiian education, mo'okū'auhau, and identity development, we now turn our attention to the lived experiences of those engaging with those practices today. The literature review has provided a foundation from which we can examine the rich personal narratives collected through talk story. The data will illustrate participants' lived experiences and provide a basis for exploring how traditional practices are integrated into modern education settings and their effect on students.

CHAPTER FIVE - DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

5.0 Chapter Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed interpretation of qualitative data collected during the research process. The purpose is to elucidate how ancestral connections influence and shape individuals' sense of self and well-being. Through thematic analysis, the chapter aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the complex relationship between moʻokūʻauhau and identity, supported by detailed manaʻo and moʻolelo shared by participants during our talk story sessions and hui meetings. Each of those discussions centered on the influence of moʻokūʻauhau in the lives of kūpuna, teachers, and graduates. Following these rich and meaningful sessions, I felt tremendous responsibility for the knowledge and experiences that participants expressed. I was grateful for the trust that they extended to me in capturing their thoughts for this thesis. The process of transcribing their manaʻo allowed me to slow down and ponder each contribution to reveal the similarities and differences, culminating in this analysis. It is important to note that each participant may interpret the coding and selected themes differently.

I initially used the process of coding to identify patterns, insights, and relationships in the data. As I broke the data down into smaller segments, I was able to group them into descriptive codes that captured the essence of the data segments. I looked for the most significant and focused codes to refine these into categories representing broader themes. Twelve focused categories emerged, each with its own nuanced difference, contributing uniquely to the overall findings: sense of belonging, mana, ʻohana, pride in ancestry, connection to land, ancestral presence, support and security, gratitude for heritage, ancestral stories, community connection, identity and heritage, and personal growth.

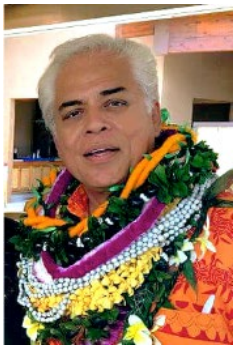
Next, I used axial coding to determine how the focused categories related to each other so they could be contextualized into a thematic framework. Because this research looked at the influence of moʻokūʻauhau as experienced specifically at Kanu and was conducted predominantly with individuals related to the school, Kanu's five core values serve as the thematic framework for the data. As discussed in the preceding literature reviews, those values are the guiding principles that the Hawaiian education movement purposefully incorporated into their education system due to their transformative potential in developing student identity.

Organizing the qualitative data about the influence of learning moʻokūʻauhau on identity development through the school's values is crucial for several reasons. It ensures that research findings align with Kanu's mission and provide context for understanding the impact of moʻokūʻauhau instruction on students. This approach facilitates targeted interventions that support identity development in ways consistent with the school's ethos and demonstrates the research's relevance. Additionally, it enables a structured evaluation of moʻokūʻauhau instruction, assessing its effectiveness in meeting the school's values-driven objectives. By respecting cultural significance and offering a holistic view of student development, this method enhances the clarity and applicability of the findings, making them more useful for informing educational practice.

5.1 Hoʻolauna

This structure of data analysis by theme facilitates the interweaving of participant voices. Some of those voices are kūpuna. I was fortunate to have two kūpuna, each raised in ʻohana settings that treasured moʻokūʻauhau and understood the importance of keeping family names, lineage, and moʻolelo alive. Their voices as kāne and wahine, as well as cultural practitioners and educators respectively, lend kupuna wisdom and ancestral knowledge to this analysis. The

following introductions of these kūpuna and the teacher and graduate participants are taken directly from talk story transcripts, which is appropriate for research related to identity.



My name is Cy Bridges; I'm from Hau'ula. I was born in Honolulu at Queen's Hospital. We were living, first as a little kid, we lived in town in a place called Kamakela, Honolulu. That was just off Liliha St., and then we moved to Kāne'ohe, and we lived there for a few years and moved back to Hau'ula. We purchased our family land; it was part of the kuleana that was conveyed to my ancestor in July 1850 by Kamehameha III. I'm about the 8th generation that's living there. On the property, we have burials; people were born, lived, died, and were buried there right on the property. But like all Hawaiians, we are not only from there. My mother is from Hau'ula, but her grandmother is from a different island. Our family is from all over and we were raised in different places, but Hawaiian. My mother was pure Hawaiian, and my father was, of course, he was a Bridges, but he was raised in a Hawaiian household. His grandfather was Charlie Bridges and his father came from Maine in 1862 and met a Hawaiian girl, they married and they had four children and out of the four children, one boy, that was my great grandfather. I grew up with four great-grandmothers. None of them were from Honolulu. One was from Nāpō'opo'o, South Kona. One was from One'uli, Makena, Maui. One was from Waiopai, Kaupō, Maui, and one was from Hālawa Valley, Moloka'i. My tūtūman was Penaka Kalokuokamaile. He was from Nāpo'opo'o. And another tūtū, Edward Kamakau Lilikalani, he was a genealogist for King Kalākaua and Queen Lili'uokalalni. He was an orator. When he died in 1937, they said he was the last living royal court chanter of Hawai'i. He started as a court chanter at the age of 19 with Kamehameha IV and Queen Emma and then with Kamehameha V, Lunalilo, Kalākaua, and Lili'uokalani.

Cy Bridges has been passionate about moʻokūʻauhau since his youth. He is a renowned kumu hula, master chanter, genealogist, and lecturer on cultural traditions and protocol. In 2014, he retired from the Polynesian Cultural Center after 45 years of serving in various positions, all related to performance, production, and cultural authenticity. He has generously given his time to numerous boards and associations primarily focused on the stewardship and preservation of the Hawaiian culture.

My name is Barbara Robertson, and I was born Barbara Tepa Phillips. I am the fourth child of a family of six. I was born in Waikiʻi on the saddle road in November of 1936 when my father began working for the Parker Ranch. He worked for Parker Ranch for 45 years before he retired. Being the fourth child in a family of six, I was the child who needed to work on the outside and help my father, and I had two older sisters, so they helped my mother in the home. But I helped my dad, so I learned how to feed pigs, raise chickens, tend to the yard, and also help him when he needed to fix the car. All the time I was growing up, my interest was in moʻokūʻauhau, finding who my ancestors were. Part of my mother's history is from Kona, and part of it is in Kohala. My mother being the twelfth child in a family, being the youngest child by the time she was born…well, she was about two and a half when her mother died, and so as far as grandparents, we had no grandparents. They were all dead by the time we came along. My father, he was given away when he was born. My mother was pure; she was 100% Hawaiian, and my father was half Hawaiian and half Norwegian. As children, we learned how to plant things. We learned about what's a good time to plant, when to gather. So plants, animals, the weather, planting time, harvesting time were all part of our culture. I learned about

teaching as a young girl. I fell in love with my ability to teach children, and that was my goal. Being the child of a Parker Ranch worker, there was no possible way that I would ever become a teacher, but through the help of, I think, Heavenly Father, I was able to find a way to finally get an education and become a teacher. I love the work I did. I loved the children. I miss them. I think if I was able to go back and live my life again, I would do the same thing I did because I truly loved my profession. So grateful that I had so many opportunities and finally to come back to my own culture.

Barbara earned her teaching degree in 1962 and went on to have a 50-year career in education. The majority of her teaching and principalship roles were on Hawai‘i Island, where she was able to serve her people. Barbara is an avid genealogist, helping many people find and connect to their ancestors.

My name is Pomai. I am from Waimea. My dad is Clayton Bertelmann, part of his ‘ohana came from Germany. Two brothers came to Hawai‘i and ended up marrying into ‘Ōiwi families. They moved after traveling to Moloka‘i and then Hawai‘i, they settled in Ka‘u, in Waiohinu. My mom’s ‘ohana, Lindsey. My mom is Diedre Francine Momianuhea Lindsey, and her mom is from Waimea, born and raised in Waimea. However, her grandmother comes from Pu‘uanahulu, and her grandfather on her mom’s side comes from Kona and is also pili Kanaka to Kohala. Then my grandfather, her dad, is from Waimea as well. So, I’m fortunate to be able to grow up here in Waimea. I currently am employed and really happy to be at Kanu o ka ‘Āina New Century Public Charter School. There was a school that my mom and dad were going to help to support and then opened in 2000. I was first introduced to the program when the school founder had asked if our ‘ohana, who has kuleana to the voyaging canoe Makali‘i, traditionally a sailing canoe,

and asked if we'd like to introduce our program into Kanu o ka ʻĀina. So the first year I started here in June of 2001, and was really happy to do waʻa because I had become, I guess, embedded and ingrained in the DNA already. So I jumped in. My husband was also asked to teach math. We both were able to be introduced to this movement, that I think really helped us to grow. It helped us to grow in a way that connected us back to our places, our families, and the generations before and after us. So, 23 years later, I'm very happy to still be here, and I'm grateful that the school is in Kuhio Village, grateful that our keiki, our ʻōpio, get to learn from a space and help us learn from a space, and respond to the things that need to happen to this space so the people now and into the future can thrive here. There's so much work to do.

Pomaikalani Bertelmann is currently the hoʻokele haumāna counselor at Kanu. She has sailed on multiple deep-sea canoe voyages with the *Makaliʻi, Hōkūleʻa,* and the *Alingano Maisu*. She has shared her experiences and culture with students through her work at Nā Kālai Waʻa and the Polynesian Voyaging Society.

I am the great-grandchild of the musician who impacted Hawaiʻi in the mainland. I am a granddaughter of a first-time cowboy of Parker Ranch. I am the daughter of a lei maker who has chosen to teach our seniors here how to make lei. I am the mother of a child who has looked to his grandfather in his teachings. The first time I heard of moʻokūʻauhau it was my junior year in high school when Aunty Ku and Uncle Nalei were my Hawaiian language teachers. Then I went into college with Uncle Kalena Silva; he opened my eyes as to going and researching where I come from and sitting down with my grandmother, my grandfather, my mom, and my dad. My older sister was also a language teacher and my younger sister who is also a preschool teacher. We took it upon ourselves to kind of

like really dig deep into moʻokūʻauhau. Moʻokūʻauhau is sharing who you are, where you're from, and the generations as far as you can go back and then just knowing where your family comes from, whether it be here in Hawaiʻi. We have family from Nova Scotia. We have family from Ireland. We even have family from Tahiti. So, as we grew up learning this, it just got deepened. I have been teaching for 22 years. This would be 16 years at Kanu. Makemake wau e aʻo keiki i nā lā a pau, nui ka hauʻoli - they bring joy to my spirit teaching keiki this young.

Maua Puhi is currently the papa kukui, first-grade teacher at Kanu, and the proud parent of a 2022 graduate of the school.

My name is Naomi Kuʻuleialoha Kamakea Kaʻae. I married Tachera. I was born in Kealakekua here on Hawaiʻi Island. My dad is Dudley Kaleohano Silva Kaʻae. My mom is Joleanne Peneku. My ʻohana is from Laie, last name Kalili. My second great-grandma is Alice Shaw Kaʻae from Lahaina. She was the kahu of Mokuhinia, Mokuʻula. I'm the youngest of five siblings. In 1990 we moved from Kailua-Kona to Waimea. I went to Waimea Elementary and Intermediate, and then high school, I went to Honokaʻa. My freshman year, there was a new program, the Hawaiian language program. My sophomore year, I fully went into the program of Hawaiian Academy. Then, my senior year, it got chartered, so I was the first graduating class of Kanu o ka ʻĀina New Century Public Charter School. Throughout my life, I've always wanted to connect to my ancestors for whatever reason, and then share that to make connections to other people and places.

Ku‘ulei is the mother of two boys. She earned her bachelor’s in psychology and her master’s in exceptional student education, obtaining certification as a licensed behavior analyst. She returned to work at Kanu o ka ‘Āina for a time and is now a special education instructor at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. Additionally, she is currently a doctoral candidate at Chaminade University of Honolulu.

My name is Joshua Lanakilaoka‘āinaokapono Mangauil, and I graduated from Kanu o ka ‘Āina in 2004. I’ve periodically been coming back and teaching at Kanu off and on since 2005. Kanu, that’s where I was introduced to the concept of mo‘okū‘auhau. I remember that journey taking me beyond Hawai‘i, and that was really beautiful. On my Irish or Scottish side, my grandmother is from Edinburgh. I remember getting to look into that and finding all these names; it was cool to be able to branch off into other areas. The principal rule is you honor your ohana. So, for me, it is my Hawaiian side, Filipino, Irish, Scottish. I’m an entrepreneur. I have my own business, it’s a Native Hawaiian cultural education business. My cultural exchange program that’s grown and evolved from an exchange Kanu o ka ‘Āina sent me on when I was a senior in high school. It is actually a big component to who I am today. I’ve built and expanded my programs internationally. We work with Japan, Poland, and a number of different Native tribes; we’ve stood and created different branches of solidarity and support for each other’s movements. My organization is taking over a 70-acre parcel in Honoka‘a, and we’re starting a massive food forest, completely shifting the landscape for Hāmākua. I’ve been a teacher in the Department of Education and taught pre-K to 12th grade since 2005. I’ve taught here at Kanu o ka ‘Āina over the years, Honoka‘a Elementary, Intermediate, High School, Waiākea Elementary, Laupāhoehoe. I’ve taught at colleges and lectured at about 20

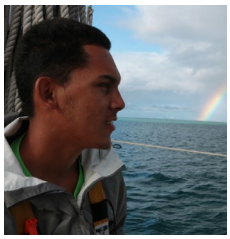
different colleges across the country. I'm the first Native public charter school student to run for public office. I led one of the largest movements in Native Hawaiian history, which was the stand to protect Mauna Kea. I'm the first Native Hawaiian public charter school student to ever receive a government appointment.

Lanakila is a kumu hula dedicated to perpetuating Native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices. His organization, HŌʻĀ, hosts a wide range of community activation opportunities, including the Ka Makahiki ʻAha Pule ʻĀina Holo annual prayer run for the health and well-being of Hawaiʻi.

My name is Katherin Lelekahonuikaʻoliʻoli Lindsey, and I go by Honu. I graduated in 2012. Both Kaniela and I were here from the very beginning of Kanu. I started in 2000. We were in kindergarten and first grade. My family works here. I have a brother who was a tech teacher, now an animal husbandry teacher, and my mom works at Kalo. My dad has worked here. My other brother has volunteered here like it's ʻohana. Kanu is home. I graduated, went to school, served a mission. I came back after I graduated from college, and my first year here, I taught kindergarten. Then, I did special education from 6th to 12th for four years after that. Currently, I'm working for Liliʻuokalani Trust; I do ʻāina, animal, and art therapy with 13-18-year-olds. A lot of what I learned here is what I take with me there, which I'm grateful for. I was raised in a family where genealogy and record keeping are such a big deal. I've always had access to these names. It wasn't until I was in middle school that I started to realize I would drive to certain places on the island, and I'd go to Kaʻu, and I'd feel uncomfortable. I would learn that I'm a descendant of Kamehameha, and because of his story with his cousin, that's why I don't feel comfortable or why I feel so pili when I go to Kohala. I've lived in Waimea my whole life, and so Waimea is such a big part of who I am and my identity and a part of that

mo‘okū‘auhau. When I go to Kauai, I feel grounded, and I never understood why I would have those feelings, but the more mo‘olelo I hear or I learn and the more I learn about my kūpuna, it makes sense to my na‘au. My papa being from Koloa Kauai, I remember the first time I stepped there, and I made that connection; he was a little kid running around in the streets and maybe working in the same lo‘i; it just made me feel connected.

Honu earned her bachelor’s at Brigham Young University Hawai‘i and is currently pursuing a master’s degree in public health from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa.



My name is Kaniela Kawai‘apoloa Anakalea-Buckley. I graduated from Kanu o ka ‘Āina in 2013, and I live in Waimea. I was born in Hilo. I do a lot of different things. I’ve worked in the valley, worked with my dad in audio and sound, worked on wa‘a. I’m working with La‘iopua in Kona and with Nā Kālai Wa‘a. Mo‘okū‘auhau, it‘s kind of different now as we’ve gotten older because as you get older, you can identify what people you’re kind of emulating; I see myself acting like my grandfather sometimes or my father or my mother. My great grandfather, John Kamaiki Anakalea, he’s from Maui, but there are a lot of stories about him in that area, Kapalua area. Actually, with Kanu o ka ‘Āina, we took the fifth-grade class there one year, and I was a kāne chaperone. We got to go up to Kahakuloa, and we got to work in the lo‘i farm right next to my ‘ohana’s property. The uncle that was there, he was telling all these stories about my family. Your ttū used to live over here, and she used to be the main luna of the ‘āina. So I was just happy because the school forced us to learn our mo‘okū‘auhau, and they made us go ask questions. You have to learn where your grandparents are from and what ‘āina they’re from. As a kid, you’re just trying to get the information and put it on paper and study it so you can pass the test. But as you get older, what you’re doing in life kind of evolves a little bit, and your mo‘okū‘auhau does change. It’s not the same paper you wrote when

you were a kid. So I think as we get older, that word is so interesting because it's evolved into such a bigger thing. I know a lot more about my moʻokūʻauhau.

Kaniela has been part of the voyaging community since 2005. He was one of the youngest crew members in the monumental Mālama Honua Worldwide Voyage. Through waʻa experiences, Kaniela continues to bridge traditional and new technologies, share and create global relationships, and discover the world to bring it home and pass that knowledge on.

I'm Mālie Sarsona, and I graduated in 2017. My parents put me here because they wanted me to reconnect with my Hawaiian side. I'm not that much Hawaiian, a little more than 6%, but if someone were to ask what I am, I would say I'm Hawaiian because that is where I'm comfortable. I know the language, I know the culture, I have existed in that space for so long. The way I think, the way I do things, the way I speak, it is very much Hawaiian. I was born in Maui. We came from Maui; my dad came here for a job. When I say I'm from a place, I say I'm from Waimea just because this is where I grew up; this is the place that raised me. We started exploring, talking to people, and making connections. We're like, oh, I have a lot of family here. You treat them like family because they probably are family. I have my daughter, who's four; she was born here, and I think she doesn't ever want to leave either. I focus anything I do as far as work; it's community-related to Waimea, just helping small businesses, working with farms.

Mālie Sarsona attended Kanu from sixth grade. She is an entrepreneur and currently serves as the marketing manager for her start-up, Waimea Herb Company, which produces locally grown, harvested, and handmade Hawaiian herbal teas. Mālie has also returned to Kanu as a tutor.

> *I'm Noah Akana-Dizol, and I graduated in 2018. I was born and raised in Waimea. I've lived here my whole life, but a lot of my family is on ʻŌahu. I'm Hawaiian, and the rest is Filipino. I work here [at Kanu] now. I never thought I would come back, but the opportunity arose, and I jumped on it. I've only been here for a year, but I love every minute of it, being able to see old teachers and interact with them. Coming here, you don't just learn about education, you also learn how to not be afraid of dirt and hard work and being outside more than inside. That's why my parents sent us here, and when I have kids, hopefully I can send them here. I'll be super proud that I can send my kids. I plan to stay here as long as possible because it's a very family-oriented place to work, and that's awesome.*

Noah Akana-Dizol attended Kanu for ten years. After graduating, he went to college and lived abroad. In 2022, he returned to the Kanu campus to work on the landscape crew.

I was grateful to learn more about each participant. Their introductions placed family relations and ʻāina at the forefront, with career and professional achievements either not mentioned or taking a backseat to descriptions of their ʻohana. This emphasis on ʻohana will reappear in the thematic analysis. Given the focus of this research, references to the school and participants' experiences there are expected. All participants agreed to be identified in this work. They are referred to by first names. Teacher names are prefaced with Kumu, while kupuna names are prefaced in the customary Hawaiian way with ʻAnakala and ʻAnakē.

5.2 Aloha kekahi i kekahi

Aloha is more than a feeling of love; it is an expression or action toward someone or something. It is reciprocal in nature, as we see in the value aloha kekahi i kekahi - love one another, a two-way action. Familiar ways we observe aloha are in acts of compassion, showing respect, remembering, inclusion, service, affection, and charitable deeds. Through these acts, we give life to the recipient of our aloha. As the ʻōlelo noʻeau reminds us, "aloha mai no, aloha aku; o ka huhū ka mea e ola ʻole ai - when love is given, love should be returned; anger is the thing that gives no life" (Pukui, 1983, p. 15).

Moʻokūʻauhau provides an opportunity for aloha. Life is breathed into ancestors as they are remembered; in return, ancestor relationships can give a sense of belonging, as described by participants.

> *Lanakila: Genealogy, you know, that's where I feel that so many people feel so alone in the world and everything, too, because today's world doesn't value family in the same way or lineage.*
>
> *Noah: Moʻokūʻauhau is very important… getting to actually learn who these people were and are. But it's cool that I was able to represent however many generations back I could go when I finally graduated and being able to voice that out, my moʻokūʻauhau, to everybody about who my family is. It was when I gratduated, I really had to let it be known and say it in front of everybody, like a lot of people. It felt a little weird but it was really cool to know that we still do that here [at Kanu].*
>
> *Kuʻulei: I think you find pieces of you in your ancestors... We see walking genealogy. I see people, and I'm like, oh, you must be a so and so. When we have contact with that it's relevant to us because we can see specific features that go throughout generations, multiple generations. My eyes are from here, and my ears are from this line, and it's all combined. This is a visual representation of my moʻokūʻauhau.*

Mālie: It [moʻokūʻauhau] was hard in the beginning but it was definitely necessary. It gave a sense of comfort that I could be related to anyone like I always have a support network, you know, even though I may not know them. Doing it [moʻokūʻauhau] at graduation is one of the most stressful things because it's in front of everyone. You're on a stage; no one else is talking. You're in front of a microphone. But it was also interesting because it's kind of like claiming this is who I'm from, this is where I'm from. It's claiming your origin and just like wrapping everyone around you. This is my family. It's to speak names that have not been spoken for who knows how long, to remember those who maybe you're the last people who remembers them… It's you entering the community, and it's another way of pulling that community towards you by making that connection by speaking those names.

Kumu Maua: As we learn our moʻokūʻauhau… It's just that sense of family, that sense of aloha, that sense of lokahi. It's bringing in all those Hawaiian values, we want and are hoping that our keiki can take with them as they leave.

ʻAnakē Barbara: I think growing up with Hawaiian women who spoke the language so beautifully, that's all they talked about [moʻokūʻauhau]. They were always going back to their families because there was always this great aloha from one another.

Kuʻulei: When I engaged in Hawaiian genealogy that was like, okay, we have pictures of people I know. I know the area they're talking about; I can see it, I can feel it. I can smell the air; I can touch the water. That was more, it was connected versus somebody else's moʻolelo from other places. The whole idea of sense of place, sense of belonging, is the main reason why moʻokūʻauhau is so important.

ʻAnakē Barbara: It's the best gift that you can give your children…knowing who they are, where they come from. Understanding why their family is so lovely and so big because the more love you have in your family, the greater your family come together.

Learning and sharing moʻokūʻauhau can provide a profound sense of belonging and identity. Participants observed that by connecting with their ancestors, they could find comfort

and community as they saw pieces of themselves in their lineage and embraced a sense of ʻohana, aloha, and unity.

Moʻkūʻauhau and mana are intricately connected. Mana imbues a person with spiritual power across generations, deepening a sense of belonging. Participants shared their understanding of mana and its connection to moʻokūʻauhau.

> *Honu: I think moʻokūʻauhau is bigger than people. My papa being from Koloa, Kauai. I remember the first time I stepped there, and I made that connection. He was a little kid running around in the streets and maybe working in the same loʻi. It just made me feel connected. It grounds you and really does feed into your identity in a sense that we walk the same ʻāina as our kūpuna did. I also think that there's an aspect of moʻokūʻauhau that connects to mana. I've always felt that mana is generational or like mana doesn't ever begin and end. I feel like our kūpuna had it, and we carry what mana they had in us in our lives. So, moʻokūʻauhau is what binds that [mana] to help you experience that. The older you get, the more familiar it feels and the more it makes sense to us every day because we're building those connections.*
>
> *Lanakila: For me, the whole idea is hoʻomana. If I am able to pull mana from four different landscapes, that's more mana. So, I honor that and it gave me the permission to learn beyond one mindset, one culture, one tradition.*

Tracing ancestral roots through moʻokūʻauhau helps individuals connect to the mana of their kūpuna, reinforcing their identity and grounding them in their heritage. These experiences enrich one's sense of belonging.

A sense of belonging can also be synonymous with the term ʻohana. For Kānaka, ʻohana is typically much larger than the nuclear family. It implies extended family and can even include the broader community. The school cultivated an ʻohana atmosphere through practices such as moʻokūʻauhau.

Kumu Pomai: We were able to get to know the families on an intimate level and also based on who they were as families, three, four, and five generations… We really became pili because we knew families by name; we knew Grandma by name. They all came to all the activities and school-related festivals and really helped to emphasize the value of community learning and living.

Kumu Maua: Having a deeper appreciation for ʻohana. I know starting off as young as our papa kukui, our first graders, just knowing that Kanu is not just our classrooms but an extended family.

Lanakila: We're kind of taught in Western society a lot of 'self.' Basically, to be very secular, to be all about oneself… Which is so not our way. We're about ʻohana and how fulfilling that can be to know that you're not alone, to look back and see who you come from or the people. It's a way to help empower.

Noah: I think out of everybody in my class, I think that they wouldn't regret ever coming here and being a part of our class. It was a small class with a sense of like family and community. I think having a small class has helped so much more than having a 200 student senior class. Being able to know all my classmates parents and their siblings and being able to all hang out, I just love that. I think being here is a sense of community.

Kumu Pomai: Kalo, Kanu o ka ʻĀina, was Kamehameha's love name, and what that meant was that his people loved him because he worked with them in the trenches. He did the makaʻāinana work, and so they respected him and loved him for doing that. So, I think what it does is that generational imprint where this is who our aliʻi is, the kind of man that he is. This is the kind of values that he has. He values working with us, not being separate from us. I think what that does is it establishes what that community is and how they work, so it's a network. It's always like a net. You can have him be the muku or the maka of the net at the center and the core or ʻāina be the core, but then the pua on the net, and they just keep networking out. That's how I see the network of Kanu o ka ʻĀina at the time, and each of those pua were different families, the volunteer base, the community service logs, all of those things.

Honu: We had kumu who cared, and you could feel it. They were aunties and uncles, they weren't just our teacher who was working a nine-to-five. They'd made sure that you were successful. And I think that made a big difference… People were excited to be in school and excited to learn, and excited to have like their whole family around.

Mo‘okū‘auhau and engagement with multi-generational families foster a sense of ‘ohana. This ‘ohana-centered approach empowers students with the knowledge that they are part of a more extensive, supportive network that values community learning and living.

Oli and mele are other ways Kanu integrates mo‘okū‘auhau in the learning environment. Oli and mele preserve family names, cultural values, place names, and stories, promoting unity, identity, and pride within the school community. The school's daily morning protocol includes a series of oli and mele.

Kumu Pomai: The school's whole focus was about what mo‘okū‘auhau is. Then, when you start to have oli in the school that is reflective of and speaks to place names and a relationship to place, you can't help but recognize the hierarchy of the mo‘okū‘auhau and how it was set up and established as Kanaka see their landscape… I would teach them mele and oli. I would draw pictures of what the oli line was about so they could remember. So, E Kanaloa Ākea, draw a picture of the ocean vast and long with a swell. I would have them do that so they can depict it so that when they try to make connections, they can make the connections, not necessarily to mo‘okū‘auhau Kanaka but to mo‘okū‘auhau ‘āina.

Noah: Protocol, we did it every single day and although in the beginning, it was like a sense of everybody's coming together, trying to get ready for the day. There's obviously some of those days are like, we're doing this again? I'm just going to mouth these words just to get the day started. But the days that were good for me, like being able to be with everybody and usher ourselves into starting the day. Doing our oli and with everybody on the same page. In that moment, we're just chanting, and everybody's doing it together… Everyone was really proud to do it, especially when guests come over, we really want to represent our school very well.

Kumu Pomai: Hula Drama the first year… it was laid out by storyline of Kanaloa, Kāne, Pele, and Hi'iaka. That's how the students were being introduced. It was the hula and the oli and the mele that was introducing them. They were being introduced to those kūpuna, and they were being asked to know who they potentially could become.

Through ancestors revealed in oli and mele, students learn the significance of their cultural heritage while developing a deeper connection to their identity and environment. This holistic approach ensures that the traditions of mo'okū'auhau continue to thrive, enriching the community and reinforcing a shared sense of pride and belonging.

Familial pride arises from a deep sense of belonging to 'ohana, culture, and heritage. This pride is further strengthened by an appreciation for the resilience, achievements, and contributions of one's 'ohana.

Lanakila: So how could I be expected to be like just this one Hawaiian way. You know how many different ancestors I have in me? So, I we have to carry it as a good Hawaiian and respect all of them. It broadens our perspective…The importance is to empower an individual to know that they come from many. I tell myself and our students, you take all the stories; you take all those ancestors, even the ones out there, those not-so-good ancestors we have. They are there in our lineages. You learn from them, even in the bad. We keep their stories alive. They represent the things that maybe we don't want to do. Very important, and in that, you get to ho'omana.

Ku'ulei: You come from all these amazing different types of people. Reading stories of my great-grandmother, who was an entrepreneur in a lei business…and family, who immigrated from the Philippines and then did what they could here to establish their life. So, it just gave me a sense of, don't let that go to waste, act right. Knowing their names and knowing their stories and what they did, it was impactful for me. My behavior also reflects them and there's a standard of how to behave, you have this responsibility. We don't only represent ourselves, you represent your families.

Kumu Maua: The school, Kanu, has a huge impact on that [pride]. They build that confidence in them to know who they are and to share that... That is pride, that whole being proud of who they are.

ʻAnakē Barbara: It's important for children to understand the greatness of those who lived before them and that it is part of their history, their story. What a wonderful thing to give to your children. To be proud of anyone in their family who excels in what is culturally ours and that's important for children to be able to make connections; it's like coming home.

Kuʻulei: I didn't know what moʻokūʻauhau did for me until I met somebody who doesn't know it. I thought everybody knew it. Everybody in my family circle knew it so it was unfamiliar to me that somebody would not have their moʻokūʻauhau and know who they look like and where their family is from. I need to have that story for my kids because they need to know where grandpa and great-grandma come from. So for me, I want to build their storybook to make sure that my kids know all of these things. I got to gather all those things and put it in the ʻumeke for them when they're ready to look at those things and be like, know who you are because these are the people you come from.

Familial pride can enhance an individual's sense of identity and belonging, fostering a stronger bond and encouraging the continuation of ʻohana. As individuals see themselves as part of a larger community and narrative, a sense of continuity and purpose develops.

Relative to the thesis topic of moʻokūʻauhau and identity development, aloha kekahi i kekahi, as manifested by participant input, profoundly enhances a person's sense of identity and well-being by fostering a strong connection to ʻohana and community. This deep sense of belonging and continuity provides emotional support and stability, helping individuals to understand their place within a larger narrative. Individuals gain a richer, more grounded sense of self by engaging with and valuing their ancestors, which boosts their self-esteem and pride. The supportive, loving environment created by these connections promotes mental and emotional well-being, ensuring that individuals feel valued and understood within their community.

5.3 Mālama i kou kuleana

In the reciprocal nature of ʻohana, there is a kuleana to uphold those relationships. Moʻokūʻauhau brings these relationships to the forefront, making them more clearly visible. Whether these connections are with ancestors, family, community, or ʻāina, there is an expectation to mālama and nurture them. Like aloha, this care is a two-way exchange; for instance, as I care for the ʻāina, it cares for me in return. For Kānaka, this understanding of mālama i kou kuleana, or taking care of your responsibilities, goes beyond general stewardship. The following participant quotes are prefaced with an explanation that provides context to this deeply held belief in kuleana.

> *Lanakila: The gods are our family. So, if you sever the akua, you're severing that relationship to ʻāina. The gods are our environment. So, when you sever that, you look at the world differently. You're not looking at the forest for the life-giving akua by Laka and the other deities. The forest is, oh that's a lot of wood I can make a profit on. Oh, we can chop down more of this. Oh, I can easily go bulldoze this or knock it all down because you're not seeing the sacred.*

> *Kumu Pomai: …[the] people relationship to land, if you don't have the land, where do people go and then what do they have? And then how do you perpetuate the Kanaka, lifeforce, and intelligence in a space where you don't have access to the relationship created by Creator?.... I think that my kuleana, if you're going to be in a place long enough and you're going be in a school where you can influence a keiki, then it's important that you start to understand what the land base is. As long as the teaching is in alignment with the land base, the intelligence and the work ethic of the individuals that come out of this space, I think it has a lot of potential. To understand the kids, you got to know what the land is, what the names are…land based moʻokūʻauhau. I hope for our kids, and I think that's what we do as a school… introducing them to all of these types of moʻokūʻauhau, land-based moʻokūʻauhau, pōhaku-based moʻokūʻauhau, forest-based moʻokūʻauhau, people based moʻokūʻauhau. Waimea is the perfect place to build a school, a nation.*

Kaniela: We still go in there [Pu‘u Pulehu school site]. We still do our protocol and harvest and plant trees on the ‘āina. It was something that we created that’s why, and I think that it was beautiful for us. To this day, we still drive past that property, and that property is important to us. I loved that about us, our school. It’s like Kawaihae is important to me. Waipi‘o is important to me. Pu‘u Pulehu is important to us. Everywhere we went, we created these stories within ourselves; that was the fun part.

Lanakila: The mo‘olelo and our mo‘okū‘auhau were so essential to so many aspects. Now, in today’s time, too, as an adult, realizing how mo‘okū‘auhau is critical to our rights. As the native peoples of this land, our documentation of our family lineages in places are absolutely critical for rights, for land rights. So, they play that role too, and that’s why the degradation and loss of genealogy even plays on that economic aspect.

There is an integral connection between Kānaka ‘Ōiwi and ‘āina. Kanu deliberately incorporates ‘āina experiences and the teaching of land-based mo‘okū‘auhau to nurture student identity. Learning place names and familial ties to place nourishes meaningful relationships between keiki and the land that feeds and sustains them.

Along with learning place names and family names comes the kuleana to remember one’s mo‘okū‘auhau. That kuleana also extends to hula, oli, and mo‘olelo, which are passed down. The following participant quotes are prefaced with kupuna wisdom, reminding us of the sacred nature of mo‘okū‘auhau.

‘Anakala Cy: It’s not every single time you just go out and blast your [mo‘okū‘auhau]. Like tūtū said, mai kaula‘i nā iwi o kou mau kūpuna me ka lā -you don’t put the bones of your ancestors out in the sun to dry like ‘ōpelu. They are sacred. They are used for certain times, like at a funeral when you establish your connection. When you have certain things where a connection needs to be made, or your stature or your foundation needs to be revealed. The spirit will tell you when it is appropriate for that to happen. When you’re talking about kūpuna that has crossed beyond the veil, you’re talking about Akua things.

Lanakila: The root word [of mo'okū'auhau] being mo'o... which commonly we know as the lizard or dragon. These mo'o represent lineage, but not only through particular ancestors, families, genealogies but perpetuation. That's what mo'o is. Those that continue to perpetuate ideology, tradition, custom. Those who are the keepers of something to pass on… So if you don't know the names in here, in the body, you're not carrying them with you.

'Anakala Cy: In my family, I always give inoa kupuna. Why? Because that kupuna name is not lost in history, it's alive, now in this time. Every single one of them [my children] get [inoa kupuna]. It's to make them remember. I tell them, you got to understand your name, where you come from and when they talk about these people, that's your connection.

Kumu Pomai: Kalo, Kanu o ka 'Āina, that being Natives of the land from generations back. Anytime you look back, you have the capacity to go back and to look back and to rely upon credibility, skill set, work ethic, value set of kūpuna. You're speaking to generations behind.

Lanakila: Through that learning of the mo'okū'auhau, the genealogy of the hula tradition. So, like numbers or chants that we do are tethered to Aunty Pua [the original teacher] and realizing the responsibility that one carries when you take on a tradition. If you're gonna use this chant or this hula, then you are a representative of so and so, who comes from so and so, who comes from so and so.

Ku'ulei: I think that the different levels of mo'okū'auhau… visual mo'okū'auhau, organization mo'okū'auhau, hula genealogy, that's mo'okū'auhau. All of those things make us who we are and so that's what makes us connected. We always strive for making connections and I think that's maybe the function of mo'okū'auhau is to make this relevant. I don't know why it's always in me to recount my mo'okū'auhau.

Mālie: I do still remember my mo'okū'auhau but now that I know it I can actually make those connections and talk to people. I know who my family is. I share it but not in the same format [as in school].

Honu: Protocol became such an important part of who we are because when we do get together, or even if I'm by myself, and I need to go gather stuff in the forest, I always do my protocol. I do not feel safe, unless I do my protocol. Or if I'm in a new space, and I'm the visitor, I feel like I have to introduce myself [through moʻokūʻauhau] in order to feel safe in that space so that they know what my intentions are… It's become such a part of who we are to make sure we acknowledge that it's not just us. There's other people out there before us that helped us get to where we are and who we are.

The kuleana to understand and honor moʻokūʻauhau impacts identity by providing individuals with continuity, connecting them to their ancestors, ʻāina, and culture. This connection reinforces personal and communal identity along with a sense of pride and responsibility to perpetuate traditions and values. By working with the ʻāina, passing on ancestral names, and practicing cultural protocols, individuals maintain a living link to their history, which shapes their sense of self, ensuring their identity is rooted in a rich, collective past.

These examples of kuleana address the thesis research question by illustrating how the integration of moʻokūʻauhau in education nurtures a profound connection to cultural tradition and protocols, thereby enhancing students' overall sense of identity and well-being. Learning moʻokūʻauhau at school deepens this influence, as it formalizes the knowledge and practice, fostering a stronger sense of identity and well-being among students.

5.4 Kōkua aku kōkua mai

Moʻokūʻauhau is community. That community can be one's ancestors and ʻaumākua, but it can also be the school community. Moʻokūʻauhau is not limited to a family tree. It can be applied to other relationships, such as students, teachers, or the school community. Within a community, it is natural that help is given and received, kōkua aku kōkua mai. In the teaching and practice of moʻokūʻauhau, Kanu was intentional in helping students discover and build relationships.

ʻAnakē Barbara: [Learning moʻokūʻauhau] it needs to begin very young because the younger they are the more they can absorb information because their learning years are really the early years. So the earlier you start with the culture it's a lot easier for the child to make it part of the child's nature, to understand and appreciate things around them and to be able to use it and to be able to watch kūpuna carrying on the processes of our own culture. Being able to appreciate it, being able to do it, being able to honor it, to be able to honor other people's traditions that are part of our culture.

Lanakila: At Kanu, thinking back to my time, it was very much the genealogy. I was very appreciative of that. That's the foundation for any of us to be able to then… have a baseline to step off from or to launch off. But I remember having to do the basic, find the genealogy, find the names, and then the palapala on how you had to lay out to recite it, to memorize, and to recite.

Kumu Pomai: You have the layers of communication and talking story with families so that their moʻokūʻauhau, our haumāna's moʻokūʻauhau, can be as complete.

Kuʻulei: We were doing moʻokūʻauhau from the beginning. From when I was a freshman in high school, and I think that's the first time I've ever intentionally wrote it down, touched it, looked for it, asked questions about it. That's I think that's the first time it was intentional, to put it down on paper and then explore.

Kumu Maua: What is the foundation? Things that have kept Kanu going, and one is moʻokūʻauhau…In the beginning of every school year, moʻokūʻauhau starts out with lei piko. Keiki are learning their hoʻolauna so how to introduce themselves, as well as their moʻokūʻauhau. From papa malaʻo, they learn just the basics of them, their parents, their grandparents in the hopes that the next class, first grade, and second grade, will add their great-grandparents. As they move up to 3rd, 4th, and 5th, they add another generation. With lei piko, we bring their families in to be a part of that. It's an amazing feeling to have keiki sit in a pōʻai with their parents, some of them bring their grandparents, some of them bring their siblings so you have the youngest one to the oldest one. And then they share out [moʻokūʻauhau] getting to know everybody's family. And you put it into a lei. It's all about pride where they place the lei up in their classroom

and then they can look upon that as - that's gonna guide our class. Our kūpuna and me are in that lei that we just shared with the whole class.

Kaniela: There are people out there who are waiting to see what the whole Hawaiian looks like and if you don't have people teaching that, the image and identity of what we could be, it could slowly fade away.

Participants noted that learning moʻokūʻauhau was a new experience for them. The school served as a valuable resource to kōkua students in the journey of ancestral discovery. As described by Kumu Maua, teachers who facilitate the Ka Lei Piko activity provide learning opportunities that strengthen family unity. As students add their mea kanu, which holds special meaning to them, to the collective lei, it connects everyone to the past, present, and future.

Kanu was also intentional in helping students learn oli and mele. Participants shared how oli and mele, recited daily during morning protocol, helped them become grounded and access ancestral and ʻaumākua guidance. The oli Nā ʻAumākua, detailed in Chapter Two, was specifically discussed by participants while reflecting on ancestral connections. This oli begins with a call out to all ancestors with a request to have them stand with and care for those making the petition. It asks that the ancestors grant knowledge, strength, intelligence, understanding, insight, and power. The oli E Hō Mai, also mentioned by participants, asks for wisdom to be granted. Statistically, for students who attend the school from kindergarten to 12th grade, these oli are recited over two thousand times during a student's time at the school.

Kumu Maua: Our purpose is that they understand why all of these protocols are done daily. With "Nā ʻaumākua," that's a deep pule. To ask our keiki to just be open to all of these things that are going to help guide them through their day in their learning is like asking their kūpuna, those who have passed, you know, part of their family, to be a part of them, to help them through the day to learn something and then go home and share with your family.

Kumu Pomai: I think you can have mele, oli, pule, you can have all of those texts, body forms, being ready for you to access. But yet, I think that if we don't access them in the right heart space and value set, you're just going through the words. I think that [the oli] "Nā 'aumākua" is a really good way, should we understand it as individuals, to know that you are loved and cared for by all of your ancestors and the 'aumākua you come from…When we are in the space with the people who truly want that kind of guidance from their personal 'aumākua, from the ones that birthed them and that are still living within them, I've had profound experiences. I think that where we have the capacity to change that trajectory of that oli alone, which then means everything else would have that same kind of vibrancy. We have the capacity to change how it is fed and nourished to our kids, and I think you make one small adjustment like that, and you spend time just on that, and you make that good, then you make the next one good, and the next one good, it is huge the impact.

Lanakila: When we do "Nā 'aumākua," how I am having them do this, to teach this concept rekindling and going deeper about who and what an ancestor is. Because when we rehumanize an ancestor, especially for kids who might have lost someone soon, or early, recently when you call 'aumākua now, they're right there. So, "Nā 'aumākua" is becoming an active pule, trying to invoke the human back into all of this so it's not just the ethereal concept of ancestor. That's kind of part of that work to re-bridge mo'okū'auhau into function.

Ku'ulei: Aunty Nalani would explain it to us, if you have a particular ancestor who you know is maika'i, ask that one in your call to "E hō mai." I think one of the things that she taught us was not all our ancestors were created equal, so when you "E hō mai" and you open the whole door, you don't know what you're going to get. So, if you want to focus on particular ones who you know have good 'ike and mana'o, focus on those, so not the whole door, but just the ones that you want to be with you to guide you. So that made the connection of knowing which ones you want to call on.

Mālie: My mind is so busy all the time, and it's been like that my entire life. My grades, my performance in school was terrible. It was because I was just so chaotic. I could not pay attention in class, I could not gather myself enough. It was really tough. When I came

here, and I learned the oli and I learned how to create a space, that was when I could actually take a breather. I could figure it out in the 10 minutes. But having 10 minutes of just speaking and doing the oli it helped clear my mind by not having quiet because quiet is terrible for a busy mind. But having something to focus on, I could focus on every word, what the meaning of the oli's were, look for hō'ailona. It brought me back into my body, into the correct space. It felt good to do that, and these are oli that potentially my ancestors did so it was nice to have that as well.

Honu: I can remember coming late to school and feeling so nervous to oli in on your own, even though you know these people. I've felt when like, you start chanting, and it just feels like an out-of-body experience where it's not just you. I have no doubt that I've had ancestors accompany me in those moments when I needed that kind of strength. I don't know if it's because it's in our mother language that we do the protocol, but it just makes it so much more obvious to me that we're not alone. As we participate in those practices and in our ceremonies and such, I think it's very clear as you're doing it with intention. There's times where you're just practicing and learning it, but when you're doing it with a purpose and intention, you just feel like you're not alone.

Kaniela: ...moments when you did it [oli] right, like when you feel like you aced the test. We're taught to maka'ala, pay attention. We learn to pay attention to wind blowing outside, to rain falling, pay attention to like how you feel inside, any changes of 'ano. Some people would say I've never chanted that good before, and they notice it. Somebody came up and said ho, I felt it that time. I felt like people like my kūpuna were with me. And I think our kūpuna are with us during those moments.

Participants recognized the support that can be accessed from ancestors through oli and mele. Receiving and giving kōkua—whether from 'aumākua, ancestors, peers, or kumu—cultivates a trusting environment. Such an environment encourages students to explore their potential without fear of failure.

Honu: The Kumu were able to create that kind of environment where we could be imaginative and like really try and fail to fail. It was okay to fail because failing meant

you know what we're not to do and then the next time that we're getting the same assignment, we could do it better.

Mālie: This is my family; they're going to help me, and that's kind of the purpose of doing that [mo'okū'auhau] for graduation is to call on the people who are responsible for you being alive… It's that sense of comfort of security, especially when you're breaking out of a small group, a small town; it feels really scary, but you know that you can do it because you have the support of all these people around you. You have people holding you up as you reach out. I know for me, I was a very shy child. I didn't want to talk to anyone. So a lot of teachers I thought they were just being really mean [at protocol] but they took me and they're like, okay, you're doing this. It broke me out of that [shyness] really fast. I learned that trying new things, being thrown into the situation, you may not get the result you like but it could be worse. So it's better to try than to not try at all. I think that was a huge one and it played a huge role in where I am now. From what I've done as a career, to just talking to people, even making new friends. But just to be able to approach situations and not be scared, that's what I learned here [at Kanu].

Ku'ulei: In that teenage stage of who am I? I mostly honed in on my Hawaiian ancestors. And then there were a few ancestors that I asked for guidance.

Mālie: The comfort of my ancestors are here. They're supporting me. I can get through this day.

Kumu Maua: And then we always look to our kūpuna of the school to be there with us. They do become part of our lei piko, part of our mo'okū'auhau.

Noah: Teachers here [at Kanu] are so helpful to the students, even for myself. I had a hard time focusing in class and paying attention and the teachers here helped me to come out of that shell and really take education seriously. I feel like they've helped me to take pride in school work and education. They've really helped me to raise myself up in knowing that education is very important.

Mālie: We went to school with kids who are deemed bad kids because they had undiagnosed ADHD or something or trauma. No one took the time to understand why,

but the only people who actually cared were the people here at the school. Learning and watching the teachers take the time to understand, now I'm seeing how they improved those kids and where they are as adults. They could have been in a much worse place. They're out there holding down jobs, they have families, they're out doing amazing things, and without this school, they would never have had that… All of us needed support in one place or another. This school was the place to get it as well as giving a foundation to grow from because a lot of the kids come in without a foundation and this school gave it to them. It gave them a place to start to take root, so that allowed them to get into a good place, no matter what their family life was like. I know one person can make a difference because I've seen it.

Honu: We had teenage pregnancies at Kanu. Other schools, they're shamed for that, and a lot of teenage moms are pushed out of their social groups. But our kids would bring them to school, and the aunties and uncles would watch them while they're in class. There was just an understanding that aloha wins everything.

Noah: Trying to build that confidence started at piko. When the teachers asked you to start a chant in front of everybody, we're just going to sit there in silence until you start it. Also, coming in late to school, having to stand in front of everybody and chant to ask them permission to come into school. It's little things like that that help you build your confidence. All the way up to hula drama when I'm standing there, in my malo, and I'm having to chant a five-minute oli by myself in front of everybody, or like, just during the presentations in front of the classroom. I feel like this school really helped in that area. They'll call out the shy kids and make them go up, not to bring shame to the kid, but just to help them. Like it's okay, we're not going to judge you if you mess up on your oli or you mess up on your project. We want you to be confident in presenting and public speaking. I think my confidence built up a lot here.

Ku'ulei: It was exciting because having come from a school within a school, we already knew you're gonna do a lot outdoors, and that was the whole point of being at Kanu, learning in different modalities. So it was Hui 1 and Hui 2, kindergarten through 12th grade. Being in 12th grade, we got to watch all of the kids, and we just rotated in different areas. It was stressful, but it was fun. I learned way more than I ever would

have. It was like hands-on, on-the-job learning. I was learning way more about tolerance and patience just all the things that typically you wouldn't necessarily learn, and then to be in different environments and how to adjust to change. We became more well adjusted but really good at accepting change.

Honu:…you have a kuleana to teach people younger. I just remember our whole first year [as a first grader], all of our reading was done with the high schoolers. Math was done with them. It was an opportunity we had to be together with the older kids. It taught them kuleana. So when we became those high schoolers, we felt the same sense of responsibility. I need to take care of you; let me teach you these things.

Participants highlighted the security, trust, and support derived from moʻokūʻauhau, emphasizing the importance of ancestral presence in overcoming challenges. This nurturing environment enables students to grow, build confidence, and embrace their kuleana to teach and care for others. It reinforces emotional well-being as students feel valued and motivates individuals to kōkua and contribute to the wider community.

ʻAnakē Barbara: I have certainly gathered a lot of genealogy for others, and I am always so happy for them when they can find who their family is. I have had so many experiences with searching and finding [family information] and being able to follow you know I respond to the feelings that come on the inside of me. There have been many times when I have thought to do something and when I've done it, it was exactly what I needed to do because then I was able to get information that I was looking for.

Honu: In our every activity that we've ever participated in [at Kanu], there was kuleana that was attached to it. We never learned anything frivolously. The things that we were taught were very intentional for ʻike Kanaka. What is our kuleana as Kanaka here in our communities and our families at the school… In school and at home, we were raised and trained to think bigger than ourselves. And so I'm just grateful. Everything we learned at Kanu was to help us have the tools and skills to be able to be these people in our community. Being a member of our community, it's not about us. It's the more we give to them, the better it benefits us and that's just reciprocal. It's a whole cycle that just keeps

going and the moment that we decide to stop and not be contributing members to our society and our community, I think it would be our downfall.

Mālie: I see myself as not just an individual but a product of my family and my community. We are a unit, we are all connected. It's no longer seeing everyone as individuals, but we are one and we need to help. We need to give back. We need to make sure that we are okay. And that also plays into identity because that is where I feel like I can help, and that is where I feel like I belong in that role of making sure everyone's okay.

Honu: If there's a lesson that I learned here, it wasn't make anywhere I'm at Hawaiian but make sure that I'm Hawaiian no matter where I'm at. There are so many of us who live in the mainland now but they're still thriving members of their community where they're at now and proud to be Hawaiian. They want to be a part of that community. I think that in itself is very Hawaiian. I'm going to contribute and be who I need to be wherever I'm at to make the people around me successful.

Kumu Pomai: We were able to get to understand the skill sets that they [Kanu families] had and what they wanted to offer and bring to the school, which then meant it was being offered to the community. Because the kids and the school culture has such a large influence on the community.

Ku'ulei: When I showed him just the picture of his genealogy, he couldn't even talk…he said - I didn't know I had a hole inside until you filled it with my genealogy - It was super important for me to see. I think that's why I love it [genealogy] is because I feel blessed to know, and I still don't know everything, but I feel blessed to know. To me, it was that drive to instill that in somebody else because I know what it does for me. I think it helps reassure all of our generations like who you are, this is who you are. This is the people you come from so act right, in the sense of act right because you represent something bigger than.

Lanakila: …watching Kanu grow over the years with Kanu and Kalo having to think outside the box, even though being absolutely mistreated by the Department of Education and underfunded. Still, here we are 20-something years later, it's still running hard, still

running strong, and still underfunded, but still being able to move beyond. That's something that happens because we're coming from a foundation of moʻokūʻauhau, of family's lineages pulling together, remembering, and actively participating in our communities.

Kanu's commitment to the community is deeply rooted in the understanding of moʻokūʻauhau and kuleana, emphasizing the importance of thinking beyond oneself. This sense of responsibility fosters a strong desire to give back and support the community, whether in Hawaiʻi or outside the islands. Kanu families' resilience and collective effort demonstrate the power of unity and the enduring influence of Hawaiian cultural practice in shaping thriving, supportive individuals and communities.

The strong desire to give back to the community was evident in the talk story sessions with graduates and kumu. They reminisced about many fond memories while attending the school. In the spirit of kōkua aku, kōkua mai, participants were asked as a final question if they had any thoughts related to learning moʻokūʻauhau or identity that they would like to give back to the school.

Noah: I know the high school is very involved with hands-on learning and being outside. I hope that never changes because I think that's very important in teaching kids about hard work and not being afraid. We need some hard working people.

Mālie: Being outside and doing that work it showed me how much I could do if I put in the actual effort. At the end of the day, you look at what you've done, and you go, oh, that's really cool, or that's really beautiful, and you learn to recognize that feeling as an adult. But yes, I think the kids need to be thrown outside more.

Kumu Pomai: The kumu used to take their kids on huakaʻi. They would come back, and they would haku all the time. Aunty Nalani Kanakaʻole, many years ago, she was talking about mele and oli how valuable is it. How do you bring that, those mele and oli, and all the information in them to this time? She said, we can go back, and we can pull all these

[oli] back, and she said that is absolutely important. What that does is it doesn't make it history anymore because we dance about it, we sing about it, we learn about it. We're doing it again. Yes, that is his or her story at that time, but it also becomes ours. She said one of the most profound things that we can do right now for our people is write about everything, write songs about it, write chants about it, write stories about it. Share the same story over and over again and keep telling it.

Kuʻulei: I would love to see Kanu o ka ʻĀina get a huge piece of yarn as a fun project for moʻokūʻauhau and say I'm so and so then throw it to somebody who you're connected to, and then you do the same thing. What we're going to find is that we're all connected in some way, shape, or form, whether it's region, family name, same organization, whatever. To show everybody you're not alone; you're not here by yourself. For the school, they have to maintain moʻokūʻauhau.

Honu: I love that the whole school does it [piko] together. I remember there were certain oli that we did, but [then] you could choose whatever you felt like doing. And it was okay that not everyone knew the oli because the more you did them, the more you caught on. It was a very different feel where whatever you wanted and felt you needed for the day, you were able to start it, and I think that also made us excited to be the starter. So you're like, I'm going to do this in piko today, and then you started, and everyone's singing. It just felt good…But we were always encouraged to do what we needed when we needed to be our best selves in the moment, no matter what that looked like, as long as it was safe and appropriate.

Lanakila: It [piko] was a beautiful thing. We're all ʻoluʻolu, we're coming out, we say our good mornings, we're getting in [to line], and then all it takes is someone to start that one chant. Whoever is chosen to lead protocol, whatever pule they start, is what we do. It always kind of keeps you awake because you got to know we're going to shift. It was organic. It was natural… We were ʻohana.

Honu: Standardized testing needs to change. Not that our Kanaka need to be in the classroom [less], but I have like this almost ʻeha or hurt feeling that these kids can't have the same experiences that we once had. I just wish there was a better way to balance it. But the biggest thing that changed that should not have is that we became a school that

admitted kids based off of lottery. Because when we first started at Kanu, you had to interview no matter how old we were. We had to write a one-page essay, our parents had to write an essay, and the essay questions were, why do you want to be here? What do you think you're going to learn and how is that going to contribute to who you are to your community? And then you would make goals and it was like a contract. People were here because they wanted to be here… and so I think the biggest mistake that was made that has changed so much is the kids don't have to commit the same way we used to have to. They're not here because they want to be here.

Pomai: I feel like with the lottery things changed. Certainly, things change and fluctuate based on the larger communities, and we're all affected. At the same time, though, what we felt like used to be a long three-week process is a really, really small pinpoint in time, to the values, the values the school upholds. I think that without even recognizing it at that time, for myself, certainly for others, that was actually one of the ways in which we kūlia, in which we would kūlia i ka nu'u. Where we are reaching our highest potential because the community was asking that of us, family by family. And I think that made us as a school very accountable…but those years, I think, were exceptionally valuable. We have amazing people working for and on behalf of the school now and yet I think that that was a shift.

Kaniela: I think if you push teachers and let them do a deep dive into the values, and not just read them for face value, let those values go deep. Because we [students] take those values everywhere. To this day, I still live life with those values because it's so much easier to be successful. When I can give aloha, and they give aloha back, we can be in pono.

Kumu Maua: We have to look back at what is the mission the vision of Kanu, and if you keep that, then everything just falls into place.

These thoughts were shared as a way to kōkua the school, based on the lived experience of these eight individuals who still have great aloha for Kanu. This mana'o showcases how the school's practices, such as modeling values, outdoor learning, and piko, played a role in the confidence, resilience, and overall character-building of students. Two participants commented

on the importance of students having a desire to attend a school such as Kanu. They felt that without that desire, it might be challenging for students to engage and benefit from the unique educational practices offered fully. They suggested this desire is crucial for fostering a deep connection to the school's values and maximizing the personal growth opportunities that Kanu provides.

Teaching students the value, kōkua aku kōkua mai, promotes confidence and self-worth. As a facilitator on the journey to learn moʻokūʻauhau, Kanu impacts students' emotional and psychological well-being by helping them understand their roots and heritage. This knowledge instills a sense of responsibility in students to kōkua. Giving to others is a powerful way to reinforce and build a coherent and positive sense of identity, as it aligns personal actions with values, fosters connections, and enhances self-understanding and purpose.

5.5 Mahalo i ka mea loaʻa

Moʻokūʻauhau inspires multiple forms of gratitude. Mahalo for ancestors. Mahalo for community. Mahalo for cultural heritage and moʻolelo. Mahalo for ʻāina. Although talk story sessions did not directly ask participants what they were grateful for, gratitude is an underlying message in their responses.

> *Kumu Maua: My son was able to go back seven generations…I mahalo Kanu for sharing that.*
>
> *Kuʻulei: How privileged I am to have walked around my whole life knowing my parents, knowing where I came from, knowing family songs, having a visual reminder of where I'm [from]. I never thought about knowing genealogy as a privilege until I met somebody who didn't know his genealogy. I never thought about how much it gives me. Finding somebody who never had it, waiting 45 years to know this information, and then got it, and I watched it in real-time, it changed his outlook on who he was. To watch him sift through pictures and tell family stories and play audio recordings of oral interviews and*

show all the different lines of people we're related to, and then him asking me like, oh are we related to this person? I think with that [experience]brought the perspective of, oh my gosh, look at me, I'm so privileged… Watching somebody get exposed to the genealogy kind of it was pretty life-changing for me. He's never felt more amazing in his life… He felt like he belonged nowhere, but then as soon as he came back to Hawai'i and knew the connections, he was like, everywhere is literally home.

Kaniela: I think there's a big, important value in just having mo'okū'auhau in the back of your head. Maybe when I was in high school, maybe it wasn't so evident, but now, as we're getting older and decisions are heavier it helps a lot, having that foundation. You can always look back at things like your mo'okū'auhau to kind of give you an idea. Maybe there is a version of our story where we go back to Kahakuloa on Maui to help restore the lo'i systems. There are all these different ideas, but without that [mo'okū'auhau] to help me figure it out, it'd be a lot harder. So, I'm a lot more appreciative at the age of 28 now.

'Anakē Barbara: The more we speak about our stories..., the more we tell them about what grandma did and what grandpa did and show appreciation for the skills that our kūpuna had, then they will have appreciation for it too.

Participants acknowledged the profound privilege of understanding one's genealogy. This sentiment becomes even more evident when one can observe someone else discovering their lineage for the first time, highlighting the impact of genealogy on identity and well-being. Deep gratitude for moʻokūʻauhau was also understood as a means for setting a solid foundation for making important life decisions. This gratitude extends to recognizing and valuing the skills and stories of their ancestors, which they believe will be passed down to future generations.

An appreciation for moʻolelo was also expressed, as these narratives hold fragments of ancestral knowledge and wisdom. Interestingly, both kupuna participants relied heavily on moʻolelo to convey their manaʻo. Notably, ʻAnakala Cy shared stories about his family

connections and ancestors, highlighting how growing up with his tūtū instilled in him the value of knowing his family history and family stories:

> *There were many times when I would be sitting with my grandma and across from her was my grandma's grandma. I knew her sister, too. And so these great grandmothers that I knew, I knew some of their siblings that were still alive in the family. So when family came around, you know, and we were all interrelated. For me, among the moʻopuna, I was just, I was kind of nīele, you know. Whenever they say go kiss Aunty, I like know how come? How is she, my aunty? One time, we're outside playing, and the family was leaving, saying goodbye, and my cousin said, who's those guys? I said that is one of tūtū's friends. And tūtū said, aww, cheah, mai manaʻo me kēlā, ʻohana nō kēlā no mai walaʻau. But for me, whenever I ask them questions and if they busy, they say, cheah, kulikuli, hele ma kahi ē, so I wait until after dinner, everything pau, they sitting on the porch or in the parlor, that's when I go over and ask, oh tūtū, ʻoe kēlā? Pehea ka pili? Ah, no ka mea, and that's when they like to talk, and they go up the line. So and so nō hea, so and so a puka mai so and so a puka mai oe ala...oia hoʻi kū pili me kēlā, kēlā poʻe. I would say oh, okay. And that would go on all the time. When they tell stories, I like to sit down and listen to them. Well, me, I sit over there, I soak it in. And so that has been my life, my family, here in Hauʻula and Laie.*

From a young age, these informal family interactions with kūpuna taught ʻAnakala Cy a deep appreciation and respect for moʻokūʻauhau and moʻolelo. Through these experiences, he also honed exceptional memory and retention skills, which have served him throughout his life. The following moʻolelo illustrates his desire to share this rich genealogical ʻike with others, but it also touches on aspects of moʻokūʻauhau's historical preservation relevant to this research:

> *The most recent one was when President Kauwe came, and he invited us to come to breakfast on his Inauguration Day. And he asked me if I could talk about our ancestor. We have the same ancestor, Kaleohano, who's buried right on the temple grounds. He's not up on the hill behind but right behind the temple. So he said, can you say something about Kaleohano. I said okay. Now everybody's up there with their three-ring binders,*

giving their talk, and I'm over there eating, thinking, what I going say? So when I went up there, I just greeted everyone and I said, you know, I'm so honored to have President Kauwe here, the first Hawaiian, the first Polynesian President of this University. And he's not from Kamehameha, he's not from St. Louis, Iolani, or any of those, he's from Moloka'i High. But I said, although as great as that is, I want him to know that he's not the first university president in the family. And he looked at me, and everybody's wondering. So I start talking about; I went back again to Paumakua. Paumakua had three sons. He had a son, Haho, surname Hahokuhiali'iamano, and brother Nanakapaleiamano. But Haho established on the island of Moloka'i what they call a Hale Nauā. A Hale Nauā was a university of learning of every aspect from the heavens, genealogy, warfare, lua, healing, limu, every aspect of Hawaiian life, the Hawaiian universe, was taught on Moloka'i, and that was at that Hale Nauā. I said the second Hale Nauā was established by King Kalākaua. He brought the masters of the land, he brought them to the palace, locked the doors and had his scribes record all of them. And among those that were the recorders as well as those that shared knowledge was one of our Tūtū Unauna and Lilikalani. And I said that the third Hale Nauā was established by one of our cousins, Rocky Jensen. So I said, so we have three. But anyway, go back to Haho. Haho was the father of Palena. Palena who started the first 'Aha Ali'i or the world order of Palena, which was a national guard made up of young chieftains of the highest noble strain. And so I said, now I gonna give you the lineage. And I'm doing it in a form that we call ha'i kūpuna, that I learned growing up. And ha'i kūpuna is, I gonna give you the name. For example, like Paumakua. Okay, noho 'ia Manokalililani hanau mai o Hahokuhiali'iamano. Hahokuhiali'iamano noho 'ia Kauili'anapa hanau mai o Palena. Palena noho 'ia. I said it goes like that. Palena had two sons both called Hanala'anui and Hanala'aiki. And since he is from Maui nui, Moloka'i, which is in Maui nui, I will go on the Hanala'aiki side. And I started 'O Hanala'aiki noho 'ia Kapukapu, hanau 'ia o Mauiloa … and I went all the way down and brought it down to Kaleohano. And then Kaleohano had a daughter who's daughter married a Kauwe and had John Kauwe, who had John Kauwe senior, who had John Kauwe the third, who is the President of the school. So I said, you wanted to know about your Tūtū Kaleohano, I just gave you. But I said in the span of time, because of time I only could do 43 generations.

This example illustrates the linking of moʻolelo and moʻokūʻauhau. We don't know the impact the moʻolelo had on the university president, but we could imagine that he may have realized that he stood on the shoulders of those who came before and may have felt strengthened by that knowledge. That is the potential power of moʻolelo and moʻokūʻauhau.

ʻAnakala Cy reflected, "I never realized that I was surrounded by these elements growing up." When asked how he thought being encircled by his tūtū and moʻokūʻauhau impacted his sense of who he was as a person, he replied, "I don't think about stuff like that. That was just life." This statement exemplifies how growing up immersed in legacy creates a solid sense of self. When asked why it was so important for our ancestors to keep lineal connections, he explained that one of the reasons is the relevance it has at the passing of a family member. He went on to share the personal story of losing his daughter and the protocol of oli and moʻokūʻauhau when the family came to the house to offer condolences. He also recalled similar experiences from his childhood:

> *A lot of times when we were kids, they're standing outside, and people are out there, they are calling. Who are you? What are you doing standing there? What brings you here? And they give their [genealogical] line. We are connected this way. We did this together as children. We did this, we did that. You get a whole history, just listening to them in their kani kau. And then they come in. It's basically those kinds of things, but that was just one of several ways [moʻokūʻauhau is important].*

This passage speaks to the significance of kinship, emphasizing the vital role of moʻokūʻauhau, particularly during moments of loss. These practices reinforce bonds within the community. As ʻAnakala described those who came, practicing the protocol he holds dear, at the tender time of his daughter's passing, I could feel his sincere gratitude for those friends and family.

Other participants also understood the importance of moʻolelo and its role in passing on traditions, customs, and beliefs.

ʻAnakē Barbara: Our history is one of telling stories to remember, and that's why we have such a wealth of Hawaiian mythology. It was really to remember about things that happened. There isn't a family that doesn't connect to the mythological things that were developed in our culture. It helped to explain things for them and even to understand why ʻaumākua became part of their belief because they were so close to nature. They loved their plants, the rocks, the ocean, the fish, the birds, and they made such use of them. Everything that was in nature they had such a respect for it.

Lanakila: …not only looking at our ancient stories, but the idea of knowing how to look at stories is very important also to how we analyze information. So, looking back at the stories of how people are doing things different today, or how can we look at the traditional or what the healthy Hawaiian landscape looked like? We're going to find that in an old story through a moʻolelo.

Kumu Pomai: My first introduction to Kanu o ka ʻĀina was ʻUmi-a-Līloa, their play. I was absolutely intrigued by the fact that these young Kanaka would, with great leadership… you had this dynamic that was created and they put on this fabulous imagery, hana keaka of this aliʻi. Part of that hana keaka was his moʻokūʻauhau. They unfolded a story that was based upon the value set of his [Umi] dad's moʻokūʻauhau and his mom's moʻokūʻauhau and how the two of them had this Kanaka and how he became who he was because of those genealogies.

Kuʻulei: I was the little kid that would huddle around the stories. I would intentionally listen to stories and those things. I think it [kuleana to story] ends up falling into your lap because you're interested in the people, family members. My grandma's sister was like, you're probably the one [to pass on the stories]. I love when we bust our moʻolelo, I love telling stories.

Moʻolelo play a crucial role in preserving history and explaining cultural beliefs. Families can make connections that help them understand their relationship with nature and their ʻaumākua. These stories are essential for remembering the past and analyzing and understanding contemporary issues by drawing parallels with traditional knowledge found in moʻolelo.

The preceding participant contributions evidence that a sense of identity can be strengthened when gratitude for ancestors and lineage is taught, particularly through moʻolelo. Moʻokūʻauhau and moʻolelo enhance well-being by fostering a sense of pride, gratitude, and purpose. These attributes that describe a state of mind influence behaviors and decision-making in life.

5.6 Kūlia i ka nuʻu

Moʻokūʻauhau can inspire one to reach for the highest, kūlia i ka nuʻu. A desire to honor legacy can be fueled by learning about the accomplishments and resilience of ancestors. Furthermore, understanding the challenges and triumphs of one's lineage can instill a drive to overcome obstacles and achieve personal goals. Moʻokūʻauhau can awaken a sense of responsibility to uphold and contribute positively to future generations.

> *ʻAnakē Barbara: It's foundational for a healthy child to grow up with that kind of [moʻokūʻauhau] knowledge. It helps him to accept who he is as a child and what he can look forward to because his family was able to do so many things and be successful.*
>
> *Kuʻulei: I think when you belong somewhere, you're more likely to take care of it. So that kūlia i ka nuʻu piece, I'm from here and belong here. My people are from here. I have connection. So, I'm more likely going to protect people, ʻāina connections than someone who doesn't know their connection.*
>
> *Kumu Pomai: Where I saw our students recognize their value, the value of moʻokūʻauhau, separate from the school itself, was after many of them had graduated. Many of them ended up on Mauna Kea [the stand and protect movement for the sacred mountain]. A manifestation of the connection because they were taught from when they were young. They knew that the moʻokūʻauhau on that mountain protected the freshwater lands of the island. They could differentiate between the fact that Mauna Kea and everything above it and below it, through all of the chants and stories that the kūpuna had left and that scholars and people over time put into text or protected the text so that we could use it, from Queen Emma to just all kinds of stories. They understood why the*

mountain is sacred. They understood every bit of that mauna because of what they learned at school…There are still mele and oli being written by these young individuals of that mountain and what their relationship is to the water cycle, to the ether, to the land base and everything, the subterranean waters under our feet that is being written and documented now in mele, oli and hula in a different, next generation of time. That's a great example, I think, of them understanding the value of what mo'okū'auhau is.

Honu: It's not that Kanu produced these people who are, like, strong Hawaiian practitioners that were out there doing ceremonies everyday. It wasn't about that. And a lot of us did, a lot of us have caught onto the culture in that sense and they went into the community. They were a huge part of the movement of Mauna Kea because they have the skills and tools to do that. But there's some of us who we just learned to be better members of our community, and we're so grounded in culture, even though we're living the culture at a different level. Like we didn't go out there to be kumu hula, some of us did, but some of us are teaching at different schools, or some of us are starting our own businesses, but they're still very integral part of the culture that helps us become these people. And we're never ashamed of that either.

Ku'ulei: I think genealogy set the tone of expectations.

Mālie: Knowing the origin of the school and just being grateful for where everything has come from. I always think, Aunty Ku didn't do this whole thing just so I could get a good education and a huge headstart. I have to do it [kūlia i ka nu'u] because there are so many different things that have come before to get me to this place, I can't not do it. It feels good when I can actually kūlia i ka nu'u, when I can actually achieve.

Belonging to a place fosters a sense of responsibility and care for it, which is exemplified by the connection students feel to their ancestors and the 'āina. This connection was evident when many graduates participated in the protection of Mauna Kea, recognizing its sacred significance through chants and stories learned in school. Their ongoing efforts to document and honor their relationship with the land through mele, oli, and hula demonstrate their commitment to preserving their cultural heritage and reaching their highest potential.

Participants clearly connected the learning of moʻokūʻauhau to an enhanced sense of identity through belonging, responsibility, and active cultural engagement. These elements contribute to students' well-being by providing them a sense of purpose, pride, and fulfillment, therefore actualizing kūlia i ka nuʻu.

5.7 ʻO wai ʻoe

The following participant excerpts could have been woven into the preceding values framework; however, it was essential to view these forthright statements regarding identity separately. These statements from Kanu graduates are powerful testimonies of culture-based instruction's impact on identity.

> *Honu: When Kanu first started, it was still in that time period when people called you Hawaiian; it was derogatory; it was because you were dumb. "Oh, must be Hawaiian." People used it in that way as such a dark term. But the school really taught us to be proud to be Hawaiian, and there's some people who came through that don't have a drop of Hawaiian koko in them, but they're proud to be of Hawaiʻi, products of Hawaiian culture. I don't know when it happened when it felt like a positive term, but I can remember doing something really awesome and a teacher being like, "Get it, Hawaiian, that was awesome!" There was a change in even the way we used the word being Hawaiian, and that was super important. No one needed to be ashamed of being Hawaiian, and as you identified with that, it was okay for that to be your identity. It was promoted; we wanted to be Hawaiian. We're at this point in our society where … people want to be Hawaiian.*
>
> *Mālie: As far as identity, we were exposed to so many different things…but just having that foundation of being Hawaiian and existing in that space that definitely helped to at least establish a foundation, somewhere to start, somewhere to grow from.*
>
> *Noah: I'll for sure say I'm Hawaiian. I only have 25% Hawaiian but I'd for sure say I'm mostly Hawaiian. I think that answer really came from here [Kanu] because being here learning the culture and learning the traditions and the protocols and just the way our*

people used to live back then really helped me to be in love, be in love like of who I am and being Hawaiian. I'm very proud to be Hawaiian, and obviously, there's so many things I could do to immerse myself more into the culture, but what I've learned here [at Kanu] helped me a lot in knowing who I am in my identity.

Kaniela: Those of us who graduated from Kanu, we don't really have an identity problem. We kind of pretty much know that we're Hawaiian kids, like we know. I'm not trying to figure out what kind of person; I'm trying to figure out how to be successful in the time and era I'm in. I'm not ever worried about figuring out who I want to be. I know that I want to be Kanaka, I know I want to live here, and I know I want to somehow give back to my community. I've never been ashamed of being a Hawaiian, ever!

Participants voiced Kanu's influence on transforming the negative perception of Hawaiian identity into a source of pride and positivity. The school's teachings provided a solid cultural foundation, helping students embrace their Hawaiian identity confidently and without shame. A clear sense of identity allows them to focus on contributing to their community and pursuing success.

In this section entitled ʻo wai ʻoe, who are you, participants voiced the school's influence on their identity development. Their reflections connect learning moʻokūʻauhau to changes in identity and indirectly to well-being. As explained by participants, Kanu's teachings have transformed perceptions and provided a foundation for confidence and community involvement, illustrating the positive outcomes moʻokūʻauhau can have on both identity and well-being.

5.8 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I presented the thoughts and experiences of Kanu graduates and teachers interwoven with kupuna wisdom related to moʻokūʻauhau and its influence on identity development and well-being. It has been a privilege to include the voices of these ten individuals

who are dedicated to perpetuating Hawaiian culture. This information has not previously been available from these sources in a literary context.

Kanu's five values, aloha, mahalo, kōkua, mālama, and kūlia, serve as the thematic framework to organize participant manaʻo. An additional subsection was included to emphasize identity testimonials. Participants linked learning moʻokūʻauhau to an enhanced sense of identity through belonging, responsibility, and active cultural engagement. The aloha they felt from ancestral connections also enhanced their sense of identity and well-being by fostering a strong connection to ʻohana and the broader community. In their view, moʻokūʻauhau was not limited to family names but included moʻokūʻauhau of ʻāina, kula, oli, hula, and other cultural practices where a lineage could be traced. Continuity became evident as participants described their feelings about their experiences with these lineages. It could be seen as a seamless progression or flow without interruption that provided stability and connection between the past, present, and future. These connections provided emotional support, a sense of belonging, and a trusting and safe environment from which self-esteem, confidence, and pride could grow. This aligns closely with Cultural Resilience Theory and the view that cultural practices are protective factors that reinforce identity and foster resilience in Indigenous communities. By maintaining cultural lineages, individuals can draw upon traditions to build resilience and thrive in the face of contemporary challenges. As described by participants, cultural practices provided stability and connection, building cultural resilience to support their well-being and identity as Kanaka ʻŌiwi.

The new knowledge gained from this data provides valuable insights into the efficacy of integrating culture and moʻokūʻauhau into the curriculum to enhance students' sense of identity and well-being. This understanding underscores the importance of culturally relevant education in fostering a deeper connection to one's heritage, promoting emotional and psychological

resilience, and overall personal success. This material is further examined and refined into thesis findings in the following chapter.

CHAPTER SIX – FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

6.0 Chapter Introduction

This chapter analyzes the emerging themes from the data to address the research question: how has learning moʻokūʻauhau at Kanu influenced students' sense of identity and well-being? First, the methodology is revisited to honor the cultural frameworks central to understanding the participants' experiences and to recognize the reciprocal relationship between this study and the methodological approach. Next, the data is analyzed and interpreted against learner outcomes established by Nā Lei Naʻauao, the State of Hawaiʻi DOE, and Kanu. Given that learner outcomes encompass various aspects of identity development, they provide a valuable and comprehensive framework against which to analyze the qualitative data of this research, offering insights into the multi-faceted impact of Kanu's educational approach on students' cultural understanding and sense of well-being. The analysis provides a comprehensive and integrated discussion of how the findings fit within the broader academic context. New insights revealed in the research that have not been covered in the existing literature are also highlighted.

6.1 Linking the Methodology

It is imperative to begin this analysis by revisiting the voice of Manulani Meyer, whose work was the foundation for the Kanaka ʻŌiwi Paradigm that governs this research. She reminds us that Hawaiian epistemology "is a work about liberation via identity… unless we, as cultural workers, describe our own philosophy of knowledge, someone else will do that for us" (Meyer, 2018, p. XVII). She cites Ignacio Martin-Baró for teaching that the recovery of historical memory via epistemology "has to do with recovering not only the sense of one's own identity and the pride of belonging to a people but also a reliance on a tradition and culture, and above

all, with rescuing those aspects of identity which served yesterday, and will serve today, for liberation" (Meyer, 2018, p. XVII). This perspective proves true as we look at the data of this research. Participant narratives in the preceding chapter describe how Kanu provided an environment rooted in Hawaiian epistemology where reliance on culture allowed students to cultivate a pride in belonging and a sense of identity that serves them today. Participant narratives illustrated components of the Kanaka ʻŌiwi Paradigm, ontology, axiology, and epistemology, all while Kanaka ʻŌiwi methodology was employed in the research process. The data collected through this culturally grounded approach answered the research question and substantiated the epistemological framework that guided this study. Due to the significance of this reciprocal relationship, a brief analysis of the data against the four components of the Kanaka ʻŌiwi Paradigm is discussed next.

Hawaiian ontology, the first component, encompasses practices and beliefs and can be seen in the interconnectedness of people and ancestors. Honu shared, "I have no doubt that I've had ancestors accompany me in those moments when I needed that kind of strength." This statement reflects a belief in ancestors' spiritual presence and ongoing influence on the living, highlighting the interconnectedness between the physical and spiritual realms. People and ʻāina are also interconnected. Kaniela's reflection, "We still go in there [Puʻu Pulehu school site]… and plant trees on the ʻāina. It was something that we created, that's why, and I think that it was beautiful for us," illustrates the ontological belief in the reciprocal relationship Kānaka ʻŌiwi have with ʻāina. These connections are a fundamental aspect of Hawaiian ontology.

The second component, Hawaiian axiology, is the morals and values that shape behavior. Kaniela's example of continuing to care for the Puʻu Pulehu school site after graduating from Kanu reflects the value of kuleana. Mālie demonstrated the value of mālama in her statement,

“We need to give back. I feel like I belong in that role of making sure everyone’s okay.” The value of kuleana emphasizes responsibility, while mālama encourages care for one another. These examples highlight the ethical principles that guide behavior and relationships in the Hawaiian context.

Third, Hawaiian epistemology emphasizes knowledge transfer through oral traditions, particularly moʻolelo and moʻokūʻauhau. Kuʻulei’s reflection on her great-grandmother’s entrepreneurial spirit exemplifies this: “Reading stories of my great-grandmother who was an entrepreneur in a lei business...gave me a sense of don’t let that go to waste, act right. We don’t only represent ourselves; you represent your families.” This reflection illustrates how moʻolelo transmit information, values, and inspiration, embodying the terms described in the literature review, “kupuna consciousness” and “moʻokūʻauhau consciousness”—the deep connection that links Kānaka ʻŌiwi to their ancestors’ wisdom. The talk story session with ʻAnakala Cy, primarily comprised of family moʻolelo and corresponding genealogies, epitomizes how ʻike is inherently transferred through oral traditions, preserving ancestral knowledge for the benefit of future generations and fostering a “genealogical consciousness,” also a term from the literature review. Kumu Pomai’s observation of students’ understanding of Mauna Kea’s sacredness from oli and mele also demonstrates the successful transmission of cultural and environmental knowledge through these means. These examples showcase Hawaiian ways of knowing, where knowledge is deeply embedded in cultural practices and oral traditions. Kanu’s use of moʻolelo and moʻokūʻauhau as educational tools reflects this epistemological approach of learning from the past to inform the present and future.

Lastly, moʻolelo and moʻokūʻauhau methodologies guided the research process and shaped the interpretation of data. These methodologies value respect, trust, relationality, and

spirituality while recognizing the participant as an expert in their own knowledge, experiences, and perspectives. The values of aloha, mālama, kōkua, mahalo, and kūlia, which serve as the themes for data categorization, were also applied to the methods and interactions with participants. For example, aloha was exhibited in how participants' narratives were collected and analyzed through talk story sessions emphasizing relationality and respect. Mālama was given to participant data, and mahalo was expressed through makana to all who contributed to the study. Cultural protocols such as beginning with aloha and honi helped build trust and openness in the data collection process.

This alignment between the methodological approach and the content of participants' responses provides empirical support for the validity and effectiveness of Hawaiian epistemological frameworks in research. It demonstrates that participants naturally articulate knowledge in ways that reflect Hawaiian epistemology when given the opportunity to express themselves through culturally appropriate methods. Moreover, this reciprocal validation highlights the importance of using culturally aligned research methodologies when studying Indigenous knowledge systems. It suggests that such approaches respect cultural ways of knowing and lead to richer, more authentic data that can further our understanding of these knowledge systems.

Acknowledging the methodologies employed and the paradigm that guided the research in this findings section provides a contextual framework that enriches the findings. Mutual reinforcement between method and findings underscores the value of decolonizing research practices in capturing and understanding Indigenous knowledge. Revisiting these components of the research methodology in a preface to the findings also demonstrates methodological rigor.

6.2 Integration with the Literature

The earlier literature review chapters synthesized existing research and theories on moʻokūʻauhau, identity development, the Hawaiian education movement, and Kanu o ka ʻĀina. Identified themes and gaps in the current understanding of these topics aid in contextualizing the forthcoming findings within the broader academic discourse on HCBE. Data from the preceding chapter will be analyzed against three key areas from the literature review: Nā Lei Naʻauao's Education with Aloha pedagogy, the Nā Hopena Aʻo outcomes framework, and Kanu's Student Learner Outcomes. These three frameworks are rooted in Hawaiian culture and emphasize holistic development, including well-being. They are also significant because learner outcomes guide educational practice while ensuring accountability.

Analyzing the data against these key areas provided a comprehensive understanding of how moʻokūʻauhau practices at Kanu contribute to students' sense of identity and well-being. This analysis revealed how Hawaiian culture-based education's theoretical foundations manifest in Kanu graduates' lived experiences. First, we can assess how moʻokūʻauhau practices embody and reinforce core Hawaiian values and teaching methods by examining the data through the Education with Aloha pedagogy lens. Second, the Nā Hopena Aʻo outcomes framework served as a benchmark to evaluate the effectiveness of moʻokūʻauhau education in fostering key competencies such as a strengthened sense of Hawaiʻi, belonging, excellence, and well-being. Finally, comparing the data to Kanu's specific learner outcomes provided insights into how moʻokūʻauhau practices align with and support the school's educational goals. This multi-faceted analysis illuminated the immediate impact of moʻokūʻauhau education on graduates' identities and its broader implications for HCBE models.

Furthermore, this approach helped identify areas of success, potential improvements, and innovative practices that could inform future educational strategies and policies in Hawai‘i and beyond. By focusing on the experiences of graduates, this analysis offers a unique opportunity for gauging the long-term effectiveness of academic policies and curricula, providing valuable insights into the lasting impact of culture-based education on individual lives and communities.

Education with Aloha

The Nā Lei Na‘auao Native Hawaiian Alliance of Charter Schools collaboratively developed the Education with Aloha (EA) pedagogy to create an enlightened nation, a culturally grounded populace that perpetuates Hawaiian culture and language, and an educated, motivated workforce. EA is characterized by the following four educational strategies utilized in Nā Lei Na‘auao schools like Kanu:

1. Commitment to Hawaiian culture, language, values, and traditions
2. ‘Ohana setting and inclusion of family
3. Aloha permeating the learning environment
4. Experiential, place-based, and inquiry-based instruction (Nā Lei Na‘auao, 2006)

These strategies were analyzed against the participant data to determine if Kanu’s instructional model aligns with the EA pedagogy. The data was then analyzed against the three EA outcomes to identify insights into the effectiveness and impact of these educational strategies.

The data reveals Kanu’s deep commitment to Hawaiian culture, language, values, and traditions, which align closely with the first strategy of the Education with Aloha (EA) pedagogy. Given this research’s focus on the cultural practice of mo‘okū‘auhau, all participants shared experiences of its integration into the learning environment. Lanakila explained, “At Kanu, thinking back to my time, it was very much the genealogy…find the names, and then the

palapala on how you had to lay out to recite it, to memorize. The moʻolelo and moʻokūʻauhau were so essential to so many aspects." Kuʻulei remembers, "We were doing moʻokūʻauhau from the beginning." Discussions by participants on learning moʻokūʻauhau flowed into experiences with moʻolelo. Kumu Pomai shared that her introduction to the school was attending a play where students reenacted the life of the aliʻi ʻUmi-a-Līloa and how his heritage made him the great Kanaka that he was. Historical figures such as ʻUmi, Pele, Laka, and Kamehameha were frequently referenced, demonstrating the deliberate inclusion of moʻolelo, language, and traditional wisdom in the curriculum.

Kanu's incorporation of oli, mele, and hula demonstrates the school's commitment to Hawaiian culture and language. Daily protocol, also known as piko, allows students to make ancestral connections while perpetuating the practices of oli and mele. Piko was deeply meaningful to all graduates. As Honu noted, graduates continue these practices: "Even at our age, whenever we get together, we participate in some kind of protocol." Typically, their protocol use is related to ʻāina, as seen from Kaniela's example: "We still do our protocol and harvest and plant trees on the ʻāina." The continued practice of protocol exemplifies their commitment to perpetuating the knowledge and values they acquired at the school.

Kanu helps students understand the deeper significance of ʻāina, as evidenced in Lanakila's explanation of ʻaumākua and the ʻūnihi pili ritual, binding ancestor spirits to natural elements: "The gods are our environment. So, if you sever the akua, you're severing that relationship to ʻāina." Moʻolelo shared by kūpuna, ʻAnakala Cy, and ʻAnakē Barbara included ʻāina as a central element. Emphasis on ʻāina is tied to a sense of place or place-based identity, how an individual's identity values and experiences are deeply connected to the physical locations they inhabit. Genealogical relationships to the land make ʻāina-based learning essential

at Kanu. The school's name reflects this ideology: " Kanu o ka ʻĀina figuratively refers to 'natives of the land from generations back.' We chose to name and identify ourselves as 'plants of the land' because, as native Hawaiians, we are an intricate part of our environment" (Kanu, 2009). Kumu Pomai recognized the role of oli in making ʻāina and moʻokūʻauhau connections in her comment: "When you have oli in the school that speaks to place names and a relationship to place, you recognize the hierarchy of the moʻokūʻauhau and how it was set up as Kānaka see their landscape." From a Hawaiian epistemological viewpoint, the land is ʻohana. Graduate narratives affirmed this belief, demonstrating how the school incorporates the EA strategies in their instruction.

The inclusion of family and ʻohana in the school setting is the second strategy. It is evident in the experiences shared by kumu and the graduates. Lei piko is one way the school invites families to participate in student learning. Kumu Maua described, "With lei piko, we bring their families in to be a part." The inclusion of ʻohana fosters a sense of community and belonging, making families feel valued. Kumu Pomai explained, "We really became pili because we knew families by name…They all came to all the activities and school-related festivals and really helped to emphasize the value of community learning and living." This inclusionary model creates a supportive environment, enhancing the overall ʻohana feeling at the school. Participants captured this feeling in phrases such as, "being here is a sense of community," "we actually had kumu who cared," "we're about ʻohana," "we learn that those connections, that pilina and family are so important," and "we were ʻohana."

The third strategy, aloha permeating the learning environment, naturally flows from an ʻohana-centered atmosphere and is a guiding principle of the school. When asked what stood out as foundational, Kaniela responded, "the values, I went straight to those because those are taught

to us as guidelines. In your everyday practice, you should be aloha kekahi i kekahi; you should be trying to love one another." Honu responded similarly: "To sum it up in one word, aloha, because if you had aloha for others, then all things fall into place. I think the thing that Kanu taught us was to aloha ourselves." Aloha and the values mālama, kōkua, kuleana, and kūlia, are intentionally embedded in the school's educational philosophy.

The final strategy, experiential, place-based, and inquiry-based instruction, is evident throughout the graduates' experiences. Within the "talk story" sessions focused on moʻokūʻauhau, various teaching methods were discussed indirectly. Graduates from the early years described learning in multi-grade level classes where older students assisted in teaching younger ones. Kuʻulei recalls, "It was Hui 1 and Hui 2, kindergarten through 12th grade. As 12th graders, we watched over the younger kids and rotated through different areas. I learned more than I ever would have in a traditional setting. It was hands-on." Honu shared that as a first grader, "Our reading and math were done with the high schoolers. It was a unique opportunity to be together with the older kids … it taught them kuleana." Lanakila appreciated how Kanu "opened up the mindset that there are many ways to look at something… we were able to self-assess and move forward with that." Honu also highlighted how the school empowered youth voices: "[We] were encouraged to utilize our voice… we were always encouraged to do what we needed to be our best selves in the moment, as long as it was safe and appropriate." The school extensively used outdoor learning labs, and all students commented on learning in nature. Noah recalls, "You also learn how to not be afraid of dirt and hard work and being outside more than inside." From the teachers' perspective, Kumu Pomai, who held classes at the Kawaihae outdoor learning lab, shared the experience of teaching students to identify place names on the island terrain as seen from the ocean. She explained, "To understand the kids, you have to know the

land, what the names are…land-based moʻokūʻauhau." Since its inception, Kanu's educational program has included a connection to place through observation, identification, and independent inquiry.

While the data overwhelmingly supports Kanu's successful implementation of EA pedagogy, it is important to note that the research did not reveal significant challenges or areas for improvement. Future studies might benefit from explicitly exploring difficulties in implementing this educational model or how its implementation could be improved.

The second portion of this analysis reviews the data against the EA outcomes. The graduate biographies provide compelling evidence in assessing Kanu's application of EA strategies to achieve the corresponding EA outcomes of 1) creating an enlightened nation, 2) fostering a culturally grounded populace that perpetuates Hawaiian culture and language, and 3) developing an educated, motivated workforce. The graduate biographies highlight professions, educational achievements, and examples of cultural perpetuation. Supporting statements from the data include:

- "Where I saw our students recognize their value was after many of them ended up on Mauna Kea [the stand and protect movement for the sacred mountain], a manifestation of the connection because they were taught"
- "Some of us are teaching at different schools or starting our own businesses, but they're still an integral part of the culture"

Successful careers, the pursuit of higher education, entrepreneurial endeavors, community involvement, and active participation in cultural traditions demonstrate Kanu's success in achieving the EA outcomes. These observations collectively demonstrate Kanu's success in

producing professionally successful graduates who are deeply connected to their culture and community.

Participants not only shared their personal achievements but also discussed those of classmates. A standout example from the data is Mālie's observation about students struggling with learning disabilities or other traumas: "They're holding down jobs, they have families, they're out doing amazing things, and without the school, they would not have had that." Honu made a similar observation related to classmates who had been houseless or had incarcerated parents, noting, "These friends who went through crazy experiences are doing so well." Honu and Kaniela attribute the success of these classmates in overcoming trauma to the strong pilina built at Kanu. Along with Lanakila, they believed the Hawaiian practice of ho'oponopono, employed as a school 'ohana, promoted healing and allowed students to work through difficult situations, clearing a path for pono choice-making.

The findings demonstrate Kanu's alignment with and successful implementation of the EA pedagogy and provide replicative evidence of the 2007 research by Tibbets, Kahakalau, and Johnson, as examined in the Chapter Four literature review. This 2007 study was conducted early in the delivery of HCBE, and no other studies of EA have been undertaken since then. Therefore, these findings are timely in illustrating the effectiveness of HCBE at creating a motivated, culturally grounded, and informed populace. Moreover, the current research recorded perspectives of graduates five years or more post-graduation, aiding in the understanding of the long-term impacts HCBE can have on individuals.

The findings also substantiate Meyer's theory (2018) that "culture strengthens identity. Hawaiian culture strengthens Hawaiian identity" (p. 144), as cited in the Chapter Three literature review. Notably, Meyer's research was conducted before the advent of Nā Lei Na'auao schools,

and her findings were based on interview data from Hawaiian leaders and educators. This background enhances the significance of the current research in affirming a theory developed over twenty-five years ago, highlighting the enduring relevance of Meyer's insights. It underscores the profound wisdom and foresight of the Hawaiian leaders and educators whose contributions led to the creation of HFCS. Their ʻike lives on in Nā Lei Naʻauao schools and continues to shape our understanding of cultural identity.

Nā Hopena Aʻo

This section evaluates how the themes emerging from the data align with the Hawaiʻi Board of Education's desired attributes for all public school graduates as outlined in the State of Hawaiʻi educational outcomes framework, Nā Hopena Aʻo (HĀ). HĀ is not a formal assessment administered to students but rather a framework that encompasses a broad range of developmental areas designed to support students in reaching their full potential. Developed by education reformists, including leaders from ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi programs, ʻAha Pūnana Leo, Kula Kaiapuni, and HFCS, HĀ provides a valuable tool for analyzing identity development data.

The analysis of Kanu's data against HĀ is not intended to demonstrate compliance with state standards but rather to show how Indigenous educational practices can effectively achieve and exceed state-defined learning outcomes. Engaging with HĀ critically allows Kanu to navigate the tensions between institutional recognition and educational sovereignty, leveraging state-adopted frameworks to advocate for Indigenous-defined success. By showing how Kanu's moʻokūʻauhau practices naturally align with HĀ outcomes, the analysis strengthens the argument for expanding culture-based education, as it proves these approaches can successfully meet multiple measures of educational effectiveness while staying true to their foundational cultural and political values.

The HĀ outcomes provide a framework for understanding the long-term impact of Kanu's educational approach on its graduates. Based on participant data, graduates' experiences demonstrate how culture-based education can foster development across multiple dimensions of learning and growth. As Kanu continues to advocate for education reform, these findings have significant implications for transforming educational policy, curriculum, and assessment development throughout Hawai‘i. Kanu's success illustrates pathways for integrating Hawaiian culture and language into the broader educational system, potentially extending these benefits to students who cannot attend Hawaiian-focused charter schools.

As explained in the literature review, HĀ comprises six strength-based outcomes in the areas of belonging, responsibility, excellence, aloha, total well-being, and Hawai‘i. Each outcome was individually aligned to the participants' experiences with mo‘okū‘auhau at Kanu.

Belonging: Participants consistently emphasized how mo‘okū‘auhau fostered a sense of connection to lineage and community. Lanakila noted that "today's world doesn't value family in the same way or lineage," highlighting the unique role of genealogy in cultivating belonging. Mālie elaborated that learning mo‘okū‘auhau "gave a sense of comfort that I could be related to anyone... always have a support network." These perspectives illustrate how genealogical knowledge creates a foundation of relationships and a strong sense of place.

Responsibility (Kuleana): The data revealed a strong emphasis on kuleana. Kaniela's ongoing commitment to land stewardship demonstrates this: "We still go in there [Pu‘u Pulehu school site]... and plant trees on the ‘āina." This act of caring for the same land that taught them illustrates how Kanu students internalized their kuleana to the environment. Lanakila further emphasized, "The mo‘olelo and our mo‘okū‘auhau were so essential... critical for rights for land

rights," linking genealogy to the responsibility of protecting cultural and environmental resources.

Excellence (Kūlia i ka nuʻu): Kanu's mission directly aligns with this outcome. Kuʻulei shared how ancestral stories inspired excellence: "Reading stories of my great-grandmother who was an entrepreneur... gave me a sense of don't let that go to waste, act right." This comment reflects a commitment to achieving one's potential in honor of ancestral legacy. Similarly, Kaniela added, "I think there's a big important value in having moʻokūʻauhau in the back of your head... as we're getting older and decisions are heavier, it helps a lot, having that foundation," indicating how understanding genealogy encourages striving for success and continuous improvement. The graduates' biographies further illustrate their continued pursuit of excellence.

Aloha: Learning moʻokūʻauhau strengthens one's sense of aloha. Kumu Maua shared, "As we learn our moʻokūʻauhau… It's just that sense of family, that sense of aloha, that sense of lōkahi," emphasizing how genealogy fosters a deep sense of love and connection within families. Kuʻulei added, "You find pieces of you in your ancestors," showing how genealogy cultivates empathy and respect for one's lineage and the broader community.

Total Well-being: Mālie's reflection captures the holistic well-being derived from cultural identity: "It's no longer seeing everyone as individuals, but we are one, and we need to help… that is where I feel like I belong." This sense of interconnectedness and support directly ties to overall mental and emotional health, the desired outcome of a strengthened sense of total well-being. Honu emphasized, "I have no doubt that I've had ancestors accompany me in those moments when I needed that kind of strength," indicating how moʻokūʻauhau supports personal resilience and well-being.

Hawai‘i: As a Hawaiian-focused charter School, Kanu’s curriculum inherently strengthens students’ sense of Hawai‘i. Kumu Pomai observed during the Mauna Kea movement, “They knew that the mo‘okū‘auhau on that mountain protected the freshwater lands of the island,” demonstrating how genealogical understanding fosters cultural stewardship. Ku‘ulei added, “I think when you belong somewhere, you’re more likely to take care of it,” illustrating a profound connection to Hawai‘i’s preservation.

While the data overwhelmingly supports Kanu’s alignment with HĀ outcomes, it is worth noting that some areas, such as total well-being, might benefit from more explicit integration into the mo‘okū‘auhau curriculum. Future research could explore how to strengthen these connections further.

The integration of mo‘okū‘auhau practices at Kanu exemplifies the outcomes of the HĀ framework, supporting Ebersole and Kanahele-Mossman’s (2023) finding that culture-based and place-based experiences lead to a way of being rather than merely an academic exercise. This research validates the effectiveness of Kanu’s approach and advocates for the broader implementation of culture and place-based curricula in Hawai‘i’s public schools to benefit students who are unable to attend HFCS. These findings contribute significantly to understanding how Indigenous educational practices can meet and exceed state-defined learning outcomes, offering valuable insights for educational policy, curriculum, and assessment development.

Kanu Schoolwide Learner Outcomes

Over the 24 years of Kanu’s existence, the school has remained steadfast in its purpose, mission, and vision. Kanu’s learner outcomes have remained remarkably consistent in their core principles and intent, with changes over the years primarily reflecting refinements in descriptions

rather than significant shifts in educational philosophy or goals. This final section of my analysis examines how the data aligns with Kanu's current Schoolwide Learner Outcomes, which are:

- Demonstrate cultural perseverance through oral and visual communication.
- Value and examine Indigenous and global perspectives through leadership and community engagement.
- Formulate and critically apply the skills necessary to activate positive change in society.
- Identify and observe traditional knowledge systems in relation to natural and community cycles.
- Apply and analyze traditional practices and behaviors to cultivate community awareness and engagement.
- Address community issues and create culturally responsive solutions.
- Perpetuate a desire for learning and maintaining relationships with the environment and community.
- Demonstrate connection to place through observation, identification, and independent inquiry.
- Embrace the kuleana of contributing to the community.
- Establish self-identity by honoring genealogy.

These outcomes reflect Kanu's commitment to culturally responsive education and provide a framework for assessing the long-term impact of their educational model on graduates. It is important to note that while this study focused specifically on the cultural practice of moʻokūʻauhau and not all aspects of Kanu's instruction, it still provides valuable insights into the broader curriculum. Even though moʻokūʻauhau is just one foundational component of Kanu's

educational approach, its deep integration into the school's culture allows us to analyze its impact on all learner outcomes. The principles and skills developed through moʻokūʻauhau practices extend to other learning and personal development areas, making it a useful lens to examine Kanu's overall effectiveness in meeting its Student Learner Outcomes.

The first outcome, demonstrating cultural perseverance through oral and visual communication, is strongly evidenced in the data. Participants consistently emphasized the importance of learning and sharing their moʻokūʻauhau and acknowledged their perpetuation of the practice after graduating. Moʻolelo were referenced as a source for learning from the examples of their predecessors. All participants referenced oli and mele as a way to connect with their heritage and ancestors. The chants performed daily at the school include place names, stories, and values, reinforcing cultural identity. Kaniela and Honu discussed their use of protocol when they gathered with other classmates, "Protocol became such an important part of who we are... I do not feel safe unless I do my protocol." This demonstrates how Kanu's emphasis on oral and visual communication fosters cultural perseverance beyond the classroom.

Kanu's success in helping students value and examine Indigenous and global perspectives is apparent in the graduates' reflections. Kaniela's observation about the privilege of understanding one's genealogy and its impact on decision-making reflects a deep appreciation for Indigenous knowledge. Lanakila emphasized the importance of learning beyond a single cultural mindset to gather broader knowledge and mana from different traditions: "For me, the whole idea is hoʻomana. If I am able to pull mana from four different landscapes, that's more mana. So I honor that, and it gave me the permission to learn beyond one mindset, one culture, one tradition." This perspective highlights the school's effort to broaden students' worldviews, incorporating a global perspective into their education.

The data reveals that Kanu graduates are formulating and applying skills to activate positive societal change, as evidenced by their involvement in community initiatives and cultural preservation efforts. The school instilled a sense of kuleana and leadership in students through the use of moʻokūʻauhau, as highlighted by Mālie and others, preparing them to be community contributors. Kanu's instructional model emphasized caring for others and teaching younger students, fostering a community-oriented mindset. As Honu shared, "It taught them kuleana. So when we became those high schoolers, we felt the same sense of responsibility. I need to take care of you; let me teach you these things." This leadership and community-oriented training prepared graduates to participate in movements such as the protection of Mauna Kea, where they applied their cultural advocacy and community organizing skills.

Participants frequently mentioned their connection to ʻāina, demonstrating their ability to identify and observe traditional knowledge systems in relation to natural and community cycles. Kaniela reflected on how learning about his family's genealogy and traditional practices on a school huakaʻi enabled him to participate in farming a loʻi next to his ʻohana's land. ʻĀina-based learning such as this connects students to their family traditions and teaches the importance of land stewardship. Kaniela later commented how the foundation of moʻokūʻauhau could lead to "A version of our story where we go back to Kahakuloa on Maui to help restore the loʻi systems." Loʻi restoration, waʻa, and moʻokūʻauhau are some of the traditional knowledge systems mentioned by participants.

Integrating traditional practices in daily school experiences, such as oli and mele, cultivates community awareness and engagement. Noah's reflection on daily protocols illustrates this: "Protocol we did it every single day... Doing our oli and with everybody on the same page." This regular engagement with cultural practices helps build a strong sense of identity and

belonging among students. Lanakila noted the inclusive and unifying nature of these practices, "We're all ʻoluʻolu we're coming out, we say our good mornings we're getting in [to line], and then all it takes is someone to start that one chant. Whoever is chosen to lead protocol… It was organic. It was natural…We were ʻohana." These practices preserve and transmit cultural knowledge and actively engage students in a communal process, reinforcing their connection to each other and their cultural heritage.

Kanu graduates demonstrate their ability to address community issues and create culturally responsive solutions. Lanakila shared how knowing his moʻokūʻauhau assisted in stopping the construction of a road through his ancestral burial lands, "because of our lineage…we have gotten that area protected, got it purchased with the open lands act... they call it Kipapa park today. Lineage and understanding moʻokūʻauhau is important even in that function of protecting ʻāina." Similarly, as mentioned previously, students' involvement in the Mauna Kea movement showcases how Kanu's education empowers students to engage with contemporary issues through a cultural lens.

The data strongly supports Kanu's success in perpetuating a desire for learning and maintaining relationships with the environment and community. Honu and Mālie's emphasis on the interconnectedness of the community and the need to give back reflects this ongoing commitment to learning and engagement. Kanu students learn to view the land as a resource and a sacred entity tied to their ancestry. This belief is exemplified in Lanakila's statement, "If you sever the akua, you're severing that relationship to ʻāina…You're not looking at the forest for the life-giving akua…The forest is a lot of wood I can make a profit on… because you're not seeing the sacred." Understanding the sacred nature of ʻāina motivates students to maintain relationships with the environment.

Kanu's approach to education fosters a strong connection to place through observation, identification, and independent inquiry. The practice of lei piko, as described by Kumu Maua, reflects this connection: "With lei piko, we bring their families in to be a part of that... you have the youngest one to the oldest one." This intergenerational learning experience deepens students' connection to place. Moreover, multiple students referenced the outdoor learning labs of Kawaihae, Waipiʻo, and Puʻu Pulehu as pivotal locations where they developed profound connections to place. These ʻāina-based experiences allowed students to work the land directly, integrating traditional knowledge with hands-on learning. For instance, Kumu Pomai shared how students learned to identify place names on the island terrain as seen from the ocean, demonstrating a deep, multi-faceted understanding of their environment. This approach reinforces cultural knowledge and instills a sense of kuleana towards the land, effectively bridging traditional wisdom with contemporary environmental stewardship.

The data consistently shows that Kanu graduates embrace the kuleana of contributing to their community. Honu reflected on how their education at the school emphasized the importance of kuleana in all activities: "It was in our every activity… We never learned anything frivolously. We were trained to think bigger than ourselves. Everything we learned at Kanu was to help us have the tools and skills to be these people in our community." This quote underscores the school's role in fostering a strong sense of duty among students to contribute positively to their communities, reflecting the Hawaiian value of kuleana.

Finally, establishing self-identity by honoring genealogy is an evident strength of Kanu's educational model. Kuʻulei described how engaging with moʻokūʻauhau was a profound experience for her, emphasizing the connection it created with her ancestors and the sense of continuity it provided. This practice helped her understand her place within a more extensive

familial history, grounding her identity: “When I engaged in genealogy…pictures of people I know, the area they’re talking about; I can see it, feel it, smell the air, touch the water. That was more; it was connected versus somebody else’s moʻolelo from other places.” Kanu promotes the honoring of genealogy at graduation each year by having each graduate recite their moʻokūʻauhau. Mālie commented on the experience: “It’s claiming your origin…people who are responsible for you being alive. It’s to speak names that have not been spoken for who knows how long, to remember those who maybe you’re the last people who remember them.”

While the data overwhelmingly supports Kanu’s success in meeting its Schoolwide Learner Outcomes, it is important to acknowledge potential areas for improvement or challenges. One area that might benefit from further development is the integration of global perspectives alongside Indigenous knowledge. While graduates demonstrated strong connections to their heritage, the data provided fewer explicit examples of how they engage with or apply this knowledge in a broader context. Additionally, while the outcomes related to cultural preservation and community engagement are strongly evidenced, those on critical thinking and problem-solving in non-cultural contexts were less prominent in the data. This suggests an opportunity to emphasize further the application of traditional knowledge to contemporary, global issues. Another potential area for growth lies in ensuring that all students, regardless of their prior cultural knowledge or family background, can fully engage with and benefit from moʻokūʻauhau practices. Future research could explore how Kanu addresses the needs of students who may not have strong familial connections to Hawaiian culture or come from diverse backgrounds. Addressing these areas could further strengthen Kanu’s already impressive educational model and ensure graduates are fully prepared for the complex, interconnected world they will navigate.

The data strongly supports that Kanu is successfully meeting its Schoolwide Learner Outcomes. Graduates demonstrate a deep understanding of their culture, strong identity, and commitment to community engagement and environmental stewardship. These findings reflect the immediate impact of Kanu's educational model and its long-term effectiveness in fostering culturally grounded, socially responsible, and self-aware individuals.

This comprehensive analysis of the participant data against Nā Lei Na‘auao's Education with Aloha pedagogy, the Nā Hopena A‘o outcomes framework, and Kanu's learner outcomes underscores the integral role of mo‘okū‘auhau practices in shaping students' identity and educational experiences. This study highlights how these practices, deeply embedded in Kanu's curriculum, reinforce core Hawaiian values and foster key competencies such as cultural understanding, community engagement, and personal well-being. The alignment of graduate perspectives with these frameworks affirms Kanu's success in cultivating a culturally rooted student body with a strengthened sense of identity. Furthermore, this analysis provides valuable insights into the broader implications of HCBE, suggesting that such models can effectively enhance educational outcomes and support community resilience. These insights reinforce the need for broader implementation of culture-based curricula in educational systems, advocating for policies that recognize and integrate Indigenous educational practices.

6.3 Key Implications and Challenges

This section introduces implications explaining why the findings matter and how they can influence future practices, inform policy, contribute to theoretical frameworks, and guide further research. Key challenges are also discussed to provide transparency in the research process and point to areas that require additional attention, resourcing, or development.

The findings demonstrate that integrating cultural practices, such as moʻokūʻauhau, into the curriculum significantly strengthens students' sense of identity and well-being. The alignment of Kanu's educational practices with the Nā Hopena Aʻo outcomes framework indicates that HCBE fosters emotional, social, and spiritual well-being. This finding supports the broader adoption of culturally relevant pedagogy in Indigenous and other education systems for the betterment of students.

Including family and community through moʻokūʻauhau experiences enhances the support network for students and fosters a sense of belonging. As students learn kuleana to familial relationships and ʻāina, they can develop leadership skills and become proactive, community-responsive, culturally grounded leaders. This potential is further enhanced by the findings that show graduates continuing to practice and value their culture. Creating similar educational models could lead to long-term benefits in preserving and promoting cultural pride and learners' strengthened sense of self.

The success of Kanu's model can inform educational policies to support HCBE within the State of Hawaiʻi and even globally. Clearly, Kanu has fulfilled the requirements of Hawaiʻi's Article X, which mandates utilizing community expertise and providing "a Hawaiian education program consisting of language, culture and history in the public schools" (Legislative Reference Bureau, n.d.). As charter schools move forward, policies related to funding, school resourcing, appropriate student assessments, and professional development for educators can be revised or developed. Although not discussed as part of this study, research on the historical and persistent inequities and under-resourcing of HFCS is available. Pairing that research with Kanu's successful model could drive policy reform, leading to meaningful change for students.

Relating to the methodological approach of this study, the findings emphasize the importance of decolonizing educational practices and methodologies. It also supports the argument that Indigenous knowledge systems and epistemologies are valuable and should be recognized for their capacity to address ongoing educational disparities.

Implementing these types of efforts could be met with various challenges, the most pressing being the lack of understanding or acceptance of culture-based and Indigenous knowledge systems. Advocacy and continued research to prove the merits of these types of educational initiatives are crucial. Culture-based initiatives require strong institutional support, including policy backing, funding, and community involvement. Ensuring this support is consistent and long-term is also challenging, particularly as societal needs evolve and education models must adapt.

Implementing and maintaining culture-based models requires significant resources, including trained educators, appropriate materials, and community involvement. Securing this type of financial support and ensuring ongoing equitable access to these resources can be difficult. The scalability of a model like Kanu's could be taxing to limited resources, especially when the adaptation requires respect and care in integrating local cultures while maintaining the essence of the educational approach.

Ensuring that all students, regardless of their cultural background, can engage with and benefit from the curriculum is essential. This process includes addressing the needs of students who may not have strong familial connections to the culture being taught. The foundational values of culture-based education are a reminder that equity must be extended to all students regardless of race or socio-economic background.

Developing curricula and assessments that integrate Indigenous knowledge with mainstream education content requires collaboration and innovation. Shifts to the standardized education system can seem daunting and demand continuous evaluation and adjustment due to the scale and complexity of such efforts. Aligning culture-based education with state and national education standards while preserving cultural integrity presents additional challenges. Furthermore, advocating for adjustments to education standards that reflect cultural values adds another layer of complexity. Tensions between standardized testing requirements and culture-based learning outcomes must also be handled. Despite these challenges, Kanu and other HFCS should continue to use and develop culture-based assessments such as hōʻike. Based on this research, an assessment related to moʻokūʻauhau could prove beneficial.

The key implications presented in this section are meant to be practical applications of the findings that can be considered to improve or fill existing gaps in the field of education. As this research focuses on education in Hawaiʻi, the applications are foremost for policymakers in that state to consider. Both the implications and challenges presented are not exhaustive or exclusive but offer a solid and comprehensive list of potential areas of improvement and broader impact beyond HFCS.

6.4 Chapter Summary

The perils of identity loss for Kānaka ʻŌiwi and the promising efforts of HFCS to address those issues fueled my interest in researching the role of moʻokūʻauhau in identity reclamation. Through the contributions of ten research participants, this study was able to access the impact HCBE, and more particularly moʻokūʻauhau instruction, has had on student's identity development. The findings reviewed in this chapter provide a comprehensive and detailed answer to the essential question: how has learning moʻokūʻauhau at Kanu influenced students'

sense of identity and well-being? Participant narratives spoke to cultural connection, emotional support, the importance of ʻohana, the inclusion of values in the school setting, and community engagement, all from their lived experiences with moʻokūʻauhau.

In an effort to make the analysis cohesive, the data was linked to the methodology and then analyzed against three relevant outcome frameworks: Education with Aloha pedagogy, Nā Hopena Aʻo outcomes framework, and Kanu's Student Learner Outcomes. This type of analysis was beneficial because it provided a comprehensive, validated, and nuanced understanding of the impact of learning moʻokūʻauhau. It also demonstrated the relevance of Kanu's educational practices to broader educational goals and illustrated the long-term impact this type of instruction can have on graduates. This multi-faceted approach strengthened the overall conclusions of this research and allowed for the recognition and filling of gaps in the existing literature. Both strengths and areas needing further exploration in HCBE were highlighted. In the next chapter, a concluding discussion will provide future research recommendations and a comprehensive overview, tying together all chapters and presenting a final synthesis of this work.

CHAPTER SEVEN – CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.0 Chapter Introduction

This chapter offers a synopsis of the study and presents conclusions rooted in the data collected from participants' voices and substantiated by existing literature. Furthermore, it delves into actionable recommendations derived from the findings, suggesting areas for initiation, continuity, or enhancement. The chapter acknowledges the limitations but proposes avenues for future research and culminates with personal reflections and inspirations drawn from the kūpuna who set the path for this study.

7.1 Limitations

This study did not seek to be critical of Kanu, its pedagogy, or its instructional methods. It also did not intend to compare student identity to academic performance through comparisons to standardized test data or any other quantitative measure. As a qualitative work focused on a unique sampling, it did not intend to generalize the findings to all populations or contexts.

Several limitations must be acknowledged in this study on the influence of learning moʻokūʻauhau on identity and well-being. Firstly, the sample size and diversity were constrained, focusing solely on participants from one specific school. This restriction may limit the generalizability of the findings to other HFCS or broader educational contexts. Additionally, while providing rich and in-depth data, the qualitative nature of the research lacks quantitative measures, which could offer measurable outcomes or statistical comparisons.

There is a potential for bias as those who agreed to be interviewed may have had particularly positive experiences with moʻokūʻauhau education, potentially skewing the results. Furthermore, the retrospective nature of relying on graduates' memories introduces recall bias, as past experiences may be remembered differently over time. The absence of a comparison group

of students who did not receive moʻokūʻauhau education limits the ability to delineate its specific impact. At the same time, the focus on successful outcomes may mean that challenges or potential negative aspects of implementing moʻokūʻauhau education were not fully captured.

The study's time constraints provide only a snapshot of participants' experiences and reflections at a specific point in time rather than a longitudinal view. Moreover, external factors outside of school that could influence identity development and well-being were also not accounted for. Lastly, researcher positionality is another factor, as my background and connection to the topic could have influenced data interpretation. Although this connection can be a strength, it is important to recognize it as a potential limitation.

7.2 Future Research

Several avenues for future research are suggested to build on the current study and address its limitations. First, conducting a longitudinal study that tracks students from their time at Kanu through adulthood could provide valuable insights into the long-term impacts of moʻokūʻauhau education on identity and well-being. This approach would address the current study's limitation of relying on retrospective accounts by providing ongoing data collection and a more dynamic understanding of the educational effects over time.

Secondly, incorporating quantitative measures of identity and well-being alongside qualitative data could enhance the robustness of findings and facilitate comparisons with other educational approaches. This mixed-methods approach would validate the rich narratives already collected and provide a broader, more comprehensive understanding of the impacts of moʻokūʻauhau education.

Expanding the research to include other HFCS or traditional public schools could offer a comparative perspective, illuminating the unique aspects of Kanu's approach to moʻokūʻauhau

education. Such comparative studies could reveal differences and similarities across various educational settings, providing a clearer picture of the factors contributing to the success of moʻokūʻauhau education. Additionally, exploring how moʻokūʻauhau education impacts students from diverse backgrounds or those with limited prior knowledge of Hawaiian culture could provide insights into its broader applicability. This would address potential limitations in the current study's sample diversity and help to understand how moʻokūʻauhau education can be adapted to benefit a wider range of students.

Further research could also delve into how parents and the broader community perceive changes in students' identity and well-being as a result of moʻokūʻauhau education. Gathering these perspectives would offer a more holistic view of education's impact, highlighting how the benefits observed in students resonate within their families and communities.

Another avenue for future research could explore the politics of moʻokūʻauhau and its role in advancing a liberatory agenda for Hawaiian communities. Specifically, this could involve examining how the intentional teaching of moʻokūʻauhau challenges colonial constructs, such as blood quantum, which have historically undermined Indigenous identity. By centering Hawaiian epistemologies and ways of knowing, new research could investigate how remembering and reclaiming ancestral connections fosters a sense of self that resists colonial erasure. This work could also analyze how the politics of moʻokūʻauhau aligns with broader movements for Indigenous sovereignty, self-determination, and cultural revitalization, offering a critical framework for understanding its transformative potential in education.

Lastly, investigating how the principles of moʻokūʻauhau education might be applied in other cultural contexts could contribute to the global discourse on Indigenous education and identity formation. By examining its potential cross-cultural applications, researchers can explore

how the core values and methods of moʻokūʻauhau education might benefit diverse populations worldwide, enriching the global understanding of Indigenous educational practices.

7.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several key recommendations emerge. These interconnected recommendations aim to reaffirm and build upon the success of Kanu's approach, addressing potential areas for growth and expansion to enhance further the positive impact of moʻokūʻauhau education on students' identity and well-being.

It is crucial to continue and possibly expand the integration of cultural practices such as moʻokūʻauhau, oli, mele, and moʻolelo into the curriculum. These practices foster students' strong sense of identity, belonging, and well-being. The curriculum's integrity and impact can be maintained by supporting teachers through ongoing professional development focused on cultural competency. Training will give teachers the confidence to assign student-led cultural projects that can deepen their engagement with cultural identity and foster a sense of ownership and pride. Integrating technology to document and share cultural knowledge from both teachers and students can also assist in ensuring the preservation and accessibility of these practices for future generations.

From the graduates' perspective, the inclusion of ʻohana was meaningful to them. The school should carry on these community and ʻohana interactions and enhance them if needed. Engagement of this kind can be further strengthened by developing programs to maintain connections with graduates, encouraging them to return as mentors or guest speakers, and providing valuable insights and role models for current students. Including the extended Kanu ʻohana in school engagements can continue reinforcing the sense of a family-oriented campus, which is crucial for students' emotional support and identity development.

Kanu has a unique opportunity to further enhance its holistic approach to education. In light of the increasing social and emotional challenges faced by students today, the school's existing use of moʻokūʻauhau shows real potential for combating these issues and fostering resilience among youth. To build on this foundation, the school could consider bolstering its approach by incorporating complementary practices that address physical and mental health more explicitly. For instance, integrating traditional Hawaiian healing practices or mindfulness techniques rooted in Hawaiian culture could further contribute to students' overall resilience and well-being. By combining these elements with the solid cultural foundation provided by moʻokūʻauhau, Kanu could create an even more comprehensive model for nurturing the whole student – culturally, emotionally, mentally, and physically. This enhanced approach aligns with the school's existing cultural focus and addresses the pressing need for more robust social-emotional support in educational settings. Kanu could potentially serve as a model for other schools seeking to combat contemporary challenges through culturally grounded, holistic educational practices.

Kānaka ʻŌiwi were adaptive, always seeking to improve and optimize their way of life. Today, this practice can be carried on through regular evaluation and feedback to identify areas for improvement ensuring ongoing effectiveness and relevance. Optimization of education policy is especially critical for the fragile system in which HFCS operates. Advocacy for and research related to culture-based education can help sustain and expand these innovative educational models, ensuring they continue to meet the evolving needs of students and communities while preserving and perpetuating cultural knowledge and practices for future generations.

7.4 Conclusion

This research has explored the profound impact of moʻokūʻauhau on identity development and well-being among students at Kanu o ka ʻĀina New Century Public Charter School, a Hawaiian-focused charter school. Through a Kanaka ʻŌiwi methodological approach, which honors Indigenous research practices and Hawaiian epistemology, this study has illuminated the crucial role of cultural education in fostering a strong sense of identity and connection to heritage among Kanaka ʻŌiwi youth.

The literature review recounted the origin of moʻokūʻauhau and its relevance in today's context. A second literature review revealed a rich history of Hawaiian culture-based education, tracing its evolution from a political movement to the establishment of schools dedicated to culture and language revitalization. This context provided a robust framework for understanding the unique pedagogical approaches employed at Kanu. Central to this research were the voices of kūpuna, Kanu teachers, and graduates, whose moʻolelo offered invaluable insights into the lived experiences of those engaging with moʻokūʻauhau practices. Their narratives consistently highlighted how learning moʻokūʻauhau enhanced their sense of identity through fostering belonging, responsibility, and active cultural engagement. Reflections from graduates offered a valuable long-term perspective on the impacts of moʻokūʻauhau education and evidence the lasting influence of culture-based education on identity formation and well-being, extending well beyond the years of formal schooling. Moreover, integrating moʻokūʻauhau into the curriculum proved to be a powerful tool for creating emotional support, a sense of continuity, and a deep connection to ʻohana and the broader community.

The study's strength lies in its effective alignment of participant experiences with Kanu's values and established educational frameworks such as Education with Aloha, Nā Hopena Aʻo,

and Kanu's own learner outcomes. The analysis of data against these relevant outcome frameworks demonstrates the comprehensive impact of this educational approach. It revealed that Kanu's model meets and often exceeds these established outcomes, fostering culturally grounded, socially responsible, and self-aware individuals.

This research fills a critical gap in the empirical study of HCBE. It also makes a significant contribution to the field by providing evidence of HCBE's effectiveness in influencing students' identity and well-being. It underscores the importance of integrating cultural practices like moʻokūʻauhau into educational curricula, not just as an academic exercise but as a way of being that connects past, present, and future.

The findings of this study have significant implications for educational policy and practice, advocating for the broader implementation of culture and place-based curricula in Hawaiʻi's public schools and beyond. It demonstrates that Indigenous educational practices can meet and exceed state-defined learning outcomes while addressing the crucial need for cultural identity reclamation among students. It also offers compelling evidence of how culturally grounded education can positively shape identity, providing a model that may be applicable or adaptable to other Indigenous contexts.

In conclusion, this research provides compelling evidence for the transformative power of moʻokūʻauhau in education. It lays a foundation for future investigations into the long-term effects of such educational approaches and their potential for broader application in diverse educational contexts. It calls for investment in HCBE to nurture the well-being of Hawaiʻi's children and preserve cultural knowledge for future generations. From the words of Nā Lei Naʻauao's beloved kupuna ʻAnakē Malia Craver,

> Ke noho kāua i ka mālie a hoʻolohe i nā ʻike a tupuna mā, he beauty hoī kau. When you and I sit in serenity, and tune into the endless knowledge of our ancestors, it is a beautiful enlightenment beyond comparison. (Meyer, 2018, p. 193)

As we move forward, it is clear that embracing cultural practices, especially moʻokūʻauhau, in education is not just beneficial but essential for the holistic development and success of Hawaiʻi's students.

7.5 Reflection

We have come full circle in this moʻolelo. One realization I have had during this journey is that my grandmother experienced the beginning of the erasure of Indigenous knowledge; I experienced the effects of its decline, but the Kanu graduates in this research were at the forefront of its reclamation, as was evident in their stories. Throughout the research process, I often wondered what my grandmother would think of Hawaiian-focused education and schools dedicated to cultural preservation, particularly the perpetuation of moʻokūʻauhau. Based on her personal journals, which reflect her understanding of the priceless value of moʻolelo and moʻokūʻauhau, I believe she would see it as a fulfillment of her dreams for future generations—a place where the importance of moʻokūʻauhau is not just acknowledged but is central to the educational experience.

Her story serves as a personal and symbolic representation of the research findings. Just as my grandmother's journals were a source of identity, values, and strength for me, the educational practices at Kanu, rooted in Hawaiian epistemology, serve as a similar source of empowerment for the students. This connection underscores the broader impact of cultural education on identity, well-being, and community engagement, making the research outcomes not just academically significant but also personally resonant and culturally meaningful. Both

narratives speak to the power of cultural resilience and the role formal or informal education plays in affirming identity.

A small yet significant detail worth noting is that in 2009, Kanu moved from its makeshift facilities to its new Kauhale campus - directly across the street from my grandmother's home. I believe this was no coincidence. Had she still been alive, she would have taken great joy in seeing and hearing the children. For someone who cherished learning, I can't help but feel that she would have been deeply proud and profoundly moved by the establishment of Kanu o ka ʻĀina in her little Hawaiian Homes community. At the blessing of the first building on the new campus, Hālau Hoʻolako, each person in the circle shared their thoughts and feelings on this remarkable achievement. Overcome with emotion; I felt my grandmother's presence and immense admiration for the school and those who had worked so hard to create it. Through tears, I shared with everyone that their kupuna neighbor, who was with us in spirit, wholeheartedly approves of and celebrates the school.

Today, the campus has expanded to four buildings with additional outdoor learning spaces, accommodating Kanu's K-12 program, preschool, adult education, and community programs. These accomplishments, along with the findings of this research, prove Nā Lei Naʻauao's 2006 claim that "Education with Aloha is working … [and] Hawaiians can design, implement, and evaluate quality models of education … Hawaiian-focused charter schools are being credited as viable educational models, which are making significant contributions to Native Hawaiian education" (pp. 1-2).

It has been a privilege to document the lives shaped by Kanu o ka ʻĀina, especially considering the challenges faced by the initial founders, who started the school with nothing but hopes and dreams of a better future for Kanaka ʻŌiwi keiki. Those founders truly embody kūlia i

ka nuʻu. This research powerfully validates that their hopes are being realized. A beautiful outcome of their dedication to this transformational movement is the moʻokūʻauhau woven through each Kanu student and kumu, all secured paʻa to the school ʻohana and its values. From participants, we have heard that the moʻo, the succession, the lineage, is one of healing.

And so we close this moʻolelo where it began, ʻo wai ʻoe? And the proud Kānaka ʻŌiwi of Kanu o ka ʻĀina New Century Public Charter School respond:

OLI KŪ!

E nā kanu o ka ʻāina - kū	*Plants of the land - stand*
E nā mamo a Līloa – kū	*Descendants of Līloa - stand*
E nā pua o Hāloa – kū	*Children of Hāloa - stand*
E nā kupa o ka ʻāina – kū	*Natives of the land - stand*
E nā ʻōpio o Hawaiʻi nei – kū	*Youth of Hawaiʻi - stand*
Kūlia i ka nuʻu – e kū	*Strive to reach your highest – stand*
	(Nālei Kahakalau, Kanu o ka ʻĀina, 2020)

GLOSSARY

This glossary of ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi terms is organized according to the Hawaiian alphabet - A, E, I, O, U, H, K, L, M, N, P, W, ʻ, with the exception of words that begin or include the ʻokina; those terms are listed, in appropriate alphabetical order, according to the letter that immediately follows the ʻokina. Glossary terms may also include my understanding and use of the words.

ʻĀina: Land, earth

Akua: Deity

ʻĀkulikuli: Flower for lei making

Aliʻi: Chief

Aloha: Love

Aloha ʻāina: The act of caring for the land; also, a reference to one who loves the land.

ʻAnakala: Uncle

ʻAnakē: Aunt

ʻAno: Character, disposition

ʻAumākua: Family or personal gods; also deified ancestors

ʻEha: Hurt, aching, sore

ʻIke: Knowledge, insight, understanding

ʻIke kupuna: Ancestral knowledge

Inoa: Name, title

ʻOhana: Family

Ola: Life, health, well-being

ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi: Hawaiian language

ʻŌlelo Noʻeau: Proverbs

Oli: Chant

ʻOluʻolu: Pleasant, nice

ʻŌpio: Youth

ʻUmeke: Bowl, calabash

Haʻahaʻa: Humility

Haku: Compose

Hālau: Meeting house

Hāloa: Hawaiian chief, referred to as "the first Hawaiian" and progenitor of the Hawaiian race.

Haole: White person, Caucasian

Hana keaka : To act in the theater

Hapa: Portion, part, fraction

Haumāna: Student, pupil

Hōʻike: To show, exhibit

Honi: Kiss or touch noses in greeting

Honua: World

Hoʻokele: Steersman, navigator

Hoʻolauna: To introduce one person to another, to be friendly

Hoʻomana: Spirituality

Hoʻoponopono: To correct

Huakaʻi: Trip, voyage, journey

Ka wā ma hope:Future

Ka wā ma mua: Past

Kaiāulu: Community, village

Kākāʻōlelo: Genealogist

Kanaka Maoli: Hawaiian native person; If written Kānaka, it becomes plural

Kanaka ʻŌiwi: Native person; If written Kānaka, it becomes plural

Kāne: Male

Kaona: Hidden meaning

Keiki: Children

Kela: Excelling, reaching high above

Koa: Brave, courage

Koʻihonua: Genealogies recounting the creation of land

Koko: Blood

Kōkua: Help, aid, assistance

Kula: School

Kuleana: Right, privilege, and responsibility

Kūlia: To try, strive

Kumu: Source, teacher.

Kumulipo: Origin, genesis, source of life; name of the Hawaiian creation chant

Kumupaʻa: Firm foundation

Kupuna: Grandparent, ancestor; If written kūpuna, it becomes plural, ancestors

Lāhui: Nation or race of people

Lei: Garland, wreath; Neckless of flowers, leaves, shells, feathers given as a symbol of affection

Loʻi: Irrigated terrace, especially for taro

Loina: Custom, manners

Lokahi: Unity, agreement

Lokomaikaʻi: Generosity

Mahalo: Thanks, gratitude

Maikaʻi: Good, fine

Makaʻāinana: Commoner, populace, citizen, subject

Makana: Gift

Makaʻala: Alert, vigilant, watchful

Makawalu: Literally eight eyes/multiple perspectives

Mālama: Care for

Malo: Male's loincloth

Mana: Spiritual essence/power

Mānaleo: Native speakers

Manaʻo: Thought, idea

Mauli: Life, heart, seat of life; spirit

Mauli ola: Life force

Mauna: Mountain

Meaʻai: Things to eat

Mea kanu: Plants

Meiwi: Traditional elements of Hawaiian poetry, storytelling

Mele: Song, to sing

Mōʻi: Ruler

Moʻo: Succession, series; lizard

Moʻokūʻauhau: Genealogical succession

Moʻolelo: Story, tale, tradition of storytelling

Naʻau: Literally intestines or bowels/mind, heart, affections

Naʻauao: Knowledge

Noni: Indian mulberry tree

Paʻa: Firm, solid

Paniolo: Hawaiian cowboy

Palapala: Document of any kind, certificate, diploma

Piko: Navel, umbilical cord

Pili koko: Blood relation

Pilina: Relationship, connection

Pōʻai: Circle

Poʻe kūʻauhau: Genealogist

Pōhaku: Rock, stone

Pono: Goodness, uprightness, correct

Pōpolo: Black Nightshade plant

Pua: Flower, blossom; child, descendent

Pulapula: Descendent

Pule: Prayer

Tūtū: Grandparent

Waʻa: Canoe

Wahine: Female

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APPENDIX A

Ethics Approval Letter

TE WHARE WĀNANGA O
AWANUIĀRANGI

09.07.2023

Katie Benioni
66-1705A Waiaka Street
Kamuela

Tēnā koe i roto i ngā tini āhuatanga o te wā,

The Ethics Research Committee Chairperson has reviewed your response to the Ethics Committee feedback. We are pleased to inform you that your ethics application has been approved. The committee commends you on your hard work to this point and wishes you well with your research.

The following feedback was provided by the committee for your ethics application:

- Will you use video recordings for the focus group with graduates (easier to tell who is speaking for the transcripts) and audio recordings for one-to-one interviews (kupuna and kumu)? If yes, consider noting this on the appropriate participant information sheets. Excellent application.

Please ensure that you keep a copy of this letter on file and include the Ethics committee document reference number: **EC2022.04** on any correspondence relating to your research.

This includes documents for your participants or other parties. Please also enclose this letter of approval in the back of your completed thesis as an appendix.

If you have any queries regarding the outcome of your ethics application, please contact us on our freephone number 0508926264 or via e-mail ethics@wananga.ac.nz.

Nāku noa, nā

Kahukura Epiha

Ethics Research Committee Secretary

Phone: 0508 92 62 64

APPENDIX B

Participant Consent Form

Moʻokūʻauhau: Hawaiian-Focused Charter Schools and Identity Development
Ethics reference number: EC2022.04

CONSENT FORM
THIS CONSENT FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF FIVE (5) YEARS

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

Interviews may be recorded using audio/video devices. Recordings will assist with accurately documenting your responses. You have the right to refuse the recording. Please select one of the following options: I consent to audio/video recording: Yes ☐ No ☐

I consent to being identified by name in the research: Yes ☐ No ☐
If No, I consent to being identified using a pseudonym: Yes ☐ No ☐

I agree to participate in this study under conditions set out in the Information Sheet, but may withdraw my consent at any given time.

Signature:_____ **Date:** _____

Full name – printed: _____

Moʻokūʻauhau: Hawaiian-Focused Charter Schools and Identity Development
Ethics reference number: EC2022.04

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

THIS CONSENT FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF FIVE (5) YEARS

I_____(Full Name – printed) agree to keep confidential all information concerning the project.

Signature:_____ Date: _____

Full name – printed: _____

APPENDIX C

Interview Guides

Kupuna Talk Story

Greeting

- Arrive with makana.
- Aloha the kupuna with honi if that is comfortable (due to COVID).
- Introduce myself, including a brief moʻokūʻauhau to establish pilina.
- Remind the participant about the purpose of the research.
- Remind the participant that information collected during the course of the project will be kept confidential.

Interview Guide

1. What is your earliest recollection of moʻokūʻauhau?
2. Have you had any memorable or unique experiences with moʻokūʻauhau, and if so, would you like to share?
3. How do you think knowing your moʻokūʻauhau impacted your sense of identity?
4. How do you feel about keiki learning moʻokūʻauhau today?
5. Do you have any recommendations on how that learning should take place?
6. Do you have anything else you would like to share?

Talk Story with Graduates

Greeting

- Aloha each with honi.

- Gather in circle, mahalo all for attending, open with oli/pule prefaced with a reminder of the purpose of oli. Ask if anyone would like to lead the oli/pule.
- Remind the participants about the purpose of the research.
- Remind the participants that information collected during the course of the project will be kept confidential.
- Invite everyone to make a plate of food before beginning the talk story.

Individual introductions

- Hoʻolauna - tell the group who you are, where you are from, and what years you attended Kanu o ka ʻĀina. Invite everyone to share moʻokūʻauhau if they feel moved to do so. Interviewer to start.

Interview Guide

1. What's your understanding of moʻokūʻauhau?
2. What did you learn about moʻokūʻauhau while attending school?
3. Can you share an experience you had with moʻokūʻauhau while attending Kanu?
4. How did learning moʻokūʻauhau make you feel then?
5. How would you define Hawaiian identity and well-being?
6. As an adult now, do you feel learning moʻokūʻauhau impacted your identity development and sense of well-being? If so, how?
7. Do you share your moʻokūʻauhau now as an adult, and if so, when and where?
8. How does that make you feel?
9. How has Kanu influenced how you see yourself and Hawaiians in general?
10. If you could tell the school anything about moʻokūʻauhau and your experience with it, what would it be?

11. Would you change anything about your learning of moʻokūʻauhau while at Kanu?

Individual Talk Story with Kumu

Greeting

- Arrive with makana.
- Aloha with honi.
- Mahalo them for taking the time, open with oli/pule. Ask who they would like to lead the oli/pule.
- Remind the participant about the purpose of the research.
- Remind the participant that information collected during the project will be kept confidential.

Individual introductions

- Hoʻolauna – share with the participant my moʻokūʻauhau and ask if they would like to share.

Interview Guide

1. What's your understanding of moʻokūʻauhau?
2. Where do you see moʻokūʻauhau within the school culture?
3. Do all school staff have this same understanding?
4. Can you share an example of where you have seen the inclusion of moʻokūʻauhau?
5. How would you define Hawaiian identity and well-being?
6. What role do you think moʻokūʻauhau has in Hawaiian identity and well-being?
7. What do you hope students take away from learning moʻokūʻauhau?

8. Are there any changes the school should make regarding moʻokūʻauhau in instruction? If so, what would be your role in this undertaking?
9. Do you have any other thoughts you would like to share?