TEACHING IN TENSION

Teacher-mothers, work-life alignment, and a falsely feminised profession

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Abstract

Teaching is widely seen to be a feminised profession. The beliefs that women dominate all aspects of teaching, are better suited to the requirements of the role, and will have careers that fit neatly into their familial obligations are intrinsically nestled into societal ideals. Over the past several decades, multiple studies have detailed the tensions of being a working mother. While this phenomenon has gained broad recognition, the tensions of being a teacher-mother are less studied and less understood by society.

This thesis examines teacher-mothers' realities, revealing the interplay between women's agency and the societal and professional structures that influence their ability to create work-life alignment. Specifically, this study mobilises the interaction of sociology and feminism to theorise teacher-mothers' experiences in their domestic and work spaces and how these were often intertwined. It questions how teacher-mothers negotiate the complex relationships between their own experiences and the perspectives of others. In doing so, it examines the tensions where different ideologies converge, confronting the inherent discord between societal assumptions of the feminisation of teaching and the lived realities of being a teacher-mother.

This study amplifies teacher-mothers' voices in its design, focus and findings. By taking photographs of their daily lives, the women were able to illustrate and articulate their experiences in detail during photo-elicitation interviews. While society and educational agents often view teaching as a family-oriented career choice, there are significant challenges contrary to this belief. This widely held view is detrimental to both individual teacher-mothers and the education sector as a whole. Yet the teacher-mothers in this study were not simply at the mercy of social structures. While they were pulled between opposing ideologies regarding *successful women* and *intensive mothering*, their practices represented an agency that helped them to shape the conditions in which they worked. The role of the school organisation and school leaders were also found to be influential in shaping their experiences. The school acted as a mediator between macro-level determinants and the women's micro-level realities.

Taking account of both structure and agency when studying teacher-mothers' work allows their experiences to be understood while recognising that women can also impact

larger gendered structures. They are simultaneously shaped by and shaping the world around them. With this in mind, it is hoped that the findings and recommendations of this thesis will support women in their transition from teacher to teacher-mother and also support actors in the education system to definitively see the complexities of this time in a critical group of educators' personal and professional lives. This understanding comes with a professional shift towards respecting all teachers as carers both within and outside of their classrooms and, secondly, empowering teachers to build alignment between these socially valued aspects of their lives.

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I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Research Topic

Over the past several decades, multiple studies have detailed the tensions of being a working mother (Hermann & Neale-McFall, 2018; Hermann et al., 2018; Hewlett & Luce, 2006; Hochschild & Machung, 1989; Kahu & Morgan, 2007b; Williams & Segal, 2003). While this phenomenon has gained broad recognition, the tensions of being a teacher-mother are less studied and less understood by society. Given the complexity of the work of teachers, further study of the dual role of teacher-mother is necessary to examine their experiences (Shulman, 1987). Previous research has mainly focused on the mutual advantages of being a teacher and a mother. Findings have included teacher-mothers having more time to be with their children, having a deeper understanding of children's development, having more credibility with their students' parents, and finding a sense of purpose in carrying out meaningful work (Claesson & Brice, 1989; Michaelian, 2005). Yet challenges for teacher-mothers have also been identified, including exhaustion from constant caregiving expectations, guilt about not fulfilling the perceived demands of either motherhood or work, and pressures associated with undertaking a disproportionate amount of the household physical and cognitive labour (Claesson & Brice, 1989; Michaelian, 2005). While these studies continue to have relevance over time, they do not reflect the current societal or work norms, which consider the concept of extreme parenting norms and increased expectations of the teaching profession (Hermann et al., 2023).

A growing body of recent research illustrates the significant tensions that arise when women return to teaching with young children (Hermann et al., 2023; Homer, 2011; Knowles et al., 2009; Michaelian, 2005). This work, however, is not positioned in the Aotearoa New Zealand locale with its specific contextual attributes. With ongoing teacher shortages in Aotearoa New Zealand secondary schools, understanding the dual role of teacher-mothers and sustaining current teaching staffing is of great importance to the field of education.

Aotearoa New Zealand statistics indicate that a significant group of teachers potentially face this dual role daily. Flynn and Harris's (2015) study of working mothers in Aotearoa New Zealand indicated that the maternal age range commonly used in

motherhood studies is between 25-49 years. Significantly, in 2020, 40% of the secondary teaching workforce in Aotearoa New Zealand were women between 25-44 (Teacher numbers, 2022). Despite the demographic statistics of Aotearoa New Zealand teachers being skewed towards the maternal age range, there is a distinct lack of research regarding strategies and conditions that make the dual roles workable for teacher-mothers. This study aims to provide schools, management, and teachers with new insights into approaches that support teacher-mothers to sustain their careers.

The predominance of females in the education sector is not a new phenomenon. Most secondary school teachers are female, with the proportion currently sitting at the highest ratio since data began to be recorded (The World Bank, 2021). Teaching is often regarded as an egalitarian career choice where men and women have equal career opportunities, and women allegedly benefit from a "matriarchal dividend" (Moreau, 2020). Wider society, media, and other educational players often perpetuate this view, expressing that more women than men are teachers because of better career opportunities (Moreau, 2019). Common justifications include increased opportunities for women compared to other professions, the advantage of possessing 'feminine' skills of caring and building relationships, and the 'family friendly' view that teaching fits well with domestic responsibilities such as childcare and domestic labour that are historically the mother's responsibility (Moreau, 2020). However, "the spatio-temporal regimes of schools are not always propice with work-life balance" (Brown, 2019, p. 171). While society and educational agents often view teaching as a family-oriented career choice, there are significant challenges contrary to this belief. Despite being widely accepted, it is detrimental to both individual teacher-mothers and the education sector as a whole. This study aims to reveal these complexities while suggesting approaches that may be used both by teacher-mothers and leaders in navigating the dual roles successfully.

Research Questions

In this research, I examined the lived experiences of teacher-mothers of young children in Aotearoa New Zealand. By doing so, I endeavoured to answer the following research questions:

1. How do Aotearoa New Zealand secondary school teachers who are also mothers of young children experience the dual roles of teacher-mother?
2. How do New Zealand secondary school teachers who are also mothers of young children attempt to create work-life alignment?

Research Purpose

Alvesson and Sandberg (2013) argued that "interesting" and "influential" research and research questions stem from challenging assumptions, agendas, and theories (p. 45). They contended that the problematisation of issues leads to the development of new ideas. All research should aim to create change on some level, whether it be the personal development of the researcher, the formulation of deeper understandings, or the establishment of change on a more significant level (Clough & Nutbrown, 2012). This study amplifies teacher-mothers' voices, illuminating their unique lived realities of being a teacher-mother and how this aligns with societal assumptions about the dual role. I aimed to make visible the experiences of women in similar circumstances in the hope that sharing stories and commonalities would support – support women in their transition from teacher to teacher-mother and support actors in the education system to concretely see the complexities of this time in a critical group of educators' personal and professional lives.

Importance of Reflexivity

My own transition into teacher-motherhood compelled me to embark upon this research. In blips of time between children's naps, school pickups, and supermarket trips, my work shared real estate at the dining table with water bottles and building blocks. My aim was so connected to my own experience that when I described my research to others, I was often met with jovial and somewhat sarcastic quips about the origins of my interests.

All researchers, including myself, are members of the social world they are investigating, and their worldview is critical in the research design process (Chiseri-Strater, 1996; Clough & Nutbrown, 2012; Foote & Bartell, 2011; Holmes, 2020). As Clough and Nutbrown (2012) described, the clearer I was about my research purpose, the better I could highlight my motivational factors and express those to my audience. These unique personal influences contribute to my positionality. The complexity of a researcher's lived experience influences all parts of the research process; it is diffused with their perspective and is rooted

in their circumstances and vantage point that helped define the problem (Burton & Bartlett, 2005).

My positionality impacted the research process, from research design to analysis (Holmes, 2020; Rowe, 2014). With the significance of positionality in the research process, it was paramount that I could identify my own - a demanding task requiring continual reflection throughout the investigation period (Rowe, 2014). It was through reflexivity that I continually examined my positions and views and how they may have influenced any part of the study (Foote & Bartell, 2011). In this way, my reflexivity apprised my positionality; I had to recognise and reveal myself in the research to understand my impact on it (Holmes, 2020).

This was a unique challenge in constructing the final work, where I sought to draw trustworthy conclusions while explaining the interplay between my identity, design, and outcomes. While all research is deeply influenced by positionality, not all disciplines are as forthcoming with these impacts. In the social sciences, where this study finds a home, there is an expectation that researchers explicitly disclose their positionality to the reader (Chiseri-Strater, 1996; Holmes, 2020). As I was part of the reality I was examining, readers must understand how this has affected the process.

While I will discuss the impacts of my ontology, epistemology, and worldview in Chapter Three, Denzin and Lincoln (2011) assert that the researcher's biography underpins the research process. Acknowledging that my research is inextricably rooted in my own experiences allows readers to make informed judgments about the validity of the accounts presented (Schwandt, 2001).

Locating Myself in the Research

Growing up in the 1980s, my family would not have stood out significantly from those of my peers. We were a family of four: two children, one boy, one girl. In a small northeastern town in the United States, ours was a tidy house on a quiet cul-de-sac with clipped lawns and a basketball hoop, where bikes could be ridden and hopscotch played on the footpath. And yet, despite the seeming normalcy of white, middle-class life surrounding me, I was keenly aware that my life was somewhat different.

My parents both worked. They had to. They married when my mother was relatively young after my father returned from the Vietnam War. Upon his return, he took evening classes, afforded free university study as compensation for his service. He had never been academically skilled but had always been able to tinker. Growing up as the youngest child of eight with a widowed working mother who earned little, things needed to be repaired, not replaced, and he had been called on to do so. He focused his study on becoming a technology teacher as he knew this suited his strengths and would afford him job security. He graduated, became a teacher (like four of his older siblings), and took a job at the local high school while teaching community night classes for extra income.

My mother, like her mother, was a nurse at the local hospital. She grew up when having a working mother was a rarity. Children on her street ran from house to house, becoming more like cousins than neighbours while their mothers met for coffee each morning. My grandmother, however, had worked hard for her university degree. During her courtship, she had stipulated that she would continue working once her motherhood journey began, clarifying to my grandfather that she "*would always work. Always*". With five young children, she negotiated hours to work while my grandfather was at home, hiring a local teenager to care for her brood in the hours that failed to accommodate the overlap.

When my own parents were first married, my mother was fresh from high school with aspirations, not without merit, of becoming a doctor. After marrying, she changed course and decided to enrol in nursing school as she felt the doctoral study commitment and long hours would impede her ability to have the family life she desired. A few years into her career, she gave birth to me. She returned to work after six weeks. It was what was expected (and mandated), and they needed the money. My mother negotiated working night shifts so she could be home during the day, and my father was home while she was away. They did this for years. Seeing each other briefly each day and sometimes on weekends. They made it work, but their efforts were not without significant sacrifice.

Throughout my childhood, my mother took different roles at the hospital to best suit our family. She appreciated the mental stimulation of a new challenge and still does. I have distinct memories of my mother studying for and earning extra qualifications as if they were a collection. Her textbooks and notepads came with us on family outings and holidays,

where she would sneak in a few moments of study when she could. My mother continued to find the space to develop her career, impacting only in faint whispers on our family life.

These experiences in my formative developmental years have always been part of my identity. I knew the unconventional rhythm of my parents' work was unique, and yet, to me, it was what we did. As I grew older, I appreciated my childhood experiences. My parents had been feminists, as had my maternal grandmother, and this was engrained in my essence from an early age. It wasn't until I became a mother that I realised the complicated strength and personal agency they enacted so doggedly.

I came to Aotearoa New Zealand with a teaching degree in biology, an unintended conglomeration of my parents' careers. What began as a one-year stint grew into two and then into fifteen. I had found career challenge and satisfaction. And a life partner whom I now share three young children with. Looking back on this time, I can see my career as a secondary school teacher being divided into two periods: before motherhood and after motherhood. These two career phases were distinct in many ways.

Before motherhood, my identity and time were most heavily committed to my career. I was dedicated to my students, my practice, and my professional development and progression. I distinctly remember nearing my first period of parental leave and feeling a bit lost; what would my life be like without being in the comfort of the school environment to which I was so connected?

After the birth of my first child, I sought advice from colleagues about my return to school. I heard stories from women I had worked with for a decade, stories that had never been alluded to before. Most of these stories were open and honest while also profoundly personal. They all centred around the realignment of teaching and home life now that children were involved. It struck me that these stories happened in real-time while I was working closely with these mothers, yet most had never directly mentioned these tensions, while others vaguely referenced them in passing.

Through these stories, I started to see such different ways of being a woman who is both a secondary school teacher and a mother. I began to explore what felt right to me and for my family. Like my mother and grandmother, my identity was so deeply connected to my career; the idea of leaving it never crossed my mind. Throughout the next six years, my

school involvement fluctuated. I took parental leave for varying lengths of time with each of my children, returning in different capacities to different roles, sometimes full-time, sometimes part. The fluidity was incessant, pushing and pulling me while I navigated the rolling waves as best I could. I was both confined and freed by systems and my agency while testing ways to make it work. It was and continues to be, challenging. Without the stories of my female colleagues and my maternal predecessors, I am unsure if I could have arrived at the same place.

I began to wonder why the stories seemed so secret. In general, I felt that educators were open to sharing so much about their practice, their teaching challenges, and their teaching successes with each other. And yet when it comes to this immensely significant period in many women's teaching careers, openness and support don't seem to come as naturally. In my own experience, I was left thinking there must be ways in which this period of change in a mother's teaching career can be supported - what these are and how women negotiate the work-life alignment as teacher-mothers is the focus of the study.

Theoretical Framework

The last half century has seen significant changes to women's participation in society in the developed world, and this is reflected in modern social science theorising (Crompton, 1999). Women's levels of education and involvement in the labour force, combined with the rise of feminism, have removed most barriers to their social involvement (Crompton, 1999). While these notions are examined closely in Chapter Two, the theoretical framework that supports these ideas is introduced here. Specifically, this study employs the interaction between sociology and feminism to develop explanations for the experiences of women in their domestic and work spaces. While little detail is justified here, this framework alludes to key theories to build understanding. The examination of multiple approaches' (in)appropriateness suggests a theoretical pluralism is warranted (Crompton, 1999; Le Feuvre, 2010; Moreau, 2019).

The foundations of sociology were essentially gender-free. The understandings put forth by Marx (1952), Durkheim (1933), and Weber (1947), the architects of early sociological theorising, offered important conceptualisations of the social world. However, each of their social theories paid little, if any, attention to the inclusion of women and

gender relations in explaining the social. Durkheim (1933) justified this by pointing to women's smaller cranial capacity, while the work of Weber (1947), despite his support of women's rights, presumed a gendered division of labour. Marx (1952) did discuss women's roles in paid employment but, at the same time, neglected to account for issues of gender or women's rights in his theoretical work (Federici, 2017). According to the theories of these pivotal theoretical founders, women were not players in the larger society, and therefore their omittance in social theory was warranted (Crompton, 1999).

Amidst the rapid expansion in sociology during the 1960s, these assumptions began to be challenged. Previously women's domestic and men's breadwinner stations had been taken for granted, leading to a view that they were natural realities (Crompton, 1999). The rise of second-wave feminism during this time saw these assumptions questioned. Gendered positionings were seen to be socially created. The division of labour was not a result of biology but rather a result of the patriarchy (Crompton, 1999).

While this shift progressed women's inclusion and standing in social theory, several criticisms must be addressed. A patriarchal view assumes that relationships between men and women are innately hierarchical and form the basis of a system of gendered structures where men can dominate and exploit women. It also generalises the experiences of all women to those of white, middle-class women without acknowledging ethnic, class, geographic, or temporal differences. Additionally, patriarchy cannot encapsulate what Cockburn (1991) argued as the sameness *and* differences between men and women. The biological differences and gendered social-emotional differences are likely to be reflected in occupational structures (Crompton, 1999). A patriarchal outlook is unable to acknowledge this duality. Finally, second-wave feminist theory risks implying that women are inferior as they need special treatment to overcome patriarchal impacts (Banks, 1981).

The rise of post-structural theory in the 1990s further impacted feminist thinking. It both rejected the early humanistic assumptions regarding gender presented in early social theory while also downplaying the role of gendered structures, including patriarchy. Instead, the post-structuralist approach saw gender as performative (Butler, 1988; Crompton, 1999). As Crompton (1999) suggested, "a view of the constructed subject is constantly in process, never unitary, never complete"(p. 5). While post-structuralism allows for personal agency to

be used in understanding gendered experiences, it neglects to account for the gendered structures that women, and men, enact their agency within.

Rather than attempting to choose between frameworks that seemingly fail to account for the complexity of women's experiences, a pluralistic approach is best used to acknowledge both gendered subjects and structures. Gendered structures must be recognised – they give context to lived experiences and their impact on women. Gendered subjects, with their own agency, must be equally appreciated – each woman is different and will interpret and respond to gendered structures differently. Marshall (1994) stated that "the two poles of the debate need to be grasped simultaneously, the content of gender is infinitely variable and in flux, yet the salience of gender categories is persistent" (p.115). Rather than seeing structure versus agency, recognising the importance of both allows for different explanatory frameworks to be used when analysing various aspects of complex gendered experiences (Crompton & Harris, 1999).

This research on teacher-mothers' experiences further breaks down this analytical pluralism into different social structures. At the macro-social level, the national policies, histories, and cultures of women in domestic and paid-work realms in Aotearoa New Zealand are explored. The profession-specific factors sit within meso-social structures. Women's agency and biographies are taken into account at the micro-social level. These factors interact and "form a terrain [for] facilitating or hindering the emergence of particular scripts, themselves negotiated and resisted by individuals" (Moreau, 2019, p. 87). By appreciating the macro-, meso-, and micro-social factors that weave together to form a teacher-mother's experience, the structures and women's individualistic interpretations and responses can be better understood. This importance of taking both structure and agency into account when studying the work of teacher-mothers was explained by Acker (1995) who stated "erring in one direction leaves teachers as interchangeable cardboard figures, buffeted about by forces … beyond their knowledge or control; in the other, teachers suffer or prosper according to their skills in life planning" (p. 116). The adoption of a pluralistic theoretical framework, therefore, allows for teacher-mothers' experiences to be understood while also recognising that women and men can impact upon larger gendered structures and the structures that can affect them.

Thesis Structure

These theoretical underpinnings were used consistently throughout this research project. The equal inclusion of gendered structures (both at the macro-social and meso-social levels) and personal agency (micro-social) when examining teacher-mothers' experiences have been used in the structuring of the literature review in Chapter Two. It also provided a foundation for data collection and analysis, which will be discussed in Chapters Three and Four. In Chapter 5, I extend the analysis of the findings by discussing how the professional and national structures shaped the experiences of the teacher-mothers. Implications for practice and further research are concluded in Chapter 6.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Examining teacher-mothers' experiences in Aotearoa New Zealand must first look at the context in which they reside. The interplay that women experience in the domestic and educational fields is not a new phenomenon. By looking to the past, it is possible to see the complexities that women have endured through their participation in both spheres. It chronicles a steady sentiment that teaching is, and should be, feminised. Upon deeper analysis, this notion needs revision. These conceptions must be inspected to call attention to "the obvious and subtle ways in which cultural beliefs about women and men influence the nature of teachers' work and the perceptions others hold of it" (Acker, 1995, p. 114).

Gendered inequalities for teacher-mothers are not essentialist social fates. Instead, they are made through the complex interaction between gendered structures and agency. To understand the personal experiences of teacher-mothers in Aotearoa New Zealand, national and professional structures which impact their abilities to carry out both roles must be recognised. However, as Collins and Wickham (2004) stated, "just because a political, social, moral system promotes a particular role for women does not mean that women necessarily conform to that role" (p. 43). Teacher-mothers' agency in finding work-life alignment is of equal importance.

The following chapter sets the contextual scene by examining the falsity of feminisation in Aotearoa New Zealand. The national context within which teacher-mothers work is then outlined by examining both the history of the dual roles and current societal structures. This is followed by an exploration of the professional structures that influence the experience of teacher-mothers. Finally, literature regarding women's navigation of these structures to achieve work-life alignment is explored.

Teaching as a Feminised Profession

The teaching profession is frequently described as feminised (Drudy, 2008; Moreau, 2019; Skelton, 2002; Smith, 1999; Warin & Gannerud, 2014). From the achievement of boys to the makeup of school boards, the feminisation of teaching is often intertwined with contentious conversation. Allegations that the teaching profession has become feminised are regularly made, yet the term itself is often left undefined (Skelton, 2002). Smith (1999) explained "it is possible to interpret the label of teaching as 'feminised' at several levels, and

it seems that those who refer to teaching as feminised assume different meanings" (p. 3). Broadly, most feminisation descriptions consider the numerical domination of women in a profession (Bank, 2007). Sociologists and educators extend this label to include trends of increasing numbers of women in a particular workforce (Drudy et al., 2005). While the statistical affiliation of the term in the teaching profession is widely accepted (Bank, 2007; Coffey & Delamont, 2002; Drudy et al., 2005; Griffiths, 2006; Kelleher et al., 2011; Moreau, 2019; Skelton, 2002; Wylie, 2000), the effects of this gender imbalance are also described as feminised often without being afforded the same consensus of meaning. Griffiths (2006) explained that feminisation can either refer to the statistical number of women in the teaching sphere or the culture associated with this dominance. Others (Coffey & Delamont, 2002; Kelleher et al., 2011; Skelton, 2002) enveloped both aspects into one more extensive definition, thus recognising sociological implications and key issues accompanying the trends. Moreau (2019, 2020) offered a synthesis of the disparate conceptions by suggesting a framework that includes teaching as 'feminised', 'feminine', and 'female-friendly'.

Teaching is 'Feminised'

The discourse surrounding teaching being a *feminised* profession centres around the statistical prevalence of women teachers. As previously noted, women exceed men in their participation in the teaching profession in most developed countries around the world (Drudy et al., 2005; Kelleher et al., 2011). The OECD uses a percentage bracket to identify any workforce as highly feminised when levels of women's involvement surpass 70% (Kelleher et al., 2011). Aotearoa New Zealand's teaching workforce meets this classification being 76% female (Education Counts, 2022a). However, by taking this relatively broad view of feminisation, many of the nuances of teacher numbers are missed. The gendered divide within school sectors is a worldwide trend; the percentage of female teachers drops as the education level increases (Moreau, 2019). This trend is reflected in current Aotearoa New Zealand statistics, where the percentage of women teaching in primary schools (85.2%) far outweighs those in the secondary sector (63.6%).

Throughout the world, the feminised assumption is often challenged when the school level, school location, subject area, and employment status of women are examined more closely (Moreau, 2019). In Aotearoa New Zealand, women are comparatively

overrepresented in some areas - holding 83.1% of fixed-term and 87.4% of part-time contracts (Education Counts, 2022a). The number of women in school management also does not reflect the overall female involvement in the profession (Wylie et al., 2020). Field Coffey and Delamont (2002) explained that

> women don't appear to have access to power and policy making within the education system. ...In that sense teaching, while becoming increasingly feminised (in terms of numbers), is not becoming distinctly feminist (in terms of career trajectories, discourse and ethos) (p. 48).

Simply looking at the statistics and asserting that teaching is 'feminised' overlooks how the teaching culture is imbued with power relationships and inequalities.

Another assertion of teaching's feminisation is the notion that women are joining the teaching community in ever-increasing numbers (Prentice, 1977; Theobald, 1990). This perceived historical shift from a male to a female majority is frequently signalled as a worrying trend that needs to be reversed (Smith, 1999); it implies that men have lost some power and status and have been demoted to the level of female teachers (Francis, 2002). Acker (1995) countered this argument by pointing out that, in actuality, women taught in private and domestic environments before teaching became publicly regulated. This historical misconception, which I will return to later, neglects to recognise that the number of women teachers has, and continues to, fluctuate over time in response to societal, political and economic factors (Moreau, 2019).

Teaching is 'Feminine'

The statistical domination of women teachers has been used to explain the value placed on feminine characteristics within the profession (Moreau, 2020). The craft of teaching is frequently thought to require *feminine* skills and being part of a "culture associated with women" (Griffiths, 2006, p. 387). At its core, the term feminisation means feminine, which may help explain this association (Skelton, 2002). Combined with the numerical prevalence of females in the teaching profession, teaching is seen as both requiring feminine skills and, therefore, being highly feminine.

The gendered perception that teaching, particularly of young children, is best suited to women is based on the traditional gender role ideals held by many societies in the

developed world. The role of carer is seen as an inherently female trait that is transferable to teaching children (Drudy et al., 2005). Warin and Gannerud (2014) espoused,

> Historically, care has often been essentialised as 'natural' to women and consequently informs understanding of the professional roles women are best suited to perform…. Women have been seen to be particularly suited to teaching young children through a symbolic representation of the teacher as the loving mother (p. 193).

In this sense, assuming that women are naturally caring and selfless implies that teaching is an extension of their mothering role (Moreau, 2019).

Upon deeper interrogation, assumptions about the femininity of teaching are problematic. Seeing female teachers' identities as simply feminine negates that they are multifaceted. Not all women are or aim to be, mothers. Not all women identify as caring, nor do all women identify with the societal constructs of femininity (Moreau, 2019). Likewise, the supposition that experiences and ideals of motherhood are uniform across all societies is troublesome.

The implications of these misconceptions have a detrimental effect on the profession. The domestic ideology that women are predisposed to nurture, and therefore successfully teach, contributes towards the de-professionalisation of teaching. Connell (2020) succinctly stated, "teachers are workers, teaching is work" (p. 69). While obvious, this signifies that teaching is not just a calling or a natural skill, but a trained profession. By simply associating teaching as a construct of women's caring temperament, the skill of teaching is devalued and misrecognised as a lower form of professional work.

The portrayal of teaching as feminine and its related problems is often perpetuated in media, by policymakers, and within the profession itself (Drudy et al., 2005; Kelleher et al., 2011; Moreau, 2019). Skelton (2002) and Drudy (2008) found that male pre-service teachers believed that primary teaching was better suited to female teachers. More specifically, Skelton (2002) found that student teachers confirmed the correlation: teaching at a secondary level was seen to be more appropriate for men than teaching at a primary level. They justified this assertion by explaining that at higher levels of education, the focus was more academic in nature and less aligned with childcare. Kelleher et al. (2011) extended this finding when explaining that societal focus on re-masculinising teaching

becomes more assertive at the secondary level when care and maternal qualities seemingly become less important and academic rigour takes centre stage.

Teaching is 'Female-Friendly'

Female-friendly describes the myth that combining teaching and caring responsibilities, particularly parenting, is a seamless experience. Because of the cultural associations between women, nurturing affinity, and domestic ideology, teaching as a female-friendly profession is often equated with being a family-friendly profession (Drudy, 2008; Moreau, 2019, 2020). Mothers' innate skills are seen as an advantage in classroom settings (Acker, 1995). Teachers' work is seen to happen within the same hours as when their children are at school (Moreau, 2019). The resulting misconception is that teachers are free to carry out parenting responsibilities outside the timetabled school day. Additionally, teaching careers can be tailored to fit around the family lifecycle; women can take parental leave, work part-time and return to work when their children are older and require less care. The stability of teaching as an occupation and many different job opportunities substantiates these claims by framing teaching as a secure profession for women to enter and consciously reposition themselves within while they have maternal responsibilities (Braun, 2015; Drudy, 2008). These assumptions contribute to the discourse surrounding teaching being family-friendly (Moreau, 2019).

In a study conducted with female pre-service teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand, White's (2008) participants regarded teaching as a career choice that would enable them to successfully carry out the dual roles of teacher and mother. Similar international studies including men and women mirrored these findings (Richardson & Watt, 2006; Riddell et al., 2005). This was furthered by Moreau (2019), who found that men and women join the teaching profession for similar reasons, with similar ambitions and career plans.

The delineation of teaching as female-friendly reinforces the outdated and heteronormative notions that women should be responsible for domestic and childcare labour (Moreau, 2019). It also omits the substantial intensification of teachers' work and the impact of the motherhood penalty (Budig & England, 2001) in contemporary times, which I will attend to when considering the macro- and meso-social structures at play.

Macro-Social Structures for Aotearoa New Zealand Mothers

The feminisation of teaching is a topic of modern times, deeply embedded in societal understandings of education. Upon more profound critique, the falsity of feminisation is made visible, as are the gender inequalities within the profession. Using historical sensibility to examine these inequalities is essential in understanding the present-day context. The following section reviews key literature on the history of female domesticity and teaching in Aotearoa New Zealand, and how they contribute equally to contemporary societal views of teacher-mothers. Additionally, the modern-day macro-social structures that directly impact teacher-mothers' work and home lives are summarised here to give national context to their experiences.

The History of Female Domesticity in Aotearoa New Zealand

The interplay between domesticity and women in the workforce has a long and complex history in Aotearoa New Zealand. It was the first country in the world to give women the right to vote in 1893, and the sentimentality of championing women's rights runs through the societal mindset. However, Gould (1982) questioned this view and argued that Aotearoa New Zealand has "kept its women the most rigidly bound to house and children" of all developed countries (p. 93). This notion is supported by the work of Gilson (1969) who ascertained that Aotearoa New Zealand was a highly domesticated society through much of the 20th century. Today, according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), women in Aotearoa New Zealand are generally afforded high gender equality (33rd in 2019) when compared to the rest of the world (Conceição, 2019). However, public perceptions of women's roles in society have oscillated between domestic worker and wage earners throughout the last 150 years, highlighting the current tensions women experience in the workforce.

Nolan (2000) examined the history of the Aotearoa New Zealand government's role in domesticity and argued that *domesticity*, like feminisation, is polysemic. It can be seen to describe the pattern of women's lives as they move between the family caretaker realm and paid work outside the family home. Conversely, it can be seen as a set of ideologies that legitimise the view that women's place is in the home and that this is a normalised, natural prescription. Domesticity can also be seen to express the perception that women's

domestic work and paid work are divorced, and there is little interplay between them. This definition is often used to justify women being part of a flexible secondary workforce who can come and go in the paid labour sphere as needed (Nolan, 2000). These notions of domesticity are often inextricable, resulting from an assumption that women's identities are closely linked to home and caretaker roles.

The idea and historical examination of domesticity often focus on the government's role in perpetuating traditional domestic roles and advancing women's roles outside the home. Nolan (2000) asserted, using historical data, that the Aotearoa New Zealand government pushed women between the worlds of wage earners and domestic workers as needed throughout the 21st century. At different times, women were needed in the domestic spaces (after wars and during depressions), while at others, they were needed to support the economy. These fluctuations appear to have occurred not because the government held different ideological stances at different times but rather because the government did not have a single policy regarding women's wage earnings or domesticity. The government's complex role as employer, legislator, and educator in society has caused seemingly entangled and contradictory legislation supporting both domesticity and women's independence at different times. At times, this may have been with intention, at others a result of different pressures (capitalist, feminist, patriarchal), and at others, simply by happenstance (Nolan, 2000).

The plethora of policies that have surfaced throughout the last 150 years appear to have perpetuated a societal discourse that ignores the tensions and challenges associated with the pull between work and home for many women. As Nolan (2000) stated, this discourse, "continues to structure women's lives at work because the basic structure loses none of its potency,…equality has not been achieved, and 'domesticity' is still with us" (p. 254). Although the nature of domesticity has changed over time, its effects remain the same.

Female Teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand

The feminisation of teaching in countries such as Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, the UK, the US, and Canada has a long history linked mainly to the traditionalist view of women's natural place in caring for children, at home and/or in school (Fry, 1993; Kelleher

et al., 2011). As with the state's role in domesticity, throughout the history of formalised education in Aotearoa New Zealand the government has promoted teaching as a career for women while seeking to limit their involvement in the profession at other times. This purposeful and divergent use of women in the teaching sphere will be analysed by examining the early history of women teachers and the aspects of equality and representation that had to be and continues to be, fought for.

In the UK before the early 1800s and before state-run education was established, schooling in homes was conducted by women who educated girls and young children (Richards & Acker, 2006). By the early 1800s, this informal system was gradually replaced with one-room schoolhouses, which saw men as the primary educators (Richards & Acker, 2006). As state schooling in the UK developed, teacher recruitment grew, and the need to employ women to fill these roles was begrudgingly accepted as early as the 1840s (Miller, 1992). While often misinterpreted as a recent phenomenon, women's predominance in the formalised teaching sector was already well established in the mid-1800s (Cortina & San Román, 2006). At this point, women were only responsible for teaching young children, making their increasing representation less controversial (Kelleher et al., 2011).

The early history of education in Aotearoa New Zealand formalised education for some Māori tamariki (children) in whare wānanga (houses of learning) (Swarbrick, 2012). In the early 1800s, missionary schools were established to teach Māori literacy and practical skills (Swarbrick, 2012). With the arrival of colonisation from the UK, education began to follow the British model in Aotearoa New Zealand (Tearney, 2016). Primary schooling was considered the government's responsibility, and the curriculum was expected to be differentiated to support children in developing gender-normalised roles (Fry, 1993). Secondary schooling was reserved for those children (generally boys) whose parents could pay for private attendance (Fry, 1993). By 1870, a free education system had been created with two branches – one for Pākehā children and one for tamariki (Swarbrick, 2012). The expectation of education throughout the 1800s saw job opportunities for women slowly increase as the developing education system needed more employees to sustain its growth (Nolan, 2000). This employment trend, however, was limited to teaching roles as it was the only profession during the 19th century that women entered in large numbers (Fry, 1993).

In 1877, after the passing of the Education Act, the Department of Education was formed to oversee the growing education system (Fry, 1993). Individual schools were governed by autonomous school boards that were responsible for teacher employment and training (Campbell, 1941), and school inspectors were appointed to monitor teachers and ensure they acted in accordance with the curriculum (Tearney, 2016). These bodies and positions were almost exclusively tenanted by men (Fry, 1993). In their roles as mothers, some women could participate in school committees. However, few women took up the opportunity as they were likely to be challenged (Fry, 1993). From the very start of public education in Aotearoa New Zealand while women and girls could participate in the education system, men consistently outnumbered women in positions of influence (Tearney, 2016).

A body of local literature has examined women's roles in Aotearoa New Zealand's educational history since the inception of its public educational system (Campbell, 1941; Fry, 1993; Hughes, 1980; McCardle, 1993; Tearney, 2016). Among these analyses are the key considerations of an ever-increasing demand for female teachers as more schools opened (Hughes, 1980) and the ensuing inequitable challenges they faced due to their gender. Bound by a gender-differentiated pay scale until 1960 (Campbell, 1941; McCardle, 1993), women found it challenging to make progress as their empowered male colleagues were often unsympathetic to issues relating to pay and status equality (McCardle, 1993). While women advocated for being installed in positions of influence through the education sector, their efforts were slow to be realised. In 1911, Sarah Saunders Page, a feminist who was active in local public affairs, wrote, "…only the poorly paid, hard-worked, inferior positions are offered exclusively to women, while all the plums of the profession are retained exclusively by the men" (Saunders Page, 1911, pp. 9-10). Women continued to be unable to gain promotion in co-educational settings for decades (McCardle, 1993). The consistently present under-representation of women in positions of authority for the last 200 years, created a pattern that was difficult to change although slow growth has occurred.

Throughout this history, women's teaching careers were heavily influenced by government legislation and societal expectation regarding their roles in education and the home. In her analysis of the New Zealand Teacher's Marriage Bar of 1931, Aitken (1996) summated, "although the bar was justified by education authorities as merely a pragmatic

response to high teacher unemployment, the policy was primarily legitimised by the ideology of domesticity" (p. 83). When additional teachers were needed to fill vacancies created by a growing education system or men participating in wars, women were called upon to take these positions. When teaching was over-subscribed, women were pushed back into the domestic realm by education campaigns, legislation, taxes, and marriage bars (Aitken, 1996; McCardle, 1993; Nolan, 2000).

Teacher-mothers have grappled with the push and pull of their dual roles for centuries. At times, they were refused the ability to enact both functions, while at others, they were compelled into participation because of national needs, financial obligations, or personal needs. Due to its many ironies, knowing how the role of teacher-mother emerged supports an exploration of the current tensions associated with the role. These tensions are repeatedly hidden under the often-unquestioned guise of feminisation. However, in examining the current conditions that teacher-mothers face, its credence begins to crumble.

Working-Mother Ideologies in Aotearoa New Zealand

As a consequence of historical expectations of women's roles in both public and private spheres, multiple ideologies developed regarding working mothers. These ideologies allowed for the justification of both domestic and workplace demands on women. Exacerbated by the emergence of neoliberal ideology in the 1980s, these competing tenets of societal participation set the groundwork for the experiences of teacher-mothers in current Aotearoa New Zealand.

Intensive Mother Ideology. Stemming from women's domestic history, the intensive mother ideology is the societal belief that mothering should be all-encompassing (Peterson et al., 2018). It is consuming work, both physically and emotionally, and is financially expensive (Hays, 1996). A good mother prioritises her children and spends as much time with them as possible (Lupton & Schmied, 2002). With the goal of raising the best future members of society possible, women are expected to be well-informed about child development (Verniers et al., 2022). While Hays (1996) described sourcing this expertise from child-rearing books and services in the 1990s, Verniers et al. (2022) and Ennis (2014) posit that while the ideology is still present, the sources of parenting expertise have shifted to social media. The focus on appropriately raising children comes at a price –

mothers are expected to take time out of paid work to provide this intensive service. Given that raising a child is the most important societal contribution there could be, motherhood takes precedence over paid work (Verniers et al., 2022).

Although this commitment to parenting has been proven to be both not necessary nor natural for a child's development (Hays, 1996), the ideal remains particularly relevant for middle- and upper-class Pākehā women (Fursman, 2002). Given their financial constraints, working-class mothers are unlikely to engage with the intensive mothering ideology and societal expectations are often lowered based on economic necessity (Fursman, 2002). It would also be incorrect to assume that mothering is a universal construct. Rather, it takes place within different cultural contexts and by individuals with personal agency; it is a social construct (Glenn, 2016). The intensive focus on child development enables middle- and upper-class Pākehā women to preserve their children's class status by taking opportunities within dominant cultural systems they understand well as teachers and mothers (Fursman, 2002).

Successful Woman Ideology. In challenging the ideal of a good mother being completely committed to the successful development of her child, the successful woman ideology focuses on the importance of women's self-fulfilment through both paid work and family life (Kahu & Morgan, 2007b; Lupton & Schmied, 2002; Peterson et al., 2018). A successful woman is seen as someone who can do both and finds personal satisfaction in both roles (Hays, 1996; Lewis, 1991; Lupton & Schmied, 2002; Woodward, 1997). This construct may be more likely to be idealised in middle-class mothers who are educated and have well-paid jobs, antithetically the same women who are also susceptible to the intensive mothering ideology (Harper & Richards, 1979).

Involvement in paid work is seen as essential to the well-being of mothers but also to society at large (Peterson et al., 2018). This ideology frames a successful woman as a responsible citizen – she has a full-time career because caring for children full-time simply does not make a large enough societal contribution (Kahu & Morgan, 2007b). The focus on the importance of paid work stems from this historical devaluation of unpaid work in Aotearoa New Zealand (Else, 1996; Nolan, 2000; Waring, 1988). The deregulation of the economy saw greater importance being placed on paid work (Copas, 2001), and since

mothering is not considered work, the only way to demonstrate good citizenship is through involvement in paid work (Barlow et al., 2002).

Impacts of Neoliberal Ideology. These notions are a result of the global political shift to neoliberalism that began in the 1980s, which idealised free markets over governmental intervention (Codd, 2008). Increasingly, the political philosophy of neoliberalism has gained hegemonic status in most Western democracies. Like the intensive mothering ideology, neoliberalism is self-justifying, validating societal inequalities based on arguments of personal choice, individual responsibility, entrepreneurial initiative, competition, and meritocracy (Girerd & Bonnot, 2020).

The enactment of this ideology resulted in a focus on economic efficiency, globalisation, and capitalism (Codd, 2008). While taken individually, the discourses of competition, human capital, and individual responsibility are not necessarily bad, but collectively they can be dangerous (Apple, 2006). To be successful, employers need *needless-workers*, workers who put their careers first and who are unhindered by distractions during working hours (Fursman, 2002); an ideal worker is someone "with immunity from family work (Williams, 2000, p. 20)". In this way, neoliberalism "undermines women's feminist identification" and reinforces the challenges that working mothers have in meeting the successful woman ideals (Girerd & Bonnot, 2020, p. 81).

Current National Structures

Tangibly, the manifestation of these neoliberal ideas can be found in current national structures affecting the lives of working mothers in Aotearoa New Zealand. The details of these relevant structures is the focus of the proceeding sections.

Fertility Trends. The landscape of fertility in Aotearoa New Zealand has changed dramatically over the last 60 years. In the 1960s, the average woman had 4.31 children and was more likely to begin her motherhood journey in her teenage years (Spoonley, 2020). In 2020, the birth rate on record was just 1.61 children per woman (Statistics New Zealand, 2021), and the most common maternal age had shifted to the early 30s (Spoonley, 2020; Statistics New Zealand, 2019).

Examining the factors that have influenced these changes provides insight into the societal context in which Aotearoa New Zealand mothers are enmeshed. Spoonley (2020)

outlined factors that may explain why Aotearoa New Zealand women choose to have fewer children than previous generations. From a medical standpoint, Aotearoa New Zealand women have access to high-quality healthcare which supports a high survival rate for children, access to contraception, and access to legal abortion. Cultural shifts, including women's greater participation in the workforce, urbanisation, and the development of new family norms, have further contributed to the fall in overall fertility (Pool, 2013; Spoonley, 2020). With the cost of raising a child rising each year, financial pressures are also responsible for this development. Neoliberal policies in the 1980s, including the rollback of the Family Benefit in 1991, transferred the cost of child-rearing from the government to individuals and households (Pool, 2013; Spoonley, 2020). Given the consistent drop in fertility rates and these societal characteristics, Spoonley (2020) denoted that these patterns for Aotearoa New Zealand families are anticipated to continue over the next 30 years.

Government Welfare. Parents in contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand have access to various state welfare initiatives to support families. In 2006, Working for Families legislation brought a raft of changes to family economic support. Rather than provisioning for beneficiaries, the focus was on supporting employed parents. In 2018, the Families Package provided financial support to working families. These programmes remain in use today, albeit with increased funding.

While these programmes focus on family support in childhood, state-funded paid parental leave was initiated in 2002 (Sin et al., 2018). Since its inception, both the duration that new parents can take paid parental leave and the payment amounts have increased. New parents can now take six months of leave (Noy & Sin, 2021). Some 80% of new parents do take leave after the birth of a child (Morton et al., 2012); fathers take an average of two weeks leave (Morton et al., 2012), and mothers average 53 weeks (Noy & Sin, 2021). Aotearoa New Zealand women expect to take a moderate amount of leave (longer than what paid parental leave is allocated for) after the birth of their child. However, they expect not to be able to take their preferred amount of time. This societal acceptance of extended leave after the birth of a child is echoed by the 52 weeks of job-protection leave, which enables women to hold their positions while receiving leave-without-pay for up to a year

(Noy & Sin, 2021). When women return to work, the main driver is financial (Noy & Sin, 2021).

Women in Work. Women in Aotearoa New Zealand face high social expectations, both in the workforce and the domestic realm (Kahu & Morgan, 2007b). Women's participation in the workforce has increased from 54.3% to 70.3% over the last thirty years (Manatū Wāhine Ministry for Women, 2022). The Aotearoa New Zealand government values women's contributions to the workforce as it positively impacts the national economy (Manatū Wāhine Ministry for Women, 2022). National policies reflect the desire for women to return to work after the birth of a child (Kahu & Morgan, 2007b). However, despite these policies, working mothers experience inequalities once returning to the workforce.

The amount of time women have out of employment after the birth of a child depends on a range of factors. In their report for the New Zealand Ministry for Women, Sin et al. (2018) outlined that the impact on women's careers, access to and cost of childcare, parental leave entitlements, and their personal desires all contribute, along with legislation, to women's return to employment. Reiterating that women are out of work longer than men, they extended these findings to compare the median men's and women's working week hours before children (41 and 40 hours per week respectively) to after having children (41 and 27 hours respectively). In addition, women experience a 4.4% reduction in wages after becoming a mother, a trend that does not occur for men. This suggests that while men's working hours and career opportunities generally do not fluctuate with the arrival of children, women's employment often shifts to part-time work after extensive leave.

***Motherhood Penalty*.** Extensive international and local research indicates a chronic motherhood penalty on women's careers after becoming mothers (Budig & England, 2001; Grimshaw & Rubery, 2015; Sin et al., 2018; Statistics New Zealand and Ministry for Women, 2017a). Considering the existing pay inequities between men and women, the motherhood penalty is apparent when comparing the size of the gender pay gap between parents (17%) and non-parents (5%). In Aotearoa New Zealand, this means that, on average, mothers experience an additional 12% reduction in their pay. At the same time, fathers receive no reduction in average pay (Statistics New Zealand and Ministry for Women, 2017b). In a

report for the International Labour Office, Grimshaw and Rubery (2015) found that the size of the gap increased with the number of children a woman had. The amount of leave a woman took also negatively impacted how quickly she overcame the wage penalty. They asserted that the impact of parental leave on the maternal penalty relies heavily on legislation relating to family welfare, taxes, and childcare policy.

The justification for the motherhood penalty is wide-reaching. Budig and England (2001) outlined four potential explanations. They attested that missing out on work experience during parental leave could be expected to impact career development and corresponding pay progression. Another explanation is the unconscious bias women may face from employers after returning to work with a new maternal identity. Lower productivity is frequently touted as a rationale for the motherhood penalty and is justified by the claims that mothers are either too tired from their domestic responsibilities or reserve energy from their work in anticipation of returning home. Hochschild and Machung (1989) added that women's working hours are interrupted by the demands of their mother roles – scheduling appointments, taking leave to care for sick children, worrying about their children at home, etc. Finally, mothers may trade their pre-child position for more *mother-friendly* employment. In this case, "mother-friendly" jobs could be identified as roles that offer flexible hours, standard working hours, and the inclusion of on-site childcare. However, Budig and England (2001) also recognised that women might accept salary reductions to obtain these features that make their working mother role easier.

***Flexibility*.** One way for women to secure more flexibility is to work part-time (Budig & England, 2001). However, in a cyclical dilemma, the motherhood wage penalty in Aotearoa New Zealand is higher for mothers working part-time than those working full-time (Statistics New Zealand and Ministry for Women, 2017a). Glass (1990) explains that men predominantly hold the majority of highly flexible jobs. This may contribute to the fact that 12% of mothers in Aotearoa New Zealand who have yet to return to work by the time their child turns two stated that it is because they cannot find a job with enough flexibility (Morton et al., 2014). The picture becomes less bleak as children grow older, with 40% of working mothers of 8-year-olds saying that they are always, or almost always, able to work flexible hours (Morton et al., 2020).

Childcare. With most Aotearoa New Zealand families relying on the mother taking parental leave after the birth of a child (Morton et al., 2012), the return of mothers to work necessitates arranging alternative care for children. This task is complex, often bringing logistical, emotional, and financial implications.

***Early Childhood Education*.** Aotearoa New Zealand has a well-established and well-funded Early Childhood Education (ECE) sector. Set up as an integrated programme, combining childcare and education, there is a mandatory curriculum and monitoring of providers is a common practice (Adamson & Litjens, 2017). The importance of ECE, beyond allowing for a parental return to employment, is widely valued for its outcomes on children's development (Ministry of Education, 2021a). As a result, 97% of children take part in ECE before starting school (Ministry of Education, 2021a).

Supporting a popular ECE sector is expensive. Aotearoa New Zealand is one of the top spenders on ECE in the OECD (Adamson & Litjens, 2017). In 2007, recognising the importance of ECE for Aotearoa New Zealand families, legislation was passed to fully fund 20 hours of ECE for all 3- and 4-year-olds (Sin et al., 2018). Despite the subsidy, many ECE providers rely on families' private funding. Aotearoa New Zealand families pay the highest percentage of their income towards childcare in the developed world. A couple earning an average wage with two children (ages 2 and 3) in full-time care pays 27% of their income towards ECE (OECD, 2022). As a result, nearly a fifth of mothers with 2-year-old children have yet to return to work because childcare costs do not make it financially viable (Morton et al., 2014).

***Primary School Education*.** From age 5, Aotearoa New Zealand children can access free, government-funded public education (Ministry of Education, 2021b). Primary schools generally run from late January to mid-December from 9:00-3:00 with four ten-week terms separated by 2-week holiday periods (Morton et al., 2018). As children grow older, secondary schools have slightly earlier start and finish dates and longer school days (Ministry of Education, 2021b). The combination of disparate school and business hours and expectations of parental involvement contributes to time conflicts for some parents. Before- and after-school care are necessary for nearly a quarter of all families. While

government subsidies are available for some families, the cost of these services falls to individual households (Morton et al., 2020).

Macro-Social Structures Summary

Situating working mothers' experiences in the wider Aotearoa New Zealand scene and history allows for contextual analysis to begin. Like in many other western countries, the government encourages women to return to work after the birth of a child given the economic advantages (Kahu & Morgan, 2007b). They provide financial and logistical support to make the transition back to work viable. However, structural and ideological hurdles remain for working mothers.

Meso-Social Structures for Aotearoa New Zealand Secondary School Teacher-Mothers

In addition to the macro-social structures in Aotearoa New Zealand, teacher-mothers' lives are shaped by the meso-social structures belonging to their profession: education. By locating teacher-mothers' experiences within the social and legislative norms of the profession, a clearer understanding of their specific circumstances can be gained.

Neoliberal Realities for Education

Neoliberal Ideals in Professional Practice. The wider societal ideals of neoliberalism extend into the education sphere. As education researcher Alan Luke (2019) lamented, there is "now [an] internationally rampant vision of schooling, teaching and learning based solely on systemic efficiency and the measurable technical production of human capital" (p.1). Likewise, in the New Zealand context, Smith et al. (2019) noted that,

> The New Zealand of today is not the same as the one of two or three decades ago, but the influence of neoliberal ideology is still very prominent with the structure of education, and society itself, shaped by it. The reconstituted roles for teachers and parents, as technicians under a notion of managerial professionalism and consumers within a quasi-market of education respectively, continue to operate in an environment of heightened demand and "holding to account" (p. 59).

With the introduction of neoliberalism, schools became members of an educational market where students, whānau, and communities became clients and economic productivity became the product (Codd, 2008). In this way, teachers' roles became to create a highly-skilled, successful workforce who would contribute to globalisation once educated (Codd, 2008). Along with this directive came increased accountability measures

that focused on performativity. Teachers became civil servants rather than professionals, and their work was seen as a technical mechanism to efficiently create future economic contributors (Codd, 2008).

The combination of commercialism and performativity of teaching saw a culture of distrust blossom in the profession (Codd, 2012). The government wanted accountability regarding teachers' outputs. Surveillance systems and a belief in the culture of presence were developed to monitor teacher performativity against pre-determined competencies, all with the focus of ensuring that teachers were held accountable for efficient student development (Codd, 2008). As a manifestation of neoliberalism, this illustrates the slippage from professional practices into moralising discourses. The impact of this monitoring was an erosion in the trust of teachers and in teacher professionalism entirely (Codd, 2012).

Neoliberal Ideals in Professional Organisation. As part of the sweeping neoliberal policy changes of the late 1980s, a major reform to the education sector took place through legislation known as Tomorrow's Schools (Picot, 1988). Previously, the Department of Education had wide-reaching control of the school system. Tomorrow's Schools gave individual schools autonomy in almost all aspects of school governance (Ell, 2011) and resulted in the most decentralised school system in the developed world (Wylie, 2012). The Department of Education was dissolved and replaced by unique governmental agencies, each overseeing specific portfolios.

Ell (2011) and Wylie et al. (2020) described school-based administration by Boards of Trustees. Rather than schools being managed at a national level, Boards of Trustees, generally parents elected by other parents, oversee all day-to-day facets of school life. While teachers' salaries continue to be paid centrally following a nationally-set scale based on training and experience, staffing is the responsibility of schools. National guidelines on appointments and nationwide collective agreement contracts exist, helping to promote employment equality, but positions are identified and filled independently by schools.

Teacher recruitment and initial education are also impacted by the remnants of neoliberalist ideology. Prospective teachers can choose between multiple modalities of training from 10 providers nationwide (Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2022). The decentralisation of training, placing, and employing teachers has essentially caused a

teacher market where schools can select which teachers they hire and for what positions (Ell, 2011). While the intent of this change may have been to increase competition, and therefore quality, the outcomes for teacher-mothers have been complex.

The conditions of employment, salaries, rights, and entitlements for secondary school teachers are stipulated in a collective agreement between the Post Primary Teachers' Association/ Te Wehengarua (PPTA) and the Ministry of Education. Within this accord, there are provisions made for teacher-parents that go beyond the government mandates previously outlined. Budig and England (2001) specify that while public sector employees, such as teachers, often benefit from parent-friendly employment policies, unionisation has unequivocal effects on the presence of these benefits. The PPTA's Collective Agreement provides the primary carer of a child with six weeks of fully paid leave and up to twelve months of unpaid leave following birth. An additional twelve months can be taken after this time provided the teacher has been employed for over a year. If a parent leaves their position to care for preschool-aged children and wishes to return to their former school, they are guaranteed an appointment to any job (at the same or lower level from which they left) that is advertised (PPTA Te Wehengarua, 2021). These provisions exceed those from many other employers; however, their shelf-life is limited to the very early years of being a teacher-mother and neglects to account for the intricacies of carrying out both roles simultaneously.

Organisational Culture. Neoliberal reforms gave individual schools the autonomy to be self-governing organisations. The term *organisation*, however, is a knotted and intricate idiom. Everyday vernacular can seem to position the concept as "so self-evident as to require no discussion" (Jones, 2014, p. 11). Yet, when exploring the complexity of this normalised social institution, the importance of establishing a coherent conceptualisation is important.

Greenfield (1975) identified two main components within early definitions of organisations – the organisation and the people. In this view, organisations were seen as entities that existed with or without people. Members were seen to be 'in' an organisation (Love, 2019). But this neglects to account for the humanity of organisations – the collective ebbs and flows that people's actions, thoughts, and emotions bring (Greenfield, 1975). In

response to this dualistic deficiency, organisations are now widely seen to be "but one specialised type of social setting" (Jones, 2014, p. 207); impossible to separate from the people who belong to it (Greenfield, 1975; Jones, 2014; Ybema et al., 2009). In contrast to the previous definition, people are seen to be 'of' an organisation (Love, 2019).

Recognising the humanity of organisations underscores the need to examine *organisational culture*. Again, culture is a conventional term with discordance in meaning (Abercrombie et al., 2000; Emeni & Ojeaga, 2010; Schein, 2016; Schwandt, 2014; Watkins, 2013). To account for this, Schein (2016) suggests different means for deciphering organisational culture, ranging from the visible to the obscure. Superficial artefacts of culture are readily identifiable and include behavioural, ritual, and physical observations. Artefacts and practices are informed by espoused values – the ideals and ideologies that rationalise the existence of artefacts, although consistent alignment with behaviour may vary (Emeni & Ojeaga, 2010). Over time and with continual testing and success, espoused values can become underlying assumptions – the intrinsic, impalpable beliefs that determine thought and behaviour across members of an organisation. The analytical significance of this level comes when determining how an organisation's members think, feel, and perceive (Emeni & Ojeaga, 2010; Schein, 2016).

By decentralising the education system in Aotearoa New Zealand, each school became a unique organisation, with its own membership and culture. In turn, each school has different values and ideologies it subscribes to and that inform both its structures and decision-making processes.

Teacher-Mother Realities

The contextual locale where Aotearoa New Zealand teachers work only shows a partial picture of their lived experiences. Teachers' lives, while frequently the subject of research, are often studied within the milieu of schools, "conceptualis[ing] teachers' identities as uni-dimensional [and] neglecting 'other' aspects of their lives" (Moreau, 2019, p. 106). For teacher-mothers, the interplay between their identities as both teachers and mothers is critical in the examination of their experiences. As described by Peterson et al. (2018), the dual roles can be predicted to impact women's lives in one of two ways (or a combination of the two): enhancement or increased stress due to lack of resources.

Enhancement Hypothesis. The *enhancement hypothesis* situates the dual roles of being a paid worker and a mother as being advantageous for women (Marks, 1977; Michaelian, 2005; Peterson et al., 2018; Sieber, 1974). Looking broadly at the experiences of working mothers in Aotearoa New Zealand, Peterson et al. (2018) signalled the return to work can provide benefits such as financial security, resumption of participation in society and social circles, enhanced self-esteem and relief from continuous parenting responsibilities. The specificities of how enhancement might be experienced by teacher-mothers, given the feminisation and unique characteristics of the profession, is worth further examination.

Several studies outline the benefits teacher-mothers report due to their dual roles (Claesson & Brice, 1989; Hermann et al., 2023; Homer, 2011; Michaelian, 2005). It should be noted that, despite the focus on the financial need to return to work outlined earlier, Hermann et al. (2023) found that teacher-mothers genuinely had a love for both roles that they held. This indicates that while the return to work may be influenced by finances, teacher-mothers may be positive about their return to the workforce. As considered in the previous discussion of feminisation, many teacher-mothers have an appreciation for the scheduling of schooling as it affords them the ability to spend more time with their own children (Claesson & Brice, 1989; Homer, 2011). However, Hermann et al. (2023) acknowledged that despite teachers' working hours generally supporting teacher-mothers' parenting role, "the rigid schedule and early hours create childcare difficulties…[and] rising expectations and technological advances now extend the workday" (p. 15).

Holding the two roles of teacher and mother may lead to work-life enrichment. As described by Claesson and Brice (1989) and Michaelian (2005), motherhood can help teacher-mothers to understand and support their own children's experiences at school. As a fortuitous outcome of their teacher training, they may have a greater understanding and awareness of their own child's development. Additionally, they may have more credibility with their students' parents who acknowledge their additional familiarity with children and their growth. Mirroring the parenting break Peterson et al. (2018) described for working mothers, teacher-mothers also found teaching provided them with respite from their parenting role (Hermann et al., 2023). Teaching presented teacher-mothers with the

opportunity to contribute to meaningful societal work and gave them a sense of purpose (Claesson & Brice, 1989; Michaelian, 2005).

Scarcity Hypothesis. Alternatively, researchers have described the *scarcity hypothesis* which sees working mothers experiencing increased stress due to the lack of time and energy resources needed to carry out both roles (Goode, 1960; Peterson et al., 2018). Working mothers may find it difficult to achieve a balance between the two roles often leading to maternal guilt, lowered satisfaction with both roles, a decline in mental health, and reduced commitment to their work organisation (Peterson et al., 2018). Findings from Peterson et al. (2018) echo findings from Claesson and Brice (1989) and Michaelian (2005) that asserted teacher-mothers often experience 'mummy-guilt' from being in full-time employment and are exhausted from the constant demands of care work in both their roles. Acker (1980) described these demands as being made by *greedy institutions* – school and home. Both roles require women to meet social expectations for "altruism, self-abnegation and repetitive labour" (Grumet, 1988, p. 87), causing tensions resulting from resource depletion. As Walker and Barton (1983) illustrated, by teacher-mothers' seemingly choosing to be involved in both greedy institutions, they

> are under pressure to demonstrate quite unequivocally that they have indeed come to terms with this dilemma and that their successful performance in one of these institutional life forms is not being achieved at the expense of underperformance in the other (p.12).

This expectation publicly hides the challenges teacher-mothers experience in both contexts, further promoting the independent responsibility of finding work-life alignment.

***Scarcity at Home*.** Teacher-mothers often experience repercussions of the current cultural expectations that women work while also being full-time mothers (Hermann et al., 2023). Described by Hewlett and Luce (2006) as "an increasingly extreme parenting model" (Life on the Edge section, para. 6), mothers in modern Aotearoa New Zealand society seem to be subjected to evermore demanding expectations on both their capacities and their children's involvement in a wide range of experiences. Teacher-mothers report that social media increases the perceived legitimacy of the new norms (Hermann et al., 2023).

The domestic demands many working-women experience are known as the *second-shift* (Hermann et al., 2023). Studies looking at teacher-mothers' experiences indicate that

women hold more responsibility for second-shift activities than their male partners (Claesson & Brice, 1989; Hermann et al., 2023; Michaelian, 2005). Daminger (2020) quantified that, while the division of domestic work has shifted towards a more equitable distribution since the mid-twentieth century, women carry out twice as much domestic work as men — a statistic that has remained static over the last several decades. This is exacerbated by the fact that domestic work carried out by women tends to be disproportionately time-dependent and inflexible than that done by men (Bianchi et al., 2000). Women also carry out the majority of the more covert cognitive dimension of household labour (Daminger, 2019). Hermann et al.'s (2023) findings reflected the notion that teacher-mothers are the "manager[s] of the second shift" (p. 15). Accepting and extending these descriptions, Dean et al. (2022) documented that emotional labour is part of familial labour. They recognised that the combination of cognitive and emotional labour composed the *mental load* which was much higher for mothers than their male counterparts. These household inequalities in carrying out all forms of labour contribute to teacher-mothers experiencing time famine, simply not having enough time to complete all the work they were responsible for (Moreau, 2019). Teacher-mothers are often left feeling exhausted from the perpetual demands – physical, emotional, and cognitive – of the altruistic caring required of their dual roles (Claesson & Brice, 1989; Hermann et al., 2023; Michaelian, 2005).

***Scarcity at Work*.** In Aotearoa New Zealand, secondary school teachers have relatively little control over when and where they work. In her 2019 study, Brown found that "inflexible school-based practices which assumed a continuous availability to work, situated within a patriarchal and linear model of time contributed to the difficulties encountered by" teacher-mothers (p. 3). Described by Moreau (2019) as a *culture of presence*, most full-time teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand are expected to work on-site during school hours. On average, teachers work 42.6 hours on campus with another 11.9 hours at home per week (PPTA Te Wehengarua, 2016). While teachers are contracted to teach 20 hours per week, the remainder of this work is composed of meetings, professional development, teaching preparation, assessment and reporting of student learning, as well as significant involvement in the pastoral needs of students, administration work, and extra-curricular activities (PPTA Te Wehengarua, 2019).

The presumption that the work of a teacher can be completed during timetabled hours neglects to account for the *intensification* of the work which has been occurring over the last several decades (Moreau, 2019). Intensification, as defined by Acker (1995), is the "pressure to do more work in the same amount of time formerly allowed" (p. 108). The intensification of teaching can be seen both in the examination of statistical data and in personal experiences with teachers' work. In Aotearoa New Zealand, a full-time worker is expected to work 40 hours per week for 48 weeks per year equating to 1920 hours a year. In 2015, the New Zealand Post-Primary Teachers Association (PPTA) conducted a study examining teacher workload. Their findings reflected that secondary teachers working full time worked an average of 2094 hours per year, an additional 22 days per year (PPTA Te Wehengarua, 2016). This number did not include time worked during weekends or school holidays which teachers signalled as commonplace.

The Workload Report also found that both the quantity and complexity of teachers' work had increased significantly since 2010. Teachers reported 10% of their days were spent as family time (including domestic activities and time with family members) and they managed little time for social and leisure activities, a trend that is mirrored in several other studies (Acker, 1995; Hermann et al., 2023; Moreau, 2019). Teachers struggled to maintain work-life alignment and this was particularly marked by teachers with young families (PPTA Te Wehengarua, 2016).

Teacher-mothers in Hermann et al.'s study (2023) cited extreme work as being a major challenge in their abilities to enact both roles. They acknowledged they were asked to carry out a wide variety of roles in their school contexts and work outside school hours was expected. The teacher-mothers noted that their professional workloads had increased which further contributed to a lack of role balance. As Riddell et al. (2005) put it, teaching "is extraordinarily hard work so it does not necessarily benefit those with childcare responsibilities" (p. 66).

Part-Time Respite. The role of being a mother is the major factor influencing teacher-mothers decisions to seek part-time employment (Brown, 2019; Smith, 2012). In contrast, most part-time men and women without children who moved from full- to part-time teaching did so to follow other professional aspirations or lighten their workload

(Moreau, 2019). In Aotearoa New Zealand, however, this may be a futile effort. Part-time teachers report that they work over 37 hours a week, with workload and complexity remaining high – and, importantly, see the shift to part-time work as not being helpful (PPTA Te Wehengarua, 2016). Sharp et al. (2019) found that school leaders understood teachers wanting to reduce their hours to deal with the workload but also acknowledged that "part-time working [is] not an ideal solution because it could result in teachers devoting more of their own unpaid time to the non-teaching aspects of the job" (p. iv). Identified by part-time teachers themselves, as well as school leaders, the flexibility of part-time work comes with significant challenges.

Progression Impacts. The often non-linear career paths of many teacher-mothers due to periods of leave and part-time work can lead to stagnating career progression. While some research points to women's career ambition and commitment not waning after becoming mothers (Gatrell, 2004), others found that teacher-mothers with young children were committed to their work, but were resistant to apply for positions with more responsibility (Brown, 2019; Moreau et al., 2007). This was due to the view that they would need to be full-time to carry out these roles and that they were redefining their identities now that they were teacher-mothers (Brown, 2019). Moreover, Moreau (2019) suggested that "taking career breaks and working part-time…reinforce an unequal division of domestic and care work in the home, ultimately further compromising the careers of those using these flexibility measures" (p. 108).

In current Aotearoa New Zealand, as well as throughout its history, the majority of secondary school teachers are women while men hold the majority of senior leadership positions, a situation unlikely to change in the foreseeable future (Wylie et al., 2020). This inequity leads to an under-representation of teacher-mothers in positions of influence, thereby decreasing women's bargaining capacity. The rationalisation of this situation often points to the acceptance that teacher-mothers are electing to forfeit their leadership opportunities to fulfil their motherhood roles, a notion that is seen as fair compensation (Walker & Barton, 1983).

Retention Impacts. Teacher retention in Aotearoa New Zealand, as in many countries around the world, is problematic. Nearly one out of five teachers leave the

profession within the first five years of their service (Ministry of Education, 2019). Turnover for women is higher than for men. Additionally, teachers under the age of 35 leave teaching at the second highest rate, behind only retiring-teachers (Ministry of Education, 2021c). When the details within the secondary school sector are examined, a gendered difference in turnover highlights significantly more women moving from permanent positions to relief teaching (Education Counts, 2022b).

Teaching conditions are reported to be the most consequential causation for teacher attrition (Michaelian, 2005). While Grissmer and Kirby (1987) recognised that childbirth is one of the main factors teachers leave the profession at the beginning of their careers, there appears to be a distinct lack of research regarding the overall retention of teacher-mothers. What can be seen from the research is a correlation between general retention factors and influences, as previously discussed, experienced by teacher-mothers. In a 2019 report, NZEI Te Riu Roa surveyed teachers who had recently left the profession. When asked to identify contributors to their decision to leave teaching, 65% of respondents identified high workload and burnout and 51% stated work-life balance concerns as underwriting their move out of the secondary schooling profession (NZEI Te Riu Roa, 2019). A report by the Education Review Office (2021) furthered this and found that female teachers were finding their workload less manageable than their male counterparts. Both workload and work-life balance have been identified by teacher-mothers as contributing significantly to the challenges they face.

In 2021, 86% of Aotearoa New Zealanders reported being satisfied with their lives with only 57% of teachers doing the same. This was particularly notable in teachers under the age of 35 (the age bracket where non-retirement-aged teachers leave teaching at the highest levels) who were three times as likely to say that they were unhappy than teachers over the age of 46 (Education Review Office, 2021). The maternal age range commonly used in motherhood studies is between 25-49 years (Flynn & Harris, 2015; Misra et al., 2011; OECD, 2011). While this overlap in dissatisfaction does not show causation, it is relevant in acknowledging what teacher-mothers in Aotearoa New Zealand may be experiencing.

Meso-Social Structures Summary

In reality, many teacher-mothers will experience both the enhancement and scarcity scenarios when returning to work with a young family. Dependent upon "the interplay between the particular stressors and support which mothers may experience both at work and at home", each teacher-mother will shift between the two positions throughout her working-parenthood life (Peterson et al., 2018, p. 5). The recognition of factors impacting teacher-mothers within the specific education profession in Aotearoa New Zealand elucidates the context in which they are experiencing this continuum.

Micro-Social Dimensions for Secondary School Teacher-Mothers

The micro-social dimensions that impact teacher-mothers' experiences are that of their own biographies. This includes their personal circumstances, settings, and resources in addition to their opportunities to enact personal agency upon their situations (Moreau, 2019). Given the unique and deeply personal nature of this dimension, the literature discussed here focuses on the generalised internal processes which teacher-mothers encounter as they negotiate their dual roles.

Work-Life Conflict and Balance

The complexity of life for a working mother is neither a new nor unexplored topic (Kang et al., 2020). In reviewing extensive cross-national work-life research, Ollier-Malaterre (2016) found that the majority of research, unlike the work of Crompton and Harris (1999) and Moreau (2019), neglected to account for the macro-social and meso-social structures which impacted working mothers' experiences. She found that while micro-social experiences were often included in research analysis, there was an overemphasis on the conflict that women experienced in their dual roles.

The concept of *work-family conflict* was influentially described by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) as "a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible so that participation in one role [home] is made more difficult by participation in another role [work]" (p. 77). This construct is mirrored in the teacher-mother context work of Michaelian (2005) who investigated the role strain that teacher-mothers experienced in their home and work lives. As the term conflict implies, the focus of these studies centred on the challenges of holding both roles. In attempting to

incorporate the benefits of carrying out both work and family roles, many scholars have suggested a wide range of other terminology ranging from *synthesis* (Kossek & Ozeki, 1999) to *interaction* (Innstrand et al., 2008) to *capabilities* (Hobson, 2014) among others.

The term *work-life balance* has become popular both in general employment research and wider society (Brown, 2019; Fitzpatrick, 2013; Flynn & Harris, 2015; Hermann et al., 2023; Homer, 2011; Kahu & Morgan, 2007a, 2007b; Kang et al., 2020; Knowles et al., 2009; Le Feuvre, 2010; Michaelian, 2005; Noy & Sin, 2021; Oteng, 2017; Peterson et al., 2018; PPTA Te Wehengarua, 2016). This shift attempts to acknowledge that a worker's life is not just bound by work and domestic duties. Moving from *work-family* to *work-life* also recognises that not all employees who seek balance are parents (Kalliath & Brough, 2008). Rather, all workers, including mothers, are fully developed members of society whose lives also may include involvement in their communities, leisure activities, health, and personal development (Kang et al., 2020).

Despite the concept's prevalence, consistent definitions of work-life balance in the literature seem somewhat ambiguous (Kalliath & Brough, 2008). In their review of the construct, Kalliath and Brough (2008) suggested conceptualisations to envelop this diversity. Work-life balance implies that individuals have multiple roles, both work and non-work related, and these roles may carry over into the other sphere (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Kalliath & Brough, 2008). It also denotes potential enhancement that can occur from carrying out both roles (Claesson & Brice, 1989; Hermann et al., 2020; Homer, 2011; Michaelian, 2005). Work-life balance allows for personalisation by allowing an individual's expectations of their work and family roles to be the bar of judgement (Eby et al., 2005).

To achieve balance, the literature acknowledges that both tensions between and the enactment of multiple roles will occur (Kalliath & Brough, 2008). Frone (2003) summated that "low levels of inter-role conflict and high levels of inter-role facilitation represent work-family balance" (p. 145). This, however, does assume a level of control over both roles (Kalliath & Brough, 2008). Therefore, the expansion from work-life conflict to work-life balance, while justified, has also been critiqued. The construct of balance underscores the neoliberal discourses that women are responsible for making choices to find role stability

without taking the larger structures into account (Bauman, 2000; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002; Kang et al., 2020).

Work-Life Alignment

Endeavouring to expand the ubiquitous concept of work-life balance, Kang et al. (2020) proposed the concept of *work-life alignment*. They posit that while women do use their agency to enact a range of roles in their lives, the structures surrounding them are of equal importance. Work-life alignment occurs when the "gendered ideologies, life courses and social structures, particularly related to motherhood" are taken into account and allow for the dual roles of teacher and mother to be conjointly supported (Kang et al., 2020, p. 398). In this way, alignment is socially constructed rather than relying solely on personal agency.

Kang et al. (2020) suggested that there are two dimensions of work-life alignment: functional and ideological. These two aspects are distinct but also interrelated in both women's lives and in the wider societal context. For the meso-social (professional) and macro-social (national) structures related to teacher-mothers' lives to be supportive of teacher-mothers' dual roles, both aspects of alignment need to be considered.

Functional Work-Life Alignment. In most research examining work-life alignment, functional alignment has been the primary focus (Kang et al., 2020). Centring on how teacher-mothers make it work on a utilitarian level, studies have described the different strategies for enacting dual roles. These include daily scheduling, commuting, childcare arrangements, and other practical preparations (Kang et al., 2020). These everyday considerations are supported by the work of Hermann et al. (2023) who described teacher-mothers' stressing the importance of organisation, efficiency, and flexibility to find functional alignment. They also pointed to the importance of finding supportive friends and colleagues, setting boundaries, actively advocating for themselves in the workplace, and avoiding excessive social media use (Hermann et al., 2023; Hermann et al., 2018). Similarly, Claesson and Brice (1989) found that their teacher-mother participants emphasised the importance of prioritising and taking part in self-care routines. However, Kang et al.'s (2020) work signalled that "functional alignment alone is not enough" (p.403). Rather,

women also had to find alignment with deeply held ideals about what it meant to be a teacher and a mother.

Ideological Work-Life Alignment. For many working mothers in Aotearoa New Zealand, the previously described intensive mother and successful woman ideologies are challenging to reconcile (Kahu & Morgan, 2007b; Peterson et al., 2018). This challenge is mirrored in the findings of research done in the United States, Australia, Britain, and South Korea (Hays, 1996; Hughes, 2003; Kang et al., 2020; Lupton & Schmied, 2002).

The co-existence of these two ideologies can lead to working mothers feeling that they need "to 'do it all'…having internalised motherhood's unreasonable expectations" (Green, 2015, p. 200). The specific outcomes of this for teacher-mothers were described by Knowles et al. (2009). They found that teacher-mothers frequently evaluated themselves against both ideologies. Wanting to be effective in both arenas, they searched for different functional strategies that would enable them to meet their self-expectations but also those which they perceived others had of them. This continual self-questioning and self-comparison left them psychologically, mentally, and emotionally depleted (Knowles et al., 2009).

Recognition and examination of both functional and ideological work-life alignment is crucial in giving teacher-mothers the support that they need to enact both roles effectively (Kang et al., 2020). Women themselves create alignment in their lives by enacting personal agency. However, of equal importance is the acceptance of both facets of alignment in the larger structural decisions made at macro- and meso-social levels (Kang et al., 2020). This common omission is "an elephant in our field", as although research often alludes to the importance of acknowledging the impact of larger national structures, "relatively few studies actually do so" (Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2013, p. 433). For teacher-mothers to have work-life alignment, decision-making at a national and professional body level must account for the functional and ideological impacts that they are facing in carrying out their responsibilities at work, at home, and in the greater community (Kang et al., 2020).

Summary

Workplace gender equality, being context-specific, is highly dependent upon the macro-, meso-, and micro-social factors that are part of women's lived experiences. For

teacher-mothers in Aotearoa New Zealand, the interplay between these components highlights the situational complexity of their lives. Given the unique ways in which the macro- and meso-social structures impact on, and are impacted by, individual women, "sweeping statements about the feminisation of the profession are unlikely to be valid" (Moreau, 2019, p. 127). Examining teacher-mothers' lived experiences allows for the interplay between their roles and social structures to be exposed.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Researching lived experiences, both of teacher-mothers and more broadly, can be a messy endeavour. Lives are complicated in ways that simple scientific investigations cannot account for. As Willmott and Nelson's (2005) analysis of the realities of life in a complex world illustrated, "life is becoming more complex" and escalating the "stresses and strains it places on people" (p. 3). To capture the richness and complexity of teacher-mothers' lived experiences through social science research, employing methods that stretch beyond the spoken word or written texts can be helpful. Such approaches tend to result in explanatory records of life and are characterised by logics of individuation and rationality. In contrast, visual research methods have the potential to provide an antidote. Characterised by mimesis – the notion that art imitates reality (Gebauer & Wulf, 1995) – visual methods have the power to invoke responses that are both immediate and emotional. But while single photographs can speak to events that have occurred in the past, their evidence alone is incomplete (Azoulay, 2008).

This research aimed to deeply understand the participants' own experiences as teacher-mothers. Aligning with a social constructionist orientation, "the research process should be driven and understood much more from the participant's perspective" (Bates et al., 2017, p. 468). Accordingly, photo-elicitation was used to allow for the sharing of the participants' experiences without contamination by my own views (Bates et al., 2017). To achieve this, an open photo-elicitation interview was conducted followed by a semi-structured interview informed by the experiences shared in the first interview. Data was then scrutinised using both inductive and deductive thematic analysis.

Paradigmatic Positionality

With the importance of transparency being crucial to myself, my participants, and the consumers of this research, my paradigmatic positionality is important to acknowledge. My paradigm shaped my decisions as it determined which methodologies, data analysis strategies, and forms of explanation that I used to uncover the meaning embedded in data (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Saldaña & Omasta, 2018; Sparkes, 2012). In this way, my paradigm acted as a filter for my perspectives, providing a framework of thoughts and beliefs through which the research was interpreted (Schwandt, 2001).

In determining my paradigm, I evaluated several key elements. Saldaña and Omasta (2018) described a paradigm as being constructed of the unique combination of a distinct ontology and a distinct epistemology. However, other scholars (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Cohen et al., 2002; Sparkes, 2012) extended this to include the conception of human nature and methodology. To gain an understanding of the research process it is essential to understand each of these paradigmatic characteristics and how they affected my research design.

I see reality as being made up of multiple truths due to different people having different experiences and their internalisation of these experiences. This assumption gives way to my subjective epistemological outlook: I see the world as not consisting of one external reality, but rather consisting of multiple realities where each individual constructs the world through their personal experiences (Sparkes, 2012). I understand human nature as a continuum of structure and agency. Rather than identifying with the notion that human nature is either pre-determined or completely voluntary, I see humans as having free will but within the constraints of their given circumstances.

When looked at collectively, my worldview assumptions build to an interpretive paradigm that challenges the idea that researchers can be objective. It values a nominalist ontological position and a subjective epistemological view. Interpretivism aims to understand society and what is happening in a particular context through analysing and interpreting dialogue between the subject and researcher. From this stance, I was concerned with making sense of the subjective nature of my participant's experiences before generating knowledge from these interpretations (Markula et al., 2001).

These three assumptions (ontology, epistemology and model of human nature), influenced the methodological choices I made (Cohen et al., 2002). As Sparkes (2012) outlined, "Ontological assumptions give rise to epistemological assumptions which have methodological implications for the choices made regarding particular techniques of data collection, the interpretations of these findings and eventual way they are written about" (p.14).

Methodology

Methodology is the explanation and justification for using a particular research tool, or method, in a study (Clough & Nutbrown, 2012). While the rationalised choice of method may seem like a concrete decision, it was dependent on my tacit understanding of how the world is constructed, the essence of knowledge and human nature that comprise the other elements of my paradigm (Clough & Nutbrown, 2012).

Given the aim of my research as well as my positionality, I took an informed position of using qualitative research design to uncover the subjective experiences of teacher-mothers in the Aotearoa New Zealand secondary school system. This focus lent itself to qualitative research design as it enabled the researcher to acquire a depth of understanding from a small group of participants (Leavy, 2017). Phenomenology was apt for my study as it fit well with my intention to gain genuine insight into the lived experiences of women who were combining the profession of teaching with being mothers of young children.

Phenomenological research is "an in-depth inquiry into a topic with a small number of homogeneous participants" (Glesne, 2016, p. 290), intending to increase understanding of a phenomenon. Specifically, I examined the phenomenon of women deciding to be working mothers and staying in the classroom. As a researcher, my own experience of the teacher-mother duality is also relevant here, with phenomenology valuing the researcher's own experience of the phenomenon alongside those of the participants (Van Manen, 1990). While my focus was specifically on the experiences of my participants, the way that I approached and analysed their experiences was undoubtedly informed by my own experiences. This framework also aligns well the critical feminist lens through which I theorised the study (Hermann, et al., 2020).

Photo-Elicitation Interviews

Photographs can be powerful tools for people to look closer at themselves. They capture holistic images of complex situations which may be difficult to see in traditional observation or discussion (Cohen et al., 2002). When people see themselves in photographs, they become self-reflective and naturally begin to explain and justify themselves (Heisley & Levy, 1991). This is the foundation of photo-elicitation interviews, an

approach that uses visual images to elicit deep reflexive understandings during interview conversations (Cohen et al., 2002; Copes et al., 2018; Epstein et al., 2006; Lapenta, 2011).

Photo-elicitation interviews are multi-layered. Initially, meaningful photographs that meet the given requirements for the project are collected. These photographs are then used to elicit narratives from the participants. The initial stage of photo collection which involves the production, assembly, and selection of images can be carried out in one of two ways - researcher-driven and participant-driven (Copes et al., 2018; Epstein et al., 2006; Lapenta, 2011). Researcher-driven photo collection relies upon the researcher to identify photographs that will be used in the interview. Photographs can be taken by the researcher without input from the participants, selected by the researcher based on what they feel might be meaningful, or taken by the researcher with input from the participants (Lapenta, 2011). There are benefits to this method as it can increase the practicality of gathering images and allows participants to see mundane aspects of their everyday lives through a different lens (Harper, 2002). It may also be beneficial for use in theory-directed research (Clark-Ibáñez, 2004). However, given that photographs are constructs of personal perspective (Cohen et al., 2002), researcher-driven photo collection does bring into question whose knowledge, interpretations, and experiences the image represents (Lapenta, 2011).

This epistemological quandary led to the development of participant-driven photo collection. Participant-driven photo collection can be categorized into two distinct but related subsets: reflexive photography (Clark, 1999; Heisley & Levy, 1991; Hurworth, 2003) and photovoice (Heisley & Levy, 1991; Hurworth, 2003). While photovoice collection has its own merits regarding how photographs can be used to enact change, reflexive photography is the focus of this project. With this method, participants are asked to take their own photographs of meaningful aspects of their lives that meet guidelines set by the researcher (Clark, 1999; Clark-Ibáñez, 2004; Epstein et al., 2006; Lapenta, 2011). This allows participants to capture their knowledge and experiences of their contexts and have a form of 'show-and-tell' with the researcher (Copes et al., 2018; Hidalgo Standen, 2021). Originally introduced by Harper (1988), the strengths of reflexive photography are that "the subject shares in the definition of the meaning; thus, the definitions are said to 'reflect back' from the subject" (pp. 64-65). In this way, the participants' worlds can be seen from their own points of view (Hurworth, 2003).

Once photographs are collected, a selection is chosen either by the researcher or by the participant for use in the interview. Photographs are used to stimulate the conversation. Collier and Collier (1986) described the power of the use of photographs in interviews:

> When native eyes interpret and enlarge upon the photographic content, through interviewing with photographs, the potential range of data enlarges beyond that contained in the photographs themselves.... [becoming] communication bridges between strangers... [and] pathways into unfamiliar, unforeseen environments and subjects (p. 99).

Photo-elicitation interviews can take several different forms. Bates et al. (2017) suggested three main types which align with the photograph collection methods described previously. Researcher-driven interviews utilise researcher-produced images as a way of stimulating discussion with participants and leading a structured interview. When participant-produced images are used, the interview can either be classified as open participant-driven or semi-structured participant-driven. In the first, participants are prompted to discuss the photographs using open-ended questions at the beginning of the interview. This method is largely based on allowing the participant to lead the discussion with little directional input from the researcher. The photographs themselves determine what issues are discussed and why (Bates et al., 2017). As an alternative, photographs can be employed in a semi-structured interview. Here, researchers brief participants about the sub-topics they wish to explore. Participants are asked to discuss their photos in relation to those sub-topics. As Harper (2002) clearly and cogently stated, "When two or more people discuss the meaning of photographs, they try to figure out something together. This is, I believe, an ideal model for research" (p. 24). In this way, the researchers can focus the participants' discussions on the area of interest while allowing flexibility for unanticipated revelations to be shared. These varied forms of photo-elicitation, while different in functionality and purpose, all rely on the researcher and participant to collaborate to uncover knowledge.

Fitness of Purpose

In examining the lives of teacher-mothers as they discern their dual roles, gathering their reflections and recollections empirically and in their vernacular was the most appropriate way to gather data (Michaelian, 2005). The specific methods that I used in

eliciting data centred on Freire's (1996) notion of dialogue. Dialogue aims to engage the researcher and participants together to allow them to converse, question, and challenge each other (Conquergood, 1991). However, the false formality of traditional interviews is loaded with power dynamics that do not gel with a critical qualitative approach to research.

Photo-elicitation interviews were used to generate powerful, insightful discussion while negating the power differential between participant and interviewer. Harper (2002) described the use of photos in the interview process as being able to "mine deeper shafts into a different part of human consciousness than do words-alone interviews" (p. 23). In this vein, reflexive photography captured the participants' deep understanding of their situations (Clark, 1999; Clark-Ibáñez, 2004; Hidalgo Standen, 2021; Lapenta, 2011). As Collier Jr. (1957) described in his seminal work, using photographs in interviews had a "compelling effect upon the informant, its ability to prod latent memory, to stimulate and release emotional statements about the informant's life" (p. 858). The ensuing interviews can elicit ideas, emotions, meanings, and ways of thinking that are not able to be observed directly (Cohen et al., 2002).

This method was selected specifically to combat a range of the challenges that teacher-mother participants may bring. Several studies noted that teacher-mothers experience high workloads between their profession and home obligations and are time-poor (Brown, 2019; Homer, 2011). The benefits of using photo-elicitation include its capability to elicit deep insight with relatively small time and energy commitments on behalf of the participants. It also allows for the democratization of the research and allows participants to be more actively involved and share in research ownership. Additionally, the use of photographs can help to overcome the staleness and potential awkwardness of traditional interviews (Cohen et al., 2002; Hidalgo Standen, 2021; Lapenta, 2011; Schwartz, 1989).

Additionally, photo-elicitation is often used when the stories of traditionally silenced groups are desired to be told (Hidalgo Standen, 2021). As previously described, given the prevalence of women in a sizable profession the dual roles of teacher and mother is an under-researched area (Michaelian, 2005). While this dearth of understanding may be

unintentional, its existence in conjunction with the societal view of teaching being a 'feminised' pursuit (Moreau, 2020) leads to teacher-mothers' experiences often being silenced. This is exacerbated by teacher-mothers carrying out nurturing roles at both work and home leading to exhaustion, which can leave little for the adult relationships in their lives (Michaelian, 2005). Many teacher-mothers' often do not have the time nor energy to rectify societal views of the unrealistic reality with the adults closest to them. By allowing teacher-mothers to share photographs of their experiences, I was hopeful they were empowered to illuminate their realities. Bates et al. (2017) summarised: "By allowing the introduction of participant-driven photographs, or other visual stimuli, the researcher attempts to understand the experiences... of the participants rather than imposing their own framework or perception of a topic" (p. 461). Photo-elicitation interviews, in this project, gave teacher-mothers the space to explore and share their experiences in a supported manner.

Sampling

Participant recruitment took place in two phases, both of which were selected to avoid the ethical concerns related to the direct recruitment of participants. The first recruitment stage involved distributing a research information flyer to senior leaders at three secondary schools that had a high percentage of female teachers. The flyer outlined what the study was about, what would be required of participants, and how they could contact me to express their interest in participation. The senior leaders were then asked to circulate the flyer to teachers at their schools. If interested, teachers contacted me directly using the details on the flyer. Senior leaders did not know who decided to participate unless participants decided to tell them. Participation and non-participation had no impact on their employment.

To expand the participant pool, snowball sampling was used. Cohen et al. (2017) suggested that this method is beneficial when it is challenging to find a centralised communication network with a 'list' of participants who meet the criteria. As being a teacher-mother is an identifier that overlaps personal and professional lives, no database exists and the use of participants' contacts helped to find qualifying participants. In the interest of negating power differentials between participant and researcher, this form of

sampling allowed for participants to "act as gatekeepers to other participants and…exercise control over whom else to involve and refer" (Cohen et al., 2017, p. 221). This shared power dynamic was used to widen the participant search. Participants were asked to distribute a Research Information Flyer among their networks and, in turn, any suitable contacts who could then make contact with me to express their interest in participation.

In response to their emails of interest, potential participants were then contacted with more information about the scope of the project. Here, I outlined what they could expect to experience as a participant in the research including the collection of photographs, their usage in the interview process, and the ethical considerations that had been made to ensure participant safety. The women were also provided with copies of the AUT Participant Information Sheet, AUT Consent Form, and Participant Instructions. The former concisely described the two phases of the trial and acted as the go-to document for the participants about what they needed to do. Once I received a completed AUT Consent form for each participant, the data collection process began.

Participants

Four participants were selected to take part in the study. There had been several other women who expressed interest in becoming participants but the length of time that they took returning necessary documentation precluded their participation. Each of the selected participant's backgrounds and experiences will be described at length in the upcoming chapter. A brief introduction of each will be given here.

Linley had been teaching for 19 years. Her senior leader, after receiving the flyer from me, distributed the information and Linley then contacted me. She and her husband, who was also a teacher, had two primary school-aged girls. She was a middle leader and had experienced being a teacher-mother at three of the four schools where she had taught across Auckland. After agreeing to become part of the study, Linley sent the flier out to other colleagues in her network. It was through this snowball sampling that Janice became a participant.

Janice taught at the same school as Linley. She had just started her third year of teaching after changing careers from stock broking. She had two children who were the oldest of the participants' children in this study. She was unique in the sense that she was

the only participant who did not have the experience of teaching without children before becoming a teacher-mother and had another career to compare her current situation with.

After seeing the recruitment flyer, Katie contacted me with an interest in becoming a participant. She was a mother to four young girls. As a relief teacher, her work was not consistent. She was called into work most weeks and had recently taken up a short-term medical leave cover position. She began relieving a few years after having children and worked at the same school where her husband also taught.

Jen stood out, not in how she was recruited (seeing a flyer sent out by her senior leader), but in how she experienced being a teacher-mother. Unlike the other participants, Jen felt that her position as a mother had been directly responsible for unfair treatment. She had two children, one primary-aged and one pre-school-aged – the youngest in this study. She held a middle-leadership position at her school. It was the only school she had taught at during her 12-year career. She was newly pregnant and fresh off resigning from her leadership role.

At first glance, the range of participants seemed diverse: from relief teacher to middle manager, from beginning to established teaching careers, and from substantial to minimal support from their schools. However, it is important to note that while none of the participants self-identified culturally, designations that I am not in a position to assume, they did share social class signifiers which indicated they each had social stability. They were all partnered and were homeowners. They spoke of holidays, paying for extra-curricular activities for their children, throwing birthday parties, and subscribing to meal delivery programmes. The connotation of financial and social security was firm from all the participants throughout their stories, affording them a level of privilege not experienced by all teacher-mothers in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Data Collection

Method

Informed by processes outlined by Cohen et al. (2017) and Bates et al. (2017)), data was collected over a period of several weeks. The phases of data collection will be described and rationalised below.

With their agreement and consent to become participants, the teacher-mothers were asked to collect between 5-10 photographs that illustrated their experiences as a teacher-mother. This took place over two weeks during the school term. They were also able to select photos from their personal archives. The timeframe and quantity were selected based on findings that suggested more photographs become difficult to manage in an interview context and fewer create less meaningful discussion (Edmondson et al., 2018; Heisley & Levy, 1991).

At this time, participants were also emailed the Participant Background Information Form. In the interest of spending most of the time during the photo-elicitation interview discussing the participants' experiences, there was a need to collect basic information about the participants' personal and professional lives before the interview took place. In research looking at the dual roles of teacher-mothers, Michaelian (2005) used a questionnaire with her participants to garner these situational details. For this project, these included simple background about years teaching, subject area, years at current school, employment status, number and ages of child(ren), etc. While Michaelian (2005) used this strategy to streamline basic semi-structured interviews, I was able to do the same with photo-elicitation interviews. Several studies identify photo-elicitation interviews as being effective as a stand-alone methodology but more compelling when used in tandem with other qualitative approaches to elaborate on the findings (Copes et al., 2018; Epstein et al., 2006). The completed Participant Background Information Forms were emailed back to me before the first interview.

We arranged to meet approximately one to two weeks after the photo collection had concluded. Participants were given the option for the interview to be done via Zoom or in person. Together, we agreed on a suitable date, time, and modality. If the participants chose an online format, I emailed them the Zoom link. If they chose to meet face-to-face, governmental health and safety recommendations for COVID-19 were followed.

Before the interview began, a thorough account of the purpose of the research and a robust reiteration of the ethical assurances were discussed (Bates et al., 2017). The participant was given an overview of what to expect: the interview duration was to be approximately 45 minutes and it would be audio-recorded and then transcribed. I then

went through the Oral Consent Protocol with each participant. This was recorded separately from the interview recording.

The initial interview focused on the participant's discussion of the photographs. If online, the participant shared her screen with me to show each photograph; if in person, she shared her device. I used the following indicative questions to engage the participant in discussion (adapted from the work of Bates et al. (2017)):

- Could you please talk through these photos and explain why you chose them?
- How do you think these capture your experiences as a teacher? As a mother?
- Why is X (depicting something in a photo) an important aspect of you being a teacher-mother?
- Is there anything else you want to discuss about your teacher-mother experience which is not depicted here?

Unlike interviewing with traditional turn-taking and a question-answer structure, I did not control the direction of the discourse. Rather, participants worked in partnership with me to co-construct meaning from the photographs through dialogue (Cohen et al., 2002; Lapenta, 2011). Central to this approach was "…asking questions of the photographs, and the informants [became my] assistants in discovering the answers in the realities of the photographs" (Collier & Collier, 1986, p. 105). The purpose of this interview was to build trust and rapport with the participants while informing tailored questions for use in the semi-structured follow-up interview.

The second interview took place on Zoom or in person approximately one to two weeks later. This allowed me to reflect on initial findings and develop topical points that would extend the depth of data gleaned from each participant. We began, again, with a verbal overview and consent to the interview process as we had done for the first interview. This time, however, I utilised a semi-structured interview format. I provided prompts to bring forth participant experiences that pertained to the subtopics of my research. These questions were open-ended and tailored to each participant given their responses from the photo-elicitation interview (Cohen et al., 2017). The following were example prompts for each subtopic:

- their lived experiences holding both teacher and mother roles

    - Have you experienced constraints in being both a teacher and a mother?
    - Could you please talk me through how the tensions you have experienced have affected your role as a teacher? As a mother?
- the strategies and structures that impacted their ability to have work-life alignment
    - Are there particular conditions that have allowed you to continue your career as a teacher after becoming a mother?
    - How have external factors enabled you to sustain the teacher-mother role?
    - Have there been times/moments that you have experienced agency as a teacher-mother at your school?

Ethical Considerations

The use of photo-elicitation interviews must meet the same ethical principles that all other forms of research comply with. While this is to ensure all parties are safe during and following the completion of the project, the use of images extends the scope of ethical considerations that must be made in comparison to traditional interviewing. Cohen et al. (2002) contended that the collaboration between researcher and participant that underpins photo-elicitation is "one way of addressing complex ethical issues" (p.636), but that collaboration alone is not a substitute for specific ethical measures.

Before beginning the research process, I applied for and was granted ethics approval from the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC). This was granted on 29 April 2022 for three years, reference number 22/63. The submission included the following:

- Participant Information Sheet (Appendix A)
- Consent Form (Appendix B)
- Participant Background Information Form (Appendix C)
- Research Protocols (Appendix D)
- Potential Participant Flyer (Appendix E)
- Transcription Confidentiality Agreement (not used) (Appendix F)
- Participant Instructions (Appendix G)

In this project, the ethical considerations aligned with AUTEC's principles. Wiles et al. (2011) argued, "general ethics guidelines and codes of practice cover important principles. [But being] "visual" in orientation... brings its own set of methodological practices and its own distinct set of ethical conundrums that require resolving" (p. 28). This complexity was central to my planning and implementation of safe, ethical processes throughout my research.

Photographs are socially constructed artefacts. When they are used in research, an ethically-based understanding should exist between the researcher and the participants. In the following sections, I will broadly address the three main ethical considerations I addressed in the planning and enactment of my research.

Informed and Voluntary Consent. Gaining consent is one of the fundamental issues inherent in photo-elicitation interviews (Bates et al., 2017; Cohen et al., 2017; Copes et al., 2018; Glaw et al., 2017; Lapenta, 2011). Informed consent from participants needed to be received for a wide variety of events that take place during the research process, including having their photographs taken and sharing the photographs with me, and taking part in the interview (Frohmann, 2005). To ensure that participants are fully cognisant of how their photographs are used, Close (2007) recommended that providing consent for photographs to be used in the interview should be a separate process from giving consent for photographs to then be published.

Informed consent not only applies to photographs of the participants and inanimate aspects of their lives; it must also be given by any person who appears in the image. With participant-driven photo collection, this becomes more complex as the participants had the responsibility of gaining consent and respecting the privacy of others in the photographs that they took. It was my role to ensure that participants knew what this looks like and how to do it (Lapenta, 2011). There were specific provisions made in both the methodological choices as well as participants' communication that ensured participants were aware of the consent process and adhered to the guidelines.

Participants had total control over what photographs were taken and submitted for use in the photo-elicitation interview. Given the nature of this project, some participants took photographs of their children. To ensure that assent was given for photographs of

minors, participants were asked to explain to their child(ren) the purpose and use of the photograph and gain their assent. If assent was given by the child(ren), participants digitally marked the photograph with a smiley face. If assent was not given by the child(ren), the photograph was not submitted. If the child was too young to participate in this process, the participant determined assent on their behalf.

Participants may also have incidentally taken photographs where other adult members of their households were present. They were asked to explain the purpose and usage of the photograph and gain verbal consent from the photographed adult. If consent was not given by the adult, the photograph was not submitted.

In some situations (e.g. a busy playground or a full school hall), it can be difficult to gain consent from everyone in a photograph (Cohen et al., 2017). To address this and to streamline the process, participants were asked not to photograph their students, colleagues, or people not in their households.

Respect for Rights of Privacy and Confidentiality. Images of people's lives inherently identify people. As Cohen et al. (2017) suggested, "The whole purpose of the image lies in the details of the person, place or institution in question, without disguise or dehumanization" (p. 637). This can cause complexities in the ethical use of photographs in research as visual images bear representations of people's lives that must be kept confidential. Given that this project focused on examining the dual roles of teacher-mother, the photographs used captured intimate details of women's lives. Participants had the right to ensure that these aspects of their lives remained private outside the scope of the interview and publication.

To address their right to privacy, the photographs always remained in the sole possession of the participants. They shared their photos during the interview by screen sharing on Zoom or their own devices in person. While the photographs were used to stimulate conversation during the interview, the images themselves were not part of the data which was collected. They were not used in any findings, presentations or publications and, hence, participant privacy and confidentiality were able to be securely maintained.

Minimisation of Emotional Harm. Photographs elicit emotional responses. While this is the main driver for using photo-elicitation, careful consideration needed to be made

to ensure the emotional safety of participants. Kunimoto (2004) explained that using photo-elicitation to understand lived experiences requires great caution if the topic of the research is particularly sensitive. It does not mean that the research should not be conducted in this manner. Rather, purposive methodological decisions need to be made to minimise emotional harm (Bates et al., 2017).

Lapenta (2011) suggested that researchers must emphasise that "no picture is worth taking if it begets...harm or ill will" (p. 12). The same applies to the subsequent interview. Researchers have a responsibility to show care and sensitivity to ensure that participants are not left distressed and do not feel judged (Bates et al., 2017). Participants may reflect upon photographs and find themselves having uncomfortable realisations. Conversely, photographs may allow participants to reflect upon their lives and come to enlightening realisations which benefit their understanding. In both situations, care and sensitivity are needed to ensure the emotional well-being of participants.

In this research, participants were asked to explain the experiences depicted in their submitted photographs and prompts were used to elicit deeper meaning from them. It was not anticipated that any prompt or question would place at risk, embarrass, or compromise the integrity of the participants. However, given the nature of the discussion topics, the interviews could have brought to light sensitive issues and/or emotionally distressing topics. Participants were reassured at the start of each interview that if they ever did feel this way, they would be asked if they would like to have a break from the interview and have the recording device turned off. Participants retained the right to refuse to answer any question that might cause them discomfort or withdraw from the interview completely (as made clear in the Information Sheet).

During one of the interviews, a participant began speaking of her daughter's mental health and subsequently became emotional. I reassured her before asking if she would like to take a break from the interview to which she declined. I then asked if she would like to change to another topic or continue with the interview when she felt ready. She expressed that she wanted to continue; that it was part of her life as a teacher-mother, which was "fine" but hard. After a few moments, she began again, and the interview continued.

Data Analysis

It is imperative to readdress the role of my positionality before embarking on a discussion of data analysis. Clough and Nutbrown (2012) affirmed this when stating, "Research which did not express a more or less distinct perspective on the world would not be research at all; it would have the status of a telephone directory where data are listed without analysis" (p.10). Through my own lens, each participant's experiences were analysed to ascertain how they have experienced the dual roles of teacher and mother and the strategies and conditions they have employed to continue teaching with young children at home. To do this, the dialogue from each interview was transcribed, analysed, and themes were created to find the meaning of their lived experiences. Using both inductive and deductive thematic analysis, I was able to build a more complete perspective of the meaning of the women's data.

Transcription

Despite the prevalence of transcription in qualitative research, its description in methodology is often superficial (Shelton & Flint, 2020). "Not merely a technical endeavour", transcription is a complex process steeped in theoretical subjectivity (Roulston, 2010, p. 105). The transcription process relies on decisions made by the transcriptionist; therefore "the very notion of accuracy of transcription is problematic given the intersubjective nature of human communication, and transcription as an interpretive activity" (Poland, 1995, p. 292). Just as positional transparency in other aspects of methodology is essential, its inclusion in transcription deserves an accurate and detailed explanation in trustworthy research.

McMullin (2021) described all transcription on a continuum from naturalised (where oral language is adapted to meet written language norms) to denaturalised (where every utterance is included). Each has its benefits. In this research, I conducted a denaturalised transcription following the completion of each interview. I made a concerted effort to transcribe each interview as soon as possible. This allowed my insights gained during each interview to be maintained in the resulting transcription (Yanay-Ventura et al., 2021). Acknowledging that the process of transcription is time and labour-intensive (McMullin, 2021; Shelton & Flint, 2020), I utilised voice recognition technology to provide a rough,

"good-enough" draft transcription (Bokhove & Downey, 2018). I then began a cycle of listening, reading, and amending to check for accuracy, fill in gaps, and edit for context (McMullin, 2021). It was through this cyclical process that transcribing stopped being simply a mechanical process and became an "active" practice that "require[d] careful engagement" (Kiyimba & O'Reilly, 2016, p. 468).

Coding and Categorising Data

My data collection generated a significant amount of data which I analysed using thematic analysis, "a tactic for reducing and managing large volumes of data without losing the context, for getting close to or immersing oneself in the data, for organizing and summarizing, and for focusing the interpretation" (Mills et al., 2010, para. 2). By using a cyclical process of coding, classifying, and finding patterns, I was able to make sense of the disparate data that I gleaned from participants. To appropriately handle the volume of information, and to find meaning from it, I utilised two layers of analysis: inductive thematic analysis followed by deductive or theoretical thematic analysis. This duality of analytical tools allowed for a "more organised, rigorous and analytically sound qualitative study" (Bingham & Witkowsky, 2022, p. 134).

Inductive Thematic Analysis. Before beginning the coding, I started by reading through the transcripts of each interview and adding annotations that described the photographs that they had shared with me throughout the interviews. Although the photographs themselves were not analysed, I wanted to ensure that the verbal discussion that they promoted was accurately correlated. I made a note of any details that the photographs had shown – many of which I had recorded in my field notes.

I then carried out an inductive thematic analysis. Through this process, I read through the transcripts and used open coding to describe what the participants had discussed (Bingham & Witkowsky, 2022). I did this line by line, adding in new codes as appropriate; I had no pre-existing constructs, but rather the codes were created on-the-spot to more accurately describe the data. This process of coding allowed me to focus my attention on what mattered most – the women's experiences.

As analysis progressed, there were times when codes from one participant could be used with other participants and therefore the acceleration of additions to my codebook

dwindled. Upon completion, given the volume of codes, I grouped any codes that were closely related, making them subcodes within a larger category (Turner, 2022). By using the constant comparative method and re-reading and recoding using these new codes, I was able to consolidate and create a clearer interpretation of the data (Glaser, 1965). From this, I was able to construct themes – core categories of the women's experiences.

Deductive Thematic Analysis. A deductive thematic analysis enabled me to create a more nuanced account of certain aspects of the data. This layer of analysis allowed me to draw from existing theoretical ideas to understand the data (Bingham & Witkowsky, 2022). Given that this study examined the interaction between sociology and feminism, I had earlier identified a framework to help develop explanations for the experiences of women in their domestic and working spaces. I re-read each transcript this time using the micro-, meso- and macro-social factors from the framework while coding. By overlaying this with the themes that I had identified inductively, I was able to go beyond my newly organised descriptions of the data and begin to see the broader meanings in relation to previous literature (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of research is comprised of the sentiments of producing knowledge that both closely mirrors reality (validity), and which is consistent (reliability) (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The mechanisms assessing the trustworthiness of findings in qualitative research can be found in "the extent that there has been some rigour in carrying out the study" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 237). One of the main strategies for ensuring both the credibility and consistency of a study is by ensuring that the research is carried out ethically. Since the conception of this project, planning has ensured purposeful and ethical research would be carried out; a research proposal was submitted, ethics approval was applied for and granted, and methods for data collection, analysis, interpretation and presentation were carefully selected and used, each working with the others to produce knowledge in an ethical and trustworthy manner (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

My reflexivity was central to ensuring valid findings. "Humans are pattern-seeking, storytelling animals," described Shermer (2020, para. 1), "Sometimes the patterns we find represent reality … but sometimes the patterns are imposed by our minds rather than

discovered by them." Creating meaning within my data could not be done within an epistemological vacuum, nor could any of the research processes throughout the duration of this project. To ensure validity, it was important to approach the entire research process in a positionally aware, critically reflexive, and transparent manner – a task I returned to repeatedly throughout.

Before the start of this research, I carried out a comprehensive trial. The trial's context and initial methods were the same, albeit with a smaller sample size. The focus, however, was on its methodological legitimacy rather than findings. I wanted to be able to test, modify, and develop my work to answer my research questions most effectively. Piloting before the main study formalised this process (Bloor & Wood, 2006).

While trialling research has long been accepted and deemed conventional in quantitative research, qualitative research also benefits (Sampson, 2004). It allowed me to "access processes...in order to learn from them and reduce mistakes in the main research design" (Gudmundsdottir & Brock-Utne, 2010, p. 359). The trial and ensuing critical evaluation gathered information about the effectiveness of the different strategies and questions used in the interview process, the appropriateness of the length of interviews, as well as detection of potential ethical issues which were not originally accounted for (Bloor & Wood, 2006). This critical awareness lead me to redevelop my research plan based on substantive evidence, thus increasing the reliability and validity of this project's findings (Gudmundsdottir & Brock-Utne, 2010).

In carrying out data collection, multiple tools were used to ensure that the findings reflected the research questions and the participants' diverse perspectives. It's important to note that qualitative data is impossible to replicate given that human nature is not static. Even if the same methodology was used with the same participants and by the same researcher, findings would be different given the passing of time and human experience (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In this sense, reality in qualitative inquiries involves the negotiation of truths through a series of personal accounts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Sparkes (2012) implied that validity lies in the skills and sensitivities of the researcher. Truth becomes a matter of coherence, connection, consistency with other positions, and social agreement through peer reviews. These advocates of qualitative research argue that the

subjective data collected about feelings and experiences are as true-to-life and honest as it is possible to achieve through research. By invoking a feeling in readers that the described experiences are lifelike, believable, and representational, researchers can ensure a sense of verisimilitude, which Denzin and Lincoln (2011) expressed as the sensation of authenticity.

Following Holley and Colyar's (2009) appeal for researchers to intentionally select, shape, and present research narratively to stimulate engagement with a broader audience, the findings reflect the conversations that took place during the interview phase of the data collection. Through intentional and strategic writing choices, I endeavoured to cultivate the feeling of verisimilitude in presenting the participants' narratives in the findings. They are written in the present tense to help readers situate themselves in the conversation.

Member checks and triangulation helped to ensure reliability as well as validity. Member-checks of transcripts were done where participants were able to check for transcription accuracy and clarify any statements they had made. While all participants completed the member-checking process, no one wished to amend the transcripts. Additionally, triangulation was used to increase the trustworthiness of the data. Multiple data sources were obtained through two different types of interviews which were conducted on different days, represent not just a single data source, but a pattern of response.

Chapter 4: Findings

The experiences of each of the four teacher-mothers in this study were unique and wide-reaching. The conversations and images that they shared during our time together offered a glimpse into their deeply personal, sometimes emotionally charged experiences as teacher-mothers. Themes of commonality were woven throughout the stories, albeit hidden until deeper analysis was undertaken. This chapter tells the stories of each woman. All names and pronouns have been chosen to protect their anonymity. Each narrative illustrates their lives, organised, mainly, into three themes: *the complexity of life*, *personal agency*, and *schools as structural mediators*. For each woman, the order in which these often-interconnected themes are presented is based simply on the ability to tell their story coherently.

The *complexity of life* theme is focused on the reality of the women's lives. The roles of being a teacher and a mother made their lives profoundly full – physically, cognitively, and emotionally. Time was often in short supply and had to be used efficiently to fit all their responsibilities. While enacting both roles had logistical benefits and increased the time they could spend with their own families, they were left depleted in ways.

By using their *personal agency*, the women all searched for different versions of job flexibility as they sought to manage the parts of their lives where the responsibilities of being a teacher and being a mother collided. They each recognised that there were generic expectations of being a secondary school teacher that they couldn't meet because of their families' needs. They made decisions at work in order to be the mother that they wanted to be.

Ultimately, the teacher-mothers' experiences were shaped by the individual schools where they taught. *Schools acted as mediators* between the women and larger societal and professional structures present in Aotearoa New Zealand. The flexibility they needed was only created within the confines set by schools and school leadership. Each school's senior and middle leadership made unique decisions regarding how they supported the needs of the teacher-mothers. While they each found that schools were supportive of their need for flexibility, it was provided to different extents and in different ways. Some women were satisfied by the flexibility afforded to them while others were not. Most of the women did

not experience formalised flexibility, rather flexibility was at their request and informally arranged. While each woman found ways to obtain the flexibility she needed, they each felt it was in exchange for the extra work that they had done or were currently doing in contributing to the school.

Linley

Introduction

Linley exhales and slumps back in the front seat of my car as we reverse out of the driveway to her family's bach. Her two girls and her parents are dressed in dressing gowns and pyjamas, smiling and waving at us from the deck. As we drive, she laughs about how lovely it feels to be out enjoying the sun and going for a child-free brunch. The last few weeks of term have been hectic and, once realising we would both be on holiday in the same town, we made plans to go to a local café for our first interview. She is tired and pleased to be spending the morning sharing her thoughts and experiences over a coffee, or two.

Throughout her 19-year career, Linley has taught at four high schools of varying deciles and sizes across Auckland. Since having her daughters Ivy (10 years old) and Sienna (8 years old), she has changed schools three times with each providing her with different working arrangements. Linley is the head of her department and has additional responsibilities from her role in her school's Community of Learning Kāhui Ako. Her husband, Marc, is also a teacher at her school. "*It's interesting being both teachers,*" she describes. They live a kilometre from the school and the girls attend the adjacent primary school. *"We've set it up so that we're at the school, there are lots of advantages*." As we begin to talk, it's apparent that Linley is committed to her work and appreciates the advantages that she feels come from teaching at her current school. She is, however, weary.

Complexity of Life

A Busy Life. Linley flicks through her photos on a tablet before settling on a picture of her school desk to share with me. Her computer sits open revealing an abundance of emails. Atop her colour-coded teacher planner lies a piece of refill entitled "To Do". She has listed her different responsibilities (teaching, management, and personal) and her

scribbles show her progress through the week. "Elizabeth's thing – photos", is bulleted between a dentist appointment and a reminder to cancel swimming lessons.

> *My life, basically, is writing a million lists. … I would probably say that the personal list, I don't get through. I get through the school one. … I think I've always been a list person, but I think I'm a bit more efficient now. So I think I generally work through my lunch and I don't procrastinate as much. … I have to because otherwise it will just sit there and annoy me. And I'll think about it like 4:00 in the morning."*

It's a literal snapshot into the busyness of Linley's life. 'Busy', a word that Linley returns to again and again throughout our interviews, is evident in other pictures she shares with me. There are calendars with appointments and deadlines written in, the days crossed out. A photo of the girls' homework pages. Another of her own marking is splayed across the dining table, mixing in with Covid testing kits and a floral arrangement. In the background, Ivy, home sick for the day, lies on the couch next to a full laundry basket. She talks of afterschool activities, which although she and her husband intentionally limit, play a large part in her day-to-day shuffle. "*While Marc's really good at helping out, I'm still the one organising it all*", she admits. "*I like to be busy [but] probably not quite as busy as I am."*

Covid-19 Weariness. While the physical strain of a busy life is outwardly apparent in the visual images Linley shares with me, the internalised weight of her two roles comes across in her stories. Our interviews come two and a half years into the Covid-19 pandemic. She has been teaching and leading her department through lockdowns, rostering home, and a transition to online learning. "*We're just over it. … You finally get some rhythm and then you've got Covid or you get some other thing. You're just constantly battling illness and it's just horrible. And the whole school is like that.*" The tentacles of continual student and staff absences extend beyond relief logistics and into the classroom.

> *We're managing the relief, we're managing the relievers, managing all of that. And so things just have to go. Like, I don't do much of the extra stuff anymore, the extra fun stuff. … There's no joy in our classes because you try and do fun stuff and you'll plan in a really cool lesson, but it'll be, like, seven kids there. And it's like, what's the point?... We probably had ten weeks of rostering home. So that's one period a week that all the classes are missing. … It's hard. It's really hard.*

In the midst of describing the current difficulties, Linley explains to me, "*I do really like teaching, but I just don't like it at the moment*." Her experiences are situational.

> *This year has been the worst year teaching of my entire career. Like, lockdowns were nothing compared to this. Just that balancing act of having ten in your class one day and then 30 in your class and trying to work with the kids that haven't been there for three weeks and the kids that have been there for the whole time, and kids being anxious, kids being just assholes. ... I have no patience for those kids anymore, whereas in a [sic] normal time I would. …We're at that point, we just don't care. Like, trying to get Year 13s through who just don't care anymore about their work. I've never had it... We've spent six months trying to push them and it's just like, actually, we don't care anymore.*

The internal battle between a tired resignation and a commitment to her work and students plays on her mind. Her concerns are multifaceted. She recounts telling her principal that "*the results this year are going to be terrible*" despite the historic success of students in her department. She is troubled by the changes she sees in her teaching and professional mindset and that it is mirrored by colleagues around her. "*I am very worried about our profession as a whole over just what we're dealing with at the moment*," she tells me.

Mother Guilt. Linley's mental burdens extend beyond her working life to her own children. "*I'm on an edge,*" she explains in response to the depletion she feels at work. She discloses her daughter's recent struggle with mental health. While it is a situation that exemplifies the cognitive space that her mothering role occupies, the details are not included here out of sensitivity to her daughter. It "*just took me over the edge*", she tells me. Her voice wavers, exposing her worry and concern. "*I think you always have that sort of guilt as a working mother, like, are you doing anything at your best capacity*?"

Later, I ask Linley to explain more to me about feeling guilty. She begins to tell me about different aspects of her life as a teacher-mother that she feels guilty about. They are jumbled together, weaving their way in and out of her roles. She feels guilty about leaving straight after school, "*I should be the one that's the last to leave. But I do my work. It's just not necessarily at school*." When she stays later, she feels guilty about her children being in the department while she finishes her work. She feels guilty that "*the kids kind of would like me to be there after school to pick them up, and sometimes I can. Sometimes*." She feels guilty that she doesn't do enough baking or make enough crafts with her daughters. She feels guilty that she doesn't make enough fun resources for her students. "*I just I'm too tired*." She feels guilty that she and Marc have to logistically prioritise who will stay home

with one of the girls when they are sick based on who has the "*least disruptive day*" rather than basing it simply on her desire to care for her child. She feels guilty that she "*can't go on school trips. … And I can't help out at the library or help out sorting reading books and other mothers can*." She tells me, "*I think you're never going to have that balance. You're never going to feel perfect, and then you're tired all the time as well. ... I think you're just going to feel guilty no matter what.*"

Each of the aspects of Linley's life that bring her guilt has been thought through, evidenced by her self-justifications and rationalisations. It's an aspect of her life that she deals with continually.

> *In terms of guilt, I don't think that's ever going to go away. When you have your good days, it's fine, but when you have your bad days … it just becomes another thing that you're like, 'oh, I'm not a good mother.'*

Her assertion that "*As a mother, all you want is your child to be happy no matter what that entails, [but] I think you've also got to give yourself a break because you can't do everything*" shows that she has found a way to function amongst her inner dialogue.

Personal Agency

A Purposefully Set-Up Life. The current context in which Linley finds herself working and mothering is circumstantial. However, the mental and physical challenges of holding both roles have been consistently present. Earlier in her career, when her daughters were both under 3-years-old, Linley found the balance difficult to achieve. The small art business that she had started during her second parental leave quickly snowballed from selling her paintings at craft fairs to having a year-long client waitlist. She was living on the other side of Auckland from the school she taught at. "*I didn't get home till like 6:00 at the earliest and I would be driving for 2 hours sometimes.*" The pressures on her dual-roled life built and resulted in trips to A&E followed by a diagnosis of anxiety.

> *When I got the worst, like real bad panic attacks, was when there was a whole lot of shit going on at the same time. But I think my therapist sort of said it was women with young kids [who were also] working - that was who the majority of her clients were now. So I was travelling across Auckland … and I was doing the art business … [and] the girls got chicken pox and nits at the same time. … And then Ivy also had asthma and Marc was snoring and Sienna still had night terrors and I wasn't getting any sleep. It just was a whole conglomeration. And I got panic attacks.*

With counselling, Linley began to make purposeful changes to her life. She went off social media as "*it makes you feel guilty as a mother*", stopped her art business and eventually moved schools. "*It's a tough call, but I think you get to a point where I guess your kids become more important. I don't regret it*."

Linley reflects on her current situation, telling me that "*Marc and I have set ourselves up pretty well in that we're in the local school*" while pointing to a photograph of her girls developing pictures under the red glow of darkroom lamps. She explains that the girls' school begins after and finishes before her and Marc's workdays. "*They come to my office at the end of the day and just wait for me to finish teaching because there is like about a 20-minute crossover.*" At the beginning of the day, the converse situation occurs. She shows me another picture of the girls watching craft tutorials in the department's computer pod before explaining

> *They just go into the office and they do stuff. But, I mean, I don't like them being in my office as much because there'll always be one of the other staff members in there and I don't want them to be disturbed. And so as soon as the bell goes, I'm like "out, you need to go into the other classroom." So I guess you're not fully concentrating on one particular thing. You're always aware that your kids are at school and you don't want to kind of ignore them, but you still got your job to do.*

While Linley sees this before-and-after-school arrangement as "*one advantage of me being an art teacher and also being head of the department*", she experiences complications of enacting both her roles simultaneously.

> *[Before school] I've got to print relief. I'm trying to get … things organized and I've got the kids kind of at me. And it's not necessarily that they're wanting much, but it's still like, "Mum, can you do this?", "Mum. I can't get this" or, "Mum, can you help me with this?".*

Linley identifies one of the cornerstones to carrying out all the responsibilities in her life is the decision that she and Marc made to both work at the local school, close to their home and their girls' school. It is a decision that allows them both the ability to work despite their children's shorter school days, but also affords them little commuting time, the ability to spend holidays together, and involvement in their children's lives after school. Linley tells me "*there are advantages of working and I wouldn't do it otherwise*."

Leadership Flexibility. When she began at Riverside High School, Linley was hired as the Head of Visual Arts. After two years, she took on additional responsibilities which came with an additional time allowance. Linley uses her non-contact time flexibly, making choices about what to do and when.

> *Because I've got that [Kāhui Ako] COL role, I've got two more non-contacts on top of my HOD [time allowance]. So it does mean that I can balance out my time a bit more. I do have that flexibility during the day to get a lot more done than I probably would being on a normal teacher load. … Sometimes during the week, I don't really need to do much of my COL stuff. It depends on the week, so it means that during that time I can do a lot more of another aspect.*

I ask her if she feels like she could carry out both her work and family responsibilities if she were on a standard teacher's timetable of five non-contact hours a week. She shakes her head, "*I would have to do a lot of work at home*", something she has already told me she finds difficult. "*I can't do anything once I get home. I just can't*." Instead, Linley works during break times and shuffles her responsibilities. "*I can work out my day to fit it all in. Because you've got the extra non-contact time, which is probably not what it was there for, but it has meant that I am able to do that."*

Schools as Structural Mediators

Job Sharing. In the ten years since she became a mother, Linley has taught at three schools. The first, Te Ara Pueru High School, was where she taught before having children. Her husband also taught at that school with her. She worked full-time and held the position of Assistant Head of Visual Arts both before and after having her first daughter. When she became pregnant with her second child, her principal, knowing that Linley would be going on parental leave midway through the school year, suggested a full-time job-sharing arrangement.

> *Delilah set it up that Bridget [her replacement] and I kind of combined our jobs and so we would do a little bit of relief and then kind of team-teach...which was really awesome because it meant that I wasn't horrendously tired. And then Bridget kind of got to learn the job while I was still there. …That was really awesome of Delilah to do that because not many principals would probably do that for you.*

Upon returning in a full-time capacity to Te Ara Pueru High School after her second parental leave, Linley wasn't looking to change jobs. She, however, was made aware of a job-share position. While the school, St. Joyce College, was further from home, she would

be able to work three days a week in a department she knew she would enjoy being a part of. "*I also knew that job share positions were really unheard of, in secondary anyway*," she tells me. "*Not many schools do it at secondary because it's not financially viable to have two secondary school teachers do it compared to how it's set up with primary schools*." Linley took the job and loved it.

> *It was really cool. I know [the principal] is quite old-school, but he really supported the staff. There were a number of teacher-mothers with this kind of position at St. Joyce but when the principal changed, he wasn't keen on keeping that.*

Linley left St. Joyce College to move to her current school before the change in leadership was announced. She pauses,

> *If you want to keep good staff, then I think there needs to be an element of flexibility involved, particularly with women of childbearing age. If you want to keep them or you want them to come back, then there needs to be an element of flexibility that we don't necessarily see. … I think St. Joyce is the only job I know that someone's been able to do that.*

Later, Linley returns to what she sees as the reciprocal nature of work flexibility for teacher-mothers. "*If you want to keep good staff over that period of time where they're also sort of wanting to look after their own children, that sort-of preschool period, it [flexibility] is one way of doing that*." The notion of keeping good staff comes up throughout Linley's interviews, including in her approach to being a leader to other teacher-mothers.

Being a Leader of Teacher-Mothers. Linley's department members are all female with all but one having multiple children under the age of 10. She inherited the department with several teachers on the brink of resigning. She made it her focus to increase the well-being of her team.

> *You kind of have to have empathy. I think that was one advantage of me coming in, is knowing, having some empathy for their very different situations…I'm conscious of that because if you want to keep good staff, you have to make it easier on them.*

Linley recognised, and continues to recognise, that each of her department members has different obligations and different ways of working and she is supportive of their needs.

> *Tash will go home, be with her kids, do all the mother stuff and do work once they're in bed. Whereas Jo very much gets everything done at school, then gets home and concentrates on the kids. So you've got this different dynamic. They both approach it in a different way, but...they still get both jobs done. … They both have high*

> *expectations of themselves, but they also have high expectations of themselves as mothers. So whatever works for them, as long as things get accomplished, I'm not going to be on their backs as to when exactly they do it, because it's a balancing act.*

As a middle-leader, she uses the power that she has been given to build flexibility into her own working life and those of her colleagues. She limits the number of meetings that they have, instead relying on emailing and reminders on a department whiteboard. When meetings are required, Linley schedules them for "*lunchtimes because we all have different things. It's a balancing act.*" She arranges for longer moderation meetings to be after school but gives weeks of warning and brings along wine and nibbles. "*It works really well. But as a leader, in terms of that, I don't know if I'd be the same if I hadn't had kids*," she tells me, returning to her notion of empathy for other teacher-mothers.

Flexibility as a Reward. At each of the schools where she has been a teacher-mother, Linley has found, created, or been given flexibility in very different ways. When she reflects on this, she identifies that she doesn't think all teachers would be given the opportunity. "*It would very much depend on how strong you were in your relationships with the school."* For Linley, receiving flexibility is a condition of doing your job and doing it well.

> *For a female-dominated profession, you would expect that they [school leadership] might consider that period of time in a career [when teachers have young children]... It just seems silly to me… I have been quite lucky, very lucky, that I've had principals or DPs or Heads of Departments that are quite willing to keep me. … But I think that's also a testament to probably my own work ethic. Teachers or female students coming into the profession need to really consider that if you're going to want to stick with your job. But if you also want the other side of life, that you need to put in some effort.*

Janice

Introduction

Janice apologized as she took a call from her husband. We had just sat down at her dining room table on a Friday afternoon. Her son, Jack aged 12, flopped into a beanbag behind us and, donning a pair of headphones, began playing video games. As I sip on a glass of water, I hear Janice discussing lollies over the phone. Hanging up, she apologises again before explaining that her daughter, Charlotte aged 9, has a birthday party on the weekend and her husband is picking up a last-minute gift – the details of which she has thought

through, but her husband is vaguely aware of. We laugh. It seems the perfect way to begin our conversation.

I barely begin, "*Tell me about teaching…*", before Janice launches into her story. "*I'm quite late into teaching, so I'm 47 and I got into teaching simply because of my children and my family. So I come from a corporate background and I'd always been in stock broking.*" She tells me of long hours and commuting, of changing roles and companies, of part-time, full-time and self-employed work. She explains that she took different positions and contracts to facilitate her family life. A few years before becoming a teacher, she started her own business which grew more quickly than she had anticipated. "*I felt wired all the time…because I was going from this to this to this to this*." Janice felt that she needed to make a change. It was her husband who reminded her of her previous interest in teaching and supported her in making that decision. "*I thought, you know, that just sits right. It felt calming to me.*" At 44 years-old, Janice enrolled in a postgraduate teaching degree and shifted from being a working mother to being a teacher-mother.

Personal Agency

A Purposeful Decision. Janice's entry into the teaching profession came after years of working flexible, part-time jobs which enabled her to be at home with her children. It was something that was important to her and reflected an aspect of her own experiences growing up with a "*very caring and very maternal mother who has always been around for us kids*."

> *I really, really wanted to be ... that mum that would pick them up and they'd come home, there's fresh baking, and we'd have milk and cookies, and go for a walk, and have that time before dad got home, and cook meals together, and just be.*

Janice's desire to "*just slow life down a bit*" for her children is rooted in a deeper belief in how it impacts their development.

> *One of the reasons I decided to go back to full-time work was because Charlotte had had her first year at primary [school]. She was settled, she was happy. … I just wanted [them to have] firm roots so that's why I wanted to stay home as much as possible when they were little.*

And so, with her children being older and her weariness of the corporate roles and expectations growing, Janice's decision to train as a teacher was based on what she saw as a

wide range of benefits to being a teacher-mother. She shows me a photo of her daughter walking to school, her jacket collar pulled up around her ears and her mask fitted snuggly to her cheeks. Janice smiles and talks proudly about how her daughter is responsible enough to walk to and from school independently and how her family life in the morning is comparatively calm.

> *My kids are a great age for me to go back full-time, but this full-time just feels so flexible. … We still have a bit of time in the morning, it's just not a pressure cooker. I don't want to go back to that.*

She shows me another picture of girls playing netball under the lights on a winter's evening and tells me that previously, she "*just could not get school activities to work. So now Charlotte can finally play netball and cricket and he [Jack] was doing rock climbing but now he's doing his Dungeons and Dragons Club."* She tells me of her relief, both logistical and financial, of not needing childcare before or after school or during school holidays. "*I guess that's what I love most. I'm on their schedule and that's why I feel like I've got more time than I've ever had before*." It is in stark contrast to her previous experiences.

She felt instinctively that teaching would be a profession that would be supportive of her needs and responsibilities as a mother. "*I thought there would be an empathy and an understanding about the family dynamic because you're in that setting*."

These factors all played a part in her decision to become a teacher. They are things that she continues to appreciate as elements of her life that allow her to work and be the mother she desires for her children.

A Built Life. Janice flicks through her photos on her phone and stops on a picture of her computer sitting open on the same table that we are currently sitting at. Her children and husband sit on the floor in the background playing a board game. She tells me of her dislike of board games and her pleasure of being able to work on a Saturday afternoon while her family plays close by. "*I've built a nice little life*."

Janice explains the decisions she has made about her employment have been equally as family-oriented as her decision to enter the teaching profession in the first place. She took a teaching job at Riverside High School, the same school where Linley is a teacher. Like Linley, she "*was pretty determined to find a local job*." Janice's daughter attends a local

primary school where she can safely walk to and from school independently. She enrolled her son to attend an out-of-zone intermediate school that is close to her workplace. As Jack finishes before Janice does, he can take advantage of a bus that picks him up at the intermediate and drops him at his mother's school in the afternoons. He often sits in the back of her meetings before they leave for the day, together.

Complexity of Life

Easy Flow, Hard Work. Throughout our first conversation, Janice returned to the notion that she finds her life easy at the moment.

> *I'm actually loving teaching. I'm loving it. It's so my space. And because my life is so easy. … I don't want to say it's the easiest work I've ever had, but it's got the easiest flow that I've ever had.*

It is an idea that she also expressed in our initial email communications. Often, these comments were made in conjunction with a comparison to her life when her children were younger and her work was corporate-based.

> *I have to be careful that I don't judge teachers because I think that they're on a good wicket with money and holidays and all this because I'm looking at it from another angle. But I have to be very careful that I don't because it is a draining job. It is tiring, and I can imagine that if you're 10 years deep into it, it's very different to two years.*

There were moments when her comments supported her 'easy' claims and others that were seemingly contractionary. Janice shows me a screenshot of a spreadsheet that she made for her husband. It is colour-coded and filled with annotations. She created it for him to use over several days when she would be away on a school surfing trip. Later, she explains

> *Some weeks, the juggle is real. Sigh. You get to the end of the week and you think, how did I actually do all that? Because you look at it and you go, I cannot physically be in two places at the same time.*

In our second conversation, I asked Janice for clarification. Although she had described the logistics of her "*easy flow*" in great detail, the impacts of a "*draining job*" had been left unexamined.

> *It's not hard work in the sense of I know my stuff. … It's the bityness of it. … You never stop refining. I don't think you ever have perfect coursework. I think I've changed it every time I've taught a topic. … I don't think you ever stop. So you've got all that*

going on at the same time as marking at the same time as you're getting emails constantly. … It comes in ebbs and flows. … You'll have three of four weeks which are just doing my work, and then you'll have a week, like this week, where you're like 'Oh my god, they want me to put this in and they want me to put estimated credits into the system and they want me to have all my derived mark grading and by this and they want me to...and then they want me to fill in this form. Whoa!' But I know now that next week it will feel different again and I cope.

As she explains, Janice's work and home life are busy. She, however, feels that teaching has enabled her the timing to carry out both roles well, despite their sometimes intense demands.

When Roles Collide. There are times, however, when the roles do rub against each other and Janice needs to make decisions, juggle, and prioritise. Our second interview occurs the morning after Janice spent the previous day at A&E with her daughter. She recounts to me,

[Charlotte] walks out at 6:20 yesterday morning. 'Mummy, my wrist hurts.' … There was bruising and I did the old mum thing, 'It's probably just a sprain."…. About ten minutes later…I'm like, "Actually, I think I need to go get this sorted." But to be fair, some of it was because it was the last day my seniors were at school because they go on exam leave and part of me was thinking, 'I've got my Level Twos and then I have [sic] that workshop.' So part of me is thinking, 'Surely it can't be that bad' and like, 'Not today. Today is a bad day.' At 6:40, I thought no, mum comes first.

We are meeting later than we had scheduled. While driving to work, she received a call from Charlotte's school that she wasn't well and needed to be picked up.

I said, "look, no problem, I'll come straight away." And then it was that panic. … I just quickly pulled over, rang my colleague, started driving again, and she was great. She goes, 'I will email, I'll get it all sorted. You just send relief.' … So I was like whew!

The jumping between roles, and sometimes carrying them out simultaneously, is something that Janice has experienced. She stated that in these times, the support of her colleagues and her ability to juggle her responsibilities allowed her to navigate the tensions that arose.

Emotional Exhaustion. Janice spoke at length of both the positive and negative implications that being a teacher-mother had on her logistical life. She also recognised that this career, more so than with her corporate work, had cognitive and emotional implications that she had not expected.

I think that's probably the hardest thing, especially teaching. I've noticed my brain doesn't switch off as much as other jobs. I had an encounter, not a positive encounter, with two students yesterday. But I went and read their notes and I just felt such empathy for them because they just come from such a tough place. ... But you can't switch off and then you come home and your own kids have got stuff. … There's more emotion and more kind of just thought going on all the time even though you're not working.

Janice finds a picture on her phone of her dog playing with a large bone tied with an equally large ribbon. The previous weekend, she and her family had thrown the family dog a fifth birthday party complete with gifts and a candle-laden cake. She tells me of the guilt she felt during the party.

I was thinking about those girls because I was thinking… 'Oh my god, these girls have such a tough...they don't live with parents, they're only in Year 10.' And here I am throwing a party just to make my kids' life fun… I think that's where I find it harder because like…some kids don't have this. And I think that's probably as a mother teaching, where I find it more draining.

Later, she tells me of another student whose experiences weigh heavily on her mind.

He's just going through so much, so much. And he's not turning work in and I'm trying to be so supportive and doing workshops and having them come at lunchtime and trying as much as I can, but he's absent so often and all that. And it plays on your mind. … And so that gets me because I'm like, "Oh man." And I've had days when I come home and just hug my kids and just think, "you guys are so lucky that you've got parents that actually care, more than care." It goes beyond that, I think. It is really emotionally draining.

To Janice, the emotional toll of caring for her students and her children is one of the most challenging parts of being a teacher-mother. The emotional ups and downs are "*a bit of a rollercoaster*." It's an aspect of teaching that Janice struggles to negotiate. "*And maybe I never will*," she reflects.

Schools as Structural Mediators

Friday Flexibility. Although the logistics of Janice's life have been carefully and purposefully curated, there are gaps that Janice required the support of her school to fill. While her daughter's afterschool care is usually provided by a neighbour, Fridays proved to be a challenge. Janice, seeing a solution, approached middle managers with a proposal.

On a Friday, she [my neighbour] can't have her [Charlotte]. That's why I came home early. But I don't teach period five. So my manager, my teacher-in-charge and my

> *Head of Department were like, "That's fine, leave early" because I said "I can't get her into afterschool care on a Friday, it's full. My neighbour can't have her. Can I just leave?" They're very good.*

Janice sees the culture at Riverside High School as being supportive of this flexible working environment.

> *And I think it just probably comes down to the school you're at. … They [Riverside High School] are kind of like, 'well, at the end of the day, no one else can do your work if the work is not getting done … we'll know.'*

Throughout our interviews, she returns to the idea that while she had chosen Riverside High School for specific logistical reasons, she is grateful that they are supportive of her work and family needs. It is something that she feels is "*very dependent on the department and the school you work in*" and acknowledges that her experiences might be very different elsewhere.

Flexibility as a Reward. Janice sees the flexibility in working hours that she receives as being well-earned. "*I do think you do need to be flexible and it does have to go both ways*." She tells me a long list of extracurriculars that she has been involved with during her short tenure at the school.

> *I think I might have been a wee bit tactical too, in the way that I do try and do as much as I can when I am there, as in taking trips or covering the sports or whatever. … I am a great believer in swings and roundabouts and I think it can't be all one way. So I can't just be like, "No, these are my hours. I'm not doing anything extra." And then, "Hey, I need time off for this. Hey, I need time off for that," even if it is sickness. And I think that's an unrealistic expectation for any business. So when I've been able to, I've tried to do as much as possible.*

Janice sees schools as businesses. She applies lessons she learned in her corporate roles about both work inputs and networking to her current teaching role.

> *I think I built pretty solid relationships very quickly, which I think also helped. ... If you expect to go in and do minimal and then you expect your school to be supportive, if you do need lots of time off as a parent, I think that sometimes is probably asking a little bit too much because it's going to be give and take.*

Katie

Introduction

Eden, Katie's youngest daughter, peered around the corner of the computer screen as our video call connected. She would return to check in on us throughout our interviews, often quietly observing while looking for a cuddle, at other times letting her 3-year-old curiosity and impatience for a bike ride at the park take over. As a mother of four girls under the age of ten, Katie seemed to effortlessly give Eden what she needed without breaking focus or conversation. At one point she stopped to apologise while adding "*Oh my god, this is just like exactly what mum life is like*." Perhaps her seemingly seamless juggling reflected her familiarity with balancing the complexity of her family and work life.

Katie began teaching before she had children, spending just over two years at a large Auckland secondary school before moving overseas with her husband. There they comprised the entire PE department at an area school with Katie teaching the younger students while her husband taught the elder. The arrangement was of their choosing but Katie pointed out that she thought the school, while never directly stating as such, "*kind of preferred a female to do the younger ones*."

After a few years, Katie had her first child and resigned. She explained her decision to leave full-time teaching, "*I just really wanted to be a mum and be able to stay home and enjoy my children. I didn't want that financial pressure of having to go back to work*." With a move back to Aotearoa New Zealand and the addition of more children to her family, Katie returned to teaching in a somewhat different capacity.

> *I've been a mum for almost ten years coming up and I haven't got back into full-time teaching. I feel like I'm not in the right mind space to do full-time, but I've just done relief. So probably in the last five years, I think I was pregnant with my third child when I started relieving again. … And so now, even today, I'm still just doing relief, just on days that suit me.*

Her description of "*just doing relief*", however, undersold the true complexity of her life as a teacher-mother as she would later explain.

Complexity of Life

Katie shows me a picture of four plastic lunch boxes drying beside a sink. They were different styles, one cracked, showing the frequency of their use. She laughs and begins to explain why she had shared this photograph with me.

> *Lunchboxes, man. I find that every morning it's so repetitive and I'm trying to think of things to put in there that maybe are a bit different to what the normal is and then getting them out after school, washing them, getting them dried, ready for it to go the next day. ... It's just another job in the morning to do. You know, like getting everyone ready or sorted… And I'm always like "Have I got enough stuff in the cupboard for the next day?" … It's always on my mind "What is going to go on those lunch boxes tomorrow?" And Michael, my husband, gets told off all the time for eating stuff that [sic] in my mind I've put aside for lunch boxes. I'm like, "Oh my goodness, don't eat that, that's for the lunchboxes!"*

Her Many Hats. Katie's mind is full. Full from the logistics of raising four children. Full from the variety of roles she has taken on, one of which is relief teaching on a part-time basis.

> *I think because I'm relieving, I've taken on quite a few different hats because I don't have just a regular job. … I work a day for my mum, so I have to think about that. I'm the treasurer at Playcentre at the moment, so that's like a hat to wear. And then I took on the job of running the community hall bookings in Northbrook. And so that's like another hat I have that takes up a bit of time. And then my relieving hat when I have to plan, and then my mum hat and my afterschool activities hat. There's quite a few different hats. Sometimes, I just feel that my head is just, like, at its capacity, and I don't actually get that much time even just to sit and not do much.*

While her 'relief teacher hat' affords her the time to do other roles, it too comes with its own cognitive burdens.

> *It's always on my mind … if I do have a day where I want to teach and I haven't been asked [but] I think I'm going to be asked. It's always on my mind, kind of in those early hours of the morning. I'm like, "Oh, I better wake up…so I can check my phone and then get sorted."*

She admits that she has come to the point where she prepares as if she will be called in to relieve regardless.

Organising the Juggle. Pointing to a picture of her smart-watch at the beginning of her run, Katie describes the importance of starting her day with exercise despite the scarcity

of free time. It, as with many parts of Katie's life, needs to be organised so that it doesn't fall through the cracks left by the busyness of her daily life.

> *I think we've just worked out quite a good system, Michael and I. He'll get up and go to the gym, and then when he gets home, I'll go for a run. And then I'll get back, and then he'll go to work, and then I'll kind of get the kids ready, and then I'll go. Some mornings, like, quarter past eight, I'm like, "Oh my god, come on guys! I've got to go. Come on guys, get out the door." Yes. I've got to be pretty organised to fit it in.*

An informal organisation with her husband weaves its way through our conversation. While Katie struggles to pinpoint how the juggling happens, through her stories it is clear that communication and sharing the domestic load with her husband occurs daily.

> *It just kind of happens. ... Normally, I kind of am like, "We've got this on. What time are you finishing?" And then we kind of just work it out on the day if he can help or meet somewhere.*

She speaks of how lucky she feels Michael is so involved with family life while acknowledging that not every mother is equally as fortunate. Taking a deep breath, she describes an example of how the juggle works when he is unavailable.

> *Every now and then he'll have … parent interviews in the evenings. And that was when it became quite a juggle. … The kids all had a school disco at different times. I had a netball game and Olive needed to be dropped at a friend's house. And it was all on one night. And I remember driving home from netball and I was ringing him and I was like, "How far away are you?!" It was just such a juggle. I was like, "Man!" And the kids were a bit run down because it was the end of the term. I had to drag Eden to all these different places. She just wanted to get home. I was like, "That was quite intense."*

Katie's life, mind, and schedule are full. Her multiple roles leave little time for other commitments and her choice to relieve on a part-time basis reflects the fullness of her reality.

Personal Agency

Choosing Relief Work. Katie recognises the space that her family life occupies both cognitively and temporally fits, albeit tightly, with the teaching commitments of relieving. It's the primary reason why she has decided to remain a relief teacher.

> *I said that I wouldn't like to go full-time for quite a long time because, like, life - it's quite a juggle. My kids do quite a lot of after-school activities and I feel like my brain*

> *will just be constantly going. You know, like of all the things that I've got to get sorted and then all that planning as well.*

She shifts and explains that recently she has taken up a short-term, twice-weekly contract to provide cover for a teacher on extended sick leave.

> *It is quite different because, actually, for the first time in ten years, I actually have to plan. And so that has been a little bit it's been good and bad. Like, it's been really good because it's a nice ease [back] into teaching … [because] I haven't had to plan for so long.*

Katie begins listing aspects of teaching that relieving has shielded her from and this new role has begun to expose (planning, e-learning tools, marking, giving student feedback) before optimistically settling on the fact that she has consistent, enjoyable work twice a week. Consistency rids her of one small piece of the complexity of her teacher-mother life.

Choosing a School. Katie has been strategic in her choice of the school where she relieves. While two other secondary schools are closer to her home, she relieves at Suncrest High School. Although this is also where her husband teaches, that is not the primary driver of her choice. She shows me a picture of Eden and her holding hands. Eden wears a backpack adorned with a big, purple, googly-eyed bird while a laptop bag swings on Katie's shoulder. It could be a generic picture of a mother-daughter on an adventure or a preschool drop-off but this picture stands out because of the background. It is taken at Suncrest High School, where Eden, as two of her older sisters did before her, accompanies Katie while she teaches. She explains to me that she didn't return to teaching intentionally, rather it was the opportunity presented by the school that drove the decision.

> *Nothing changed financially. Maybe the opportunity just came to relieve and take the children. So I think I was like, "Oh well, I'm going to be earning some money, but as well I'll still be spending time with the kids". And I wouldn't have done it if that wasn't an option. I would have just stayed [at home].*

She knew that relief work proved difficult to navigate in relation to childcare. So when asked if she would be open to relief work at Suncrest High School, she had explained to school leadership, "*I can, but I do have the kids and I don't want to put them into daycare. If I only work one day that week, then I don't want to have them in [day-care for] set days.*" This focus on spending time with her young children while also earning money in a

logistically feasible way for her family lead Katie to decide to relieve primarily at Suncrest High School.

Schools as Structural Mediators

Children at School. The support in balancing her family and work responsibilities that Katie has received from Suncrest High School comes not from her requests but from what Katie described as part of an overall school ethos. She sees the principal as being *"… pretty incredible. He is all about family and different generations within a school and everyone is kind of interacting*." In describing one conversation she had with him, Katie recounts,

> *One time I was just like, "Oh, thank you so much for allowing me to bring Eden. It's been so helpful and like, financially." And he was just like, "Thank you so much for coming. It's so cool having her in the school as well." I was like, "Oh, it's so nice."*

The offer to bring children to work is not limited to Katie. Multiple relievers do the same. Full-time staff are also afforded some flexibility in having their children at school.

> *A lot of their kids go to Suncrest Primary, which is down the road, a lot of the teacher's kids. If there's a Teacher Only Day, then you often see their kids around for school. Or even a couple of them if they're not feeling 100%, then they might be in the office on a bean bag for the day. The primary school also finishes at 3:00, so then they all walk down to the secondary school. So just after 3:00, you see them all start to come in and disperse to where their mum's offices are or their dad's. You kind of see it a little bit, but not like a whole day like it is for myself.*

Katie happily shows me another picture of her and Eden at school. She describes that while she teaches, Eden draws on whiteboards, and looks at books, and colours. When she is assigned to relieve a PE class, Eden plays on the equipment in the gym. Katie can send Eden to Michael's class when he is teaching in the gym or "*if they started spiking*." She fondly tells me about the school's ongoing support of her family. "*I think a couple of times, actually, Olive [now 9] went with him when I had one of the babies. Not for like a whole day or anything, but [Michael] would take Olive maybe for the afternoon or something*."

While Katie states that this flexibility is freely offered to relievers by "*the deputy principal … and the principal … because he's been so desperate for relievers*", she also describes some tensions that her husband has seen between a part-time teacher-mother with two young children and her colleagues in response to her bringing children into school.

> *I think she brings a pram and all this stuff into the office. … I think, like, six teachers [are] in it and it's her office as well. Yeah. I think Michael just mentioned that there's been a few people not that happy about that. … Maybe that's their quiet place where they concentrate and then there's two kids in there. ... They're probably marking and planning and it's creating a bit more distraction.*

Flexible Hours. Allowing Katie to bring the girls into school while she teaches is not the only support that she has been given. When presented with the opportunity to take on the short-term medical-leave cover, Katie easily negotiated flexibility in the hours that she worked to accommodate her family commitments.

> *My kids do gymnastics on a Monday at 3:30 in Suncrest but that school finishes at 3:30. When she asked me if I could do that, I was like, "I can, but I can't do Block Four, because I actually have to get home to get the kids to take them back again." So she was really good and she said "That's fine. You can just come for the first three blocks because that takes you to lunchtime and there's only one more block after lunch." She said she'll just pay me but it will just be classed as like a planning block. They're very accommodating.*

Katie knows that the school is unique in what they are offering her. She smiles, "*Suncrest is amazing*."

Jen

Introduction

Jen is six weeks pregnant with her third child when she contacts me, interested in becoming a participant. She has two children, Lachlan aged 6 and Grace aged 2, the same ages as my daughters. As we talk, setting up the foundations for our upcoming work together, it strikes me that, at face value, many aspects of our teaching and parenthood journeys seem to mirror each other and yet our experiences have been vastly different.

Jen has been teaching for 12 years at Windsor College. Throughout the last nine years, she has taken on different leadership positions within her department, something that she has recently re-evaluated. In a few months, Jen will voluntarily step down from her leadership role before going on parental leave and returning, full-time, as a classroom teacher. She wants to tell her story, she says over the phone, because she feels it's important to share it both for herself and other teacher-mothers.

Complexity of Life

A Physically Busy Life. Jen is at home when we connect our video call. It is early afternoon. She tells me that she left school early as she was not feeling well and had no afternoon classes. Her pregnancy is approaching the end of its first trimester and the last few weeks have been physically challenging. She is tired. She is working full-time, mothering two young children, managing her household, and leading the geography department.

> *I got to school this morning just feeling a bit average and I sat at my desk. It was like 8:20, and I was like, "Wow, like an hour ago I was at home with my kids. I've dropped him [Lachlan] at before-school care. I've dropped her [Grace] at daycare, and here I am sitting here now." And it was just this moment of "Wow, in an hour, look where I am."*

She shows me several pictures. While different, Jen sees them as showing the same thing – the busyness and overlapping aspects of her teacher-mother life. They are all taken at night, lights dimmed, curtains closed. There are cleaned dishes drying on a rack next to open lunchboxes and plastic containers. Jen wearily tells me of needing to cancel the meal-delivery service that she relied on because of her pregnancy wooziness. Dinner planning now has been added to her responsibilities of weekly meal preparation and the daily grind of packing lunchboxes.

Another picture shows a pile of marking on the dining table interspersed with her son's toys. "*Sometimes the worlds collide as much as you want to keep them separate. Like trying to do marking on a table with a Batman Lego set and a Build-Your-Volcano kit, that doesn't say it any better than that*." Jen explains that compartmentalisation of her work and home 'worlds' is something she strives for but sometimes struggles to achieve.

> *I was very conscious about walking in and walking out and changing that mindset and changing those thoughts because I didn't want to be thinking about work when I came home because I wanted to be focused on being a mum.*

She shows me the next picture, taken the same evening. Her open computer and a block of chocolate have joined the dining table and student assignments have been opened. She points to the lower corner of her screen.

> *I started work for the night at 8:36. So it took me until 8:36 to make the dinner, put my kids to bed, do the dishes, sort the house, and then I could start my marking for*

the night. And I think I probably sat down and was thinking about things and thought, yeah, this is a good photo because literally, it shows you that the time that most people are having a shower and sitting on the couch. But no, that was the time I was starting and working again. … You've got to do what you got to do to survive.

Jen reflects on how her working habits have changed since having children throughout our two interviews. She takes work home now. She sneaks in short bursts of work when she can. She uses each moment at school efficiently. It's a change that she relates to her growing family's needs.

You try to balance when you come back [from parental leave]. You don't want to be at school until 5:00 because you're trying to just make the new routine at home work and you're trying to balance your work responsibility. … And so it means there that my non-contacts I had to use incredibly wisely, which meant that my in-school extracurricular responsibilities changed.

To Jen, the inevitable outcome of the busyness of her life has been forfeiting time for her own self-care.

Sometimes I feel like I'm just talking to people all the time and looking after my kids. Like I don't have time to get my nails done or my hair done or to go clothes shopping or to go to the movies. That's a sacrifice that I've chosen to make. I get that. But I guess it's that idea of self-care. … It's almost like you're on a treadmill and you just keep going because if you don't, you'll fall off the treadmill. And that hurts.

An Emotionally Drained Life. The busyness of Jen's life is coupled with a sense of being emotionally sapped. "*Sometimes I'll say to my husband…'all I've done today has been nice to people. I need my cup filled back up. I'm empty. I've spent the whole day looking after other people.'*" She goes on to explain

I think people who don't have kids don't understand the mental side of being a teacher and a mum because, yes, people go off and they're busy and they're doing all their things. … [But] as a teacher, you spend your day giving love and giving support and then to get home and you're still giving that out. Yeah, that can be extra taxing.

The concept of Jen struggling to compartmentalise her 'worlds' returns. "*I think people who don't have kids don't understand that just extra element of when you're at work, you're focused, you're doing your work because you go home and you go to your second job.*" It is the demands of these two 'jobs' which leave Jen feeling emotionally drained.

Judgement Preoccupation. Throughout our conversations, Jen fluctuates between a confident irreverence for how her colleagues perceive her status as a teacher-mother and a

concern about what she feels is unfair judgement. Her stories reveal her belief about being *"… a mum of a young kid. Whether you like it or not, that brings people's preconceived ideas about you and your ability to do your job*." It is an underlying narrative that weaves its way through many of her experiences and decisions, consistently lurking at the back of her mind.

Jen is keenly aware of her status as a teacher with young children. This is not because of shame or lack of pride but rather because she worries about the implications of what others may think of her dual responsibilities. Therefore, Jen often approaches teacher-motherhood in search of (in)visibility. On one hand, she hopes for understanding and acceptance and on the other, she seeks protection from judgement. She tells me of transitioning back into the school when she returned from parental leave after the birth of her daughter.

> *I have one of my really good friends who teaches at the school, but she teaches in a different department. And so I spoke to her because I was paranoid that I would come back and look like a weak link. So I didn't want to ask people in my department to fill in the gaps that I felt I had because I felt like I would look stupid. … I used my personal friendships to gain information so that I didn't professionally look dumb.*

Jen pauses and reflects that with this pregnancy, she feels she doesn't need to worry about being judged as heavily. She can let her motherhood be seen; she has proven herself by now.

> *At that time I was conscious of coming back and wanting to make sure that I looked like I could still do my job even though I had two little kids. I still wanted to be respected and seen. I didn't want to be seen, like, I couldn't do things. Whereas now I'm at the point where I'm like, "You know that I can do my job if I come back from this child. And if you make those assumptions, all that's on you." Because I actually know, this is my third time around, like, I know I can do my job. I don't need to prove anything. Whereas like with number two, I was still out to prove people wrong. This time I'm like, "I don't need to prove anything to anybody."*

There are times, however, when Jen's internal narrative shows less confidence. She tells me what she hopes returning from leave will be like this time – invisible.

> *I don't want the spotlight on me. I don't want that. I just want to just tap in and tap out. I want to come back next year and someone goes to me, "You were on maternity leave? Really?" I just want it to be just seamless. I don't want that attention drawn to me. … I don't need the song and dance for it all because I guess there is an underlying sense of being paranoid that you'll be treated differently because you have young*

children. A young father would, I think, not be treated like that because it would be seen like they had a wife or a woman at home to do all that stuff.

She spoke of the judgement that she feels about justifying her choices to return to work.

I do feel like I get judgment because I come back with under a year of having my kids. Coming back eight months [after having Lachlan] and eight months [after having Grace], and then this time six months, even though my husband is at home. I feel like I have to tell people that he's at home for three months to justify why I'm coming back after six. And I shouldn't have to justify my leave length.

Jen's awareness of potential judgement seeps into her students. During our first conversation, she explains to me that she told her students she was pregnant days prior. "*I had to tell them because I like I had to relieve the pressure from myself so that it would be okay that I could sit at my desk*."

Through these stories, Jen shows me the continual tensions that she faces with trying to both be seen as a professional and be seen as a teacher-mother. Her sometimes-contradictory thoughts illustrate the persistent presence the judgement of others plays in her daily life.

Personal Agency

Pulling Back. One of the first things that Jen tells me when we start talking is about how she has made purposeful decisions to facilitate the addition of motherhood into her professional life. She proudly rattles off her involvement in an extensive list of programmes, sports teams, school camps, and shows. The list has dwindled over time as her family grew.

I did all that stuff. You know, I was all in. I did all that stuff and then I had my first child and I was like, "Okay, well, the only thing I can do now is coach my own netball team." So I did that and then, as I had my second child, … I just managed a netball team. And now with my third child, I now know that I can't do anything.

She tells me that she tried to shift to doing an extracurricular that met during school hours.

In the end, actually, that wasn't successful because that took away more of my school time, which is where I do my marking and my planning. … So it's just, I guess, like that new balance and changing the responsibilities and the participation.

She has pulled back with her involvement in her curricular involvement as well.

I did do lots of professional development at our school when I started, like a lot. And before kids, I'd happily go to the 7:30, 7:45 meetings... And now I don't go to

anything unless I have to... I just, I do what is required of me, but I am careful because things like meetings and PDs if they're not during school hours.

To Jen, to continue working full time and being a mother to young children, she has had to go back to the bare bones of the profession. She can't fit the extra, optional aspects into her life.

Months before we met, Jen decided to take the additional step of resigning from her leadership role. She knew that she wanted to have another baby and yet didn't want leadership to think she was stepping away because she was pregnant. When she resigned, her concerns about judgement were confirmed.

It was a comment that someone in leadership made to me where I said, look, "Thank you for your support of me stepping away." And their comment was, "Oh, well, you've got a young family that comes first now." And actually, I am not. Yes, having a young family contributes to that decision but, actually, the reason why I stepped away is because I've done it since 2014 and it's time for something new. And even if I wasn't having this third baby, I still would have stepped aside from it.

During our first conversation, Jen explains her resignation was based on a desire for professional change. In our second, with the transition period of her newly appointed replacement having started, she tells me "*I am fully at peace with coming back and being a step back from what I was.*" Her rationale is now much more family oriented.

It gives me mental space back. It takes a layer of stress out of my life because what I have to worry about at school reduces dramatically - the to-do lists, the "What is this person doing in their class?", "Did these kids turn up to the exam?", "Oh I need to do this budget", "These kids need a refund", like all that stuff that you think about in the shower at night when you're debriefing in your day and you're washing your hair and you're like "What happened here?" I don't have to worry about any of that stuff. I can literally be thinking "What am I going to cook for dinner tomorrow night?", "Have I put that load of washing on?", "Have I paid for Lachlan's [sic]..." And that's what I want back. I know that if I really wanted to, I know that I could maintain in leadership and be a good mom. And I feel like, because I know that, that's enough for me. But it'll hopefully makes me less stressed, more patient, because I won't have to worry about the politics of school. I can just rock up, teach my classes and go.

She sees the change as giving her less stress and more patience and time with her children. She isn't concerned with the change in pay or status. She wants to plateau professionally for the foreseeable future to find more balance in her life.

> *I reckon it all comes down to control as well. … Taking that step back gives me more control over that because I'm not in that leadership position. … The things I'm worrying about are less. And so therefore it gives me more control over my time, over my emotions, over all those extra things, which is a benefit to me at the moment.*

Staying Put. Jen has decided to continue working. "*I still want to work because I still want to earn money and I still want to give them [my kids] that kind of life*." She has decided to stay at her current school where, despite some of the attitudes from senior management towards her status as a mother, she feels she has support from the team of teachers and middle management around her.

> *I've been at this place for a long time. … I have the flexibility, I have the personal connections and the relationships that allow me to be flexible and allow certain situations where I have to go and care for my family or "Hey, I can't go on that overnight school trip for three days," that level of understanding because they know who I am.*

She worries that if she were to go to another school, she might not be afforded the same level of understanding. "*I just don't think it's worth it.*"

When I asked Jen about how long she sees herself staying at her school, she told me indefinitely. "*I decided that I want to stay here for my children. … I feel like I've worked hard for other people's children. My children should have the same opportunity*." She is wholly dedicated to the school, both accepting and critical of their stance towards teacher-mothers.

Schools as Structural Mediators

Up to this point, all the participants shared with me aspects of the school culture that supported their roles as teacher-mothers. While they all identified features that made it challenging to enact both roles, they felt that their schools were accommodating albeit in different ways and to different extents. Jen's narrative tells a different story. While she feels that she has collegial support from the group of teachers working around her, the school on a larger scale does not reflect this same attitude. Through her stories, she illustrated this lack of support while also, in some cases, justifying the position of the school to which she is committed.

Missed Job Opportunities. At the end of last year, Jen was looking for a change. When a deaning role was advertised, she knew that it was the challenge she was looking for.

She applied, was shortlisted, and interviewed along with another teacher with, what she felt, remarkably similar experience and qualifications. She didn't get the job. However, Jen was left with a feeling that her status as a teacher-mother was directly responsible for the school's decision.

> *I think it's fair to say that I've missed out on some job opportunities because I've had children. I have missed out on a promotion. … The types of questions that they asked me at the beginning of my interview about my children, which I think they kind of did under the guise of, like, being friendly, really they were sussing out how I look after my children. So did I have enough time to apply to the role?*

She reiterates,

> *Because I had kids, I feel like I've missed out on jobs. No one has said that explicitly, but I feel like it is. ... At the end of the day, doesn't matter, right or wrong, if I feel that way, there's been something that's happened to create that feeling. That idea that because I have young kids I can't do this or I can't do that. And I get it. Fine.*

Jen, while acknowledging that she has no direct proof of discrimination, feels that at her school "*there are definitely people who [think] 'Got young kids? Moving on.'*" She justifies this by explaining the view that being a dean "*…takes up more of your mental space. And I have young children, therefore I can't do that as well. No matter what anyone says from the comments made, I do feel like having young children was a barrier*." At the same time, she tells me that before she had children, "*it was almost like I couldn't become a dean because I didn't have children of my own and therefore couldn't understand a parent's struggle."* It was a situation in which she feels she just couldn't win.

Parental Leave. Even with taking parental leave, Jen feels that at her school, accessing this entitlement is seen as a decision to take a step back and this will have inevitable repercussions.

> *You can't step back and then demand that you have these classes and you have this classroom and I'll have this and that. … It doesn't work like that. If I step back, it means that I have to come back [from parental leave] and be a reliever or I have to come back and have juniors. You can't have it both ways. You have to choose.*

It's a choice that Jen made after each of her children was born. After Lachlan was born, Jen returned to work at the beginning of a new school year in a very similar role which she left. After Grace, however, things were different. She returned halfway through the

year and was "*given one senior class instead of [my normal] three…even though I was coming back as the head of my subject*."

Jen shifts, thinking about her upcoming leave. She will return partway through the year.

> *I haven't been formally told but it's kind of been insinuated that I'll most likely just be a reliever because I won't be coming back as head of my subject… Is that worth dying on the hill for? I'll have three little kids. Whatever. I could fight it, and I could demand classes. But at our school, every decision is made with the students at the centre and sometimes that means that the staff wellbeing fits in a little bit differently to maybe other places. But it's okay, I've just accepted it now. It does suck that … in a female-dominated profession [sic], there isn't sort of allowances or accommodations when obviously the staff going on maternity leave would be quite high. But, yeah, that's okay. I'm at peace with it. But it does suck.*

She decided to take her parental leave early despite not being due until well into Term 1. She doesn't feel that the school will accommodate her needs at this point in her pregnancy.

> *I knew that they'd use me as a reliever and our campus was very big and I didn't want to be walking from one end to the other end to cover a class because they put me where they needed me. They didn't go "Oh, she's eight months pregnant, let's put her in one block for the day." So part of me is a bit miffed, but again, I understand about the school, like, students need to be at the centre, but it's just one of those things.*

The School's Decisions. Again and again, Jen justifies the school's decisions that she feels are unfair, highlighting her school's priority on student needs over staff welfare. While she has "*a really close group of immediate people who support me, no questions asked*," she doesn't feel the same from senior leadership or the school as a whole.

> *I definitely feel that in a female-dominated profession, there are men who lead. Men are the ones in power mostly at this place. And yeah, that sometimes means that because the decisions are so student-centred, it often means that some aspects of the staff [welfare] are, I don't want to say cast aside, but the balance isn't always there because the product at the end is the students.*

She gives me an example.

> *On Friday I've got an obstetrician appointment. I'm just going to call in sick for the whole day and take a sick day because that's easier than having to prove a medical appointment, go through the rigamarole of still getting paid for that or not getting paid for that, or getting cover for this and getting cover for that and coming and going. It's just too hard. I'm just going to call in sick.*

The support that she does get comes at a cost. Jen sees the flexibility and understanding she is afforded by her department as a reward for the years of hard work and extra responsibilities that she took on. "*I've seen people who just came and did the bare minimum and turn around and ask for something. And the school was like, 'Sorry, who are you?'*" To her, "*You can't have your cake and eat it too*."

Chapter 5: Discussion

Filled with personal choices and reverberations from structural influences, the teacher-mothers' unique yet kindred narratives are further discussed in this chapter, reflecting the professional and societal structures that they occurred within. The educational and parental structures (meso-social) contributing to the teacher-mothers' experiences are explained in connection to relevant literature. Finally, the influence and over-arching impacts of national (macro-) social structures are analysed in relation to the empirical data.

Experiencing the Dual Roles of Teacher and Mother

The previous chapter gave accounts of each participant's individual experience as a teacher-mother in Aotearoa New Zealand. While unique, the women's lives presented similarities. In different ways, each woman found that her life was physically busy. Long lists of responsibilities, ranging from car-pooling and laundry to facilitating meetings and marking assignments, composed their physical labour. The women also described how they were continuously mentally occupied by the practicalities of keeping track of their complex lives, judgements of their teacher and mother capabilities, and carrying out the emotional labour of their dual roles. The combination of this cognitive and emotional labour constituted their mental loads. While presented in individualised forms, the commonalities attend to the question, 'How do New Zealand secondary school teachers who are also mothers of young children experience the dual roles of teacher and mother?'

The Physical Labour of Being a Teacher-Mother

The physical labour that the teacher-mothers in this study faced occurred in both role domains – at home and work. According to Dean et al. (2022), physical labour is visible work that does not always include an emotional element. This type of labour can be measured in time. For the teacher-mothers in this research, their physical labour loads were high, leaving time in short supply, a reality that was further compounded by professional and national structures.

The personal experiences that each woman described as contributing factors to their physically busy lives are supported by and give evidence to the enhancement and scarcity hypotheses: when by holding dual roles, women's lives can be enriched or strained due to a

lack of resources (Peterson et al., 2018). The teacher-mothers' accounts, not unexpectedly, included aspects of both. Peterson et al. (2018) surmised, "In reality, it is likely that many mothers encounter aspects of both the scarcity and enhancement scenarios upon combining parenting and paid work. However, for each mother, one of the two hypotheses may apply to a greater extent" (p. 5). For three of the four women, aspects supporting the scarcity hypothesis applied to their lives more heavily. Janice found that, for the most part, carrying out both roles enhanced her ability to work and be a mother. However, her often contradictory narratives about the ease and challenges of her life show the true nature of experiencing antithetical scenarios simultaneously.

Enhancement Hypothesis. The 'friendly' school schedule is often given as justification for the feminisation of teaching (Moreau, 2019). It is seen to allow women to work while their children are at school and carry out their familial duties when their children are home. All the women in this study referred to their appreciation of this scheduling. All reported that their work days began before and ended after primary school hours, a common trend in secondary and primary schools in Aotearoa New Zealand (Ministry of Education, 2021b, 2021d). While this rigid schedule of schools was sometimes challenging, as with the findings of Hermann et al. (2023), they found ways to cover the small gaps in childcare. They spent most of their afternoons and evenings with their families, but this itself created a conflicted situation; they were responsible for completing professional work at other times, which added to their overall physical labour.

Despite the intense physical labour of their lives, each woman identified the comparable flexibility that the school schedule afforded them enhanced aspects of their overall lives. The participants appreciated having school holidays together with their children. Janice spoke of the financial benefits of not having to enrol her children in school holiday programmes. At the same time, she, Jen, and Linley were grateful for family time during school breaks. While this appreciation for scheduling is common in other teacher-mother studies (Claesson & Brice, 1989; Hermann et al., 2020), Jen and Linley both expressed their relief upon the arrival of the holidays as they provided respite from the incessant busyness and exhaustion. As Jen noted, "*sometimes [it's] hard, but then we have the holidays together, so that's like a trade-off.*"

Scarcity Hypothesis. The intense physical work the teacher-mothers experienced at home and school left them with a lack of time and energy – a notion exemplifying the scarcity hypothesis (Goode, 1960; Peterson et al., 2018). For Jen, Linley, and Katie, this hypothesis most closely aligned with their narratives. Janice, too, experienced a scarcity of time and energy in her life. However, she often disregarded the impacts of this by comparing her situation to when she had younger children and was working in a corporate setting. The participants agreed that their physical labour load at home and work led to a depletion of resources needed to carry out both roles.

The intensification of teachers' work is not unique to teacher-mothers' experiences. As illustrated by PPTA Te Wehengarua (2016) in the Workload Task Report, teachers are experiencing a continual increase in workload demands. This, on average, sees secondary school teachers work approximately 29.5 hours per week outside of the timetabled school hours. The participants' descriptions of their workloads reflected intensification. Supporting the findings of Hermann et al. (2023), they described many roles they were expected to carry out. In 2020, PPTA Te Wehengarua proposed expanding the description of teachers' duties to reflect current demands accurately. They suggested that teachers' duties now included, subject teaching, academic mentoring, collaborating with other teachers, individual pastoral care of students in their contact classes, marking, moderation, planning, preparation, attending assemblies, briefings and meetings, supervising detentions and duty, email communication, supervising extracurricular activities, facilitating form time, taking part in professional learning, engaging with subject associations, up-skilling in subject content and pedagogy, and attending workshops (PPTA Te Wehengarua, 2020). This articulation details the "*bitsyness*" that Janice described, and the other women referred to. The continual physical demands of their ever-expanding work roles left them with little time and energy.

It is worth noting that teachers and teacher-mothers encounter the same workload challenges at school. However, the expectation of completing work outside of school hours (Hermann et al., 2023; PPTA Te Wehengarua, 2016) can be more challenging for teacher-mothers, as described by the participants in this study, due to the time and energy requirements of their 'second shifts' – their family responsibilities (Claesson & Brice, 1989; Hermann et al., 2023; Michaelian, 2005).

The teacher-mothers described two distinct portions of their daily lives – their first shift at school and their second shift at home. The physical labour they carried out was also high during their second shifts. The previously discussed heavy workload that teaching carries is compounded by the disproportionate domestic work of their second shift. Other studies (Claesson & Brice, 1989; Hermann et al., 2020; Michaelian, 2005) reflected this and found that teacher-mothers often take on a more significant proportion of second-shift workload than their male partners. Daminger (2020) asserted that this trend is not unique to women in the education field but rather a more significant societal trend. As with Daminger's (2020) findings, the four women stated that they did not do all of the domestic work in their households, but they did do most of it.

The intensification of parenting also played a large part in the experiences of the teacher-mothers in this research. The increasing expectations on parental capacity as well as children's involvement in extra-curricular activities in Aotearoa New Zealand society have been described by Hewlett and Luce (2006). While Jen did not discuss extra-curricular activities for her young children, Katie was the opposite. "*It's quite a juggle. My kids do quite a lot of afterschool activities.*" It was one of the factors that kept her from returning to full-time work. Linley and Janice encouraged their children to do some activities while limiting their involvement. They resisted the pressure of over-involvement because they felt it was in the best interests of their children. Even with limited participation, extra-curricular activities added to their physical labour and overall busyness.

For all the women, there were times when the two roles brushed up against each other. This was particularly common when the shift changes occurred during the transitions before and after school. In these times, the participants needed to decide how to physically complete two roles simultaneously or prioritise one over the other. As Tamboukou (2000) facetiously stated,

> 'real' women can work in the…education sector and have a nuclear family with a husband and children and everything. In almost a magical way, they can combine housework, childcare, and a senior position in…education. In the time and space of a workday, they continually move in and out of personal and public boundaries (p. 470).

The teacher-mothers in this research found that their 'magic' was created by compartmentalising their focus on the shift work at hand.

The continual time demands that the teacher-mothers faced often led to what Moreau (2019) described as time famine. Given that physical labour is measured in time, (Dean et al., 2022), their lack of time is evidence of a high physical workload. This aligns with the findings of both international studies of teacher-mothers (Apple, 1986; Hermann et al., 2020; Moreau, 2019) and the national findings from the PPTA's Workload Taskforce Report (PPTA Te Wehengarua, 2016). To find the time to complete all their physical responsibilities, the participants each sacrificed different aspects of their social and leisure lives.

The Cognitive and Emotional Labour of Being a Teacher-Mother

While the physical labour aspects of the women's lives were substantial, another salient feature was the cognitive and emotional labour of their two roles. For most physical labour to occur, the cognitive work of organising, thinking, and planning must take place (Daminger, 2019; Dean et al., 2022; Offer, 2014). Emotional labour comprises managing one's own emotions or those of others (Dean et al., 2022; Hochschild, 2003). Due to the caring nature of mothering and teaching, the two types of labour are often inseparable (Dean et al., 2022).

***Managers of the Second Shift*.** As previously discussed, the intensification of the secondary education sector and societal parenting expectations in Aotearoa New Zealand has physical labour consequences. With this increased physical labour, increased cognitive labour is needed to plan and organise physical tasks at home and work. These teacher-mothers, like those studied by Hermann et al. (2023), were each manager of their second shift.

The idea of this hidden cognitive labour was presented by Daminger (2019). It can be expanded to three types, according to Offer (2014): job-specific, family-specific and cross-domain mental labour. Participants experienced all three. The increased intensity of the teaching profession and parental expectations required increased job-specific and family-specific cognitive labour. Cross-domain cognitive labour (planning and organising in the opposite context) also occurred regularly. Whether it be Janice's hurried response to her daughter's broken arm, Jen's ruminations about departmental budgeting in the shower,

Katie's on-call anticipation while getting her daughters out the door in the morning, or Linley's notes to reschedule dental appointments melding with work administrative tasks, each woman experienced some level of cognitive labour spillover between their working shifts due to their managerial roles and the time famine that they experienced.

Care. A high level of cognitive labour also increases emotional labour. As described by Dean et al. (2022), "cognitive tasks underpin the caring for loved ones which is emotional regardless of the triviality of the task (p.17)." While Dean et al. (2022) were concerned with emotional labour carried out in the domestic realm, the women in this study recounted care and emotional labour being carried out during both of their shifts.

The inclusion of care in the education sector, and its' presumed congruency to feminine qualities, is often used to justify the feminisation of teaching (Moreau, 2019; Warin & Gannerud, 2014). While I have previously discussed how this justification is flawed, care is reflected in *Our Code, Our Standards*, the profession's legal document outlining the teacher behaviour and professional standards expected of teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand. Of the multiplicity of expectations included, teachers are specifically responsible for "promoting the wellbeing of learners and protecting them from harm" (Education Council New Zealand Matutū Aotearoa, 2017, p. 3). They are expected to be committed to ensuring the best interests of their learners, their families and whānau, the teaching profession and society at large (Education Council New Zealand Matutū Aotearoa, 2017). In her seminal work, Noddings (1986) described that

> When we care, we consider the other's point of view, his objective needs, and what he expects of us. Our attention, our mental engrossment is on the cared-for, not on ourselves. Our reasons for acting, then, have to do with both the other's wants and desires and with the objective elements of his problematic situation (p. 24).

Using this description, the outlined expectations require teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand to provide care. Given this, the concept of emotional labour outlined by Dean et al. (2022) in the family context can be expanded to the professional context for teachers.

The emotional labour experienced by the teacher-mothers in this study was wide-reaching. They not only anticipated the needs, emotions and reactions of their children, students and colleagues, but they also needed to manage their own emotions during their work. Hochschild (2003) described this as "surface management" (p.53) – when women

need to manage their reactions, feelings, and thoughts to give the response needed for the situation. In the cases of both teaching and mothering, women often need to conceal their innate reaction and present the 'appropriate' emotion to support the person they are caring for. This process involves significant emotional labour to carry out (Dean et al., 2022). All the teacher-mothers, in different ways, found that their internal dialogue involved judgement, guilt, and worry. These emotions, for the most part, were kept hidden from their students, colleagues, and family members: living secretly in the women's minds and masked by the appropriate responses that were required in the moment. The 'greedy institutions' where their work resided needed them to carry out emotional labour for their children, students, and colleagues to be suitably cared for (Acker, 1980).

The Mental Load. The inherent link between cognitive and emotional labour in care work was conceptualised by Dean et al. (2022) as the 'mental load'. Given the additional emotional labour required to carry out cognitive labour in both shifts of a teacher-mother's life, the term *load* signifies the idea of piling work on top of work on top of more work. The women in this study carried significant mental loads, a finding supported by Dean et al. (2022), who suggested that working mothers most frequently experienced high mental loads because "they must manage it all" (p.17).

Mental load, unlike physical labour, can be challenging to measure as it occurs in the worker's mind. This invisibility adds to its complexity as it enables the work to be done anywhere, anytime and with anyone (Dean et al., 2022; Hochschild, 1997; Offer, 2014). It is "not restricted to shifts but rather percolates the everyday and every night" (Dean et al., 2022, p. 21). All the teacher mothers in this research reflected on the mental load spillover between shifts, which has been found to result in various negative impacts. None of the women felt that the spillover affected their ability to be effective at work, a notion described by Budig and England (2001) to rationalise the motherhood penalty. However, they did report other mental load impacts, outlined by Dean et al. (2022), including sleep issues, having less time to recover from and prepare for their school responsibilities, having less time for leisure activities, and experiencing increased anxiety and stress.

Mental load depletes well-being and productivity (Dean et al., 2022). Along with the physical depletion discussed previously, participants found that they were mentally drained;

tired from continual giving, thinking, managing emotional needs, and caring. While Linley directly named her mental depletion in recounting her challenges with anxiety, the others described the impacts without specification. Even Katie, who experienced a lesser amount of school mental load from her transient role as a reliever, found that "*sometimes I just feel that my head is just, like, at its capacity*."

Attempting to Create Work-Life Alignment

The experiences described above illustrate the complexity of life that the participants faced. The interplay of structure and agency was such that the women's choices and actions in their work and personal lives were shaped and constrained by broader influences. Likewise, their efforts to create work-life alignment involved the reciprocation of agency and ideology. Both forces, at the micro- and macro-social levels, were powerful vehicles in their search for balance. Schools and school leaders mediated this association with their recognition of and responses to the complexities that the teacher-mothers faced. These accounts address the second research question, '*How do New Zealand secondary school teachers who are also mothers of young children attempt to create work-life alignment?*'

Functional Work-Life Alignment

The functional responses the women made to overcome the domestic and professional intensity they faced took place in the public setting of their schools, surrounded by colleagues. Yet, their rationales were invisible to all others. To find ways to carry out both of their roles, the teacher-mothers found cracks in their schools' structures – places where they could use their agency without negating their professional obligations to gain the flexibility they needed. Their journeys to finding these cracks, these ways of working, were solitary and yet, when brought together in this research, show remarkable similarities. While the cracks allowed the women to make their dual roles feasible, the very need for these spaces necessitates a deeper examination of why they are required at all.

Many of the strategies used by the women in their search for functional work-family alignment are unremarkable from teacher-mothers' actions in other studies (Hermann et al., 2023; Kang et al., 2020). Both financial and satisfaction drivers influenced their return to teaching, a trend identified by Hermann et al. (2023) in the professional context and by

Peterson et al. (2018) with working mothers in the national context. Their doggedly efficient use of time while at work, careful organisation and planning, active prioritising, and appreciation for supportive partners and colleagues consistently ran through their narratives, reflecting the well-documented trends in other teacher-mothers' searches for alignment (Claesson & Brice, 1989; Hermann et al., 2023; Kang et al., 2020).

The teacher-mothers' decisions to find schools close to their homes and their own children's schools to reduce their time famine also aligned with the findings of Hermann et al. (2023). Much like the possibility of deciding whether to return to work or not, the option to select their optimal working locale was an opportunity not afforded to all teacher-mothers. All the participants expressed that their ability to carry out both roles would be significantly diminished without this key logistical aspect. Linley's decline in mental health, in part due to a 30km drive to school through heavy traffic, gave her further evidence of the importance of school-home locales.

Claesson and Brice (1989) described the importance of rearranging priorities to allow teacher-mothers to find additional time and energy. As a result, carefully crafting strategies to complete all their physical labour was only part of the participants' stories. The women also actively minimised their workloads to combat the intensity that was being put upon them, resulting in an essential increase in time and flexibility. Despite their overload from their domestic and professional roles, the women mainly focused on reducing their school-based work. This may be because "it is much easier to choose not to teach than not to parent once the roles have been assumed" (Michaelian, 2005, p. 215). While none of the women left the profession altogether, Linley and Jen drastically reduced their contributions to optional school functions compared to their pre-motherhood involvement. While Katie did not specifically choose to withdraw from the supplementary activities involved with the teaching role, her decision to relieve came with the expectation of no extra commitments. In this way, the women could reduce their time commitments and battle intensification while still meeting their professional obligations.

In some way, each woman stepped back from taking on extra professional responsibilities to enhance the effects of pulling back in optional areas. At different times, they each traded their jobs for more flexibility - Linley initially returned to work after the

birth of her second daughter to a part-time job-share role which saw her forfeit her leadership role. Katie moved from full-time work to relief work. Janice moved from profitable corporate work to a lower-paid teaching career. Jen recently relinquished her leadership role. These purposeful decisions were made to address time famine and the mental load. While Budig and England (2001) suggested this type of swap is a rationale used to justify the motherhood penalty, a report conducted by Statistics New Zealand and the Ministry for Women (2017a) looking at the effects of motherhood on pay in Aotearoa New Zealand found that "there is no strong evidence in New Zealand to show mothers trade higher wages for 'mother-friendly' jobs that are easier to combine with parenting" (p.7). This statement directly contradicts the decisions made by women in this research. Except for Janice, each woman was already working in a "mother-friendly" profession but needed to change responsibilities to fulfil their dual roles. This led to a reduction in pay and influence in their professional setting – again, supporting the assertions of Budig and England (2001), and challenging those of the governmental report.

Wylie et al. (2020) stated that the proportion of female middle leaders is the same as that of female teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand secondary schools. It is essential to note the contrast between the two participants in this research who held middle-leadership roles: Jen and Linley. The roles held by Jen and Linley were remarkably similar – with similar responsibilities, time allowances, and financial compensation. Jen's decision to step away and Linley's to take on further responsibility were each made in hopes of achieving the same thing – time and energy to complete their roles.

When reviewing the literature, Jen's decision is what might be expected. Brown (2019) also found that the teacher-mothers in her study were committed to their work but were resistant to taking on extra responsibility, and there is an abundance of research looking at the challenges of women taking on leadership roles in education (Gatrell, 2004; Moreau et al., 2007; Walker & Barton, 1983; Wylie et al., 2020). Even Janice, who continually asserted that teaching had increased her time availability compared to her previous corporate work, rebuffed leadership opportunities because of her mothering responsibilities. While made for various reasons, Jen's decision was primarily based on her desire to regain control. She found that her role as a leader could easily disrupt the careful balance that she had crafted. "*Everything is so well planned, and if someone … doesn't do*

their job, it has a big flow-on effect." Letting go of this responsibility removed this variable. However, Walker and Barton (1983) recognised that losing women in positions of influence diminished their bargaining power. On a personal level, Jen's decision to leave educational leadership made her circumstance more workable. On a professional level, the loss of her teacher-mother perspective and potential influence to make things more manageable for other teacher-mothers, and therefore herself, continues to perpetuate the challenging conditions that exist.

Alternatively, Linley sought additional leadership opportunities to make her circumstance feasible. Her decision contradicts the findings of the studies mentioned above examining women in school leadership (Brown, 2019; Gatrell, 2004; Moreau et al., 2007; Walker & Barton, 1983; Wylie et al., 2020). Linley found that adding more responsibility came with the practicality of additional time allowance, which increased her ability to assume agency over when she could complete her tasks. It increased her autonomy within the "culture of presence" existing in Aotearoa New Zealand secondary schools (Moreau, 2019). As a result, she maintained control over her small piece of a complex puzzle; she could support the teacher-mothers she led, widening the cracks they worked within.

Simply being efficient and finding ways to work within fissures in the system cannot be "a silver bullet" when dealing with structural expectations of both the mothering and educational professions (Dean et al., 2022, p. 19). Each woman's decisions were based on her immediate need to find ways to carry out all her responsibilities. While these strategies did help alleviate some of the pressures they experienced, it also highlights that the conditions that the women faced were unrealistic. This supposition points to the need for a more comprehensive societal conversation about why teacher-mothers need to work in these ways. This point will be returned to when examining the macro-social structures influencing the participants' experiences.

Schools as Structural Mediators. There were times in each woman's professional life when working within the cracks was simply not enough. They needed them widened by their schools to get the flexibility to carry out their dual roles. However, given the independence of schools in Aotearoa New Zealand, how schools responded to the teacher-mothers' requests and decisions varied significantly. School leaders were the brokers,

negotiating the space between women's agencies and broader school structures. The impacts of these settlements ranged from complete support to professional devastation.

The decentralised schooling system in Aotearoa New Zealand affords individual schools the most organisational autonomy of any education system in the developed world (Wylie, 2012). This self-governance enables schools to create their organisations independently while meeting broad governmental expectations. The experiences of the teacher-mothers in this research were heavily influenced by the unique organisations that they contributed to as teachers.

Traditional studies of organisations have typically remained remote from the everyday experiences of the people who work in them. As Fineman et al. (2005) illustrated, there is "a gulf between the lived experience of organising and being organised by others, with its uncertainty and confusion, and the tidy, rather sanitised, texts on organisation behaviour" (p. ix). The tidy texts to which they refer miss the complexity and richness that organisations consist of as if they are not populated and embodied by real people who work there. Rather, every organisation, including the schools where the teacher-mothers in this study taught, has multiple complex structures. The formal ones appear in the handbooks and policy documents, although the teacher-mothers did not know of any formalised parental school policies for teachers. But the everyday relationships of the people who comprise the organisation are where the interesting phenomena reside. For the women, it was the people of their organisation, the people they worked with every day who created many of the professional structures that impacted their dual roles while also being the structural arbitrators when the women sought additional flexibility.

Organisational culture, then, is the coming together of two main organisational aspects: organisational structures and the accumulated shared learning of the people of the organisation (Schein, 2016). The latter requires further explanation to inform the discussion that follows.

Accumulated shared learning is the learning that has occurred by all members throughout an organisation's history. This begins from its outset when the founder(s) impose their values and beliefs regarding what will work in the organisation, thus influencing members' behaviours. These early seeds of organisational culture slowly grow to

maturity when the organisation's members forget that *how they do things around here* was once a directive and come to believe it as being what they do because it works. They have become underlying assumptions, hidden from consciousness (Schein, 2016).

These covert assumptions, uncovered by the women only when asked to probe deeper, had at one point been a rationale for decisions made about the support of teacher-mothers in their schools. At both ends of the continuum, school cultures dictated unwritten rules about how teacher-mothers were to be supported. On one end, in the case of Jen, life outside of the professional setting was not taken into consideration due to the school's underlying assumption that the sole focus on student interests would lead to academic success. At the other end, a variety of support mechanisms were woven, unquestioned, into the fabric of schools' cultures: "*we're all about whānau*" underpinned Suncrest High School's decisions to allow parents to bring their children to school as needed while Riverside High School's professional trust of their teachers was deeply integrated into their school's culture. In all cases, these rationales for the support (or lack of) that they received were taken for granted by the women; they were irrefutable constructs in which they were immersed.

Culture, indeed, is so ingrained that it is hardly noticeable except when what was previously successful fails. As a result, it can be challenging for an organisation to adapt and make changes. Organisational systems and structures are, after all, built on underlying cultural assumptions. However, when an organisation can adapt, it adds strategies about how to solve challenges to its accumulated shared learning and, thus, its culture (Abercrombie et al., 2000).

Each woman, in her search for the flexibility she required to enact her dual roles, encountered situations that challenged their inherent school cultures. It was here when either school leaders or the women themselves saw a conflict and approached the other with a potential solution. These requests and offers were based on the women and school leaders recognising that slight adaptations could support teacher-mothers in both domains of their lives while still meeting the school structures set out by the individual organisations. Some schools were more resistant to change than others just as some of the teacher-mothers were more comfortable making requests than others. The implementation of

these strategies, in turn, was often added to each school's accumulated shared learning, therefore progressing, albeit slowly, the school culture towards affirming the dual roles of teacher and mother.

The process of cultural change is ongoing. Each woman, regardless of her school, found that there were elements of school life that were made more challenging because of her mothering role. Most of the women worked with school leaders to shift some of the more practical aspects of the job while resigning themselves to deal with other challenges. Even for Katie, who was given the most flexibility to carry out her dual roles, tensions remained. Seeing culture as monolithic would be misplaced (Martin & Siehl, 1983). As Jones (2014) cautioned, "that there are common principles that an organisation is said to subscribe to need not imply that all individuals in the organisation do so with the same enthusiasm, or even that some organisation members do not reject them" (p. 13). Indeed, while Katie was supported by school culture and school leaders, some colleagues questioned, if not protested, the extent to which this support was offered to teacher-mothers. Conversely, Jen experienced quiet support from a close group of colleagues while being denied the same privilege from the wider school.

Because culture is the "shared product of shared learning" (Schein, 2016, p. 6), culture shifts with each member who departs or joins an organisation. A strong culture is established when membership is stable over a long period (Abercrombie et al., 2000). When changes do occur, cultural understandings remain in the deep assumptions that are ingrained in the remaining members, while new members are socialised into the culture (Abercrombie et al., 2000; Schein, 2016). This is exemplified in the experiences of Janice who benefited from a school culture that had been developed by women who taught at the school long before her, including Linley. Their actions created a culture over time, where having children in meetings after school was left unquestioned and a certain degree of challenge to the culture of presence had already been established.

However, it is important to recognise the impact that changing leadership can have on school culture. Linley recognised that with a change of principal at her previous school, support for teacher-mothers dwindled. As the new leader was in a position of significant power, he made culturally-contradictory decisions before acclimating, resulting in several

members of staff leaving. Conversely, when Linley joined her school as a middle leader, she inherited a departmental culture rife with challenges. After being inducted as a school leader, she was slowly able to start shifting the culture. "*It was quite full on in that first year…[but it] set me up in a good way for…the future.*" Now, after years in the role, the teacher-mother-friendly culture that she has helped to curate has become commonplace – unquestioned and assumed.

With Jen's departure from middle management, a shift in her departmental culture will ensue. It is the trend of women stepping back from, or being resistant to apply for, leadership (Brown, 2019; Moreau et al., 2007), taking career breaks and working part-time that can further compromise the cultural institutionalisation of support for teacher-mothers (Moreau, 2019). By feeling that they need to remove themselves from positions of influence to enact their dual roles, teacher-mothers remove their voice from the conversation or, in the case of leaving the profession, from the culture entirely. This, in turn, makes negotiating supportive working conditions and creating an encouraging school culture more challenging for teacher-mothers.

Macro-Social Factors

Work-Life Ideologies

The women's use of personal agency, along with the school's role as mediator, allowed them to navigate structures and bring their work and family lives into functional alignment. Of equal importance are how these functional arrangements are compatible with the wider social ideologies around both motherhood and teaching. It is when functional and ideological arrangements are in harmony that work-life alignment can be realised (Kang et al., 2020). The findings supported the idea that teacher-mothers in Aotearoa New Zealand are negotiating two ideologies about their dual roles: *intensive mothering* and *successful woman*.

Intensive Mothering Ideology. The intensive mother ideology focuses on women unselfishly investing time, energy, and finances into the raising of their own children (Fursman, 2002; Hays, 1996; Kahu & Morgan, 2007b; Lupton & Schmied, 2002; Peterson et al., 2018; Verniers et al., 2022). As a system-justifying ideology, it allowed the participants to feel satisfied in a potentially undesirable situation (Jost, 2019; Jost & Banaji, 1994;

Verniers et al., 2022). The history of female domesticity in Aotearoa New Zealand is strong (Gould, 1982; Nolan, 2000). While there have been significant changes to its nature, domesticity continues to be an active part of societal expectations of New Zealand women (Nolan, 2000). As described by the participants, their roles as managers of the second shift carried a disproportionate labour load to that of their partners. Paradoxically, the decline of the male breadwinner model did not result in the rebalancing of domestic labour (Verniers et al., 2022). Rather, the participants were left with a high domestic workload on top of paid work. This situation is not tenable. However, the intensive mothering ideology led the women to justify the situation they found themselves in by rationalising their overload as a sacrifice for their children's development and, therefore, future society (Verniers et al., 2022). The teacher-mothers spoke of the importance of their influence for the betterment of their children's growth, epitomised by Janice's rationalisation for staying at home when her children were very young: "*it's all about building capable, strong…[children with] firm roots.*"

Successful Woman Ideology. The findings suggested that there was a second, contradictory, ideology that participants negotiated in their search for work-life alignment: the successful woman ideology. As a result of feminist demands for equality and increased workforce participation by women, a successful woman is seen to be fully committed to her career in an effort to be equal to their male colleagues (Hughes, 2003; Kahu & Morgan, 2008; Lupton & Schmied, 2002).

By the very nature of being a teacher-mother, the participants demonstrated a commitment to this ideology; they decided to hold both roles. It is the details in their experiences which embody their ideological subscription. Each of the participants ensured that while at school, they were seen as being wholly committed to the work at hand. They completed their work without bringing attention to the mechanisms that allowed them to do this creatively. They justified any requests for flexibility that they made as fair compensation for additional work done. Furthermore, they attempted to satisfy the societal desire for needless-workers by minimising the visibility of their motherhood (Fursman, 2002). While the others were less covert, Jen actively hid her mother status.

In describing the successful woman ideology, Kahu and Morgan (2008) explained that "mothering, particularly as a full-time role, is constructed as doing nothing, not in the sense of not being busy but in the sense of not doing anything worthwhile" (p. 4). Here, the idea that a woman would stay at home with her children is not enough to be considered successful or fulfilled. This ideology manifested in different ways. Linley explained her adherence to full-time teaching despite the perpetual exhaustion she experienced by stating "*I don't think I could live my life without being busy. Even if I was part-time, I'd fill it up with something. That's the type of person I am".* Both she and Jen expressed lacking a level of stimulation while at home on parental leave, supporting the discourse that being a full-time mother is an undesirable role. Katie's plethora of working roles, despite her self-identified financial security, showed her commitment to contributing to the wider societal marketplace. In stark contrast to Janice's rationale for staying home with her young children to benefit their development, Janice also expressed criticism over her own mother's singular focus on mothering. "*She was Mum, that was it. And I wanted more of a balance. I wanted to be me and be Mum. Whereas I felt Mum was just mum."* While they were not judgemental of other mothers' decisions, these representations of the successful mother ideology demonstrate the participants' acceptance of the implied inadequacy of women who stay out of the workforce.

Creating Work-Life Alignment

While the struggle to find work-life alignment in an ideological sense is not limited to teacher-mothers, the need to rectify these ideologies is complicated by the perceived feminisation of the teaching profession. The high proportion of women in the profession and the assumed 'female-friendly' nature of the work leads to societal misinterpretations of their experiences, in turn compounding their challenges. The societal expectation that women are responsible for finding alignment for their own lives is underwritten by neoliberal ideals of the responsible individual (Harvey, 2005): they decided to be both a mother and a worker and therefore it is their responsibility to figure out how to do both. However, neither individual agency nor larger professional or national structures can wholly explain the experiences of these teacher-mothers (Kang et al., 2020). Rather, examination and alignment of these structures, in conjunction with the impact of women's own agency, is essential for both understanding and beginning to address the challenges that they faced.

Finding Personal Ideological Alignment. The cultural ideals of being both an intensive mother and a successful woman are contradictory. As Kahu and Morgan (2007b) found, mothers in Aotearoa New Zealand want to put their children first but also want to be successful women who contribute through paid work. Societal neoliberal undertones of personal choice put the onus on women to find a balance to meet both expectations simultaneously.

The findings point to participants internalising both ideals and finding ways in which to reconcile their decisions surrounding both work and mothering; the resulting 'balance', however, was hardly stable. They justified their actions using tenets from both ideologies, at times reflecting the importance of one over the other, at others both simultaneously. While participants were not apologetic for their endorsement of either set of beliefs, they also recognised the challenges that they faced because of them. The most significant implication was the feeling that they need to meet all expectations, however unrealistic it might be to actualise (Green, 2015). The same ideologies that supported them to both teach and mother also made it more difficult to achieve both ideals – an impossible feat with unattainably high standards (Kang et al., 2020). To counter this, the women pulled back in areas that were discrete and allowed them to match the gambit of expectations most closely. The result was a feeling that although they were not living up to perfection, they were doing the best they could. While they spoke of this in matter-of-fact ways and generally felt they were doing a good job in both realms, a niggling of self-deficiency remained.

For many of the participants, the continual mental work of attempting to meet their internalised conflicting requirements added to the exhaustion they felt from already high labour loads. Like the teacher-mothers in the work of Knowles et al. (2009), they appraised themselves against both ideals and were keenly aware of how others may be doing the same of them. For Linley and Jen, the drain of this internal negotiation was palpable. Katie's decision to teach part-time while taking on many smaller paid roles allowed her to both fulfil her maternal desires while protecting her from societal scrutiny of her paid contributions. Interestingly, Janice's initial adherence to the idea that "*it's [her life] so easy*" was interspersed by a more frank examination of its complications. It was her manifestation of the societal expectation that teacher-mothers need to make it work – they need to come

to terms with the duelling ideologies and be successful in both domains (Walker & Barton, 1983). Although unaware of her discrepant commentary, the contradiction revealed her deep entrenchment in both ideologies.

The findings signalled that the women were both comfortable and uncomfortable in their dual roles. They spoke with confidence about how they managed the roles, stating matter-of-factly the functional challenges they faced. It was only upon probing that they spoke of the deeper ideological challenges. Mainly, they each used their own agency to come to a place of satisfaction. They had to be able to "find themselves and fulfil their place in society…[by] successfully negotiat[ing] new meaning in terms of their own perceived multiple role expectations" (Knowles et al., 2009, p. 342). There were, however, periods where this wavered and exposed their deeper internalised conflicts.

Ideological Alignment in the Teaching Profession. Ideologies of working mothers are not limited to the women themselves; each member of society will have beliefs about the roles of working mothers whether they are one or not. The humanity of organisations and governments, both of which are impossible to separate from the people who belong to them, sees them also subscribe to these ideologies (Greenfield, 1975; Jones, 2014; Ybema et al., 2009). Subsequent structures set up in both professional and governmental settings are informed by their members' ideologies just as individual teacher-mothers' decisions are informed by their own. The impacts, however, are broader as they have ramifications on all the teacher-mothers in the organisation but also on either perpetuating or shifting societal views.

The findings signal that school decisions had a significant impact on how the teacher-mothers whom they employed experienced the dual roles. School decisions were made by people, each with their own ideologies, and the ensuing organisational culture that they created (Bolman & Deal, 2017). In turn, the culture shaped the actions and structures that were present within the school. The participants did not identify the ideological alignment of their organisations specifically, nor would this be expected. One of the most significant aspects of organisational culture is that it becomes so much a part of ourselves that we no longer see it for what it is. The more familiar it is, the harder it is for us to see it (Bolman & Deal, 2017). As organisational ethnographers have signalled, "Immersion in the particular

settings of our daily lives often leads to rather poor awareness of the social processes that contextualise them" (Ybema et al., 2009, pp. 1-2). The participants, rather, spoke of the settings in which they worked, which in turn revealed the school's deeper belief systems.

The reconstituted roles that emerged under neoliberalism enabled each of the schools in this study to make their own decisions and policies, including those about how teacher-mothers should be supported. The wide range of experiences – from bringing children to school to being passed over for promotion based on parental status – highlights the incredible spread of responses that were possible as a result of the free choice and responsibility that schools are endowed with as a result of neoliberalism. In the best cases, decisions were made that supported the participants in their dual roles as teachers and mothers. In the worst, indifference was given to their identities outside the teacher role.

As employers, all of the schools unsurprisingly contributed most heavily to the successful woman ideology. Teachers are at school to work and all the teacher-mothers whom they worked with decided to carry out both roles. What was significant, however, were the differences in how the schools' actions fuelled this ideology. Their actions reinforced the ideology, fuelling it in different ways and to different extents. In some cases, their roles as mediators opened possibilities; in others, it constrained them.

Suncrest High School supported their teacher-mothers to be successful women in both roles. They openly acknowledged that many women would be experiencing a pull between ideologies and attempted to alleviate tensions where they could. They did this without compromising their focus on student well-being and growth. Their policy of allowing parents to bring their children to school as needed demonstrated their awareness of both societal ideals and commitment to helping their employees navigate them.

Riverside High School also wanted their teacher-mothers to find ideological alignment. While their structures didn't go as far as acknowledging the duelling ideologies or actively supporting women in their search for alignment, they did recognise that their teachers would have complex lives outside of the school walls. To counter the neoliberal ideals which saw the need for needless-workers (Fursman, 2002), they rebuffed the mistrust that is so ingrained in the educational system (Codd, 2008). They trusted all staff to get their work done when was convenient for them. While not directly helpful for women in

finding alignment, it did allow for some mediation between professional expectations and the needs of teacher-mothers to occur.

Windsor College's blatant adherence to neoliberal ideals influenced their actions towards teacher-mothers. Their adherence to the idea of an educational market where students were clients (Codd, 2008; Smith et al., 2019), their desire for needless-workers, and their lack of regard for teacher's lives except for their contributions to the core school business (Williams, 2000), all fuelled the perpetuation of the importance of the ideal successful woman. While this is not a principle of their making, it reflected a wider societal expectation without critique. The consequences, for Jen, were significant. She was left trying to negotiate the societal expectations of her two roles on her own while continually feeling misunderstood, judged, and underappreciated. This only acted to compound her internalisation of unreasonable expectations. In a personification of system-justification, she rationalised the school structures, "*I get it*" she said, despite her continual challenges (Jost, 2019; Jost & Banaji, 1994; Verniers et al., 2022).

The neoliberal remnants that so heavily influence the successful woman ideology and schooling in Aotearoa New Zealand also played into the participants' experiences when they did receive support from schools. The notion of meritocracy saw the women express their belief that they received the reward of flexibility based on their successful contributions to their schools (Girerd & Bonnot, 2020). This form of mutual recompense was so engrained in school culture that most women took it as acceptable, even just. Despite being highly aware of the ideological pull teacher-mothers faced, the self-responsibility of, as expressed by Linley, "*put[ting] in some effort*" to receive necessary flexibility was left uncritiqued both by the women and also by schools.

Summary

Teacher-mothers experience high levels of labour in both their roles. The physical, emotional, and cognitive labour that they experience is a result of unrealistic expectations informed by duelling societal ideologies regarding mothers and working mothers. These ideologies inform not only what they are expected to do but also how they find functional alignment to accomplish all their responsibilities. Their own beliefs, along with those of the

school where they teach, inform what support they are willing to ask for and what concessions schools are willing to give.

Examining how teacher-mothers make their dual roles align, points to a need to support teacher-mothers, both functionally and ideologically. Kang et al. (2020) noted that alignment is "a social construct rather than an individual perception or arrangement" (p. 398). Simply put, affirming national neoliberal ideas of self-responsibility is not appropriate in this case. Relying on women's agencies to "make it work" is not enough. There must be support from both a professional and societal level. The duelling ideologies must not simply be rationalised individually; they must be recognised and resolved in wider society.

The high labour loads and struggle with antithetical ideologies are not unique for teacher-mothers; it is common for most working-mothers (Flynn & Harris, 2015; Kahu & Morgan, 2007b; Kalliath & Brough, 2008; Lupton & Schmied, 2002; Verniers et al., 2022). Teacher-mothers, however, experience the additional complication of a societal misconception of their work being "female-friendly", a result of the long-standing feminisation of the profession (Moreau, 2019). Seeing teaching as a good fit for mothers separates them in the eyes of society, thus negating their experiences as working mothers who happen to teach. This proposition leaves teacher-mothers' true experiences hidden, reinforcing unjustified feminisation arguments, and ultimately stagnating progress in addressing gender inequalities within the profession.

Schools and society cannot wind the clock back to the educational and political context before neoliberalism, nor were the conditions proceeding it without flawed ideologies. Our current social contexts are different. However, schools can do a better job in assisting their teachers to work in a contemporary social world. This would necessitate that schools see their teachers as more than economically efficient, technocratic workers.

In terms of the main discourses that govern the social context for contemporary educational workplaces, we cannot ignore the fact that neoliberal discourses are now built into society. We cannot operate outside this context. We can, however, strive to shift the valued discourses in our schools. By talking openly about the tensions and challenges faced by the professional community, as well as the strategies that, in the context of this study,

work to support teacher-mothers, schools can address imbalances of power to pursue greater equity for women.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

The belief that teaching is a feminised profession is entrenched in societal understandings. However, the reality of teachers' work calls into question such normative conceptions. The female-friendly discourse can be dismantled when the assumptions behind teaching as a feminised profession are examined in relation to the diverse experiences of teacher-mothers.

The teacher-mothers in this study led busy and complex lives. In many ways, their day-to-day experiences were not unlike those of other working mothers in Aotearoa New Zealand. They experienced high levels of physical labour because of their professional responsibilities and their roles as managers of the second, domestic-based shift. The invisible labour, carried as their mental loads, was equally heavy.

Tensions arose when the teacher-mothers fulfilled both of their roles. Their finite resources were needed by two institutions demanding high levels of attention and care: teaching and mothering. Tensions, however, need not simply denote a negative connotation. Rather, their experiences were pulled in tension with both positive and negative associations. Like a string made taut from both ends, the women found that some tension enabled them to walk the tightrope that stretched between their dual roles. Their lives were enhanced by congruent scheduling, personal satisfaction, and financial reward. At other times, the tensions resulted in a scarcity of resources, both time and energy, due largely to the intense expectations of both roles.

While the beneficial structure of a teacher's school-based working day is often touted when rationalising teaching as a feminised profession, it neglects to account for the work teacher-mothers do outside of these visible parameters, both physically and mentally. Profession-wide, there is an acceptance, if not an expectation, of labour spillover. For teacher-mothers, the impact of spillover is exacerbated by the time famine created by their familial responsibilities outside of the working day. They also face the burden of cognitive and emotional exhaustion that results from their participation in two roles, each requiring high levels of care. This burden, however, may be hidden from society at large, which is more familiar with individuals' experiences of being education *consumers* rather than providers. In this view, the perceived compatibility of teaching and mothering may seem to

support the notion of teaching being female-friendly. But, as I show through the deep examination of this group of women's experiences, that superficial account of compatibility is too tidy and fails to account for the true complexities.

The assumption of implicit work-life alignment is central to the feminisation of teaching debate. However, the women in this study demonstrated that work-life alignment is not a given but rather is created through a combination of their agency and professional and societal structures.

Societal-level constraints impacted the teacher-mothers' creation of work-life alignment. Competing ideologies of successful women and intensive mothering resided both in society and within the participants' expectations of themselves, creating tensions. The expectation that women should be wholly committed to the development of their children while simultaneously being needless-workers produced contradictions that the women had to navigate. In a society where both ideologies exist, the fallacy of teaching as a feminised profession is exposed; work-life alignment is not predetermined, given to all women who choose to teach. Rather, it must be created, and concessions to both societal ideals must be made.

Creating alignment came through the teacher-mothers' responses to managing the demands of their roles. They employed their agency to find and expand structural cracks where they could begin to shape the conditions in which they worked. Reflecting wider ideological beliefs, the women often justified these actions, endeavouring to demonstrate their full commitment in both domestic and paid working spheres. While important and predominantly effective, these personal actions did not often translate into wider change for other teacher-mothers in the profession. Each woman was independently responsible for scoping out opportunities in support of her dual roles rather than support being accessible to all within the profession. It is also worth noting that while the participants did not self-identify their social class, they each held a stable economic position in society. This afforded them a level of privilege in making adjustments to their lived realities.

The intersection between the macro-level structures and the micro-level responses of individual women is in the context of schools. Schools acted as mediators between what the women needed in support of their dual roles and what the neoliberal ideals of schooling

dictated. In some cases, school culture allowed for support to be provided, while in others, motherhood was deemed detrimental. This variety of experiences highlights the inaccuracy of the notion of the feminisation of teaching. In a truly feminised career, no woman would need mediation; school cultures would be inherently supportive, and work-life alignment would be implicit for all. This, however, is not the reality of teacher-mothers in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Implications for Practice

The participants' experiences point to the current societal structures not serving teacher-mothers in finding work-life alignment. When drawing this conclusion, I am not advocating for the return to more traditionalist historical structures in a society where women were found only in the domestic realm. Rather, what is required is a change in societal values of both work and care. A society that values both care and paid work equally and recognises both as essential parts of citizenship, where "raising children is both a valued social act and an individual pleasure" (Kahu & Morgan, 2008, p. 13). A society that acknowledges people for others in their lives. A society that empowers everyone to create alignment between these accepted, valued aspects of their lives.

Garey (1999) noted, "as a society, we should expect work life and family life to be compatible", directly challenging the neoliberal notion of a needless-worker (p. 200). By devaluing care in society, a parent cannot be an idealised effective worker, and a teacher's work cannot be fully legitimised as work. In their work examining the experiences of working mothers in Aotearoa New Zealand, Kahu and Morgan (2008) concluded, "valuing care needs to be a central policy issue for all" (p. 13). However, shifting the deeply engrained neoliberal ideology and its subsequent influence on teacher-mother structures is a task outside of the scope of this study. Likewise, relying simply on teacher-mothers' agency to create compatibility of care and work is not effective; it simply results in an assemblage of strategies that dull the challenges without creating meaningful change. The space for impact is in schools where cracks in the neoliberal architecture can be widened, and meaningful reverberations for all teacher-carers can be realised.

The schools in this study took different approaches to humanise the experiences of teacher-mothers. The humanisation of teachers is central to enhancing the experiences of

not only teacher-mothers but of all teacher-carers. Schools need to recognise that all teachers are human, with caring responsibilities outside of their employed role, and with these responsibilities comes the need for structures that support the development of work-life alignment. In the context of this study, when schools rejected the capitalist conception that raising children happens somewhere else, by someone else, teacher-mothers were afforded the platform to freely identify the needs of their dual roles (Acker, 1992).

Teacher-mothers, like all teachers, need the ability to have safe, honest conversations with school managers regarding how structures can be adapted to support effective teaching and caring. By humanising the management of schools, all teachers can be supported in developing work-life alignment. Each school, however, has a different school culture with a different starting point. By reflecting on their current actions, schools can begin to advance their structures, resulting in teachers who are supported to carry out their dual roles. Self-reflection may be an ideal place for schools to start. School leaders can ask:

- What are the needs of our teachers outside of school?
- How are the needs of our teachers inside and outside of school related?
- How do we already support our teachers in building work-life alignment?
- Who can teachers come to discuss what they need to build work-life alignment?
- How do we let teachers know that they are supported both inside and outside of school?

These questions are a starting point for the humanisation of management. Teachers and educational managers are inherently carers; it is part of the job, built into the fabric of most educational settings (Moreau, 2019; Warin & Gannerud, 2014). However, the impacts of neoliberal agendas ate away at the implicit presence of care, replacing it with capitalistic values. By reclaiming the conception of collegial care, schools can begin to make a change in the experiences of teacher-mothers and, fortuitously, for all teachers.

While schools need to be responsive to changes in society, they can also be the vector for creating societal change. In their educative essence, schools are where young people receive their education and their induction into society. Yet, as organisations and places of employment, they also have the potential to bring about change. The neoliberal

ideologies that are so prevalent in the world at large may seem too daunting to confront. However, if schools begin releasing the tethers of neoliberalism that bind teachers to unrealistic needless-worker expectations, there may be ripples that extend into the larger societal sphere, including higher levels of satisfaction and passion for teaching.

Implications for Research

Shifting how schools value care and work-life alignment requires change at both meso-social and macro-social levels. As constructs, they do not solely belong to the preserve of women; work-life alignment and care are integral to the purpose and functioning of society. Such shifts also require new and different research.

This study, like all research, is limited. It is a tiny piece of a larger picture. Through my own interpretive lens, I have illustrated the experiences of a group of teacher-mothers. The importance of expanding this peek into the experiences of teacher-mothers helps understand the wider work-life situations of the 30,000+ secondary school teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand (Education Counts, 2022a). Diversifying the participants of future studies to include a greater range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds, gender and sexual orientations, social classes, family structures, and career histories would be important in recognising the different conceptions of motherhood. There is also meaningful scope to explore the experiences of teacher-fathers as caregivers. Additional research focusing on school management and the culture surrounding teacher-mothers would enable a greater depth to understand the intersection between professional structures and personal agency in all its complexities. Lastly, there appears to be a dearth of information examining the career trajectories and retention rates for teacher-mothers once they embody the dual roles. While this study goes some way to addressing this void, gathering data and identifying trends regarding career progression, both in the short- and long-term, will help to form a more complete picture of the teacher-mother's role amidst the current teacher shortage.

Implications for Myself as a Researcher

By its very nature as a qualitative investigation, people are at the heart of this research. I explored the experiences of teacher-mothers through my lens of interpretation. People, too, are how the quality and utility of this research can be judged – the value I, as a

researcher, and you, as a reader, put on the meanings that I have generated. It is important here to note the impacts that I have experienced throughout this process and those which may be of value to others.

I began this project not as a researcher but as a teacher-mother. My interests were shaped, as I outlined earlier in Chapter 1, by my own experiences transitioning into and attempting to navigate a life of dual roles. I knew that my experiences were similar to other teacher-mothers I spoke with, but I was left feeling like there must be ways that I could negotiate the tensions better: maybe I was missing something, maybe my expectations of my capabilities were just too high, or maybe I was just not quite doing it right. And maybe that's why it felt so challenging.

I intended to talk with teacher-mothers who, on a first cursory glance, had managed to ride the waves of competing roles, ending up on the other side as successful teacher-mothers. There, I felt, would be the lessons to be learned, the secret recipe, the strategies that I, other teacher-mothers, and schools would now have access to.

Far from the simplicity of this notion, I began to see that at their core, the varied experiences of the teacher-mothers, like my own, were shaped by larger-than-life ideologies, trickling down and shaping our society, schools, and experiences. I had felt their impacts previously, but they remained intangible, like trying to describe a colour but not quite being able to grasp the right verbiage. I began to see that, in essence, it was that insufficiency that made my experiences feel so challenging. The feeling that something larger was at play and being unable to see it had resulted in my assumption that it was a personal deficiency that could be fixed with the right tools.

This is not to say that the power of agency should be dismissed. Rather, I posit that it may be meaningful to some teacher-mothers and schools, as it was to myself, to have that ideological context. Particularly in a society that sees teaching as feminised. When situated in a setting where teaching is being touted as being good for mothers, dealing with the tensions becomes more challenging and more private. Teacher-mothers can speak back to the feminised discourse; we have the agency and influence to shift things, to make it better for all teachers who are carers. Schools, too, have the influence to alter how teacher-carers

are viewed and the conditions they experience. More change will come with the humanisation of the profession.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

Date Information Sheet Produced

29 April 2022

Project Title

Teacher-mother dualism in New Zealand Secondary Schools

An Invitation

Kia ora. Thank you for expressing an interest in participating in my research project. My name is Elizabeth Bouchard and I am completing my Master of Education degree at AUT University. I have been teaching in New Zealand for the last 13 years. Over the last decade, my role has expanded to school-wide leadership in curriculum and pedagogy development. I have also worked extensively with pre-service and beginning teachers.

I live in Auckland with my partner and our three young children. It is my own experiences of being a teacher-mother which have led to my interest in the lives of women fulfilling the dual roles of teacher and mother.

You are invited to participate in a project examining the lives of teacher-mothers who teach in New Zealand secondary schools. I am undertaking this research to complete a thesis project which contributes to a Master of Education degree.

What is the purpose of this research?

This research examines the lived experiences of women who are both secondary school teachers and mothers of young children. While international research indicates that there are significant tensions which arise when women return to teaching with young children, this research aims to situate the issue within the New Zealand secondary school context and elucidate strategies that can make the situation viable for teacher-mothers and schools. The findings of this research may be used for academic publications and presentations.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

Participants are being recruited based on their suitability for the research project. You have received this information sheet because you responded to the flyer which was distributed alerting potential participants of this upcoming study.

The inclusion criteria for the proposed study includes: being a currently practising (either relief work, part-time or full-time) secondary school teacher in New Zealand, being a mother of a young child(ren) (0-10 years-old), and teaching for 3 or more years.

A limited number of participants are being recruited. This means that not all people who want to participate may be included. If recruitment is oversubscribed, participants will be selected based on ensuring a balance of teaching experiences, current teaching status, age of children, and cultural backgrounds.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

If you would like to take part in this research, please complete the attached Consent Form and email it to me at bouchard.elizabeth@gmail.com.

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You can withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.

What will happen in this research?

This project uses photo-elicitation interviewing (described below) to understand the experiences of practising secondary school teachers who are also mothers of a young child(ren).

In this project, you will be asked to gather between 5-10 photographs over a 2-week period during the school term which illustrate your experiences as a secondary school teacher, as a mother and the overlap of these two roles. These photographs can be taken during the two-week-long timeframe or sourced from your personal photograph collections. Also during this time, you will be asked to complete a short Participant Background Information Form. This will give me an overview of your career as well as the overlap of becoming a mother. After you have completed the form, you will be asked to send it via email to me prior to the scheduled interview.

A 45-60 minute interview will take place which utilises the photographs which you have selected. This interview will be held remotely on Zoom or in person from a location that is not your school. During this time, you will be asked to discuss the meaning and experiences which the photographs embody.

A 45-60 minute follow-up interview will take place about two weeks later on Zoom or in person. Again, this interview will be conducted from a location that is not your school. During this interview, you will be asked follow-up questions based on the experiences you previously shared regarding being a teacher-mother in New Zealand.

What are the discomforts and risks?

It is expected there will be very little risk to you since the research focuses on topics that are unlikely to prove personally intrusive. You may find taking part in the research enjoyable.

In some situations, there may be the following risk/s to you. While it is unlikely for you to be affected negatively by taking part if you reveal information in the process of data collection that makes you distressed, you can stop the data collection at any time. You may also want to seek additional help and support following your participation.

It is possible others may be aware you participated in the research, however what you reveal to me will be kept confidential and will only be shared with my supervising lecturers.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

You will be asked to explain the experiences depicted in your submitted photographs. I may use prompts to elicit deeper meaning from you. It is not anticipated that any prompt or question will place you at risk, embarrass you, or compromise your integrity. The photo-elicitation interview may bring to light sensitive issues and/or emotionally distressing topics. If this does occur, you will be asked if you would like to have a break from the interview and have the recording device turned off. You will be provided with reassurance, given the option of continuing with the line of conversation or changing to another topic, and/or given the option to continue the interview when you feel ready, or reconvene at another time. You will retain the right to refuse to answer any question that might cause you discomfort or withdraw from the interview completely.

AUT Student Counselling and Mental Health is able to offer three free sessions of confidential counselling support for adult participants in an AUT research project. These sessions are only available for issues that have arisen directly as a result of participation in the research and are not for other general counselling needs. To access these services, you will need to:

- drop into our centre at WB203 City Campus, email counselling@aut.ac.nz or call 921 9998.

- let the receptionist know that you are a research participant, and provide the title of my research and my name and contact details as given in this Information Sheet.

You can find out more information about AUT counsellors and counselling on https://www.aut.ac.nz/student-life/student-support/counselling-and-mental-health

What are the benefits?

With the potential prevalence of teacher-mothers in the New Zealand secondary school community, this research aims to benefit women who experience this duality. By exploring the constraints and personal agency that some women use to successfully sustain their positions as teachers after becoming mothers, other women in the wider education community may have a resource to draw on when going through this life transition themselves. School leaders may find ideas that allow them to support their own teachers who are also mothers. As the participants and researcher are teacher-mothers themselves, the opportunity to reflect upon their own career journeys and share their learning with others. With on-going teacher shortages in New Zealand secondary schools, sustaining current teaching staffing is of great importance. Providing schools, management and teachers with evidence of approaches that support teacher-mothers to stay in the classroom is beneficial to individuals and to the field of education as a whole.

How will my privacy be protected?

You will not be identified in the report of the project. You will be identified by a pseudonym and any references that you make to your school or community will likewise be protected with pseudonyms to preserve confidentiality.

Photos will only be used for the purposes of stimulating conversation in the first interview. They will not be collected by me and will not be used in presentations or publications.

If your photos contain images of adults in your household, you will need to seek verbal permission from them to submit the photo. If your photos contain images of your own minor children, you will need to give assent for the submission of the photo and ensure that the child is accepting of the photo being used. You are encouraged to take photographs that do not include people. You will be asked not to take photographs of people who do not belong to your household.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

The cost associated with participation is your time. You can expect that your involvement will take approximately 2.5 hours.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

Please consider this request and if you are interested in participating please contact me within two week of receiving this information sheet. If I have not heard from you by then I may follow up my invitation a second time.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

You will be provided with a one or two-page summary of the findings of this research.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, *Dr Meg Jacobs, meg.jacobs@aut.ac.nz,* 09 921 9999 Ext.5776

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEC, *ethics@aut.ac.nz* , (+649) 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details

Elizabeth Bouchard, [redacted]

Project Supervisor Contact Details

Dr Meg Jacobs, meg.jacobs@aut.ac.nz, 09 921 9999 Ext.5776

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 29 April 2022 AUTEC Reference 22/63.

Appendix B: Consent Form

Consent Form

Project Title: ***Teacher-mother dualism in New Zealand Secondary Schools***

Project Supervisor: ***Dr Meg Jacobs***

Researcher: ***Elizabeth Bouchard***

- ○ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 29 April 2022.
- ○ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ○ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-recorded and transcribed.
- ○ I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time up to 3 weeks after the final interview is completed without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ○ I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
- ○ I understand that the photographs will remain in my possession, will not be given to the researcher and will not be published in any form.
- ○ I understand that at the end of the research study all data will be securely stored for 6 years and then destroyed.
- ○ I agree to take part in this research.
- ○ I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes ○ No ○

Participant's signature: ……

Participant's name:……

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

……

……

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 29 April 2022 AUTEC Reference 22/63.

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

Appendix C: Participant Background Information Form

Participant Background Information Form

Project Title: ***Teacher-mother dualism in New Zealand Secondary Schools***

Project Supervisor: ***Dr Meg Jacobs***

Researcher: ***Elizabeth Bouchard***

Please complete the following questions. The information provided here is confidential and will be used to inform the researcher of your background prior to the interview.

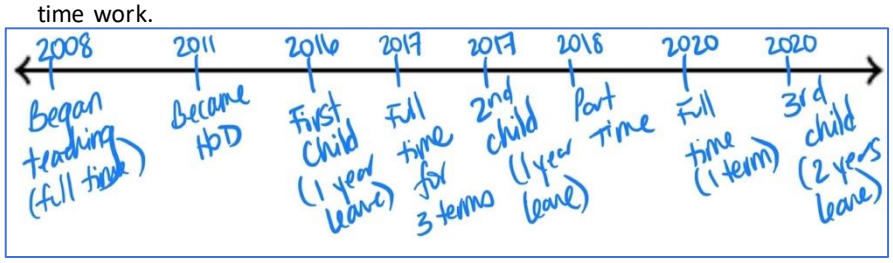
1. How long have you been teaching?

2. What position(s) do you currently hold?

3. Are you employed part- or full-time? If part-time, please describe your working hours.

4. What are the first name(s) and ages of your child(ren)?

5. Complete the timeline below. Please include (see example in the box below for guidance):
   - Begin with the year you started teaching
   - Finish with present time
   - Include any major role changes, birth of children, periods of leave and changes in full/part time work.



Please return the completed form to Elizabeth Bouchard ([redacted]) prior to the interview.

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 29 April 2022 AUTEC Reference number 22/63.

Research Protocols

Project Title: ***Teacher-mother dualism in New Zealand Secondary Schools***

Project Supervisor: ***Dr Meg Jacobs***

Researcher: ***Elizabeth Bouchard***

Indicative Questions

The first interview (open photo-elicitation interview) centres on looking at the photographs and the participant discussing the meaning behind them. The participant will share her screen with the researcher in order to show each photograph. The researcher will use the following indicative questions to engage the participant in discussion (adapted from the work of Bates et al. (2017)):

- Could you please talk through these photos and explain why you chose them?
- How do you think these capture your experiences as a teacher? As a mother?
- Why is X (depicting something in a photo) an important aspect of you being a teacher-mother?
- Is there anything else you want to discuss about your teacher-mother experience which is not depicted here?

During the second interview (semi-structured interview), the researcher will provide prompts to bring forth participant experiences which pertain to the subtopics to the research. The following are indicative prompts for each subtopic:

- the tensions/constraints that they face in holding both teacher and mother roles
    - Have you experienced constraints in being both a teacher and a mother?
    - Could you please talk me through how the tensions you have experienced have affected your role as a teacher? As a mother?
- the strategies and structures that allow them to be a teacher and a mother simultaneously.
    - Are there conditions that have opened possibilities that have allowed you to continue your career as a teacher after becoming a mother?
    - How have external factors enabled you to sustain the teacher-mother role?
    - Have there been times/moments that you have experienced agency as a teacher-mother at your school?

Data Recording Protocol

Participants will be informed that audio recordings will be taken during the interview on the Participant Information Sheet. Before the interview begins, the researcher will go through the Oral Consent Protocol with them. This will be recorded. If conducted virtually, Zoom provides an extra layer of consent by asking the participant if they agree to the video call being recorded. Provided that the participant agrees, the consent recording will stop and a new recording of the interview will begin.

The photo elicitation and semi-structured interviews may bring to light sensitive issues and/or emotionally distressing topics. If this does occur, participants will be asked if they would like to have a break from the interview and have the recording device turned off. Participants will be provided with reassurance, given the option of continuing with the line of conversation or changing to another topic, and/or given the option to continue the interview when they feel ready, or reconvene at another time. Participants will retain the right to refuse to answer any question that might cause them discomfort or withdraw from the interview completely (as made clear in the Information Sheet).

Digital recordings downloaded to a USB will be stored securely initially on researchers premises in a location separate from the consent forms. Any physical data will be stored in a locked cabinet administered by the postgraduate Student Administrator in the School of Education.

Use of Photographs Protocol

Participants have total control over what photographs are taken and submitted for use in the photo elicitation interview. Given the nature of this project, participants may take photographs of their own children. To ensure that assent is given for photographs of minors, participants will be asked to explain to their child(ren) the purpose and use of the photograph and gain their assent. If assent is given by the child(ren), participants will digitally mark the photograph with a smiley face. If assent is not given by the child(ren), the photograph will not be submitted. If the child is too young to participate in this process, the participant will determine assent on their behalf.

Participants may incidentally take photographs where other adult members of their households are present. Participants will be asked to explain the purpose and usage of the photograph and gain verbal consent from the photographed adult. If consent is not given by the adult, the photograph will not be submitted.

Participants will be asked not to photograph their students, colleagues or other people not in their households.

While the main purpose of the supplied photographs is for use during the interview, in the event of a publication or presentation benefiting from the use of these photographs, the researcher will seek written approval via email from the participants for their use. The participant will have final say of how their photographs can or cannot be used.

Appendix E: Potential Participant Flyer

Appendix F: Transcription Confidentiality Agreement

Confidentiality Agreement

Project Title: ***Teacher-mother dualism in New Zealand Secondary Schools***

Project Supervisor: ***Dr Meg Jacobs***

Researcher: ***Elizabeth Bouchard***

- ○ I understand that all the material I will be asked to transcribe is confidential.
- ○ I understand that the contents of the audio recordings can only be discussed with the researchers.
- ○ I will not keep any copies of the transcripts nor allow third parties access to them.
- ○ I will delete all audio files and documents related to this research once transcription is completed.

Transcriber's signature: ……

Transcriber's name : ……

Transcriber's Contact Details (if appropriate):

……

……

……

……

Date:

Project Supervisor's Contact Details (if appropriate):

Dr Meg Jacobs

meg.jacobs@aut.ac.nz

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 29 April 2022 AUTEC Reference number 22/63.

Note: The Transcriber should retain a copy of this form.

Appendix G: Participant Instructions

Participant Instructions

Project Title: ***Teacher-mother dualism in New Zealand Secondary Schools***

Project Supervisor: ***Dr Meg Jacobs***

Researcher: ***Elizabeth Bouchard***

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research project.

Before we can begin, please read the enclosed Information Sheet and sign the Consent Form if you are willing to take part in this trial.

This project is looking to examine being both a mother and secondary school teacher in New Zealand. Your involvement in the trial will take part in three phases: photo collection, completing of the background information form, and interviewing.

Photo Collection

- Select between 5-10 photos that illustrate your experiences as a teacher-mother over the course of two weeks during term time.
- Photos can be of anything that you feel illustrates your experiences as a teacher-mother. The photographs themselves will not be analysed. Rather, they will inform the discussion that takes place during the interview.
- Photos can be taken by you or can be selected from your personal photo archive.
- If photos contain images of your own children who are under the age of 18, please show them the photo, discuss its use and indicate if they are happy to appear in the photo by digitally marking it with a smiley face. This indicates their assent to use the photo.
- If photos contain images of other adults in your household, please show them the photo and discuss its use. Please get verbal consent from the adult. Selection of this photo implies that verbal consent has been given.
- Please do not collect photos that include people who do not live in your household.

Background Information Form

- Complete the Background Information Form.
- Send me an email with the completed form prior to the interview so that it can be used to inform the interview.

Interview #1 (Discussion of photos)

- It is anticipated that this interview will take between 45 minutes and an hour to complete.
- This interview will be done via Zoom or in person. We will agree on a date, modality and time which is suitable. I will email you the Zoom link prior to the interview, if needed.
- Send me an email with the photographs that we discuss during the interview so that they can be used during the data analysis process.

Interview #2 (Follow-up discussion)

- It is anticipated that this interview will take between 45 minutes and an hour to complete.
- This interview will be done via Zoom or in person. We will agree on a date, modality and time which is suitable. I will email you the Zoom link prior to the interview, if needed.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Elizabeth Bouchard

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