Kei Roto I Te Tuakiri o Te Tangata Māori He Rongoā Hei Whakatutuki Mātauranga?

*Formulating Māori Academic Success.*

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Education At Massey University, New Zealand.

Awatea Nathan

2015
DEDICATION
It is with a heavy heart that I dedicate this thesis to my late grandmother who passed away during my writing process. I have no doubts that you are proud beyond belief of what I have accomplished. This thesis is also dedicated to your new great grand moko, due September 2016. I love you and I miss you.
ABSTRACT

There has been a long standing issue in mainstream schools throughout New Zealand in regards to Māori students underachieving academically. Numerous efforts have been made by The Ministry of Education over successive years to combat this problem. A series of strategies ensued focusing on supporting, adapting and improving various related areas of the education system in order to cater better to its Māori students learning needs.

This study sets out to explore the notion that there exists a prescription to Māori academic success. Not in a clinical sense but rather the unique characteristics, attributes and innate qualities found in successful Māori academics. It is anticipated that the revelation of certain attribute consistency will contribute to the overall outcomes of this study.

This study explored the experiences of Māori tertiary students, and the essential elements of their educational lives that are related to their success in mainstream education. The study focussed on what was and is currently working for academically successful Māori as a basis for new perspectives in regards to Māori academic success.

The study was underpinned by a contextualised theory of seven categories representing commonalities found within each of the participants that contributed to their educational experiences. Five of these categories were intangible, human qualities that each participant possessed while the remaining two categories were found to reside in their surrounding environments.

These results show that the foundations to a potential formula for Māori academic success can be found dwelling within the individuals who are undertaking a journey to find success in education.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are many people that have helped me on my journey in completing this painstakingly long venture. Firstly, to my family, thank you for carrying me through some of my toughest hardships, lightening the load when everything became too much and encouraging me to carry on when I felt like giving up.

To my dad, my heart, thank you for answering every question and dismissing all excuses. To my mum, my fire, thank you for having unrelenting pride in me and my abilities. To my sisters, brother, sister in-law and our babies, thank you for not letting me forget that there is life outside of my studies and that no matter what happens I have your complete support. To my cousins, my other siblings, thank you for providing an outlet for my frustrations and shoulders for me to cry on. Finally, to Jarryth, my love, for being there at the bitter end, reminding me how close I was to the finish line.

Secondly, to my supervisors Spencer and Huia, thank you for guiding me through this foreign process, offering priceless advice on how to survive it and reminding me that sometimes when other aspects of my life required my attention, to give it.

Finally to the participants of this study, thank you for offering your time and experiences. Without you and the successes you have each attained, none of this would have been possible.

*He mihi nui tēnei ki a koutou katoa. Arohanui kia koutou katoa mō ake tonu atu.*
TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION i
ABSTRACT ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS iv
LIST OF FIGURES vi

1. CHAPTER ONE: Introduction 1
   1.1 Outline 3
      1.1.1 Purpose and Aim 3
      1.1.2 Methods 4
   1.2 Chapter Organisation 5

2. CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review 6
   2.1 Background 7
      2.1.1 Traditional Māori Education 7
      2.1.2 Colonisation 8
   2.2 Literature 11
      2.2.1 Resistance of Dominant Hegemony 11
      2.2.2 Improvements to Mainstream Education 13
      2.2.3 Internal and External Barriers 15
   2.3 Theorising Māori Academic Success 18
      2.3.1 Exceptions to Barriers 18
      2.3.2 The Potential 21

3. CHAPTER THREE: Methods and Methodologies 23
   3.1 Methodology Rationale 24
      3.1.1 Qualitative Methodology 24
      3.1.2 Kaupapa Māori Methodology 24
      3.1.3 Constructivist Grounded Theory 26
      3.1.4 Research Combination 27
      3.1.5 Appropriateness 28
      3.1.6 Paradigms 28
   3.2 Research Design Limitations and Weaknesses 29
   3.3 Ethical Considerations 31
      3.3.1 Ethical Principles 31
      3.3.2 Consent and Confidentiality 32
      3.3.3 Commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi 32
   3.4 Participant Selection 33
   3.5 Data Collection 34
      3.5.1 Individual Interview and Focus Group 34
   3.6 Data Analysis 36
      3.6.1 Processes 37

4. CHAPTER FOUR: Results 39
   4.1 Current Participants Narratives 40
      4.1.1 Participant One 40
      4.1.2 Participant Two 41
   4.2 Past Participant Narratives 42
      4.2.1 Participant Three 42
      4.2.2 Participant Four 43
4.2.3 • Participant Five 45

4.3 Presentation of Analysed Findings 46

4.3.1 • Responsible 47

4.3.2 • Industrious 49

4.3.3 • Incessant 50

4.3.4 • Conscious 52

4.3.5 • Ambitious 53

3.3.6 • Genuine Support 55

4.3.7 • Responsibility 57

4.3.8 • Further Findings 59

5. CHAPTER FIVE: Discussion 61

5.1 Interpretation 61

5.1.1 • External Factors 62

5.1.2 • Internal Attributes 63

5.2 Contribution 67

5.2.1 • Focus of Current Literature 67

5.2.2 • Target Areas 68

5.2.3 • Recognition of Similar Studies 69

5.2.4 • The Similarities and Differences 71

5.2.5 • This Study 72

5.2.6 • Limitations 74

6. CHAPTER SIX: Conclusion 76

6.1 Closing Statements 76

6.1.1 Theory and Findings 77

6.1.2 Recommendations 79

REFERENCES 81

APPENDIX A: Information Sheet 87

APPENDIX B: Individual Interview Consent Form 90

APPENDIX C: Focus Group Consent form 91

APPENDIX D: Confidentiality Agreement 92
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure one: Concept one: Internal Attributes 47
Figure two: Concept two: External Factors 55
Figure three: Theoretical Model 73