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**Agents of retention and
achievement of Māori girls at
secondary school.**

**A thesis presented as a fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Masters of Arts Māori Studies
at Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand**

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Whaia te iti kahurangi

Me tuohu koe, he maunga teitei

Abstract

This research investigates positive agents of retention and achievement for Māori girls in mainstream secondary schooling. The study focussed specifically on pupils engaged in post-compulsory education at a selected state secondary school in Te Waipounamu.

The impact historically of schooling on Māori girls was reviewed as were changes and developments in educational policy in New Zealand.

Methodologies such as critical theory, Kaupapa Māori research, and indigenous research methods/tools informed the research. In order to investigate and empower Māori girls and the community of the school involved, qualitative methods of study, document analysis, and semi-structured interviews were used. Māori concepts of manaakitanga, mana, whanaungatanga and tino rangatiratanga were integral to the study.

By focussing on those things which provided positive impetus for the girls to remain at school and to achieve success, it became more possible to avoid any emphasis on pathological explanations for alleged lack of retention and achievement by Māori girls in New Zealand mainstream state secondary schools.