

An Analysis of Youth Guarantee Fees-free Programme Outcomes in a New Zealand Wānanga

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Abstract

The Youth Guarantee Policy was enacted in 2009 to increase the educational achievement of New Zealand youth and improve transitions between school, tertiary education and work. The Youth Guarantee Fees-free (YGFF) initiative and subsequent programmes have been implemented to provide the opportunity for unqualified youth to study free-of-charge at tertiary education organisations.

The Wānanga (where I previously worked) has delivered YGFF programmes since 2011, producing mixed student outcomes. Student retention in the programme, course completion and qualification achievement were all below the minimum education performance indicators set by the Tertiary Education Commission. Furthermore, student progression into higher levels of study was not reliably tracked and progression into work was unknown. This research was undertaken to analyse the discrepancies between the objectives of the Youth Guarantee Policy and the Wānanga student outcomes that were occurring (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). This qualitative study utilised documentary analysis to analyse the Youth Guarantee policy context and the national outcomes of the YGFF, as well as, a student questionnaire to gather student perceptions. The analysis found that YGFF programmes have contributed to increases in qualification achievement, but around half of all students do not complete the programme. Also, participation in YGFF programmes has not increased the likelihood of progression into higher levels of study or work. The student questionnaire revealed that many students enroll for reasons that do not align with the objectives of the programme, three quarters of students experienced barriers to their achievement and more than a quarter acknowledged a learning difficulty. Most students could not identify an academic or vocational pathway. Overall, the Wānanga outcomes were typical of the national outcomes.

This study recommends that funding models need to account for student progression and flexible achievement. Providers need to have robust enrolment processes and support staff to manage the complex challenges students experience. More time needs to be dedicated to exploring future student pathways and processes need to be implemented which place students directly into higher levels of study or work.

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Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	1
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	2
LIST OF TABLES	6
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	7
GLOSSARY OF KUPU MĀORI	8
CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION	1
INTRODUCTION	1
RATIONALE	4
RESEARCH AIMS.....	5
RESEARCH QUESTIONS	5
THESIS OUTLINE.....	6
CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW	7
INTRODUCTION	7
A HISTORY OF TARGETED YOUTH EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES (TYETPs) IN NEW ZEALAND.....	7
<i>Changes in the labour market</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Changes in the attitudes towards public accountability.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Changes in youth transitions from school to work</i>	<i>10</i>
THE YOUTH GUARANTEE POLICY	12
<i>Embedded values in the Youth Guarantee Policy</i>	<i>14</i>
YOUTH GUARANTEE FUNDING	17
<i>Youth Guarantee Performance Framework.....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Youth Guarantee Initiatives.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Evaluating the Youth Guarantee Policy</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Monitoring the Youth Guarantee</i>	<i>23</i>
THE STUDENT PERSPECTIVE.....	24
SUMMARY	26
CHAPTER THREE – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	27
INTRODUCTION	27
KAUPAPA MAORI RESEARCH.....	27
METHODOLOGY	28
<i>Epistemology</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Qualitative Research.....</i>	<i>29</i>

RESEARCH METHODS	32
<i>Documentary analysis</i>	32
<i>Sample selection</i>	33
QUESTIONNAIRES	34
<i>Sample selection</i>	35
DATA ANALYSIS	36
<i>Thematic Coding</i>	37
VALIDITY.....	38
<i>Triangulation</i>	39
<i>Ethical issues</i>	39
SUMMARY	40
CHAPTER FOUR – FINDINGS AND RESULTS.....	41
INTRODUCTION	41
DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS	41
<i>Monitoring the Youth Guarantee: Youth Guarantee Fees-Free Places (2017)</i>	41
<i>The Youth Guarantee Fees-Free scheme: A research study</i>	45
<i>Youth Guarantee Pathways and Profiles Project – Profile Report</i>	46
QUESTIONNAIRE FINDINGS	47
Q1. <i>Are you male or female?</i>	47
Q2. <i>How old are you?</i>	47
Q3. <i>What ethnic group(s) do you identify with?</i>	48
Q4. <i>How long have you lived at your current address?</i>	48
Q5. <i>How did you find out about the Youth Guarantee Programme?</i>	48
Q6. <i>Why did you enrol on the Youth Guarantee programme?</i>	49
Q7. <i>Why do you stay enrolled on the programme?</i>	50
Q.8 <i>What challenges and/or barriers to achieving on the Youth Guarantee programme are you currently facing?</i>	52
Q.9 <i>Have you been involved with any of the following services in the past 12 months?</i>	53
Q.10 <i>How would you rate the academic learning in your current programme?</i>	54
Q.11 <i>How would you rate the work skills learning in your current programme?</i>	54
Q.12 <i>In your opinion what is a successful programme outcome?</i>	54
Q.13 <i>Do you have an academic (learning) or vocational (job) pathway already planned when your programme finishes?</i>	55
CHAPTER FIVE - DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	59
INTRODUCTION	59
FACTORS THAT AFFECT ENGAGEMENT	59

FACTORS THAT AFFECT RETENTION	61
FACTORS THAT AFFECT COURSE COMPLETION AND QUALIFICATION ACHIEVEMENT.....	61
FACTORS THAT AFFECT PROGRESSION	63
CONCLUSIONS	64
<i>Engagement and Retention</i>	64
<i>Achievement</i>	64
<i>Progression</i>	64
<i>Overall</i>	65
RECOMMENDATIONS	65
LIMITATIONS	66
FUTURE RESEARCH	67
SUMMARY	67
REFERENCES	69
APPENDICES	79
APPENDIX 1: YOUTH GUARANTEE TAUIRA QUESTIONNAIRE.....	79
APPENDIX 2 INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS.....	83

List of Tables

Table 1: Targeted Youth Education and Training Programme's (TYETPs) 1978 - Present.....	2
Table 2: Youth Guarantee Performance Framework 2017	20
Table 3: Youth Guarantee Initiatives.....	20
Table 4: Student Challenges and Barriers to Achievement	52
Table 5: Services engaged by YGFF students in the last 12 months	54
Table 6: Summary of Documentary Analysis Findings: Monitoring the Youth Guarantee Fees Free 2017	56
Table 7: Summary of Documentary Analysis Findings: The Youth Guarantee Fees-Free scheme: A research study	56
Table 8: Summary of Documentary Analysis Findings: Youth Guarantee Pathways and Profiles Project – Profile Report.....	57
Table 9: Demographic information of YGFF Student Respondents	57
Table 10: Summary of Questionnaire Findings	57

List of Abbreviations

ACCESS	Not an acronym
ART	Achievement Retention Transitions
EPI	Education Performance Indicator
GFC	Global Financial Crisis
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
MACCESS	Not an acronym
MOE	Ministry of Education
MSD	Ministry of Social Development
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NCEA	National Certificate of Educational Achievement
NZQA	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
NZQF	New Zealand Qualifications Framework
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
SAC	Student Achievement Component
STP	Secondary Tertiary Partnership
STAR	Secondary-Tertiary Alignment Resource
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TEC	Tertiary Education Commission
TEO	Tertiary Education Organisation
TOP	Training Opportunities Programme
TYETP	Targeted Youth Education and Training programme
YPTP	Young Persons' Training Programme
YGFF	Youth Guarantee Fees-Free

Glossary of kupu Māori

ahuatanga	aspects
aroha	care, love
awa	river
hāpu	sub-tribe
ingoa	name
iwi	tribe
kaiako	tutor
kaimahi	worker/employee
kaumatua	Respected male elder
kaupapa	principle
kotahitanga	unity, oneness
kupu	word
marae	meeting house
matauranga	knowledge
maunga	mountain
mauri	life-force
mea	thing
tapu	sacred
tauirā	student
te	the
tēnā koutou katoa	Greetings to all
tikanga	culture
waka	canoe
wairua	spirit
wānanga	Tertiary organisation founded on Māori values and principles
whakapapa	genealo

Chapter One - Introduction

Introduction

Since 2010, the Youth Guarantee Policy has been implemented progressively in New Zealand to increase the educational achievement of 16 to 19-year-olds and improve transitions between school, tertiary education and work (Earle, 2018). The Youth Guarantee Policy has been applied in New Zealand through a range of Youth Guarantee initiatives and programmes, delivered at secondary schools and tertiary education organisations (TEOs).

The Youth Guarantee Fees-free (YGFF) initiative was the first Youth Guarantee initiative to be implemented, providing the opportunity for young people aged between 16-19-years-old (and 15 with a school exemption) to gain qualifications at a Tertiary Education Organisation (TEO) free-of-charge (Earle, 2018). Over the last eight years, the numbers of YGFF participants and providers has grown considerably. Originally, only 1,100 YGFF student places were available, but this was quickly increased to 2000 places in 2010. Amendments to the Youth Guarantee Policy occurred in the following years which extended the age eligibility, increased the number of student places and increased the total number of YGFF providers. By 2016, YGFF enrolments had swelled to 13, 597 and 110 different providers were offering YGFF programmes (Ministry of Education, 2017). The growth and popularity of YGFF programmes has occurred despite any evidence to confirm that participation in the programmes improves progression into higher levels of study or work (Gordon, Sedgwick, Grey & Marsden, 2014; Earle, 2018).

The Youth Guarantee Policy is an example of how successive New Zealand governments have approached the problem of youth unemployment for the last 30-years. The state-lead approaches have involved the formation of central policies to fund targeted youth education and training programmes (TYETPs) - Targeted means that the programmes are only open to people who meet certain eligibility criteria (Mahoney, 2010).

The TYETPs that have consecutively run in New Zealand since 1978 are listed in Table 1 below. A range of factors defined the various programmes, “but most were short-term, low skill interventions” (Gordon et al., 2014, p.1).

Table 1: Targeted Youth Education and Training Programme's (TYETPs) 1978 - Present

Young Persons Training Programme	1978 – 1987
ACCESS	1987 - 1993
MACCESS Scheme	1987 - 1993
Training Opportunities Programme	1993 - 1998
Youth Training	1998 - 2012
Training Opportunities	1999 - 2012
Youth Guarantee	2010 – Present

As well as continuing the policy trend of prior governments, the formation of the Youth Guarantee Policy (and its subsequent initiatives and programmes) was a response by the, then National, Government to growing international and national concerns. These concerns included a global focus on the growing populations of youth not engaged in education, employment or training (NEET) (Eurofound, 2012; OECD, 2017; Pacheco & Van der Westhuizen, 2016) and the high numbers of students who were exiting secondary school without National Certificate in Educational Achievement (NCEA) Level 2 qualifications. In 2009, just over 19,000 students left school without NCEA Level 2, seven years after NCEA had been installed nationally as the New Zealand upper secondary school qualification (Ministry of Education, 2017). This was a major concern for the New Zealand Government because NEETs produce a range of negative impacts for the individual and society (Eurofound, 2012), and upper school qualifications are considered to be the minimum credential for further education or successful entry into the labour market (OECD, 2017; Ministry of Education, 2017).

To achieve the objectives of the Youth Guarantee Policy, six Youth Guarantee initiatives were created to provide students with a wider range of learning opportunities and to make better use of the education network, clarifying pathways from secondary school (Earle, 2017). The six Youth Guarantee initiatives are: Vocational Pathways, Fees-Free Secondary-Tertiary Programmes (STP), Secondary-Tertiary Alignment

Resource (STAR), Gateway and Achievement Retention Transitions (ART). YGFF was the first initiative to be implemented in 2010 and the other initiatives were progressively added in the following years. The YGFF initiative provides funding for 15–19-year-olds to study free-of-charge at a TEO on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF) Levels 1 to 3. The Vocational Pathways Award was added to the Youth Guarantee suite in 2013, clarifying the options for young people and identifying the skills and knowledge valued by employers (Earle, 2016). Since 2013, TEOs have delivered YGFF programmes with the Vocational Pathways Award included within the programme.

A Wānanga is a TEO that operates according to tikanga Māori (Māori culture) and is characterised by work that maintains, advances, and disseminates knowledge and develops intellectual independence, and assists the application of knowledge regarding ahuatanga Māori (Māori aspects). Tikanga Māori is expressed in a wānanga through the day-to-day operating activities, the actions of the staff and the programmes it delivers. The Wānanga in this study has delivered YGFF programmes since 2011 and included the Vocational Pathways Award since 2013. The entry criteria for the Wānanga YGFF programme is:

- students must be aged 16-19 years, 15 year-olds can also enrol if they gain an exemption from the MOE; and
- not hold a Level 2 qualification or above.

To gain NCEA Level 2, students must achieve 60 credits from Level 2 and 20 credits from any other level (80 credits in total) - 10 of these credits must satisfy the literacy requirements, and 10 of these credits must satisfy the numeracy requirements. To receive a Vocational Pathways Award, a minimum of 20 Level 2 credits must be from sector-related standards, with the remaining from recommended standards to make up 60 pathway credits in total.

This qualitative study utilised documentary analysis to analyse the Youth Guarantee Policy context and identify the objectives and the outcomes of the YGFF programmes nationally. The student questionnaire gathered student perceptions on enrolment, retention, achievement and progression. A further documentary analysis of two large YGFF studies provided validity to the research findings.

Rationale

My interest in this topic came from my experiences as a Manager of YGFF programmes in a Wānanga. Specifically, my concerns about the outcomes that were occurring for youth enrolled on YGFF programmes. The programmes had high withdrawal rates meaning students often exited the programme without attaining qualifications. The programmes themselves were visibly demanding, requiring tutors to deliver 120 credit courses to youth with complex and challenging backgrounds. Programme completion, qualification attainment and retention of students were all below the minimum performance expectations set by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC). Furthermore, no reliable data was available on student progression rates into higher levels of study and no data was available on work progression.

Nationally, Youth Guarantee Initiatives have been very successful in engaging youth with 13,579 students enrolled in YGFF programmes in 2016 (Ministry of Education, 2017). The Youth Guarantee Initiatives are also credited with providing new ways for students to achieve qualifications and this has contributed to a decrease in students leaving school without NCEA Level 2 from 19,000 in 2009, to just below 12,000 in 2016 (Ministry of Education, 2017). In regard to the other objectives of the Youth Guarantee Policy, there is no evidence to support that participation in a YGFF programme improves the likelihood of progression into higher levels of study or work. Of more concern is the fact that only half of all YGFF participants complete the programme and the report that participants may actually increase their likelihood of becoming NEET or a beneficiary recipient (Earle, 2018).

The rationale for this study is therefore grounded in the discrepancies that were occurring between the objectives of the Youth Guarantee Policy and the Wānanga YGFF student outcomes.

Research Aims

The research aims are:

1. To analyse the Youth Guarantee Policy context and the national outcomes of the Youth Guarantee Fees-free initiative in relation to the Wānanga Youth Guarantee Fees-free programme outcomes.
2. To analyse the reasons why students enroll on Wānanga Youth Guarantee Fees-free programmes and compare their reasons to the objectives of the programme, to assess if they align.
3. To analyse factors that affect Youth Guarantee Fees-free programme student engagement, student retention, course completion, qualification achievement and progression into higher levels of study or work.

Research Questions

The research questions are:

1. What are the objectives of the Youth Guarantee Policy and why were they created?
2. What are the national outcomes of the Youth Guarantee Fees-Free initiative, why are they occurring, and how do they compare to the Wānanga Youth Guarantee Fees-Free outcomes?
3. Why do Wānanga Youth Guarantee Fees-free students enroll on Fees-free programmes and do their reasons align with the objectives of the programme?
4. What factors influence Wānanga Youth Guarantee Fees-free student engagement, student retention, course completion, qualification achievement and progression into higher levels of study or work.

Thesis Outline

Chapter one briefly outlines the research study and introduces the research topic and problem. The Youth Guarantee Policy and the subsequent initiatives and programmes are then introduced. My rationale for the research is described along with the context of the study before the research aims and questions are presented. A summary of the five chapters is also included.

Chapter two critically reviews international and national literature which relates to the YGFF. The context which influenced the formation of the Youth Guarantee Policy is discussed including a detailed description of the subsequent Youth Guarantee Initiatives formed to implement the Policy in New Zealand.

Chapter three outlines the research design and the methods used. The epistemological position justifies the use of a qualitative approach, used to gather differing perspectives, which have provided interpretive data. The documentary analysis and questionnaire research methods are described along with the sample selection and data analysis processes. A discussion about the research validity and the ethical considerations for the study are then presented.

Chapter four presents the demographic information of the students before the findings of the two research methods are discussed. The findings of the documentary analysis are organised by each document and the questionnaire findings are organised by the order the questions appeared in the questionnaire.

Chapter five contains a discussion of the findings with reference to the literature base identified in chapter two. Recommendations are listed for policy-makers and the Wānanga before the limitations of the research process and possible foci for future research in this area are presented.

Chapter Two – Literature Review

Introduction

The literature base on Targeted Youth Education and Training Programmes (TYETPs) revealed a 30-year history of consecutive policy approaches in New Zealand to address youth unemployment and other social issues. This chapter focuses on the social changes that have influenced TYETPs throughout the years and specifically the attitudes that were present during the formation of the Youth Guarantee Policy. Themes emerging from the literature include TYETPs producing mixed results and equity values impacting the expectations for all students to achieve. The risks associated with being classified as NEET are then discussed before the Youth Guarantee Policy, Initiatives and funding model are summarised. Finally, a discussion is presented on the significance of the student perspective in relation to Youth Guarantee students and their study.

A history of Targeted Youth Education and Training Programmes (TYETPs) in New Zealand

The Youth Guarantee Policy is the most recent iteration of targeted youth policy approaches enacted by successive New Zealand governments to address youth unemployment and other social issues. According to Gordon et al. (2014) TYETPs have been a constant in the New Zealand educational landscape for the last 30 years undergoing many systems and setting changes.

The first TYETP was the Young Persons' Training Programme (YPTP) which began in 1984 (Gordon, 1989). The ACCESS and MACCESS schemes followed and had a regional focus. The programmes were targeted at people who were disadvantaged in the labour market and for whom traditional training methods were unsuitable or unavailable. Māori ACCESS (MACCESS) ran alongside and was separately administered by Māori authorities. It focused specifically on Māori, and was delivered through Māori providers (Mahoney, 2010). The Training Opportunities Programmes

(TOPs) operated from 1993 to 1998, targeting school leavers and long-term job seekers with low or no qualifications. TOPs retained some of the features of the ACCESS programmes but removed the regional focus and MACCES element (Gordon et al., 2014).

The Youth Training programme was established in 1999 offering part-time courses at TEOs. Mahoney (2010) states that Youth Training was:

funded to provide training to school leavers with no or low qualifications. It focused on learners acquiring a valuable set of foundation skills that enabled them to move effectively into sustainable employment and/or higher levels of tertiary education. (p.10)

Unfortunately, the numbers of Youth Training participants diminished over time and eventually the funding was transferred to the Youth Guarantee Fund in 2012 (Earle, 2014). As the TYETPs have evolved over time the intentions of the programme have shifted focus from employment, to training, gaining life skills and now qualification attainment. According to Gordon et al. (2014) changes to TYETPs have been brought on by social changes.

Changes in the labour market

Originally, the TYETPs focused on placing unemployed people into low-skilled jobs (Gordon, 1989). This focus was appropriate when low-skilled jobs were plentiful, but over time as the prevalence of low-skilled workers declined, this triggered a shift away from job placement to training. Middleton (2011) agrees that many of the traditional pathways for young people into work have declined as apprenticeship models have changed while technology has made some entry level jobs redundant.

Changes in the attitudes towards public accountability

A large shift that has happened during the lifespan of the TYETPs was the import of business orientated approaches into educational accountability practices (Stolte, 2004;

Huisman & Currie, 2004; Brundrett & Rhodes, 2011). Historically, education maintained a culture of autonomy where teachers and lecturers were entrusted to deliver curricula. But during the 1980's and 1990's policy-makers increasingly demanded that education providers be held accountable for their performance (Rutherford & Rabovsky, 2014). Stolte (2004) summarises the situation for educators in New Zealand at that time:

During the 1980s and 1990s the New Zealand public sector underwent rapid and far-reaching changes. Economic decline and a general dissatisfaction with the public sector (perceived to be overly bureaucratic and wasteful) led to the introduction of business accountability principles and financial management techniques. (p.7)

Romzek (2000) defines accountability as "answerability for performance" (p.22) as the new levels of accountability were justified by a central government need to measure performance. This was due to the large sums of public money invested in the education sector (the Youth Guarantee Fund was \$59 million for the first four years of implementation). Over the last 30 years, different funding sources and funding models have been applied to the different TYETPs, and various government departments have been charged with managing the programmes (Gordon et al., 2014).

Brundrett and Rhodes (2011) describe the changes to education accountability as 'unprecedented government intervention' which eventually resulted in the development of national standards. They acknowledge the need for accountability practices, but question what accountability structures and cultures best suit education and how quality frameworks should be constructed. An example of this is the use of the National Certificate in Educational Achievement (NCEA) achievement rates as part of the Education Performance Indicators (EPIs) accountability framework applied by the TEC to measure the performance of the YGFF Initiative.

Stolte (2004) explains how the shift in accountability practices resulted in education becoming outcome focused:

Previously, public sector auditing involved the reporting of inputs (resources) and outputs (the products or services delivered These arguments advanced the cause for new ways to measure the effectiveness of what an organisation does, in terms of its effects on society. The concept of the outcome was introduced to measure the effects of a policy, and to determine whether the outputs of agencies (such as training providers) were aligned with overall policy goals. Consequently, the financial management techniques used to measure inputs and outputs (which are usually cost-based) were transferred to the (non-financial) notion of effectiveness, to create the measurement criteria for outcomes (p.8)

Changes in youth transitions from school to work

According to Middleton (2011) a 'transition gap' refers to the scenario when a student does not successfully transition between different levels of education or work. Education systems require students to make a number of transitions during their education and there are key transition points which mark a successful transition; pre-school to primary school, primary school to secondary school, secondary school to work/tertiary study and tertiary study to work.

Although spending short and limited periods of time disengaged from the labour market and education system can be part of any normal transition from school to work, spending protracted periods in the transition gap produce a wide range of negative short- and long-term consequences (Eurofound, 2012). Persistent disengagement from education or work makes the transition of young people to adulthood difficult and can have long-term effects on their labour market performance in terms of labour force participation and future earnings. Transitions from secondary school into further education, or employment, is thwart with complex social challenges not easily navigated by the individual (Reid, Turner, Schroder & McKay, 2016). When young people do not make successful transitions from school to work or higher study, they run the risk of becoming classified as NEET.

NEETs and Y-NEETs

In the last decade, people not engaged in education, employment or training have become regularly referred to as NEETs by policy-makers (Fergusson, Swain-Campbell & Horwood, 2002; Pacheco & Van der Westhuizen, 2016). Internationally, NEETs are aged between 15 – 29 and refer to those who currently do not have a job, are not enrolled in training, or are not classified as a student (Eurofound, 2012).

In New Zealand, the term Y-NEET (youth not engaged in education, employment or training) has been applied when referring to NEETs aged between 15 – 24 years. According to Pacheco and Westhuizen (2016), in 2015 there was over 60,000 Y-NEETs in New Zealand and they are more likely to have no school qualification. In regard to gender, females made up a larger proportion of Y-NEETs due to maternal and caregiving responsibilities. New Zealand European and Māori youth accounted for the largest ethnic proportion of Y-NEETs. The short-term economic cost per capita for Y-NEETs was estimated to be \$21,996 in 2015.

Young people who are classified as a NEET produce a range of negative impacts on the individual and society (Eurofound, 2012). New Zealanders with no qualifications had an unemployment rate 48% higher than those whose highest qualification was a school qualification (OECD, 2013). As well as labour market impacts, NEETs risk a range of negative social conditions. Social exclusion in the form of political and social disengagement from their communities can result in isolation, involvement in anti-social or criminal activity and/or unstable mental and physical health (Eurofound, 2012; Fergusson et al., 2002) Fergusson et al. (2002) state that “young people who leave school without qualifications have an increased risk of a range of adverse outcomes including substance use, juvenile offending and receiving a benefit and engaging in no tertiary training” (p.21). Vice versa, the OECD (2017) state that higher education attainment increases the likelihood of being employed:

On average across OECD countries, the employment rate is about 85% for tertiary educated adults (25-64 years old), 75% for adults with an upper

secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary qualification, and less than 60% for adults who have not completed upper secondary education”. (p.92)

In New Zealand, the attainment of upper secondary school qualifications is also linked to labour force status and incomes (Ministry of Education, 2017). In 2016, 82% of women and 88% of men with a bachelor’s degree or higher, participated in the workforce. In comparison, 39% of women & 56% of men without a qualification participated in the workforce.

In the last decade, governments have paid increasing attention to reducing the total populations of NEETs both in New Zealand and around the world. This has been prompted by a sharp increase in Y-NEETs following the Global Financial Crisis in 2008, which spiked the youth unemployment rate in a number of European countries (Eurofound 2012; Zepcke & Leach, 2006). In New Zealand, the government followed the international focus creating policies which supported students to remain engaged in education. This included, the *Better Public Services target* which aims to increase the proportions of young people achieving NCEA level 2 to 85% (Ministry of Education, 2017). The Youth Guarantee Policy provided a set of interventions to help reach this target.

The Youth Guarantee Policy

The Youth Guarantee Policy was agreed to by Cabinet in 2009 to increase NCEA achievement, provide opportunities for re-engagement in education and to improve transitions from school to tertiary study and work. The original objectives of the Youth Guarantee policy were to increase the educational achievement of 16 and 17-year olds not engaged in education and to improve transitions between school, tertiary education, and work.

The Youth Guarantee Policy was implemented in 2010. The initial policy allowed for 1,100 places but was quickly increased in the same year to 2,000 places for 2010 and 2011 respectively. The first initiative from the policy to be implemented was YGFF. In 2011, a significant decision was made to merge Youth Training funding with Youth

Guarantee Fund in 2012. The Youth Training Programme had also provided training for youth who had become disengaged from education but lacked the qualification attainment and pathway focus of the Youth Guarantee Policy. The merging of funding allocation provided for further increases in places to 7,500, spread across 150 providers. In 2012, fifteen-year olds with an early leaving exemption were also given eligibility for YGFF places. In 2013, the total number of YGFF places was again increased to 10,500 and the age eligibility for YGFF places was widened to include 18 and 19-year-olds (Earle, 2014). In 2016, 13, 597 youth enrolled on YGFF programmes (Ministry of Education, 2017).

The Policy is an example of how a government attempts to change the behaviour of society through the development of policies (Phillips, 2005). The Youth Guarantee Policy was formed to increase qualification attainment and address the broader societal issues pertaining to the rising NEET population. It is a *technical empiricist* approach which assumes educational change is a rational consequence of logical steps (Codd, 1988). The steps created by the policy provide funding for the provision and regulation of educational services (Bell & Stevenson, 2006) which result in Youth Guarantee Initiatives delivered in secondary schools and TEOs. It is assumed the attainment of qualifications will lead to progression into higher levels of study or work.

If the outcomes of a Policy do not achieve the intended outcomes it can be attributed to a 'causality problem'. Stolte (2004) explains that a 'causality problem' occurs when policy-makers make miscalculated assumptions during the process of policy formation. There are different policy formation models, but the traditional and dominant model is the 'technical-empiricist' approach (Phillips, 2005). This model assumes that when policy is formed policy-makers have access to all relevant information and that the outcomes of the policy will address the policy issue. A 'causality problem' happens when the outcomes don't impact the policy issue in the assumed way. A technical empiricist approach also does not consider socio-cultural contexts and because YGFF students bring a myriad of socio-cultural challenges into the programme this contributes to the lack of progression. Stolte (2004) summarises the challenge stating, "exogenous factors are always exerting their influence over social development programmes so perhaps the problem is a lack of analysis and anticipation of external influences" (p.14).

Embedded values in the Youth Guarantee Policy

Equality, Equity and Excellence

Equity, equality and excellence are three values long associated with education (Sergiovanni, Burlingame, Coombs & Thurston, 1999). Equity stands for “fairness” and corresponds to a societal value of equal opportunity. Equality is defined as “the state of being equal, especially in status, rights, or opportunities.” Excellence is related to ‘accountability’ and ‘maximising resources’.

Internationally, these values are evident in global education policy like the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Strategic Policy. The OECD has 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the 70th General Assembly of the United Nations in 2015. The fourth SDG aims to “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” (OECD, 2017, p.27). According to Sergiovanni et al. (1999) when values are combined, they are even stronger drivers of policy reform and mandating changes to performance. International strategy such as SDG’s sets a global precedent for OECD countries and provides an impetus for governments to generalise the expected outcomes of their education systems. Phillips (2005) agrees that it is not unusual for governments to foster the exchanging of policies relating to similar attitudes, approaches and systems globally. Often education systems apply these goals and values through policies that promotes social inclusion, universal participation and equitable outcomes. Bell and Stevenson (2006) acknowledge that powerful structural forces of an economic ideological and culture shape policy.

In New Zealand, the value of equity is recorded as early as the 1930 speech by Clarence Beeby who pronounced that education is a ‘right-of-citizenship’ (Shaw & Eichbaum, 2005). Today, equity and equality are still present in education as found in the Ministry of Education (MOE) long-term outcome that ‘every child and student achieve educational success’ (MOE, 2017). In relation to the Youth Guarantee Policy, equity and equality are also present within the intentions of the policy. The policy assumes that all young people can produce equitable outcomes (NCEA Level 2) and thus experience the benefits of higher school qualifications. Gordon (1989) challenges

this believing that there is a bottom 15% of students who for academic or social reasons will not achieve minimum qualifications. Current New Zealand Education Policy has a more utopian rhetoric stating that ‘everyone achieves’ (Ministry of Education, 2017). The OECD (2015) support this equality and equity notion stating “a fair and inclusive education system makes the advantages of education available to all and is one of the most powerful levers for making society more equitable (p.1).

The attainment of higher school qualifications

A recent social development is the expectation that young people stay engaged in education (Middleton, 2011). This is partly due to international research on the benefits of higher education qualifications. Higher education refers to qualifications achieved at the end of secondary school education (upper secondary school qualifications), or tertiary education (tertiary qualifications). Internationally, the OECD (2017) justify the critical role a higher education plays in preparing people for life, work and engaging in society (OECD, 2017):

Higher education programmes help students develop a broad range of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are indispensable for navigating through life, and not just through the labour market. Proficiency in critical thinking and problem solving, and in social and emotional skills, such as teamwork, communication and cultural awareness, are all essential to ensure an individual’s inclusion and constructive engagement in society. (p.11)

Internationally, the purpose of upper school education is to develop students' basic skills and knowledge through either academic or vocational pathways. An upper secondary education is often considered to be the minimum credential for successful entry into the labour market and necessary for further education (OECD, 2017). In New Zealand, the Ministry of Education (MOE) is the government’s lead advisor on the education system. The MOE shape the direction for education agencies and providers and contribute to the achievement of the government’s education goals (Ministry of Education, 2016). The MOE (2016) concur with the OECD in relation to the significant role education plays in shaping New Zealanders life and work:

All New Zealanders need to be equipped to thrive in the rapidly developing global environment and participate actively in our society. Our education system plays a huge part in this – it enables children, young people and adults to learn and achieve throughout their lives and to build the skills and knowledge for work and life. (p.2)

Upper Secondary School qualifications in New Zealand

The NCEA Levels 1 – 3 were introduced as the upper secondary school qualifications between 2002 and 2004 (replacing the School Certificate, Sixth-Form Certificate and Bursary qualifications). NCEA enables students to undertake multi-level study to attain credits towards an NCEA qualification. Students can attain credits through internal and external assessment, and they can accumulate these credits both within and across years. In accordance with the OECD attitudes towards minimum qualifications, NCEA is considered by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) to be a measure of the extent to which young adults have completed a basic prerequisite for higher education and training and many entry-level jobs. As international and national values continue to emphasise the requirement of higher education qualifications to ‘be included’ and ‘be constructive’ in life, what happens to the students who do not achieve minimum qualifications?

NCEA attainment in New Zealand

Although the shift to the NCEA qualifications in New Zealand raised the total number of students attaining qualifications, 19,000 students left school without NCEA Level 2 or equivalent in 2009 (NZQA, 2010). The large number of unqualified students became an increasing concern to the government and was one of the significant motivating factors in the creation of the Youth Guarantee Policy.

Another factor that became increasingly pertinent for policy-makers was the difference between the NCEA achievement of different ethnic groups. The *2010 Annual Report on NCEA & New Zealand Scholarship Data & Statistics* (2009) showed that 80% of

Asian and European students, 68% of Pasifika students and 60% of Maori students were leaving school with at least NCEA Level 1. At NCEA Level 2 the disparities were even greater with 62% of European and 67% of Asian students achieving relative to 35% Maori and 39% Pasifika achieving. In response to the significantly lower achievement of Maori and Pasifika students, specific strategies were created by the MOE in an attempt to boost the achievement for these populations. The strategies were:

- *Ka Hikitia Managing for Success// Maori Education Strategy 2008 – 2012*
- *Ka Hikitia – Accelerating Success 2013 – 2017*
- *Pasifika Education Plan 2013 – 2017*

By 2016, the number of students exiting school without NCEA Level 2 or equivalent had been reduced from 19,000 to just below 12,000. MOE strategies such as the Better Services Targets and the Youth Guarantee Initiatives like the YGFF have contributed to more young people achieving NCEA Level 2 in New Zealand. Demographically, the disparities between the ethnic groups has also decreased with 93.9% of Asian students, 84% of European students 79.5% of Pasifika students and 74.9% of Māori students achieving NCEA Level 2. Overall, 80.3% of all school leavers attained at least NCEA Level 2 or equivalent in 2016 (NZQA, 2017).

Youth Guarantee Funding

To achieve the first objective the Youth Guarantee Policy the Youth Guarantee funding mechanism was determined by the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment under Section 159L of the Education Act (1989):

eligible domestic students aged 16 to 19 (inclusive) who are studying towards either National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) Level 1 and 2 aligned to the Vocational Pathways or another qualification at Level 1 or Level 2 on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF), which is intended to enable learners to progress to higher-level education or employment.

The Youth Guarantee Fund provides funding for study towards qualifications at tertiary providers free of charge. YGFF is the initiative that enables New Zealand tertiary providers to access the Youth Guarantee Fund via the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC). Earle (2018) states the purpose of the YGFF is to provide:

full-time, fees-free tertiary study at New Zealand Qualifications Framework Levels 1 to 3 for 15 to 19-year old's who have left school with low or no qualifications. It is intended to re-engage young people in education and provide a pathway into further study, training and employment. (p.2)

The fund also provides provision for students studying towards a Level 3 qualification, or students involved in Dual Pathways programmes (such as Trade Academies). TEOs receive Youth Guarantee funding administered by the TEC. The TEC determine the amount of funding a TEO receives through Investment Plans (which TEOs submit annually). YGFF programmes are funded using the equivalent full-time (EFT) student funding model. An EFT equates to the workload normally be carried out by a student enrolled full-time, for one year and it is used to determine how much funding is allocated.

Originally, YGFF was funded based on the Student Achievement Component (SAC) funding model and consisted of a payment of \$4500 per EFT. SAC funding is “the Government’s contribution to the direct costs of teaching, learning and other costs driven by student numbers” (www.providers.studylink.govt.nz/about/glossary/sac-funding.html). In 2012, the Youth Guarantee Fund became targeted and was no longer based on SAC funding rates. Two new funding rates were implemented in the funding determination at \$10,800 for non-trades and \$14,300 for trades. A pastoral care component of \$500 and a transport component of \$800 were also included due to feedback from providers on some of the challenges Youth Guarantee students faced (Akroyd, 2010).

Youth Guarantee programmes consist of assessment standards from the New Zealand Qualifications (NZQA) Framework. Youth Guarantee funding is dependent on the completion of standards throughout the year. Youth Guarantee Policy is therefore

performance-based, formally tying institutional funding directly to student outcomes (Rutherford & Rabovsky, 2014; Zepcke & Leach, 2006). Rutherford and Rabovsky explain that performance-based policies may positively influence student outcomes, however, they can also result in negative consequences contributing to lower student performance in the long-term.

Youth Guarantee funding has provided a lucrative pool of money for TEOs as demonstrated by and the rapid increase of YGFF enrolments in the first 5 years of implementation from 500 students to 9,500 students (Profile & Trends Report, 2015). The allocation of Youth Guarantee EFTs for each TEO is assessed annually against the Youth Guarantee Performance Framework. In 2017, around 9,200 fees-free places for young people were offered by a range of polytechnics, wānanga, and private training establishments (Ministry of Education, 2017)

Youth Guarantee Performance Framework

The government assesses the performance of the Youth Guarantee programmes through the TEC who are responsible for administering and monitoring Youth Guarantee funding. TEOs must demonstrate (through a data return system) they are delivering on the agreed funded education services using the following Education Performance Indicators (EPIs); course completion, qualification completion, retention, progression. TEC apply the Youth Guarantee Performance Framework to set minimum performance expectations for each TEO. Table 2 below describes the EPIs included in the Youth Guarantee Performance Framework and the minimum percentages for each level for 2017. If a TEO does not achieve the minimum performance indicators, the outcomes can affect the Youth Guarantee EFT allocation for the following year and therefore funding. Student EPI outcomes are therefore critical to the sustainability of Fees-free programmes for TEOs.

Table 2: Youth Guarantee Performance Framework 2017

	Course completion	Qualification completion	Retention	Progression
Level 1	55%	40% (for levels 1 and 2 combined)	50%	40%
Level 2	60%		45%	35%
Level 3	70%	60%	55%	35%

Source: www.tec.govt.nz.

Youth Guarantee Initiatives

There are six Youth Guarantee Initiatives that provide opportunities for youth to achieve. The initiatives are; Vocational Pathways, Achievement; Retention and Transition (ART 2013-2017); Secondary-Tertiary Programmes (STP) including Trades Academies; Fees-free (YGFF); Secondary-Tertiary Alignment Resource (STAR) and Gateway. A brief description of the Youth Guarantee Initiatives is provided in Table 3: Youth Guarantee Initiatives.

Table 3: Youth Guarantee Initiatives

Initiative	Purpose
Vocational Pathways	Provides alternative ways to achieve NCEA, and develop pathways that progress to further study, training and employment.
Fees-Free	Provide funding for 16–19-year-olds to study free-of-charge at Tertiary Education Organisations (TEO's) at the New Zealand Qualifications Framework Levels 1 to 3.
Secondary Tertiary Partnerships (STP)	A partnership between schools, tertiary providers, local communities, and employers to provide young people with better education and employment opportunities (includes Trades Academies).
Secondary-Tertiary Alignment Resource (STAR)	Designed to help schools provide students with relevant, coherent learning experiences, aligned to the Vocational Pathways.
Gateway	Enables schools to provide senior students with opportunities to access structured workplace learning.
Achievement Retention Transitions (ART) - Numbers, Names, Needs	Works in partnership with secondary schools to identify young people at risk of not achieving NCEA Level 2, with a particular focus on Maori and Pacific students (MOE, 2018).

Source: www.youthguarantee.co.nz

Fees Free (YGFF)

The YGFF initiative provides full-time, fees-free tertiary study at the NZQF Levels 1 to 3, for 15 to 19-year-olds who have left school with low or no qualifications. YGFF is intended to re-engage young people in education and provide a pathway into further study, training and employment. YGFF places have been implemented in different ways by different providers. Some providers offer dedicated and tailored programmes for funded learners, others offer places within existing programmes and many offer a mix of both (Earle, 2016).

Vocational Pathways

Since 2013, the YGFF has included a Vocational Pathways framework to clarify the options for young people and identify the skills and knowledge valued by employers (Earle, 2016). The Vocational Pathways provide new ways to achieve NCEA Levels 1, 2 and 3 and develop pathways that progress to further study, training and employment. The Vocational Pathways provide a framework for students to show how their learning and achievement is valued in the workplace by aligning learning to the skills needed for industry. The six Vocational Pathways are; Primary Industries, Services Industries, Social & Community Services, Manufacturing & Technology, Construction & Infrastructure and Creative Industries.

NCEA Levels 1 and 2 of the Vocational Pathways were launched in 2013, as a result of government agencies, the industry training sector, secondary and tertiary representatives and industry and employer representatives working together to produce the Vocational Pathways Award (which is awarded alongside the NCEA qualification). The award is intended to enable employers to assess more easily whether potential employees' skills align with their industry requirements.

Evaluating the Youth Guarantee Policy

The notion of quality

Any form of evaluation is premised on the idea that quality is discernible and capable of representation. Stake and Schwandt (2006) explain that “to distinguish quality one must be able to disseminate - to tell the difference between the absence and presence of quality” (p.404). Brundrett and Rhodes (2011) describe competing views on the nature of quality, while Stake & Schwandt (2006) describe quality as “a broad term that encompasses notions of merit, worth and significance (p.405). Whereas, Sallis (2002) warns that quality is difficult to define, elusive and ambiguous, because it means different things to different people and because it is both a relative and absolute concept. The application of quality as a relative concept means it can be measured against a set of standards. In relation to education, Sallis (2002) confirms quality is a relative concept because it is about judging whether the programme is ‘fit for purpose’. Sallis also suggests that for the purposes of analysing quality it is more appropriate to view education as a service (rather than a product).

The quality of an education programme is often spoken of in terms of its meeting its objectives, enhancing student outcomes and so forth. Stake and Schwandt (2006) state that when assessing quality “one rarely deals with a situation in which the judgement of quality is clear-cut and straightforward. Judgements of quality usually leave room for doubt” (p.404).

The OECD (2017) list the following education and learning outputs as a framework for assessing ‘quality education’:

- The quality and distribution of individual education outcomes
- The quality of instruction and delivery
- The output of educational institutions and institutional performance
- The overall performance of the education system (p.13)

This study focuses on the quality and distribution of individual student educational vocational and progression outcomes.

Monitoring the Youth Guarantee

Monitoring the Youth Guarantee reports have been produced since 2013 to monitor the performance of YGFF and so policy-makers can “understand the extent to which the desired outcomes are being met” (Earle, 2017, p.3). The report uses statistical data from a specific cohort of YGFF students compared to a matched cohort group from a similar background (that are not participating in the programme) to identify the effects of the programme.

The comparison group have very similar characteristics to the YGFF cohort, and it is assumed that had the programme not existed, both groups would achieve similar outcomes. Conclusions are then drawn about the impact the YGFF cohort programme by comparing the outcomes of both groups. Earle (2013) describes this methodology as robust, but acknowledges the limitations of the sample size, and the potential for other characteristics which are not considered to influence outcomes. The findings of the *Monitoring the Youth Guarantee – Fees Free 2017* report that Youth Guarantee Initiatives have contributed to a 12.8% increase in NCEA Level 2 nationally between the years 2009 – 2016. However, the specific contribution of YGFF is difficult to assess due to the complexity of the educational system and the multiple ways students now achieve NCEA – one of which is a YGFF programmes (Ministry of Education, 2017). The report also stated that YGFF programmes have been effective in keeping more young people in education during the period of the programme. The programme has also engaged some young people who would otherwise have been not in employment, education or training (NEET). The report presents the following findings in relation to:

- **Education outcomes:** Fees-free participants were more likely to achieve NCEA Level 2 or equivalent than young people with a similar background but only around half of starters passed most of their courses.
- **Progressions into Higher Education:** Fees-free participants were no more likely to progress to Level 4 study than young people with a similar background. Māori and Pasifika participants are no more likely to progress to higher level study than Māori and Pasifika with a similar background.
- **Employment outcomes:** There is no evidence that participation in the programme impacted their earning premium for those in employment. Māori and Pasifika

participants are no more likely to be in full employment than Māori and Pasifika students with a similar background.

- **Benefit outcomes:** Participants were more likely to be NEET and/or receiving a benefit than young people with a similar background (Earle, 2018, p.1)

One limitation of this method of reporting is that the conclusions are made using statistical analysis of educational factors only and it does not account for the individual complexity of YGFF lives students' lives (Gordon et al., 2014; Reid et al., 2016).

The Student Perspective

A limitation of a technical empiricist approach is that it does not consider socio-cultural contexts (Phillips, 2005) and unfortunately, as Gordon et al. (2014) acknowledges, YGFF students have a wide range of social and educational needs. The Coleman Report (1966) which involved the observation of 645,00 students found that family background was by far the most important factor explaining academic success. The *Youth Training Statistical Profile 1999 – 2008* also described that successful outcomes were heavily determined by factors external to the programme such as age, gender, ethnicity, geography, social class, physical assets or liabilities, educational level attained, intelligence and influence. Athanasou (2001) adds luck to this list.

Reid et al. (2016) explained in the *Youth Guarantee Pathways and Project – Profile Report* that students who have not achieved NCEA in mainstream education often bring a range of personal, behavioural and learning challenges into the YGFF environment. These challenges can include health or mental issues, learning disabilities, low literacy and/or numeracy ability, drugs and alcohol abuse, transience and/or poor home environment. Many of the young people described a range of difficulties and barriers to learning in school, including bullying, health problems and forms of disengagement” (Gordon et al., 2014, p.1). Reid et al. (2016) agrees that youth pathways vary due to individual contexts and effect young people's pathways.

...young people's journeys to and from YGFF, and their experiences and achievement in Youth Guarantee programmes, could not be effectively categorized ...Instead, the degree of support our participants had access to,

their sense of determination, self-efficacy and control over their lives and their connections to education and employment throughout their pathways from school all played a role. The effects of these factors on participants' experiences and pathways influenced their decisions about the future and understandings of what was possible for them and varied according to participants' context and the challenges they faced. (p.iii)

Fergusson et al. (2002) concur that individual background influences outcomes, but go one step further, to state that students from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to leave school with no qualifications. This is one of the biggest challenges for an education system striving for equality and equity – student backgrounds are not equal.

The current New Zealand education system states that 'every child and student achieve educational success' (MOE, 2017). In this context, academic success usually relates to attaining academic qualifications at a nominated national level. YGFF programmes are the same requiring students to achieve what has been deemed the minimum standard of qualifications to function in life – NCEA Level 2.

The problem here is that equality attitudes towards minimum qualification attainment leave no room for the student who sits outside the 'norm' for whatever personal or social reason. As Sallis (2002) states "...it is impossible to produce pupils and students to any particular guaranteed standard...Human beings are notoriously non-standard" (p.19). This is entirely true of YGFF students who have not achieved in mainstream education for a reason. For some, it was a learning disability, for others it was falling in with the 'wrong crowd' or socio-economic issues which created barriers to their achievement. Whatever the complexities of the individual student, we are guaranteed they are not standardised. Gordon et al., (2014) suggests that 15% of students should also not be expected to achieve the minimum qualifications based on academic ability. As a solution to this problem, Gordon suggests that funding and EPIs should be flexible "to ensure that YGFF is focused on student need, not on the ease of measuring, evaluating, or administering the scheme" (p.2).

Often, a successful outcome for a YGFF student will include overcoming individual specific challenges. The problem is using quantitative 'indicators of success' as the sole measure of programme performance does not account for personal/social positive outcomes. Reid et al. (2016) describes that "Qualifications are important to the young people in this study, but the pastoral care they receive from their Youth Guarantee providers is equally important" (p.iv). Reid et al. (2016) reported the following positive feedback from participants about their experiences of Fees-free:

Participants felt well supported; they reported positive relationships with their tutors, other staff and students, and enjoyed the learning style and environment. Students reported positive effects on their confidence, motivation and literacy and numeracy skills. Bullying, mental health, poor attendance and the misuse of drugs and alcohol had negative effects according to participants, although a number of interview participants reported that they had changed, and the effects of these had diminished, because of Youth Guarantee. (p.3)

Summary

TYETPs such as the YGFF have been implemented by successive New Zealand governments to address national youth concerns for the last thirty years. The programmes have changed their appearance and focus throughout the years in response to social, political and economic change. In the last decade, a global focus on NEET populations and the expectation for all students to achieve minimum qualifications influenced the formation of the Youth Guarantee Policy.

TYETPs produce mixed results and this is also true of the YGFF programmes. The policy approaches make logical assumptions about achievement and progression and do not account for social issues which are common with YGFF students.

Chapter Three – Research Methodology

Introduction

Chapter three describes the epistemological position and methodology of the study. The epistemological position situates the research context, and the scope of the study. The research paradigm (or view of the world) the study is applying is then explained, along with the research design and research methods. Concepts relating to reliability, validity and triangulation are finally discussed and justified in relation to the study.

Although this study was undertaken from a traditional European Research Paradigm an acknowledgement of the unique study context of the Wānanga and Kaupapa Māori Research is first acknowledged.

Kaupapa Maori Research

Although this study has applied a traditional European approach to the research, it is important to acknowledge the unique Wānanga setting where the research occurred and Kaupapa Māori Research.

As previously mentioned a Wānanga is a unique type of TEO recognised as tertiary institutions under section 162 of the Education Act 1989. All Wānanga embody teaching and research that “advances, and disseminates knowledge and develops intellectual independence, and assists the application of knowledge regarding ahuatanga Maori (Maori tradition) according to tikanga Maori (Maori custom) (<https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/audience-pages/wananga/>)”.

Wānanga are therefore institutes that value Maturanga Māori (Māori knowledge) and Kaupapa Māori Research. Jahnke and Taiape (2003) state that Kaupapa Māori Research is research which:

occurs in a cultural environment which is spiritually and tribally based, where emphasis is placed on people, whanau and hāpu, and where principles such as generosity, reciprocity and co-operation abound. (p. 42).

According to Bishop (2005) Kaupapa Māori Research has evolved during the last 50 years to question traditional research approaches. Kaupapa Māori Research puts Māori people, their culture and their values at the centre of the research. Examples of this include spiritual notions of mauri (life-force), wairua (spiritual) and tapu (sacred) which are all integral concepts in Māori culture but do not conform to any single English translation or idea. Whakapapa (genealogy) is another Māori concept which can be used to organise both the spiritual and physical world in ways unavailable when applying European paradigms. Kaupapa Māori research allows for the prevalent colonial viewpoints to be abandoned so that traditional Māori viewpoints can be applied and explored.

Because the YGFF programmes are a by-product of the New Zealand Government and NZQA systems and are not bore of traditional Māori systems a traditional European research paradigm has been applied for this study. This study does however acknowledge and value the Kaupapa Māori values and principles of the Wānanga and their inherent inclusion in the YGFF programme's.

Methodology

Epistemology

The methodology is the philosophical commitment (Davidson & Tolich, 2003) a researcher makes when committing to an epistemological position and paradigm. It is about the choices that the researcher has to make to set and define the direction of the study (Silverman, 2005). The methodology defines the way forward for the study and provides a rationale for the methods applied to conduct the research (Morrison, 2007).

In life, as in research, people experience different realities based on their own interpretations, or their own epistemological assumptions. Epistemology is defined by

Merriam (2009) as the nature of knowing, whereas Davidson and Tolich (2003) define epistemology as “the philosophical theory of knowledge” (p.25). Epistemology provides a justification of what things are, how they are known, and how they may be known (Davidson & Tolich, 2003).

To make a study manageable an epistemological position is required to situate the study in a specific political, social, and cultural context. An epistemological position organises a study, defining what knowledge is acceptable and what knowledge is not (Bryman, 2012). Once an epistemological position is assumed, ontological assumptions about the nature of reality are confirmed defining the research paradigm or ‘view of the world’ the study is applying.

There are two traditional epistemological research paradigms - the positivist, scientific paradigm, and the post positivism, interpretive paradigm. A positivist paradigm seeks ‘absolute knowledge’ and the discovery of natural laws. It is a paradigm taken from the tradition science fields where it was applied to understand and generalise the living world. In contrast, a post positivist or interpretive paradigm draws conclusions from how people describe their worlds (Bryman, 2012; Cohen, Manon & Morrison, 2007). Positivist research is also be called social research (Bryman, 2012)

The epistemological position for this study is post positivism because the knowledge is relative, not absolute (Merriam, 2009). The study is situated in the interpretive paradigm because it is interested in how the people make sense of their world (Davidson & Tolich, 2003). According to Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2011), “The central endeavour in the interpretive paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience” (p.17).

Qualitative Research

In the interpretive paradigm, a qualitative research methodology is appropriate because the nature of the data provides knowledge in the form of perspectives - qualitative research is most often located in the interpretive paradigm (Merriam, 2009). The simplest justification for qualitative research is that the data gathered is words, and not

numbers (Bryman, 2012). The purpose of a qualitative study is to explore a problem (Creswell, 2007) not to generalise, but to theorise about what is happening in one specific context (Wellington, 2015; Lichtman, 2013; Cohen et al., 2011).

In this study, documentary analysis of Youth Guarantee Policy documents and two YGFF research studies was completed to analyse objectives of the Youth Guarantee Policy and to understand the policy context.

A questionnaire was completed by 39 Wānanga YGFF students to gather their perceptions on enrolment, achievement challenges and barriers, programme quality and pathways. Once the research methods were completed, the results were coded separately to identify themes. The themes in the questionnaire responses were then compared and analysed to identify discrepancies between the objectives of the YGFF programmes and the perceptions and outcomes of the students. It is hoped that the study will contribute to future evaluations of the Youth Guarantee programmes in the Wānanga.

Applied Research

There are many forms of qualitative research including applied and evaluation research which apply in this study. Applied research is a form of qualitative research that is “undertaken to improve the quality of practice of a particular system” (Merriam, 2009, p.3).

Evaluation Research

A common form of applied research is evaluation research which assesses the effects, accomplishments or effectiveness of an innovation, intervention, policy or practice (Fox, Martin & Green, 2007; Merriam, 2009). Questions often emerge from the discrepancies between what is intended and what is occurring.

In this study, discrepancies were evident between the intended and actual achievement rates of students, and the intended and actual progression rates of students into higher

study or work. These discrepancies led to the formation of personal questions about the intended outcomes of the programme, and the intentions of the students. The research approach analyses and compares the desired outcomes of the programme and the intentions of students. The assumption is that if the student intentions do not align with the programme intended outcomes, the outcomes will never be deemed successful by either party. The second research approach identifies and analyses factors that influence YGFF student retention, achievement and progression, so problems could be identified and recommendations for improvement made.

This study is a form of summative evaluation because it focusses on the outcomes of the students in relation to the objectives of the programmes and perceptions of the students. A summative evaluation is concerned with the overall outcomes of the programme or its impact. Bell and Stevenson (2006) explain that "most monitoring and evaluation research is concerned with assessing impact" (p.11). To achieve this, the study analysed the policy context to gain a deeper understanding of the Youth Guarantee Policy and the YGFF Initiative. This approach has been applied because a summative report on YGFF outcomes is already available from the MOE and evaluating YGFF programmes on the EPI data alone does not acknowledge the individual circumstances of students. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) state that many researchers apply a multi-angle approach to evaluation, believing an evaluation is incomplete if it attends only to the integrity or the impact of the programme.

Although programme design and teaching are significant factors which affect outcomes, this study intentionally did not look inwards at the programme because formative evaluations were already occurring at the Wānanga.

To summarise, this study occurs in the post-positivist, interpretive paradigm. The study is qualitative research and can also be labelled applied, evaluation research. Practitioner research considerations were also made at the start of the study because the study began at my place of work.

Research Methods

Documentary analysis

Bowen (2009) defines documentary analysis as a “systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents” (p, 27). It can help a researcher uncover meaning and develop insight about the research problem (Merriam, 1998). According to Fitzgerald (2012) “Documentary research is a form of interpretative research that requires researchers to collect, collate and analyse empirical data in order to produce theoretical account that either describes, interprets or explains what has occurred” (p. 298). Documentary analysis can be the main focus of a study or it can be used as a supplementary tool (Wellington, 2015; Fitzgerald, 2012). Documentary analysis is often used alongside other qualitative methods to provide triangulation.

There are many varied forms of documents but some “common documents include official records, letters, newspaper, accounts, poems, songs, corporate records, government documents, historical accounts, diaries, autobiographies and so on” (Merriam, 2009, p.140). Documentary analysis is deemed to be a preferred methodology in organisational research and unobtrusive because only the researcher is engaging with the documents (Cardno, Rosales & McDonald, 2017).

However, before a document can be utilised in a research study it must meet certain criteria. First, its authenticity must be assessed (Merriam, 2009; Wellington, 2015). Authenticity refers to where the document came from, and who was the author. The date and place of writing is also important, along with the conditions that the documents were produced under (Merriam, 2009). Along with authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning all need to be considered. Credibility refers to the extent to which a document can be trusted. Is the information credible? Or has it been distorted for some reason. Representativeness refers to assessing how typical or atypical a document is. Is it a fair representative of that type of document or is it abnormal? (Wellington, 2015).

Once a document has been assessed suitable for the study, like all analytical data in qualitative research it needs to be examined to gain meaning (Bowen, 2009). Meaning refers to assessing what the document is, and what is telling the reader? Meaning is the most contentious or the four criteria because it raises questions about the intentions of the author, and the perspectives of the reader (Wellington, 2015). Documentary analysis needed to be included in this study because the inquiry is based on a programme formed from government policy. Public records are common documents used in qualitative research and Meriam (2009) believes that there is not much different from using documentary analysis to interviews or observations. Specifically, the objectives and outcomes of the Youth Guarantee Policy needed to be defined and the policy context understood so an analysis of the YGFF programmes could be completed. Because there are multiple Youth Guarantee Initiatives delivered across secondary and tertiary institutes an analysis was needed to clarify the purpose and outcomes of the YGFF programme's specifically. Thus, Research Question 1 was designed to clarify the purpose of the Youth Guarantee Policy and Programmes.

Sample selection

The sample refers to the unit that will be used for analysis in the study (Merriam, 2009). According to Merriam (2009) non-probability sampling is “the method of choice for most qualitative research” (p.77) and the most common form of non-probability sampling is purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling means that the research selects the sample that will provide the greatest insight into the focus of the study. Purposeful sampling was applied in the selection of the three documents chosen for analysis. The two research studies were chosen because of their scope and the direct correlation between the YGFF programmes included in the studies. The Monitoring Report was selected because it is the most reliable and current source for national YGFF programme outcome data. The documents analysed in this study can be categorised into two types – Government Policy Documents and Research Studies. The documents analysed were:

- Monitoring the Youth Guarantee: Youth Guarantee Fees-Free Places (2017)
- The Youth Guarantee Pathways and Profiles Project: Interim report (2016)
- The Youth Guarantee Fees-Free scheme: A research study (2014)

Questionnaires

According to Bell (2007) questionnaires are a set of questions about a specific research topic, produced for a target audience to answer independently. They are a common research tool in qualitative studies because they allow the researcher to collect large amounts of data from the relevant population, in a short amount of time. Another benefit is that questionnaires can be crafted and manufactured by the researcher for a low cost.

Questionnaires usually consist of different question types. One type allows the responder to rate their order of agreement or disagreement. A Likert Scale is an example of a question format that requires respondents to indicate their response to a question, or statement. When applying Likert scales researchers have a choice between writing questions or statements (Bell, 2007). Questionnaires also regularly contain open-ended questions that allow for a written response. Open-ended questions provide in-depth responses but require more time and different strategies to analyse because of the descriptive nature of the data.

Bell (2007) warns that careful consideration however needs to be given about exactly what it is you need to find out through the questionnaire and although there are many benefits to selecting questionnaires as a research tool and there are also many pitfalls. Firstly, the wording of the question will influence the usefulness of the response. Questionnaires have to be clear. There can be no ambiguity, imprecision or assumptions. For example, the researcher cannot assume that words have the same meaning to different individuals. Secondly, the questions should not be leading meaning that the structure of a sentence, or the inclusion, or exclusion of words can easily influence the implication of a question. For example, 'How would you rate the vocational outcomes of the programmes?' This question assumes that the respondent (1) knows the meaning of vocational outcomes (2) knows what the vocational outcomes are (3) and has the required knowledge to assess outcomes. The question is also ambiguous as it is not clear whether it is referring to individual outcomes or the cohort as a whole. Thirdly, questions should not ask two questions in one sentence (double question). For example, "Please rate the quality of our food and service". If the

researcher wants to know about two different topics, they should ask two separate questions. If the researcher wishes to know about a concept that is unobservable, such as the value students place on outcomes, it needs to be linked to an observable indicator, or be “operationalised”. Operationalisation refers to the researcher linking the language of theory (concepts) to the language of indicators (research). For example, if a student is asked to rate a variety of outcomes, the researcher can theorise about what outcomes the student values the most by considering the rankings.

The questionnaire should be uncluttered and appealing. Longer and/or difficult questions should be at the end of the questionnaire, so the respondent is not deterred from answering the whole questionnaire. The researcher needs to know the time the questionnaire takes to complete. The questionnaire does not want to be too long or tedious to complete. There is a risk the students will get bored and provide false data by indicating any response just to finish the questionnaire (Bell, 2007).

In this study, questionnaires were given to all the YGFF students at one wananga. The questionnaires were designed to capture demographic data as well as the student perceptions on enrolment, barriers to achievement, quality of the programme and plans for the future. The Questionnaire used in this study is included in the Appendices labelled *Appendix 1 – Student Questionnaire*.

Sample selection

A purposeful sample of Youth Guarantee classes was selected because they were accessible and assessed to be a typical representation of the Youth Guarantee cohort in a wānanga. A sample size of 39 students represent approximately 39% of the total population and large enough for a Dissertation research study. In a qualitative study, a representation of the entire population is not required because the data is interpreted, and not generalised. Instead, the researcher decides what the sample size is, and the margin of sampling error that is acceptable (Lichtman, 2013). Youth Guarantee students are aged between 15 – 19 years and slightly more males than females enrol. Māori make up the largest proportion of enrolments followed by Pasifika. In 2014, 45% of students identified as Māori and approximately 20% were Pasifika (Earle, 2018).

Most students do not complete secondary school and many report negative schooling experiences arriving at Youth Guarantee programmes with a range of socio and economic needs.

Twenty-one males and twenty females completed the questionnaire providing an almost equal gender mix of respondents.¹ 66% of respondents were 16 or 17-years-old. 15% were 18-years-old. 10% were 19-years-old. One participant was 20, one participant provided a false age response and two participants were 15-years-old. The two 15-year-old respondents were excluded from the study as per the ethical guidelines of the research. Maori participants made up the largest ethnic group at 74%. Only five students identified as Polynesian, however another six respondents listed a specific Polynesian country [Fiji (1), Samoan (2), Tongan (2), Rarotongan (1)] increasing the number of Polynesian students to eleven (28%). Six respondents identified as European, two identified as Asian and one South African. More than half of the respondents (58%) had lived at their current address for more than 3 years. Fourteen students (36%) had lived at their current address for less than one year and the same number (14) had lived at their address for longer than 3 years. Two students declined to answer this question. More than half of the respondents found out about the programme from a family member or friend. Other forms of programme referral or advertising accounted for all other responses.

Data Analysis

The aim of research analysis is to answer the research questions by forming a hypothesis or concept, addressing a problem or providing an interpretation (Lofland, Snow, Anderson & Lofland, 2006). In a qualitative research project “there appears to be general agreement that the goal of analysing the text and work collected is to arrive at common themes (Lichtman, 2013, p.148). Creswell (2014) describes it as “making sense out of text and image data. It involves segmenting and taking apart the data (like peeling back the layers of an onion) as well as putting it back together” (p.195). Lichtman (2013) makes a point that analysing data is more than just looking for themes

¹ This includes the two 15-year-old respondents

that are supported with quotes drawn from the raw data it includes a deeper analysis and interpretation of patterns and categories. Once completed, themes are identified, described and collated before the interpretation of the themes and meanings can happen (Creswell, 2014). Coding is the process applied across the raw data to sort information into categories that are meaningful to the research. The application and analysis of 'codes' within the data provides the information for the themes.

Thematic Coding

'Initial coding' involves condensing and organising data into categories (Lofland et al., 2006). It involves the inspection and analysis of data line by line. The researcher needs to analyse what the information is saying and represents. Once completed, 'focused coding' links findings back to the themes and the topic of the research. Researchers will usually analyse common thematic responses to draw conclusions. A limitation of thematic coding is that the researcher can never truly capture the perspective of a participant in 5 – 6 themes (Lichtman, 2013). Themes can be presented in a range of formats including diagrams, taxonomies, matrices, typologies, concept charts and flow charts (Lofland et al., 2006).

The questionnaire data was analysed by grouping all the responses to each individual question together. Once the responses were grouped by question, the data was coded by identifying like key words and similar phrases. The collated like responses then formed the themes for the data.

To analyse the document data each document was read many times over and findings collated. The findings of the different research studies were then compared to ascertain if any of the findings were similar.

In qualitative studies, simple quantification occurs to establish the frequency and strength of response to questionnaires. Simple quantification was used to analyse the Likert scales included in the questionnaire and the to calculate the themes response percentage. For example: 8 or 40 students responded that they wanted to achieve qualifications is described as 20% of students want to achieve qualifications.

Validity

Validity is a critical element of research: “If a piece of research is invalid then it is worthless (Cohen et al., 2011, p.179). Theorists acknowledge there is a significant difference in the definition of validity between quantitative and qualitative studies. “Qualitative validity means that the researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures” (Creswell, 2014, p.201). Validity is the demonstration that a research tool measures what it purports to measure, and that the account is accurate (Cohen et al., 2011). Validity confirms the accuracy of the data from the view of the researcher, participant and reader.

There are different types of qualitative research validity, and the threats to validity can never be completely erased. Validity in qualitative research includes the assessment of the data as plausible and credible, the assessment of the methods applied to recording and interpreting the data, and the assessment of the theories and generalisability of the research (Cohen et al., 2011). Cohen et al. (2011) describe several principles of qualitative validity: Qualitative data is sourced from the natural setting. Data is taken to participants to check. Fox et al. (2011) present that there are varying viewpoints on practitioner research and validity. One viewpoint is that if practitioner research is intended to produce knowledge in traditional outlets then common notions of validity are appropriate. Alternatively, they suggest that if the research is intended to be transformative validity may include democratic validity (honouring the perspectives of stakeholders) and outcome validity (resolving the problems).

Validity in this study is provided by the documentary analysis and the comparison of findings of two large YGFF research studies. If the result data from this study shares a correlation with the much larger studies, then plausibility and credibility of the research findings is assumed.

Triangulation

Triangulation is “the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon (Denzin, 1970, p.291). Triangulation allows for evidence to be converged and corroborated provided credibility to findings (Bowen, 2009). Triangulation is applied in this study by using a questionnaire and documentary analysis as the two research methods.

Documentary analysis is often used alongside other qualitative methods to provide triangulation. The application of triangulation reduces the risk of bias that may occur in a single study (Bowen, 2009).

Ethical issues

When undertaking a research project there are ethical considerations that need to be considered to keep individuals and organisations safe. According to Bryman (2012), research should not harm participants, there should be informed consent, there should not be an invasion of privacy and there should be no deception. The paramount objective of ethical consideration is protecting people (Bryman, 2012). Bryman describes a range of ethical considerations for the researcher. Firstly, participation in research needs to be voluntary. Once committed, formal approval needs to be gained. Formal approval is not required in this study as completion of a questionnaire assumes tacit approval. Secondly, topics and questions may be sensitive for participants. This needs to be considered when investigating barriers as they may include personal and emotional subjects. Thirdly, there should be no deception. Participants need to know why, and for whom, the research is being done. The researcher should also disclose and adhere to any agreements regarding anonymity. Finally, any agreements to share tentative conclusions, or provide access to the final report again needs to be followed.

When undertaking practitioner research, there are a unique set of risks that need to be mitigated by the researcher. The dual role as both researcher and practitioner opens the door for conflicts of interest that can jeopardise the best interests of the students (Fox et al., 2011) manifesting itself during student consent and coercion into

participation. Another issue for the practitioner researcher is risk of research having a political agenda. This can manifest in the form of advocacy or social justice on a topic. Because the research will occur in the work setting it is important for the researcher to remain aware to the proximity of the study to the researcher and maintain a specific focus on the purpose of the research. There are issues of power that will need to be considered when carrying out the research. Students may feel obligated or pressured to provide a response because of the proximity of the researcher to the research. The Information Sheet that was supplied to student participants is included in the Appendices as *Appendix 2: Information Sheet for Participants*.

Summary

The epistemological position for this research is post-positivism, situating the study in an interpretive paradigm. The epistemological position defines the context for the study and frames what knowledge is acceptable. Because the study has occurred in my previous work setting practitioner research considerations have been made along with considerations relating to applied research and evaluation research. Triangulation is demonstrated through the use of two research methods – Documentary Analysis and Questionnaires. Bowen (2009) states that a qualitative researcher is expected to use at least two sources of evidence. Documentary analysis will provide the background information on the Youth Guarantee Policy before a student questionnaire will provide data on how students interpret their world.

The research process has been described included considerations of validity and reliability. Ethical considerations have been mitigated relating to practitioner research and applying research in a kaupapa Maori environment.

Chapter Four – Findings and Results

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the documentary analysis and the student questionnaire research methods applied in the study.

The analysis of a government YGFF monitoring document was used to identify the objectives of the Youth Guarantee and the national outcomes of the YGFF initiative. A further analysis of two large-scale YGFF research documents was also used to provide validity to the findings. The documents included in the analysis were:

1. Monitoring the Youth Guarantee Fees Free 2017
2. The Youth Guarantee Fees-Free scheme: A research study
3. Youth Guarantee Pathways and Profiles Project – Profile Report

Wellington's (2015) 'Framework for Interrogating Documents' was used as a guide to carry out the analysis. The analysis included the consideration of the following questions: *Who wrote the document and what is their position/bias? Who is it written for and why them? Where and when was it produced? How is it presented? Why was it written? What style is it written in? What are the common words, themes and values of the documents?*

Documentary Analysis

Monitoring the Youth Guarantee: Youth Guarantee Fees-Free Places (2017)

The *Youth Guarantee Fees Free Places Monitoring the Youth Guarantee 2017* was published in 2018 and is the latest MOE report document on the Youth Guarantee written by David Earle, a Chief MOE Research Analyst who authored all of the Youth Guarantee Monitoring Reports.

The document provides demographic and achievement data for YGFF students up to 2014 plus their outcomes and destinations to 2016. The style of the annual monitoring report is consistent with the previous annual reports and matches a standard format applied to other MOE documents (such as the MOE Annual Report 2017). The document is published by the Tertiary Sector Performance Analysis so policy-makers are the primary audience. Because the reports are available to the public, they are also an audience, along with education organisations and researchers interested in the performance of the YGFF.

The intention of the *Youth Guarantee Fees Free Places Monitoring the Youth Guarantee 2017* report is to provide information that can contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of the YGFF initiative. Policy-makers need to justify the expenditure of funding, so they use the report to assess how effective the initiative is at meeting the objectives of the Youth Guarantee Policy. To judge the effectiveness of the YGFF the report looks at the effect of the programme for those who participated compared to a matched group of young people who did not participate. By comparing the outcomes of the participants and the comparison group, the report estimates how much of the outcome is likely to be due to programme participation rather than the characteristics of the young people

It is unclear why the report applies this methodology to estimate effectiveness instead of reporting on the actual desired outcomes (for example the percentage of YGFF graduates who transition into employment after completion of a YGFF programme). One reason may be that the information is private, or the complexity of individuals lives makes it impossible to capture this data. Another reason could be a reluctance from the author to make conclusive statements about the effectiveness of the programme as outcomes are often described as simply being 'more' or 'less likely'. Nowhere in the document does the author categorically state that the objectives of the Youth Guarantee Policy are being achieved (or not being achieved).

The author admits there are uncertainties that cannot be accounted for in the applied method such as family and peer influence, career and study preferences, as well as personality and other individual attributes. Finally, because the MOE is producing the

report for one of its own programmes there is the potential for bias to be present. As previously stated, the inconclusive and ambiguous style of reporting effectiveness in the document makes it difficult to ascertain whether or not the actual outcomes on the whole are effectively achieving the desired outcomes of the policy.

The report itself includes the background of the YGFF and an explanation of the research methodology. This includes the objectives of the Youth Guarantee Policy and the outcomes of the YGFF.

The objective of the Youth Guarantee Policy

The original objectives as agreed to by Cabinet on 13 May 2009 were to:

1. Increase the educational achievement of 16 and 17 year olds not engaged in education by providing them with improved access to study towards a qualification at levels 1-3 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in tertiary education; and
2. Improve transitions between school, tertiary education, and work.

The Monitoring Report (2018) lists the Youth Guarantee objectives in more detail as the educational and employment 'outcomes of interest':

The education outcomes of interest are:

- improved retention in school and/or tertiary education (including industry training)
- more students achieving NCEA Level 2, or equivalent
- increased progression to tertiary study at Level 4 or higher (including industry training).

The employment outcomes of interest are:

- obtaining sustained employment
- reduced incidence of not being in employment, education or training (NEET)
- reduced incidence of welfare benefit receipt (Earle, 2018, p.3)

:

The Objective of the YGFF Initiative

Because YGFF was the first initiative implemented to achieve the objectives of the policy it states the operationalisation of the policy objectives as the YGFF objective.

The objective of the YGFF initiative is to provide:

full-time, fees-free tertiary study at New Zealand Qualifications Framework Levels 1 to 3 for 15 to 19 year olds who have left school with low or no qualifications. It is intended to re-engage young people in education and provide a pathway into further study, training and employment (Earle, 2018, p.2).

The Youth Guarantee Fees-free outcomes

- Youth Guarantee Fees-Free places have been effective in keeping more young people in education during the period of the programme.
- The programme has also engaged some young people who would otherwise have been not in employment, education or training (NEET).
- Fees-free participants were more likely to achieve NCEA Level 2 or equivalent than young people with a similar background. However, across all years, only around half of starters passed most of their courses, although the proportion failing most of their courses has decreased.
- Fees-free participants were no more likely to progress to Level 4 and above tertiary education, or to gain full employment, than young people with a similar background. There is no evidence of any earnings premium from participation in the programme for those in employment.
- Following the programme, participants were more likely to be NEET and/or receiving a benefit than young people with a similar background (Earle, 2018, p. 3).

In summary, the report stated that the YGFF initiatives have successfully engaged young people in education – many of whom may otherwise have been NEET – and

supported them to achieve NCEA qualifications. Unfortunately, none of the employment outcomes have been positively affected and participation in a YGFF programme may actually increase the chance of becoming NEET or a beneficiary – both of which are negative outcomes and contradictory to the desired employment outcomes of the Youth Guarantee Policy.

The Youth Guarantee Fees-Free scheme: A research study

The Youth Guarantee Fees-Free scheme: A research study is one of two known large research studies on the YGFF. This study was completed by Liz Gordon, Charles Sedgwick, Sandra Grey and Natalia Marsden and published by Pukeko Research Limited in 2014. Gordon started Pukeko Research to make a difference for individuals, institutions and society and the research is intended to have implications for policy and for practice. The particular study states that the research was completed as “an effective a response to the issues dilemmas, hopes and aspirations of you all” (Gordon et al. p.2). The audience of this study is therefore defined by Gordon as policy-makers, practitioners and anyone invested in YGFF. The document is presented in a report form and includes all the elements of academic research. The research is an investigation, seeking to understand; What institutional, sector-wide and other factors contribute to achievement by former NEETS in Youth Guarantee ‘fees-free’ places?

The research was undertaken at a time when the performance of the YGFF programmes was unknown. The research was likely to have been completed to provide further evaluative data to YGFF policy-makers and to support YGFF practitioners in the field. The document provides a thorough and sympathetic review of the YGFF programmes and challenges. A theme from the document is the suggestion that successive centrally funded, targeted youth education and training programmes have occurred in New Zealand for the last thirty years as described in the quote below. Gordon, Sedgwick, Grey and Marsden (2014) describe some of the programmes:

The first youth training programme, Young Persons’ Training Programme (YPTP), was followed by the ACCESS and MACCESS schemes....The Training Opportunities Programme (TOPS) developed out of ACCESS at the

start of 1993, and MACCESS was subsumed into TOPS later that year....This led in 1998 to the formation of Youth Training... The Youth Guarantee fees-free (YGFF) scheme commenced in 2010 and in 2012 the Youth Training programme was abolished, subsumed into the new scheme. (p.4)

The Youth Guarantee Fees-Free scheme concluded that the YGFF pedagogy and therefore objectives are dictated by external factors because of the funding models attached to the programmes.

In relation to the YGFF Outcomes The Youth Guarantee Fees-Free scheme found that:

- YGFF programmes are accessed by NEETs many of whom had limited schooling. Many YGFF students are transient, have significant need and require expert help with a range of problems.
- Around half of the YGFF students in the study completed the programme.
- YGFF students have varied types of plans about employment and pathways, some have specific goals but others have a more general goal of gaining work or continuing to study.
- The 'pathway' approach was not always well set up to promote a clear path through to industry qualifications.
- Many of the TEOs performed in 2013 only slightly above, or in some cases below, the expected EPI standards, thus putting pressure on for better completion rates in the classroom.

Youth Guarantee Pathways and Profiles Project – Profile Report

The *Youth Guarantee Pathways and Profiles Project – Profile Report* is the second large scale YGFF study underway in New Zealand. The study is being undertaken by The Collaborative Trust for a TEO contractor (Community Colleges New Zealand) and funded by Ako Aotearoa. The Profile Report was published by Ako Aotearoa in December 2016. The longitudinal study began in 2015 and is gathering the perspectives of Youth Guarantee students' and their PTEs to explore the sustainable benefits of foundation education for young people in Aotearoa New Zealand. The report

was written by Adelaide Reid, Mark Turner, Ria Schroder and Sarah Mackay of The Collaborative Trust. The Trust undertake funded research projects to inform and influence policy and practice.

In relation to the YGFF Outcomes The Youth Guarantee Pathways and Profiles Project study found that:

- Most survey participants were early school leavers aged 16 or 17 years-old and the majority had low or no school qualifications when they entered the YGFF.
- YGFF students often have physical and/or mental health issues and they access many different services for support.
- Many factors that influence young people are interconnected, complex and varied due to diversity in individual characteristics, needs and contexts.
- Students on the whole have positive learning experiences on YGFF programmes and feel supported.
- Qualifications are important to young people, but pastoral care and support of their network is just as important.

Questionnaire findings

39 YGFF students completed the questionnaire. The key findings are summarised at the end of the chapter. The questionnaire respondents have been named T1 – T39 to maintain anonymity. Basic demographic information was gathered to identify sex, age and ethnic group. Please note that the quotes from the student's responses have been copied verbatim to maintain authenticity.

Q1. Are you male or female?

39 Wānanga YGFF students in total completed the questionnaire. 21 were male and 18 were female.

Q2. How old are you?

66% of respondents were 16 or 17-years-old. 15% were 18-years-old. 10% were 19-years-old. 1 participant was 20-years-old, and 1 participant provided a false response.

Q3. What ethnic group(s) do you identify with?

Maori respondents made up the largest ethnic group at 74%. Only 5 students identified as Polynesian, however another six respondents listed a specific Polynesian country [Fiji (1), Samoan (2), Tongan (2), Rarotongan (1)] increasing the number of Polynesian students to eleven (28%). 6 respondents identified as European, 2 identified as Asian and 1 South African. Some tauira identified with more than one ethnic group.

Q4. How long have you lived at your current address?

A question about the length of time living at a current address was included to identify transience or unsettlement in the home living situation.

36% had lived at their current address for more than 3 years. 23% had lived at their current address for more than one year but less than three. 36% had lived at their house for under a year. Two respondents declined to answer the question. The fact that more than a third of students have lived at their house for less than a year may indicate transience or an unsettled home environment. Both of these factors could impact student retention and academic achievement.

Q5. How did you find out about the Youth Guarantee Programme?

A question about engagement was included to identify the ways YGFF student are entering the programme.

33% found out about the programme through a family member.

23% found out about the programme through a friend.

15% found out about the programme through a social worker.

In total 71% of respondents were referred to the programme by either family, friends or a social worker.

Q6. Why did you enrol on the Youth Guarantee programme?

Enrolment was included in the questionnaire for two reasons.

1. By identifying the reasons for student enrolment on a YGFF programmes they can be compared to the objectives of the programme to assess alignment.
2. Enrolments are required to confirm the viability of a YGFF programme for the wananga so capturing student information about enrolment can contribute to a programme evaluation.

Respondents provided a range of different reasons why they enrolled on the YGFF programme. The responses have been coded into themes because many of the responses were similar or had the same meaning. 28% of taurira enrolled to get out of the house and/or doing something. Some of the student responses to this theme included:

T19: I enrolled because I needed to get out of the house and try achieve some of my goals. Also to keep out of trouble.

T1: To get out of the house and do something

T20: Because I needed to do something instead of staying home, and I knew I would enjoy it because I like being active and sports

The same percentage of respondents (28%) enrolled because of their interest in a particular subject area. Some of the student responses to this theme included:

T9: Because I love dancing and expressing myself to people

T24: I enrolled to work on my art/graph

T16: *To get quals in retail and hospo*

20% of taurira enrolled to either gain an education or qualification. Some of the student responses to this theme included:

T2: *Because I need to get my level 2*

T12: *To gain qualifications and its somethings to do in my freetime. Also to earn my NCEA levels as it will be easier to get a full time job. Gain drivers license.*

13% enrolled to get a job or improve their career options. Some of the student responses to this theme included:

T11: *Because it fitted into what I wanted to do as a career choice.*

T30: *I enrol because I had a dream to be a personal trainer and the course had the information I needed.*

A small percentage of respondents enrolled because it was free or because they had been ordered by the Courts to attend.

Q7. Why do you stay enrolled on the programme?

Retention was included in the questionnaire because retention is an Education Performance Indicator that the Wananga reports to TEC. The responses to Q7 have also been thematically coded. Respondents provided similar response themes to question one with the addition of the following new themes; influence of peers, environment, fun/enjoyment, personal developments

20% of respondents identified the achievement of their goals (including careers) as their reason for remaining engaged in the programme and 20% identified

education/qualification attainment as their reason. Some of the student responses to these themes included:

T17: Because I want to further my career and getting qualifications will help that

T20: Because I think this will help me with my future goals and it'll support me with my learning accordingly

T19: Because I want to make something out of myself and get my level 2.

Similar to the response theme from question one 13% responded with 'something to do'. Some of the student responses to this theme included:

T6: To give me something to do during the day

T21: It's something to do in my spare time instead of being stuck at home.

10% identified their friends. Some of the student responses to this theme included:

T15: I meet a lot of people and make long-time friends.

T21: The boys, friendship and the class environment

10% identified personal development. 8% identified the environment and 5% identified the specific subject matter. Some of the student responses from these themes were:

T1: Because I love the positivity of my course mates and they keep me going and wanting to come back

T28: Cause I want to do something with myself

Q.8 What challenges and/or barriers to achieving on the Youth Guarantee programme are you currently facing?

Question 8 was included because of the high withdrawal rates the programmes experience. This question attempted to quantify the challenges and barriers YGFF students faced to achieving so that support services can be matched accordingly.

The list of challenges and barriers was taken from a wananga youth pastoral care. The challenges in the list were identified by a group of YGFF Kaiako (Tutors) and Kaitohutohu tautoko (Pastoral Care). The challenges and barriers options presented in the questionnaire for students to circle were: None, Learning disability, Peer Pressure, Low reading level, Mental health issues, Behavioural issues, Low writing level, Low self-esteem, No role models, Low math, Low confidence, No support, Crime, Problems at home, Lack of money, Self-harm, Gang involvement, Relationship problems, Lack of food, Sexual identity issues, Drug use, Family problems, Lack of support, Negative thoughts, Alcohol, Friend problems, Caring for baby, Suicidal thoughts

Table 4: Student Challenges and Barriers to Achievement

The total number of challenges or barriers per student	26% indicated no challenges/barriers to achievement 46% indicated 1-3 barriers 23% indicated 4-8 barriers 5% indicated 2-14barriers
Literacy and Numeracy	23% indicated a low reading level 26% indicated writing level 23% indicated a low numeracy
Psychological issues	10% indicated mental health issues 2% indicated behavioral issues 28% indicated low self-esteem or confidence 20% indicated negative and 4 students indicated suicidal thoughts
Socio-economic	28% indicated problems at home or with family 23% indicated a lack of money 23% indicated problems with relationships

	16% indicated a lack of support. (No one indicated no support) 5% indicated peer pressure, lack of food, and caring for a baby.
Harmful behaviours	18% indicated drug abuse 7% indicated alcohol abuse 7% indicated gang involvement 5% indicated crime 10% indicated self-harm

Q.9 Have you been involved with any of the following services in the past 12 months?

The services question is a follow on from Q.8 Challenges and Barriers. The question sought to identify the total amount and type of services the respondents had engaged with in the last 12 months. The Services included in the questionnaire were:

- Oranga Tamariki
- Wananga student services
- Police
- Community groups
- WINZ
- Church
- Youth Services

The response found that over 75% of respondents were engaged with police, corrections, welfare or youth services in the last 12 months. A third of students have been involved with WINZ in the last 12 months.

Table 5: Services engaged by YGFF students in the last 12 months

Total number of Services engaged in last 12 months	Number of students
0	8
1	14
2	9
3	5
4	3

Q.10 How would you rate the academic learning in your current programme?

Q.11 How would you rate the work skills learning in your current programme?

Questions 10 and 11 are the only two programme evaluation questions included in the questionnaire. Because the programme has both educational and employment desired outcomes students were asked to rate their learning in both areas. Student responses overwhelmingly rated the programme positively in relation to academic learning and work skills. A Likert Scale was used for questions 10 and 11.

81% of respondents indicated a positive response to their academic learning.

92% of respondents indicated a positive response to learning work skills.

Q.12 In your opinion what is a successful programme outcome?

Question 12 is another question designed to assess if the young people's opinion of a successful outcome aligns with that of the YGFF programme. Again, if there is misalignment this may indicate that the young person may be enrolled on the wrong programme or has a higher chance of withdrawing from the programme before completion. The findings indicated that 50% of taurira identified a successful education or employment outcomes that aligned with the programme desired outcomes. 25% of students provided a response that aligned with the education desired outcomes of the programmes.

T13: *Pass this course with NCEA Level 2*

T14: A successful outcomes for me would be to pass all assessments with every credit and leave more fit

25% of taurira provided a response that aligned with the employment desired outcomes of the programmes.

T1: Get a job.

T12: For me it would be having more opportunities for my career choice.

12% of taurira responded with a comment that indicated group success to be meaningful to them.

T1: Everyone passing

T4: When everyone achieves

T5: A successful outcome is when everyone passes in the class you are taking

Q.13. Do you have an academic (learning) or vocational (job) pathway already planned when your programme finishes?

Question 13 was included to ascertain if the students have a pathway plan after completion of the programme. Progression into higher education or work was a primary outcome of the Youth Guarantee Policy and YGFF initiative. Over half the respondents do not have an education or employment pathway plan. 45% of respondents indicated that they have a planned education or employment path. 65% of student could not describe any type of educational or employment plan. From the respondents that have an employment plan 29% made a generic statement relating to gaining 'a job' students 65% could identify a specific career. 12% had a specific educational pathway they could describe. Note that some students identified both an educational path and employment path.

Table 6: Summary of Documentary Analysis Findings: Monitoring the Youth Guarantee Fees Free 2017

YGFF Objective	To provide full-time, fees-free tertiary study at New Zealand Qualifications Framework Levels 1 to 3 for 15 to 19 year old's who have left school with low or no qualifications.
Engagement Outcomes	Youth Guarantee Fees-free places have been effective in keeping more young people in education during the period of the programme. The programmes have engaged some young people who would otherwise have been classified as not in employment, education or training (NEET).
Retention	However, across all years, only around half of starters passed most of their courses, although the proportion failing most of their courses has decreased.
Completion & Achievement Outcomes	Fees-free participants were more likely to achieve NCEA Level 2 or equivalent than young people with a similar background.
Progression Outcomes	Fees-free participants were no more likely to progress to Level 4 and above tertiary education, or to gain full employment, than young people with a similar background. There is no evidence of any earnings premium from participation in the programme for those in employment.
Other	Following the programme, participants were more likely to be NEET and/or receiving a benefit than young people with a similar background (Earle, 2018, p. 3).

Table 7: Summary of Documentary Analysis Findings: The Youth Guarantee Fees-Free scheme: A research study

Engagement	YGFF programmes are accessed by NEETs many of whom had limited schooling.
Completion	Around half of the YGFF students in the study completed the programme.
Challenges and support	Many YGFF students are transient, have significant need and require expert help with a range of problems
Progression	YGFF students have varied types of plans about their futures. Some have specific employment or study goals while others. Have more general aspirations about gaining work or remaining in education. The 'pathway' approach was not always well set up to promote a clear path through to industry qualifications.
Other	Many TEOs performed in 2013 only slightly above, or in some cases below, the expected EPI standards, thus putting pressure on for better completion rates in the classroom.

Table 8: Summary of Documentary Analysis Findings: Youth Guarantee Pathways and Profiles Project – Profile Report

Engagement	Most survey participants were early school leavers aged 16 or 17 years-old and the majority had low or no school qualifications when they entered the YGFF.
Challenges & Support	YGFF students often have physical and/or mental health issues and they access many different services for support. Many factors that influence young people are interconnected, complex and varied due to diversity in individual characteristics, needs and contexts.
Services	Students on the whole have positive learning experiences on YGFF programmes and feel supported.
Achievement	Qualifications are important to young people, but pastoral care and support of their network is just as important.

Table 9: Demographic information of YGFF student respondents

Question	Key Findings
Q1. Gender	54% Male, 46% Female
Q2. Age	66% of students were aged 16 or 17
Q3. Ethnicity	Māori taura were the largest ethnic group (74%), Polynesian were second (30%)
Q4. Current address	One third of taura have lived at their current address for less than a year

Table 10: Summary of Questionnaire Findings

Categories	Key Findings
Q5. Programme engagement	71% of taura were referred to the programme by an influential adult
Q6. Enrolment reason	40% of students enroll on the programme for a reason that aligns with the desired outcomes of the programme. 28% enroll just to get out of the house and do something and only
Q7. Retention	20% of taura remain to achieve goals (including careers), 20% education/qualification and 20% identified fun/enjoyment.
Q8. Challenges and barriers	74% of taura identified one or more challenges and barriers to achievement. Approximately one quarter of taura indicated low reading, low writing or low numeracy ability.
Q9. Challenges/Barriers	YGFF participants experience a range of academic, psychological, socio-economic and life choices barriers and challenges to achievement.

Q10. Services	75% of respondents were engaged with police, corrections, welfare or youth services in the last 12 months. A third of students have been involved with WINZ in the last 12 months.
Q11. Learning environment	Respondents overwhelmingly rate the programme positively in relation to academic learning and work skills.
Q12. Outcomes	Students care about gaining qualifications and a job, but they also care about their classmates achieving.
Q13. Pathways	Over half the respondents do not have an academic or vocational pathway plan.

Chapter Five - Discussion of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

Introduction

The motivation for this study stemmed from my own experience as a manager of YGFF programmes in a Wānanga. In recent years, discrepancies became apparent between the Youth Guarantee objectives and the Wānanga YGFF programme outcomes including retention, course completion, qualification achievement and progression. This study has provided an insight into the short history of targeted youth education and training programmes in New Zealand and the values and attitudes which influenced the formation of the Youth Guarantee Policy. This study has illustrated the challenges educators face in an era of equitable qualification attainment and the complexity of YGFF students' backgrounds and lives.

The following chapter focuses on four areas. Firstly, it discusses the significant findings of the research topic. The discussion integrates the literature from chapter 2 with the thematic findings under engagement and the outcomes of interest; Factors that influence engagement, Factors that affect retention, Factors that affect course completion and qualification achievement and Factors that affect progression. Second, conclusions are drawn under the headings of engagement, retention, achievement, progression and overall. The chapter then describes the limitations of the study and the recommendations for policy-makers and the Wānanga, before concluding with further recommendations for future study and a summary.

Factors that affect engagement

YGFF programmes nationally and at the Wānanga have demonstrated the ability to engage youth in education (Earle, 2018). The programmes were established to engage secondary school students who were exiting school without minimum qualifications and to this end they have been successful. YGFF programmes in 2016 enrolled approximately 13,500 students, which is a thirteen-fold increase since the programmes

started in 2010 (MOE, 2017). The questionnaire found that referrals by influential adults were the most common way students enrolled in YGFF programmes. Reid et al. (2016) also found that influential adults play a significant role in how youth make pathway choices too:

it is clear that support and relationships played an important role in young people's experiences and pathways...Whanau and friends influence participants' pathways from school, acting as role models and sources of motivation and providing knowledge, advice, support and access to opportunities. (p.87)

Earle (2018) also credited YGFF programmes with engaging young people who may otherwise have been NEET. Although there is no specific data available on the exact number of NEETs that enter YGFF programmes, the national rate of young people who were NEET has fallen in the last decade (www.stats.govt.nz/news/rates-of-young-men-and-women-not-earning-or-learning-converge) and this in-some-part can be attributed to the YGFF. The assumption is that an unknown percentage of YGFF students were not engaged in education or work prior to entering the programme. The findings from the Wānanga questionnaire supported this assumption with almost one third of respondents (28%) indicating that they enrolled on the programme to 'get out of the house and do something' (which likely indicated that they were NEET prior to enrolment).

The questionnaire indicated that students enroll for four main reasons (1) To gain qualifications (2) To further work opportunities (3) Personal interest in a subject area (4) To get out of the house and do something. The most frequent reason for enrolling was to gain qualifications (along with getting out of the house and doing something). This finding supported the work of Gordon et al. (2014) who concluded that YGFF students have a clear understanding about the need to gain NCEA. Along with gaining qualifications, respondents also identified the need to further work opportunities as their main reason for enrolling and this is concurrent with Reid et al. (2016) who found that young people care about their future and work opportunities.

Factors that affect retention

Many students provided similar responses for remaining enrolled in YGFF programmes as they did for enrolling in the programme. 20% stated 'to gain qualifications', which was again the most frequent response. Students also added the achievement of goals, the influence of peers, the learning environment, personal development and enjoyment as reasons for remaining enrolled.

For 8% of students the environment is a significant contributing factor to their retention and for another 10% it is the relationships they have with friends and staff. Reid et al. (2016) found that "qualifications are important to young people.... but the pastoral care that they receive from their Youth Guarantee providers is equally as important and is essential to their development" (p.iv). Many YGFF students have had negative schooling experiences which led to their disengagement from school (Reid., 2016) so feeling comfortable and safe is an integral element of their maintained retention in programmes. Some students also feel more comfortable in a tikanga Māori environment (Gordon et al., 2014). An unexpected finding from the questionnaire was the 13% of students that indicated they enrolled to 'get out of the house and do something'. It is unclear whether this is a strong enough reason for these students to remain engaged in the programme for the full duration and may be a contributing factor to the high withdrawal rates.

Factors that affect course completion and qualification achievement

The questionnaire found that YGFF students experience a range of academic, psychological, socio-economic and life choices challenges and barriers to achievement. 80% of students indicated at least one challenge or barrier to achievement, approximately half of all respondents indicated a low literacy or numeracy level, many students experience psychological and socio-economic challenges to achievement and some engage in harmful behaviours. Over 75% of respondents were engaged with police, corrections, welfare or youth services in the last 12 months. One third of students have also only lived at their current house for less than a year which is possibly an indicator of an unsettled home environment or transience.

These findings concur with the findings of Gordon et al. (2014) who concluded that YGFF students “bring a range of difficulties and problems with them including extreme disadvantage in the areas of health, education, and employment (p.14). Because of this YGFF students have significant unmet needs and this creates real challenges and barriers to achievement for students and providers. The expectation made by policy-makers is that providers can overcome these challenges and barriers by providing free access to study and funded pastoral support. Sadly, the reality that only half of all YGFF starters complete the programme suggests that for many students the challenges and barriers to achievement ultimately are not overcome. Gordon et al. (2014) summarises the scenario YGFF providers face in regard to student achievement:

YGFF courses are being accessed by NEETs, many of whom combine low school qualifications plus additional areas of significant need. ...Many are highly transient and need expert help with a range of problems, Arguably, YGFF is not targeted at these students but at the group above the ‘bottom 15 percent’ identified by PISA....The level of disadvantage and diversity of needs represented within this category of young people is pitted against a performance framework that shifts a portion of funding from low performing provision to higher performing provision. (p.18)

Students overwhelmingly rated the programme positively in relation to academic learning and work skills learning, but these responses seem to contradict the low rates of programme retention and achievement. The natural assumption is that if students rate the learning experience highly, they would be motivated to stay on the programme. There is a chance that students felt a need to rate the programmes highly because they didn’t want to get their Kaiako in trouble. However, Gordon et al. (2014) considered this also and when they questioned students in one-on-one interviews and asked YGFF students to provide a more realistic programme evaluation, they still verbalised overwhelmingly positive experiences. These findings may too support the notion that it is the individual challenges and barriers that ultimately causes withdrawal and not students learning experiences.

Gordon et al. (2014) suggests another explanation for YGFF low achievement rates is that the YGFF programmes were never meant to engage the bottom 15% (as determined by the Programme For International Student Assessment) of students who through disability, social and economic disadvantage are not expected to gain minimum qualifications – but the programmes invariably have. The pressure placed on TEOs to meet enrolment numbers and the decline in the funding of Level 1 programmes have contributed to the likelihood of young people being involved in YGFF programmes who are not capable of achieving. The questionnaire supported this with almost one quarter of students claiming low literacy and one quarter claiming low numeracy. Ultimately, this is something that should be assessed during programme enrolment and alternative options explored.

The questionnaire also found that 12% of students care about the whole class achieving which indicates a notion of group responsibility to achievement. This interesting concept supports the values of whanaungatanga (relationships) and kotahitanga (unity) which underpin the kaupapa of the Wānanga.

Factors that affect progression

Policy-makers assumed that the attainment of an NCEA Level 2 qualification would act as a springboard to employment or higher study and this has been found to be untrue (Gordon et al., 2014) because YGFF participants are no more likely to progress to Level 4 and above tertiary education, or to gain full employment (Earle, 2018).

TEOs are also not funded to track and place graduates into work, so it simply does not happen. Reid et al. (2018) found that from thirty YGFF providers only one had a formal process for tracking progression. The non-existence of progression tracking by TEOs is incongruent to the intentions of the policy and underlines the importance of policy design in ensuring its efficiency. A reason why tracking and placement was omitted from the policy may be that it was included in the prior TYETP (Youth Training) and TEOs reported it to be problematic and unfair (Mahoney, 2010). In Europe (where the Youth Guarantee model originated) the Youth Guarantee Policy states that all young people get a good-quality, concrete offer within four months of leaving formal education

or becoming unemployed (OECD, 2015) – the New Zealand Youth Guarantee Policy omitted this ‘guarantee’ during the policy formation.

Conclusions

Engagement and Retention

A conclusion of this study is that two thirds of Wānanga YGFF students enrolled on the programme for a reason that did not directly align with the objectives of the programme. This misalignment likely contributes to the high withdrawals from the programme because students are not genuinely invested in the outcomes of the programme. This study also concluded that almost three quarters of students enrolled due to an influential adult. Peer relationships, pastoral relationships and the learning environment are also all factors students care about when considering whether to remain in the programme or not.

Achievement

Targeted programmes like the YGFF need the flexibility to adapt achievement to suit individual students. Young people who enrol in these programmes experience complex social, economic and learning challenges which create challenges for learners and tutors and for some the standardised achievement expectations are unrealistic.

Progression

YGFF programmes do not increase the likelihood of progression into higher levels of study or work because of two policy-level failings. First, a causality problem has occurred during the formation of the policy when policy-makers assumed that the attainment of NCEA Level 2 would improve progression rates into higher levels of study and this has not happened. Second, because no ‘guarantee’ was included in the Policy no funding has been attached to the tracking of YGFF students post-programme completion and the placement of student into jobs, therefore TEOs simply do not do it.

A significant area of development for the Wānanga programmes is pathway planning. More than half of the YGGF students could not describe a work or education pathway and this lack of vision may be another factor contributing to low retention.

Overall

The mixed national outcomes of the YGFF confirm that the discrepancies which were occurring at the Wānanga were typical of YGFF programmes. Although students rate the learning in the programmes very highly, this does not translate to high achievement retention or progression.

A number of strong correlations between the findings of the student questionnaire and the two large YGFF studies have provided good validity to the findings of this research. Both research methods found that YGFF programme's engage youth NEETs who bring a range of complex challenges into the programme. Both methods also found that students access many different organisations for support and progression pathways for YGFF students is varied and can range from a vague idea to a specific job role. Students overwhelmingly rated the programme's highly in the questionnaire and the research reports.

Recommendations

This applied research study was always undertaken to inform better practices for the Wānanga. The recommendations have been made for two groups: Policy-makers and the Wānanga.

The recommendations for Policy-makers are:

- Targeted youth programme funding requires the ability to adjust what achievement looks like to match the ability and challenges of some individual students.

- Targeted youth funding policies must account for the tracking and placement of students in higher education and employment.

The recommendations for Wānanga are:

- Enrolment processes need to ensure alignment between the student and the programme.
- TEOs need to acknowledge and support the role of peers, the pastoral care staff and the environment play a critical part in the retention of students
- More research needs to be done to understand the challenges young people experience and what can be done to support them.
- Student pathways need to be explored and clarified further.
- Processes to track student progression post programme completion and place YGFF graduates directly into work need to be developed and implemented.

Limitations

In order to meet the requirements of a 60-credit dissertation I did not have the time or capacity to also conduct interviews with the YGFF Kaiako (Tutors). However, an unexpected limitation developed while the research was in progress. There was a sudden and major reduction in the student population of the Wānanga (reduced from 192 to 90). Therefore, I needed to survey students not only on one campus but also at two other campus locations.

Future Research

The study has shown that there is potential for future research to be conducted with the Kaiako (Tutors) to gauge a different perspective on the factors affecting student learning outcomes and the intent of the rhetoric in policy documents.

There is potential for an investigation into the infrastructure and funding that is required for successful progression of students into higher levels of study, training or employment. This could be achieved by a nationwide survey across the 110 Youth Guarantee providers in New Zealand.

Summary

This study was undertaken because discrepancies were occurring between the objectives of the YGFF and the YGFF programme outcomes at the Wānanga where I previously worked. The purpose of this study was to examine the Wānanga YGFF outcomes by analysing the broader Youth Guarantee Policy context and the perceptions of Wānanga YGFF students to develop a deeper understanding of what was occurring and make recommendations for improvement.

The documentary analysis uncovered a 30-year history of mixed outcomes associated with TYETPs (such as the YGFF). Logical incrementalism policy approaches throughout the decades have made small positive progress but ultimately often struggle to overcome the complex individual social, economic and learning problems students experience. As well as this, social changes have altered the ways young people enter the workforce and the expectations placed on all young people to achieve minimum qualifications.

Nationally, the programmes successfully engage young people in education and support some to attain NCEA qualifications but approximately half did not complete the programme. There is a concerning report that participation may actually increase the likelihood of being classified as NEET or becoming a beneficiary. A causality problem

during the policy formation assumed that minimum qualification attainment would improve progression into higher levels of study or work and this has not happened.

This study has concluded that the discrepancies that were occurring at the Wānanga are very similar to the national outcomes. The findings from the student questionnaire and the analysis of government documents had strong correlations with the two largest YGFF research studies (Gordon et al., 2014; Reid et al., 2016) providing validity to this study.

The long history of mixed outcomes for youth in targeted programmes suggests that solutions are not straightforward. However, this study has identified some policy issues that can be resolved and specific areas the Wānanga can review to improve student outcomes.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: YOUTH GUARANTEE TAUIRA QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTIONS: To complete this questionnaire about your current Youth Guarantee programme please follow all the instructions in blue italics.

SECTION 1: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. **Are you male or female? *(Circle one)***
Male
Female

2. **How old are you? *(Circle one)***
15
16
17
18
19

3. **What ethnic group(s) do you identify with? *(You may circle more than one)***
Māori
European
Polynesian
Asian
Other *(please list)* _____

4. **How long have you lived at your current address? *(Circle one)***
Less than 6 months
6 month – 1 year
1 – 3 years
3 years or more

SECTION 2: ENROLMENT

5. How did you find out about the Youth Guarantee programme? *(Circle one)*

A friend

A family member

A youth worker

Te Wānanga o Aotearoa staff

Digital advertising (E.g. Facebook)

Other advertising (E.g. Back of bus, newspaper)

At an event

Other.

6. Why did you enroll on the Youth Guarantee programme? *(Answer in box below)*

7. Why do you stay enrolled on the Youth Guarantee programme? *(Answer in box below)*

SECTION 3: BARRIERS

8. What challenges and/or barriers to achieving on the Youth Guarantee programme are you currently facing? *(You may circle more than one)*

None	Low reading level	Low writing level	Low math level
Learning disability	Mental health issues	Low self-esteem	Low confidence
Peer pressure	Behaviour issues	No role models	No support
Crime	Gang involvement	Drug use	Alcohol
Problems at home	Relationship problems	Family problems	Friend problems
Lack of money	Lack of food	Lack of support	Caring for a baby/ child
Self-harm	Sexual identity issues	Negative thoughts	Suicidal thoughts

9. Have you been involved with any of the following services in the past 12 months? *(You may circle more than one)*

Oranga Tamariki	Police	WINZ	Youth Services
TWoA Student Services	Community Groups	Church	Youth Justice

SECTION 4: OUTCOMES

10. How would you rate the academic learning in your current programme?
(Circle one, 1 is the lowest, 6 is the highest)

1 2 3 4 5 6

11. How would you rate the work skills learning in your current programme?
(Circle one, 1 is the lowest, 6 is the highest)

1 2 3 4 5 6

12. In your opinion what is a successful programme outcome?

13. Do you have an academic (learning) or vocational (job) path already planned when you programme finishes?
Yes No *(Please circle one)*

14. If yes, what is it *(Answer in box below)*

APPENDIX 2 INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

Title of Thesis: Youth Guarantee students' perceptions on enrolment, barriers and programme outcomes

My name is Tommy Colmore-King. I am currently enrolled in the Master of Educational Leadership and Management degree in the Department of Education at Unitec Institute of Technology. I am seeking your help in meeting the requirements of research for a Thesis course that forms a substantial part of this degree.

The aims of my project are to:

1. Identify the purpose and expected outcomes of the Youth Guarantee Fees-free Programme in a specific wānanga.
2. Identify why taura enrol on Youth Guarantee Fees-free Programmes, and what factors contribute to sustaining enrolment.
3. Identify the barriers taura experience to achieving programme outcomes.
4. Investigate student perceptions of successful academic and vocational outcomes.

I request your participation by completing a questionnaire if you are between the ages of 16-19 and currently enrolled on a Youth Guarantee programme at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa in Auckland. The questionnaire is designed to collect data on your thoughts about the Youth Guarantee programmes.

Please read and consider the following information below before deciding to participate in the research or not.

- Participation is voluntary meaning it is up to you if you complete the questionnaire or not.
- The questionnaire has no bearing on your current programme of study or results.
- Your participation is anonymous meaning you and your responses will not be identifiable. You should not write your name or any section of the questionnaire.
- If you complete the questionnaire, it is assumed you have consented to participating in the research.
- If you would like to withdrawal from the research please do so prior to the questionnaire being collected by the facilitator.
- If there are any questions that make you feel uncomfortable, you have the option to not answer a particular question.

I will provide a summary of findings for you to check before data analysis is undertaken.

I do hope that you will agree to take part and that you will find this participation of interest. If you have any queries about the project, you may contact my supervisor at Unitec Institute of Technology.

My supervisor is Dr Josephine Howse and may be contacted by email or phone.

Phone: (09) 815 4321 Email Josephine.howse@unitec.ac.nz

Yours sincerely

Tommy Colmore-King

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER:

This study has been approved by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee from 28 May 2018 – 28 May 2019. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph.: 09 815-4321 ext. 6162). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.



DISSERTATIONS

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Full title of the dissertation: *An Analysis of Joint Guarantee Fees-free Programme Outcomes in a New Zealand Wānanga*
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