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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

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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.

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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.

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*He mihi nui tēnei ki a koutou katoa. Arohanui ki a koutou katoa mō ake tonu
atu.*

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CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

This journey, this venture, began with my father. My dad grew up in a small farming and forestry town in the central north island of New Zealand. As most Māori tend to do, he often regaled us with stories of his childhood. Frequently, he reminds my three siblings and me that he did not come from much in regards to monetary wealth. Instead he chooses to focus on the richness he had in family and love. These reminders are something he continues to provide us with even today. My dad left school when he was fourteen despite his own father's wishes for him to remain and gain his School Certificate. It was from this point that he began his working life which consisted of labouring, dairy farming, bush tree felling and then working a job in the mills. Twenty nine years ago, my parents moved further north and settled in a coastal town just past Auckland city. At this stage my dad secured employment in retail and trade sales within the building industry, finally ending his career as an Account Manager.

As he got older, my dad came to realise the importance of education and often impressed upon us how an education could give a person a greater freedom to choose his or her future career. This was in contrast to his own non-education choice that resulted in limited career options, labour intensive roles, lower pay scales and a restricted scope for promotion. I knew my dad worked long hours, trying to give my mum, my siblings and I the best lifestyle he could. What I did not know was that at the same time he was also busy working towards tertiary qualifications. In his mind, he could not justify preaching to us about the importance of getting an education when he lacked one himself, so he set out to change that. In 2010 my dad graduated from Victoria University with his Honours, having previously completed his Bachelors in Full Immersion Adult Teaching at Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi.

Obviously the new qualifications led to imminent career choices for my dad. Over the ensuing years up to present day, he has established and continues to run numerous te reo Māori classes, wānanga and professional development

initiatives with the prime focus on Kaupapa Māori Education. Simultaneously he has led the establishment of a new community marae in our area. In this new environment created by my dad, I am regularly surrounded and or in the company of both educationalists and learners alike. Heeding his words and following in his footsteps, I was inspired to prioritise education. In 2012, I graduated from Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi with a Bachelor of Education and shortly moved on to my Masters of Education with Massey University.

It is important to note two very relevant points that have emerged in direct relation to this study. As was evident in my dad's case, his path towards academic success was dictated by both an internal attribute and an external factor. The internal attribute being, 'not wanting to be hypocritical in our eyes in regards to the priority he was placing on education'. The external factor that further contributed to his decision was 'his personal experiences with career limitations due to his original non-education choice'.

Both of these points are also existent in my own example, irrespective of our differing circumstances and life experiences. In my instance the internal attribute was, 'the need to please my dad and make him proud of me'. The external contributing factor was the new environment I found myself in and the influences I received there. That influence even encouraging within myself a stronger sense of cultural identity and an empathy for kaupapa Māori within mainstream education.

In this brief synopsis of our own journey to academic success, I have identified that internal attributes and external factors did play a part in dictating a successful educational outcome. It should not be discounted then, that more than one internal attribute and or external factor may also be present at the same time. I will endeavour to detail more thoroughly in the next segment of this writing the relevance of these points in relation to the overall aims of the study.

1.1 Outline

1.1.1

Purpose and Aim

My keen interest in Māori education was what birthed the topic of this thesis. During the time spent extensively reading and researching Māori education I found an array of different studies of which had two differing, yet reoccurring and clear views. Firstly, multiple studies highlighted a longstanding issue of academic failure in regards to Māori students in education (Banks & Banks, 2007; Bevan-Brown, 2003). These studies, along with many others, talked at length about the history of Māori education, paying close attention to the issues of cultural minorities and at-risk factors for Māori students. Of these studies, many voiced their concern that this notion of failure or underachievement in the education of Māori has slowly become normalised and even expected in schools all around New Zealand (Jenkins & Ka'ai, 1994; Smith, 2003; Smith, 2012).

As a Māori individual, it is and was quite easy to become emotionally involved in this subject matter. Especially given that a majority of historical evidence was based on deficit thinking models of research. Electing instead to follow in the footsteps of McRae et al. (2010), who subscribed to the affirmative repositioning model when conducting their pilot project and its report in 2010. As in their case, this has proven to be a more positive approach to a difficult and heavy issue for the participant demographic.

In saying this, upon even further research into the past and conducting comparisons with current studies revolving around Māori education and its history, I noticed the more positive view of this topic. Extensive improvements have and are currently being made in regards to finding a remedy to the issues within Māori education. The studies found identified multiple aspects of the mainstream education system and its settings that require adaptation and support in order to better cater to the learning needs of its Māori students. Further to this, the studies also offered insight into *how* these improvements could be implemented. These included but were not limited to, improving student/teacher relationships and the incorporation of Māori pedagogies

(Walker, 1991; Hook, 2006; White, Oxenhan, Tahana, Williams & Matthews, 2009; Walters, Phillips, Oliver, & Gilliland, 1993; Harris, 2009).

2.2.2

Methods

*Kei roto i te tuakiri o te tangata Māori he rongoā hei whakatutuki mātauranga?
Does the key to educational achievement exist within the identity of a Māori individual?*

To a large extent the above whakataukī (proverb) has dictated the relevant methods of research for this study. Firstly is the decision to use Kaupapa Māori theory which is essentially research conducted by Māori for the benefit of Māori (Denzin, Lincoln & Smith, 2008). Secondly, the use of qualitative research which is predominantly used when the aim of a study is of a social nature. Principally, people participating and contributing their personal experiences (Merriam, 1998). A constructivist grounded theory research approach will run parallel and in synergy with the aforementioned methodologies.

This study sets out to explore the notion that there exists a prescription to further improving Māori academic success. Not in a clinical term but rather the unique characteristics, attributes and innate qualities found in successful, university educated Māori being a determining factor for their success. It is anticipated that through the use of these methodologies and research approach the revelation of certain attribute consistencies will contribute to the overall outcomes of this study.

For the purposes of this study, I have used the term *academically successful* to describe a specific level of achievement recognised as an appropriate educational bench mark in regards to accomplishment in mainstream education. All selected participants in this study had attained and or are currently working towards attaining a Bachelor's Degree or higher. Below are the two research questions that guided the methodologies for this study;

- What attributes reside within the being of an academically successful Māori?

- What can be found in the surrounding environment of an academically successful Māori?

These questions clearly support the aims of the study as previously mentioned. These questions are also more rigorously aligned to the research methods and approach in chapter three. It is important to note that two clear domains of research focus have now been established. In the ensuing chapter we will review the departmentalisation of this thesis.

1.2 Chapter Organisation

This thesis has been divided into six chapters. Following this first chapter a broad range of literature is reviewed in relation to the history of Māori education. This begins with the presentation of significant background information around traditional forms of Māori education and then moving on to the impact of colonialism on Māori education within New Zealand. Ensuing this is the presentation of literature that relates to how Māori progressed in education after colonisation. Key points are made when Māori immersion schooling is discussed and soon after, some of the improvements made to mainstream education environments and systems by the Ministry of Education. Subsequently, the evident barriers to educational success are looked at but are closely followed up with specific examples of individuals who are exceptions to these barriers. In closing, this chapter summarises the literature addressed and relates it back to the aim and purpose of this study.

In chapter three, the methods and methodologies that were used to collect and analyse data for this study are presented and discussed in detail. Following this, in chapter four, is the presentation of the studies analysed and relevant synthesised results. These findings are then interpreted and put into perspective in the fifth chapter, the discussion. The sixth chapter concludes this study with a summative overview, synthesising and unifying all components of this study. This chapter is concluded with the presentation of its two proposed recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to validate the importance of this study in relation to Māori academic success within mainstream education. In addition, it hopes to add its weight to existent studies as an overall contribution to the field of Māori education in New Zealand.

This chapter is divided into three sections; *background*, *literature* and *the theory of academic success*. The *background* section is vital to the overall study as it provides a brief pre and post-colonial *whakapapa* (genealogy) of Māori education in New Zealand. This historical review highlights the contrast between Māori and Western learning methodologies. Many of the issues effecting Māori academic success can be pinpointed to having originated in the post-colonial era. This information sets the scene in order for us to begin to explore some of the responses.

The *literature* section follows directly on from the *background* and presents a detrimental moment of change in the history of Māori education. This section looks at a period of time in the 1980's where Māori began resisting the dominant hegemony of mainstream education. Also, how through this resistance came their redetermination of Māori education through the creation of Māori immersion schools and institutions. It is at this point that we present four initiatives and strategies designed and supported by the Ministry of Education. These were developed to better support Māori within the mainstream education system. Through summary and analysis, these initiatives and strategies lead the literature review to locate current barriers that Māori face within education. This section is vital to the overall literature review as it provides an outline on what the identified and current issues are within the education system and what has been installed to remedy them.

Finally, in the *theory* section multiple references are made to past academically successful Māori, attempting to see how they have managed to become successful

despite the barriers – theorising how they are the exceptions to underachievement and an example of academic success.

2.1 Background

2.1.1 *Traditional Māori Education*

In various tribal cosmologies that explain the nature of the Māori world, knowledge is said to come from the creator – *Io* (Best, 1923). It is said that *Tāne*, one of many sons of the primal parents, *Ranginui* and *Papatūānuku*, ascended the heavens to claim three baskets of knowledge from *Io* to bring back to the living world. *Tāne*'s acquisition of the baskets of knowledge could in turn be likened to a person's journey to achieving academic success, thereby giving us the first example of Māori academic success. It was the knowledge within these baskets that was shared with humanity through the means of *whare wānanga*, known traditionally as formal houses of learning.

Whare wānanga were institutions for specifically chosen Māori, who were identified for their talents and skills in a number of different areas (Best, 1923; Mead, 2003). Those chosen, attended the wānanga to learn directly from *tohunga* (experts) who mentored them in their mastered subjects. Wānanga were the designated place where learning occurred. Wānanga were not limited as Metge (1983) explains. There were a number of different types of whare wānanga. The diversities were based on the content being taught, the *tohunga* who were teaching and the different environments where this learning occurred. Proof of the existence of traditional whare wānanga could still be seen in the early-1990s, although in diminished forms, through the education of Sir James Henare and others alike (Mead, 2003).

Another avenue for traditional Māori education, albeit the less formal type, can be located in the communal life style lead by traditional Māori. As mentioned by Mead (2003) home life (*kāinga*) and family also played a fundamental role in the rearing of Māori children. The communal structure of a traditional Māori family is extensive, both in size and in meaning. All who reside in the *iwi* (tribe) and

the hapū (subtribe) were classified as whānau (family) or the whānau whānui (extended family) (Barlow, 1991). Considering the generous number of family members, whānau groups provided a robust array of demographics and skills from which younger members could readily draw knowledge from. As each child grew and conquered new aspects of kāinga life they would move on to help others. While there was no traditional name for this method of knowledge acquisition, it is more commonly referred to today as “tuakana - teina” or role modelling (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). Tuakana - teina when literally translated means *older and younger*. Within these tight knit communities transmission of knowledge from elder to younger was a common occurrence (Stucki, 2010; Pihama, Smith, Taki & Lee, 2004).

This method stems from a concept called ‘Ako’. Ako, as described by Pere (1994) is said to be the simultaneous application of teaching and learning. While one sibling teaches another a basic skill, this individual is learning patience. If they meet failure on their first attempt the individual learns to deliver the information differently. Pere (2004) also says that, for Māori, these two elements (teaching and learning) cannot be separated. Ako is all encompassing; its works occurred every day in all aspects of daily life and was not subjected to planning, time or space. Ako has no restrictions and took place with anyone, no matter their age, gender or social status within the community (Pihama, Smith, Taki & Lee, 2004).

2.1.2

Colonisation

The idea that colonisation underpins the decline of Māori engagement and success in compulsory schooling introduced by the colonial government in the 19th century is well recorded. Titus (2001) believes that at the time of colonisation, change occurred that was historically monumental and ultimately brought to light the resounding differences between the Māori culture and the British colonisers. According to Jones, McCulloch, Marshall, Smith and Smith (1990) these differences presented unequal power relations. While such differences were vast, and included, but were not limited to, unique values,

beliefs and ways of living. However among the most significant differences were the language barrier, the opposing ideas of law and lore and their individual and differing approaches to education (Jones, McCulloch, Marshall, Smith & Smith, 1990).

The colonisation of New Zealand was a lengthy process that contributed to the partial assimilation of Māori people. Simon and Smith (2001) recount that the turning point for Māori was the establishment of the British Government system. Significant laws introduced, such as the 1847 Education Ordinance Act, and the 1858 and 1867 Native Schools Acts had a profound effect on the early education of Māori (Ka'ai, 2011). These legislations proposed and later demanded, that Māori children be removed from traditional learning domains and introduced to government designated institutions. It was in these new domains that the English language began to usurp its dominance. Simon and Smith (2001) noted that the boarding school strategy “was aimed at removing Māori children from the influences of the kāinga (home), to acculturate them in the way of the Pākehā and hasten the assimilation process” (Simon & Smith, 2001, p. 22).

While this strategy immediately excluded Māori students from their traditional space of learning, it soon progressed to the attempted decimation of the mode in which they learnt. The introduction of the 1847 Education Ordinance Act is where the notion of removing the Māori language from all forms of education began. English was taught as a foreign language until the 1867 Native Schools Act was passed. As of 1867, the English language became the medium through which Māori education was delivered (Bellamy, 2010). This is clearly evident as it was within these schooling confines that the speaking of the Māori language became forbidden and later, punishable for those that continued to speak it (Mead, 1997). A rapid decline in the number of fluent Māori language speakers was directly attributed to these introduced laws.

A two pronged strategy to undermine Māori language and culture can easily be recognised here. First came the disruption of the traditional Māori learning

domains. Second, came the assault of, and interruption to, the natural transmission of the Māori language intergenerationally. Latter surveys were conducted detailing the usage of the Māori language in the home years 1930 to 1960. The results show that there was an 80% decrease in Māori Language use in this primary domain over a three decade period (Bellamy, 2010). A mere 13 years later in 1973, language death was predicted in a report conducted by Dr Richard Benton (Benton, 1973).

While the 1858 and 1867 Native Schools Acts affected the *location* and *mode* of where and how Māori students learnt, other laws introduced and enforced by the Crown affected the *content* of their traditional learning. The Tohunga Suppression Act of 1907 made the practice of traditional Māori medicine illegal and punishable by law (Simon & Smith, 2001). When this Act was passed, Māori tohunga (experts) were no longer allowed to use, teach or pass on their knowledge in regards to their expert knowledge. In saying this, it is believed that, many tohunga continued to practice discretely, unbeknownst to those who had enforced the Act (Boulton et al, 2014). Here we see examples of further assaults on traditional Māori learning. Firstly by prohibiting the experts from sharing this knowledge. As in the case of the Māori language, given a sufficient period of dormancy results diminished and in some instances, there was complete loss of traditional knowledge.

In this segment of the chapter we see the relevance of these brief histories to both Māori academic success and this study. The adverse effects of colonisation on traditional Māori learning is evident. It can also be argued, that during the post-colonial period legislation was directly responsible for the emergence of a number of detrimental issues that affected the overall success of Māori. As the saying goes; “with every action, there is a reaction”. In the following section we will discuss some of the responses Māori established to counteract mounting negative statistics.

2.2 Literature

2.2.1 *Resistance of Dominant Hegemony*

Māori resistance to introduced changes made by the colonists, began in the 1800's and took many forms. The Declaration of Independence of New Zealand signed in 1835, set in motion a course of events that led to the signing of The Treaty of Waitangi. The issues subsequent to this time were varied, with laws, land, governance and education being some of the key ones.

The significance of the Māori language within traditional Māori education has already been established in the previous section. Oral cultures such as Māori possessed no written medium with which to record and transmit knowledge to successive generations (Ka'ai, 2011). Therefore an interruption to the primary medium of knowledge transmission is certain to have detrimental outcomes for any similar culture. It is interesting to note that language loss is not just isolated to Māori but appears as a common denominator in the colonisation of most other indigenous peoples such as the Akaik peoples of the Yapiq culture (Kawagley, 1995). For this reason I have chosen to explore Māori resistance in this particular field, noting its relationship to the aims of this study.

In the early 1970's, valid concerns were raised in regards to the health and future survival of the Māori language. Studies released, such as the Benton Report (1973), exposed the critical state of the Māori language at the time. In direct response to these statistics, Māori leaders sought strategies to change the due course. A nation-wide movement in regards to te reo Māori revitalisation and education was birthed focussed on "freeing the indigenous mind from the grip of dominant hegemony" (Smith 2003, p.3). Within the Māori language domain, Katarina Mataira and Ngoingoi Pewhairangi were two people who pioneered the revitalisation of the Māori language.

In 1973 Mataira was introduced to a language teaching method called *The Silent Way* which was created by Caleb Gattegno and Georges Cuisenaire (Gattegno, 1972). Cuisenaire was the creator of the cuisenaire wooden, coloured rods that

were originally used to teach mathematics. With these basic tools and Gattegno's aptitude for language acquisition came a method of teaching language that would soon change the face of acquiring the Māori language.

By 1980 Mataira had made contact with Gattegno having previously completed further research on this particular language methodology. Together they adapted *The Silent Way* to better fit the Māori language and culture. Once she had convinced Pewhairangi of the merits of the methodology, they quickly developed Te Ataarangi (the Māori version of *The Silent Way*) (Mataira, 1980).

Around the same time, Māori immersion schooling was developed beginning with Kōhanga Reo (preschool). The Kōhanga Reo movement began as a means to provide an alternative to mainstream early childhood education while simultaneously revitalising the Māori language. Te Kōhanga Reo was a resistance strategy initiated by Māori for Māori with the specific aim of developing a space for Māori early childhood education. Te Kōhanga Reo proved to be a staggering success (May, 2001), raising and developing numerous Māori students to speak te reo, in turn creating a solid foundation for the future of both the language and kaupapa Māori education as a whole. Te Kōhanga Reo Trust believed that through strengthening the collective bonds of family, a goal of quality learning and development of Māori children could be achieved (Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust, 2013).

As the demand for Te Kōhanga Reo became more apparent, Māori began developing the next stages of schooling for those coming through Kōhanga Reo. It was at this point that Kura Kaupapa (primary) and Whare Kura (secondary) were developed and in turn the Whare Wānanga (tertiary) was reborn. In 1989 recognition was given to Kura Kaupapa and Whare Wānanga through the Education Amendment Act (Bellamy, 2010). Essentially this meant that there was now a Māori equivalent to all areas of the New Zealand Education Sector; Early childhood, primary, secondary, tertiary and adult education were now a reality.

Smith (1991) believes that this change to establishing kaupapa Māori education was a ‘conscious effort’ to resist the structure of mainstream schools. Kōhanga Reo not only impacted its students positively but influenced their parents and extended family groups. These Māori immersion education settings gave the parents a ‘voice’ for their children and empowerment in regards to education choice. Further to this was how the Māori immersion education settings provided great insight into what made Māori students successful. In the writings of Jones, McCulloch, Marshall, Smith and Smith (1990) Kōhanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa Māori are the most meaningful to Māori and provided the solutions for Māori educational underachievement because they are run under a Māori Philosophy; they upheld Māori cultural values, protocols and aspirations. These Māori led responses provided valuable information for their mainstream counterparts as well.

2.2.2 *Improvements to Mainstream Education*

By the early 2000’s there were just over 400 education sites being used for Māori immersion schooling (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 205). Regardless of this fact the majority of Māori still remained in mainstream schools. Issues effecting Māori academic achievement were still apparent despite extensive efforts by the Ministry of Education to improve the mainstream education environment for its Māori learners. The resultant improvements must be commended for their vital contributions; *Ka Hikitia Strategy*, the *Tātaiako Resource*, *Te Kotahitanga Professional Development Programme* and *Te Kauhua Pilot Project*.

Te Kotahitanga is an innovative professional development project that began in 2001(Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh & Teddy, 2007). This project was funded by the Ministry of Education with the express wish to create a cultural shift within mainstream education. The Ministry presented this professional development project as a means to find out first-hand from those directly affected by the Māori achievement issues. Those that participated in the research collected the perspectives from teachers, parents, principals and finally the Māori students

themselves (Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh & Teddy, 2007). This demographic include both those engaged in education and those that did not.

The main finding in the first stage of the project was that the “major influence on Māori students’ educational achievement lies in the minds and actions of their teachers” (Milne, 2009, p. 13). Te Kotahitanga started on site in secondary schools around New Zealand in 2003, providing professional development for teachers. According to Sharif (2010) achievement rates did increase for those students taught by teachers that took part in the Te Kotahitanga project. She states that after two years of implementation (2005-2007) there was a 13% rise in the pass rates for the students in year 11 who undertook NCEA Level 1. Te Kotahitanga formed a foundation for future initiatives and strategies developed by the Ministry of Education.

In 2003 a pilot project called *Te Kauhua* was developed and funded as a project that aimed at improving Māori student social and academic outcomes in mainstream schools. The intent behind Te Kauhua was to produce classrooms in mainstream schools that maintain and facilitate the goal of struggle free relations between teachers and students (Harris, 2009). This approach can be linked back to tuakana-teina, a teaching and learning concept mentioned earlier in regards to traditional Māori education. Te Kauhua allowed the teacher to assume the role of both teacher and learner, cementing the value of equality in classroom education. Harris (2009) mentions the teacher’s role in creating learning contexts for students, providing a space for student input and contribution towards learning outcomes (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). This again is linked to the traditional concepts of Māori education, Ako - the application of teaching and learning occurring simultaneously (Pere, 2004).

Ka Hikitia is a Māori Education strategy that was created in 2008. This strategy was recently updated in 2013 and has a focus of gaining participation from all who contribute to education to actively encourage success among Māori students (Ministry of Education, 2013). It is a strategy that seeks to make changes to the

education system rather than the Māori students, ultimately moving away from the deficit theories. The vision of Ka Hikitia is to ensure that “all Māori students, their parents and their whānau participate in and contribute to an engaging and enjoyable educational journey that recognises and celebrates their unique identity, language and culture” (Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 13). Māori make up 24 percent of the population of mainstream schools (Education Counts, 2015) therefore, Ka Hikitia is optimal in its purpose to ensure that these Māori students are offered the best of mainstream education through the active participation of all who contribute. This means students, teachers and extended family alike.

Tātaiako is a resource that offers cultural competencies for teachers of Māori learner’s and was created under the basis of the Ka Hikitia (Ministry of Education, 2013). *Tātaiako* was specifically designed for teachers within mainstream education and it provides these teachers with additional support in the classroom. The resource comes with links to the registered and graduating teachers’ standards, with possible outcomes, indicators and tools in regards to dealing with the possible classroom situations they may come across in relation to Māori students. These initiatives were created to address some of the challenges that Māori faced within mainstream education.

As indicated in the background section of this chapter differences existed in regards to traditional Māori and western learning methodologies. These same differences can be translated to include culture. In the next section we will take a closer look at some examples.

2.2.3 *Internal and External Barriers*

Strategies and initiatives developed by the Ministry of Education for the purpose of raising the Māori rate of achievement not only acknowledge the barriers mainstream settings present its Māori students, but dually address a constant recurring theme, *Culture*. It can be fairly argued that the Ministry of Education

built these improving documents; Ka Hikitia, Tātaiako, Te Kotahitanga and Te Kauhua based on evident cultural barriers found within mainstream education.

For the purposes of this study I have chosen to divide culture into two sub-themes; internal and external. Internal culture refers to the barriers that reside within the educational environment such as classroom culture, including the interactions that take place within them. External refers to those barriers that are existent outside of the education setting such as community and home culture. The literature suggests that these cultural barriers have been evident from the introduction of mainstream schooling (Smith, 2012; Simon & Smith, 2001).

A clash of culture in the classroom between students and educators is a barrier to success and there is an express need to unify these two parties. This barrier not only leaves educators with the inability to teach students whose culture is different from their own (Walker 1991; Hook, 2006), it also requires educators to seek the necessary information and knowledge needed in order to better know the individuals they teach. In other words, to work towards closing the cultural gap and avoiding the clash.

White, Oxenhan, Tahana, Williams and Matthews (2009) validate this barrier further when they talk about upskilling educators in 'Māori pedagogical languages and practices'. The conclusive understanding was that in order to provide educators with the tools to cater to a multi-cultural classroom, professional development is required. Walters, Phillips, Oliver, and Gilliland (1993) are also advocates for educators being equipped to cater to the different learning needs of all students. They state that a child learns best when the teaching style originates directly from their culture, for example, a literacy intervention called *Picking Up The Pace* was run in decile one schools around New Zealand. This intervention offers a prime example of positive outcomes when pedagogies and learning style become compatible (Phillips, McNaughton, & MacDonald, 2001). It was reported that after this particular intervention was

implemented, improvements were clearly seen in the outcomes for Māori students with the cause being directly linked to the improved Māori pedagogical knowledge of the educators.

Acknowledgement of the difficulty this task presents must be recognised as it is solely the educators' job and responsibility to accommodate the cultural diversities present within their learning spaces. This challenge is one of the potential driving forces behind the Ministry of Education and their development of strategies such as Ka Hikitia and Tātaiako. In saying this, issues arise in mainstream settings when educators are unable to deliver the curriculum content in a way that relates to all students (White, Oxenhan, Tahana, Williams & Matthews, 2009).

In 2005 a series of four alternative pilot programmes were run by the Ministry of Education for the purpose of up skilling mainstream teachers in four key areas noted to be imperative to Māori educational success. The four areas were;

- Increasing the Māori language proficiency of educators;
- Increasing the understanding of and respect for Māori culture;
- Improving the knowledge and use of second-language teaching and learning strategies;
- Increasing the familiarity with the Te Marautanga o Aotearoa (Māori New Zealand Curriculum).

These pilot programmes were evaluated by Murrow, Hammond, Kalafatellis, Fryer and Edwards (2007) who asked those involved to rate their content of Māori knowledge before and after the programme. These results showed they came away understanding extensively more than they knew when they arrived, better equipping them with the necessary skills required to cater to their Māori student's educational needs.

One example of an external barrier is the community and home culture of the individual. More specifically the socio-economic environment that some Māori

students are exposed to. Residing within a low socio-economic community is a reality for many Māori. According to the Ministry of Education (2009) half of all Māori students in mainstream educational settings around New Zealand live in the poorest communities. This cultural incompatibility can result in conflict for the Māori student in regards to; teacher expectation, student to teacher relationships and social and health development (Spencer, 1996).

Numerous studies emerged on the topic of 'at risk' students or those students considered to reside in poverty (Natriello, McDill, & Pallas, 1990; Borman & Rachuba, 2001). It was found that those that came from a lower socio-economic environment were less likely to be successful. They are also more likely to be surrounded by negative influences socially which will contribute further to underachievement (Wilkinson et al, 2000).

While these factors are a potential reality for many Māori, the barrier to their success in light of this reality, is actually in the perceptions of what these realities mean. According to Rubie-Davies (2008) the barrier resides in the expectations of the influential people that surround the students, both within school and outside of it. Links were made from this understanding to the deterioration of student/teacher relationships as mentioned above and also the lowering of teacher expectation. The resulting idea is that through expecting success, success will be found, more easily and at a faster pace.

In spite of the internal and external cultural barriers and the evident deficit realities they present, numerous examples of Māori academic success were still emergent.

2.3 The Theory of Academic Success

2.3.1 Exception to Barriers

Borman and Rachuba (2001) agree with the idea of barriers to academic success with discussions on some of the identified causes. However, they do acknowledge the increasing amount of studies that choose instead a non-deficit

perspective (Connell, Spencer, & Aber, 1994; Taylor, 1994). One such recent study conducted by McRae et al. (2010) condones a shift from *deficit thinking*, which emphasises the more negative statistics related to Māori academic achievement. In its stead, the study promoted the more positive attributes which they aptly named *affirmative repositioning* in order to “provide sufficient impetus and evidence to inspire educators in this country as they continue to search for meaningful and responsive ways to enhance educational achievement for Māori students” (McRae et al., 2010, p 7). In the following segment we will briefly explore the academic lives of five successful and influential Māori.

Te Aute College has been home to some of New Zealand’s greatest, educated Māori male leaders. In the latter years of the 19th century the Principal of the College, John Thornton, had an express wish to have Māori students achieve academic excellence (Openshaw, Lee, & Lee, 1993) creating what this study describes as *exceptions* to academic underachievement. Two of these exceptions were Sir Apirana Ngata and Sir Peter Henry Buck. Graduating from Te Aute College, they moved on to complete university degrees and finally became members of parliament.

Ngata, according to Walker (2005) grew up Māori. His major influences came from his father and grandfather who held a firm belief in retaining and upholding their māoritanga (all practices and knowledge of the Māori culture) despite the effects of colonisation. It was said that while Ngata did not consciously affiliate himself to his British ancestors on his mother’s side, both his father and grandfather encouraged him to learn and understand the western ways as a means to benefit his future. It is clear from his biography (Walker, 2005) that learning, and education was made a priority for Ngata.

Ngata attended Waiomatatini Native School and then moved on to Te Aute College where he became a *Thornton Boy*. This term came from the principal John Thornton and was applied to all who attended the college due to Thornton’s high academic and ethical expectations and the exceedingly “high standard” of

the boys English language. Walker (2005) wrote that Ngata attended Canterbury University on scholarship (due to high grades). In 1893 he attained a Bachelor of Arts majoring in political science. Ngata then made the move to Auckland where he completed a LLB, more commonly known as a Bachelor of Law. Ngata was the first Māori to gain a degree and become university educated (Walker, 2005).

Alongside Ngata was Sir Peter Buck who was also educated at Te Aute College. Buck grew up in a contrasting environment to Ngata. While he had strong ancestral ties to both his Māori and British sides, he followed more closely to his British. Buck was taught of his Māori heritage by his mother and his aunt. His father also had a major influence over him and his education choices. Buck attended a state school in Urenui, Taranaki. He then attended Te Aute College where he found huge success (Condliffe, 1971). Following this, he went to Otago University Medical School and completed a Bachelor of Medicine (MB) and Bachelor of Surgery (ChB) in 1904. By 1910 he had written a thesis on Māori Medicine which helped him attain a Medical Degree (MD) (Condliffe, 1971).

In the footsteps of Ngata and Buck, came many other Māori. One such person was Dr Ranginui Walker. Walker attended St Peter's Māori College and according to Spoonley (2009) Walker was a natural and hardworking student. He grew up with two, equally hardworking parents who maintained extremely strong connections to their community. Walker was consciously chosen to succeed academically by his parents who sent him away for what they thought would be the best schooling opportunities. After Walker finished at St Peter's he enrolled at Auckland University and attended Teacher's College. By 1970, Walker had completed a Bachelor of Education majoring in primary school education. He had ten years' experience in the classroom and five in the lecture halls of his old Teachers College. At that stage Walker had also attained a PhD (Spoonley, 2009).

Further to these three historically influential Māori are two, more recent exceptions; Linda Tuhiwai-Smith and Rachael Ka'ai Mahuta. Linda is the author

of the bestselling book *Decolonizing Methodologies; Research and Indigenous Peoples* (Smith, 2012). She and her husband Graham Smith are known as two of the architects of the notion of Kaupapa Māori research and has had a dominant role in raising awareness of Māori issues within the fields of health and education. In 1996, Linda attained a PhD in Education with Auckland University (University of Waikato, 2007).

Rachael Ka'ai, daughter of the well-known and again, academically successful Tania Ka'ai, began her journey in tertiary education at Otago University where she studied and obtained a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in both Māori Studies and Political Studies. In 2003, upon completion, she received honours in both of these majors. In 2004 Ka'ai began a Masters of Arts, she again completed this with first class honours. Finally, in 2010 Ka'ai completed her PhD in Māori Development at AUT University. She is currently a senior lecturer and the associate director at Te Whare o Rongomaurikura, the international centre for language revitalisation (National Māori Language Institute, 2015).

2.3.2

The Potential

All of the above candidates fit the criteria of this study as being *academically successful* by attaining university degrees. There are obvious differences contained within the individual backgrounds but more interestingly we see some commonalities. All of these individuals were strongly influenced by their families and parents in selecting an educational pathway. Every one of these Māori scholars went on to higher levels of achievement. Collectively representing an educational period spanning approximately a century, there is no doubt that each successive generation faced its own set of deterrents to academic success. For instance, Ngata and Buck were certainly pioneers of their age – the late 19th century to the mid-20th century. Each scholar clearly displayed resilience. They represented a minority demographic plagued by a number of negative statistics that coloured their chances of success.

It is imperative to know that even when a group of people are assumed to have a high risk of facing difficulties in a certain situation, there are a few people who come away intact and unhindered during the process (Rutter, 1987). These select few are what Garmezy (1991) call the *resilient*. The resilience of an individual is dependent on their circumstances and situations as no two people are exactly the same. In saying this, Wang, Haertel and Walberg (1994) believe that the typical attributes of an individual who has resilience to be, and to do better than what is expected of them are; independence, focussed and controlled, efficient and possess a high self-esteem. Further to these attributes is their active participation, contribution and engagement in education (Finn & Rock, 1997).

Two common points have materialised in direct relation to the academic success of these particular individuals. They were resilient and were influenced positively by either their parents, families or mentors towards educational success. It will be interesting to see whether these particular points bear a relevance in the outcomes of this study. In the next chapter we look at methodical approaches selected for this research project.

CHAPTER THREE METHOD & METHODOLOGIES

Underpinning this research are two methodologies; kaupapa Māori and qualitative. There were two main reasons that contributed to the decision to use these particular methodologies. The qualitative methodology implemented an exploratory approach and was especially effective in revealing the specific kind of data required to answer the core research questions. The kaupapa Māori methodology was employed due to the lineage of the participants as well as offering a unique cultural perspective to answering the key research questions. Thus, contributing to the overall aim of the study which was to explore the key ingredients required to be an academically successful Māori.

Further to the aforementioned methodologies is the use of a constructivist grounded theory (GT) approach. This choice was made because of the nature of this study. The study required the participation of five academically successful Māori who shared their experience of educational success, with the hope of pinpointing any commonalities. My unwavering interest into the lives of the Māori participants who have found success in education, while so many others have not, helped in deciding which methodology and approach would be relevant for this study.

This chapter will firstly provide a rationale that aims to outline what qualitative and kaupapa Māori methodologies are. A constructivist GT as a research approach will be explained. Included are links between the research approach, the methodologies and research questions to create clear understanding for and of the research processes that took place for this study. The research paradigms are then briefly explained, highlighting any foreseeable limitations and the proposed remedy to these as a means to ensure the research is robust. This chapter then describes the ethical considerations of the study, the criteria for participant selection, the data collection processes and the style and break down of the data analysis that was utilised.

3.1 Methodology Rationale

3.1.1 *Qualitative Methodology*

A qualitative methodology is predominantly used when the research aim of a study is of a social nature. The study usually involves human participants who are required to assist in answering the research questions by contributing their experiences (words) on the issue or topic. The qualitative method is extensive and requires time. A researcher conducting qualitative research must prepare themselves to be both enthusiastic and exhausted by the challenge that it presents (Donalek & Soldwisch, 2004).

A qualitative methodology has been used for this study because the focus is on the lives of several people with the purpose of describing their personal experiences. Merriam (1998) mentions briefly the role of qualitative methodology and how its sole purpose is to gain a complete understanding of a setting. This search for totality in regards to complete understanding, extends beyond the setting or situation itself and out to those who are involved and what and how they experienced a specific situation. The use of a qualitative approach provides the tools to effectively gain insight into the individual experiences of the participants in regards to their academic success.

3.1.2 *Kaupapa Māori Methodology*

Kaupapa Māori methodology takes precedence in this study due to the lineage of its participants. Kaupapa Māori methodology stems directly from kaupapa Māori research. This is research that concerns all areas of Te Ao Māori (the Māori world) (Denzin, Lincoln & Smith, 2008). Simply put, kaupapa Māori methodology refers to the processes that guide the research. The participants who contributed to this study are all of Māori descent. Furthermore, the specific focus of this study is on Māori academic success. In light of this, kaupapa Māori methodology ensured the research adhered to the appropriate processes necessary in all areas concerning the participants and their culture. What follows is a synopsis of the specific kaupapa Māori processes that this study utilised.

What is presented comes directly under the umbrella of kaupapa Māori methodology.

While the study does not look specifically at Māori culture, customs and teachings, these aspects of the Māori culture had the potential of residing within the experiences of the participants. In saying this, the use of kaupapa Māori methodology was to encourage a culturally sensitive ethicality through the entire research and thesis writing process. This meant that at all stages and throughout all research processes, Māori protocols were followed.

The individual interviews and the focus group were governed by *tikanga* (rules). Firstly, *karakia* (prayer) was used to open the interviews and focus group session. When these were completed, food was provided. The sharing of food is a form of Māori cultural etiquette called *manaakitanga* (hospitality). In closing, another *karakia* was shared in order to close the process.

The objective of *karakia*, as mentioned by Barlow (1991) is “*to find favour with the gods in all activities and pursuits*” (p. 37). In short, *karakia* was used to ensure that the discussions held throughout the interviews and focus group were favourable and offered contribution to the topic. Second to this is the provision of a spiritually safe environment.

Manaakitanga is a fundamental value of Māori culture. Barlow (1991) again expresses its importance when he talks of interactions between people. Further to the acknowledgement of *tikanga* Māori and *manaakitanga* is the open acceptance of *Te Reo Māori* (the Māori language). In saying this, the research participants had the choice of responding in either Māori or English.

These areas of *tikanga* were kept consistent throughout the duration of this study, more so during the time of data collection.

Constructivist GT originates from the traditional GT research approach developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967). Further development was made to grounded theory upon their opposing ideas in regards to the methodology and in turn Glaser and Strauss carried on with this development separately (Glaser, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Constructivist GT is one type of grounded theory. It was developed by Kathy Charmaz (2000) a student of Glaser and Strauss and while its purpose and essences runs parallel to that of the traditional grounded GT, it does possess significant differences.

Essentially, grounded theory endeavours to analyse qualitative data using a systematic approach. This is partnered with the express wish to locate the reoccurring forms of active participation mentioned by the participants that take part in a common experience or situation.

One leading difference concerns prior knowledge of the research issue or topic. In traditional GT there is a belief that the researcher should withhold in sourcing any form of information prior to data collection. This is because traditional GT is heavily dependent of the answers or grounded theory *emerging* from the data generated by interviews with the participants. In contrast, Charmaz (1990) believes that while the data has to emerge from the participants, the theories need to be *constructed* by the researcher. Therefore, prior research is a necessity when ensuring that the final contextualised theories produced are valid, robust, and offer a contribution to their specific research field.

What follows are the constructivist GT steps that this research followed after the topic was chosen and existing information had been sourced;

- Select participants
- Collect data
- Analyse findings
- Collect further data
- Re-analyse findings

- Create codes, categories and concepts
- Write up findings
- Construct theories

These steps will be explained in thorough detail within the data collection and analysis segments of this chapter. Next, we provide reasoning in regards to the combination of research methods chosen.

3.1.4 Research Combination

A constructivist GT approach was used alongside the experiences of the participants (qualitative methodology) and guided by Māori practices and protocols (kaupapa Māori methodology). This was done in light of the previously mentioned purpose, aim and participants of this study. There is clear merit of this when we look at the research questions;

- What attributes reside within the being of an academically successful Māori?
- What can be found in the surrounding environment of an academically successful Māori?

The two perspectives with which the research questions focus were presented within the introduction of this thesis. In the brief synopsis of my father's personal journey to academic success, I identified that internal attributes and external factors played an extensive role in dictating his successful educational outcome. These research questions allowed us to source qualitative data in regards to the experiences of each of the participants. This was carried out in a culturally sensitive manner through the assistance of kaupapa Māori methodology. Finally, it was through these shared experiences that we were able to locate the reoccurring and prominent patterns associated with this study's Māori participants and the academic success they've found. The appropriateness of these research choices is outlined in the following section.

3.1.5

Appropriateness

Five academically successful Māori participants, three of whom have succeeded in gaining a university education and two who are currently working towards their degrees, have taken part in this study in the hopes of using their individual experiences in education to answer one simple question; what key ingredients are needed to be an academically successful Māori student?

Constructivist GT was appropriate for this study as the research topic presented an issue that currently has limited resolving theories making it a phenomenon within the field of Māori education of sorts. It is driven by those who have succeeded in education, gained a university degree or higher and in turn become an exception to academic underachievement for Māori. Constructivist GT is a strategy of inquiry that allowed this study to explore the unique experiences of the participants involved in relation to their journey to academic success. Constructivist GT was an appropriate choice as it directed this study in reaching its goal; developing a contextualised theory that outlines a potential formula to attaining success in education.

A further break down to the research methodologies is provided within the data collection segment of this chapter. This is where interview and focus group questions are discussed to help give clear directions for this research. Presented next are the research paradigms that provided the research lenses to this study.

3.1.6

Paradigms

Research paradigms are what make a research project or study specific to the researcher who has conducted it. There are three components of a research paradigm and each of them have a profound influence over a research project.

Firstly, this qualitative study is influenced by my personal world view, my ontological perspective. This is how I perceive the world. Second to this is the influence that my epistemological perspective has on the study or my views on

reality. Finally, my methodological perspectives have an influence on the study, which are the reasons behind my methodology choices.

Two inter-related paradigms have been chosen for this study; constructivism and interpretivism. Creswell (2009) states that these two paradigms are constantly shared in research. Constructivist-Interpretative paradigm aligns itself with a subjectivist epistemology and a relativist ontology (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Simply put, this duo paradigm supports the idea of there being multiple realities and perspectives within the world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) also extend this notion when mentioning similarities within said realities and perspectives. They state that there are also shared views and understandings of these. This duo-research paradigm aligns seamlessly to this study as they encompass a common goal; celebrating individuality while pinpointing commonalities.

In the next segment of this chapter I will discuss how the research design and methodologies were limited to ensure a well-rounded platform for this study.

3.2 Research Design Limitations and Weaknesses

Aside from the long standing debate of validity between researchers of quantitative research and qualitative research (Reichardt & Rallis, 1994) all research designs come with limitations. These limitations then lend themselves to possible research weaknesses. It is imperative to highlight these areas of downfall in order to ensure a robust and all-inclusive research stance. This segment aims to promote transparency of all stages of research to ensure a stable foundation to this study.

As mentioned earlier, constructivist GT falls within the confines of qualitative research. This study is heavily reliant on the data that emerges from human participants. Therefore, addressing the limitations is essential in order to contribute to the field of Māori education effortlessly.

Firstly, because of constructivist GT this study was reliant on the personal and individual experiences of the participants (Charmaz, 2006). It demanded that the participants express themselves and retell their experience/s in relation to the issue. This is where majority of the research data originated from. In saying that, this had the potential to establish issues of validity and make the goal of *complete understanding* difficult as the possibility of receiving too many experiences with too many details could have caused issues of data control.

Further to this was the lack of generalisable data that constructivist GT produces. This is because every participant and the experiences they bring to the interviews and focus group are unique, both in the perspective and in circumstance. This makes generalisations nearly impossible. Therefore there was a high chance that the data collection process would provide too many codes, concepts and categories. This could have resulted in an extensive amount of work for myself, possibly proving too much, subsequently offering unspecific results.

For this specific study, controlled variables were put in place in order to counteract these two limitations and to strengthen the research outcomes. For example, the same leading interview and focus group questions were asked to each of the participants. Using this technique allowed the study to minimise the massive influx of unrelated information and data. It also aided in compensating for the differences in home life and background that the participants possessed. While controlled questions do not control answers, they do help with directing the data collecting process. For example, this study had one open question that allowed the participants to each speak freely about their upbringing and communities. They then had several, closely controlled questions directly linked to discussing their education.

Further to the consequence of this possible lack of generalisable data, is the issue with transferability. Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that the resulting research needs to be transferable and should be relatively useful to others who read and attempt to re-apply what was found. This lack of generalisable data weakens the

research as it makes contributing to the field of Māori education difficult. The less generalisable the data is, the higher the probability in regards to transferability issues.

Finally, constructivist GT utilises a specific data analysis process. One step in this process is called saturation. Saturation referred to the time in which data collection stopped. Saturation only occurred when no new codes, concepts and categories could be found among the participants. In saying this, the sample size of this research had to remain small for thoroughness and rigour purposes. With such a small sample the validity of the research could then have been compromised due to being inconclusive or unsubstantial.

3.3 Ethical Consideration

3.3.1 Ethical Principles

Prior to the process of collecting data for this research project an application of *Low Risk Human Ethics* was presented to, processed and approved by the ethics committee of Massey University. In summary, the entirety of research processes used will follow all ethical principles up held at Massey University. These principles include;

- respect for persons;
- minimisation of harm to participants, researchers, institutions and groups;
- informed and voluntary consent;
- respect for privacy and confidentiality;
- the avoidance of unnecessary deception;
- avoidance of conflict of interest;
- social and cultural sensitivity to the age, gender, culture, religion, social class of the participants (Massey University, 2015).

3.3.2

Consent and Confidentiality

Following the approval of the Low Risk Human Ethics by Massey University, information letters (appendix A), consent forms (appendix B & C) and individual interview and focus group confidentiality forms (appendix D) were sent out to potential participants. The information letter was designed to provide a robust outline as to what the participants could expect if they were interested in taking part. This included the purpose of the research and the direction that it planned on taking within the proposed field. Supervisor contact details were also supplied to further support those participants that decided they would like to contribute to the research.

To ensure that the information shared within the focus group remained as confidential as possible a confidentiality form was signed by each of the participants. Each of the five participants were made aware that while absolute confidentiality was not a guarantee (Massey University, 2015), all necessary precautions were put in place. This included minimal recording methods (sound only), name and identity suppression, and disposal of all data collected at the time of thesis completion. The participants were informed of this in the information letter and again in the consent and confidentiality forms.

3.3.3

Commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi

The ethical considerations upheld by this research project also extend to the Treaty of Waitangi concepts of protection, participation and partnership. These concepts are an imperative component to this research project as the participants involved are all of Māori descent.

- The concept of partnership requires that researchers work together with iwi, hapū, whānau and Māori communities to ensure Māori individual and collective rights are respected and protected.
- The concept of participation requires that Maori are involved in the design, governance, management, implementation and analysis of research, especially research involving Māori.

- The concept of protection requires that researchers actively protect Māori individual and collective rights, Māori data, Māori culture, cultural concepts, values, norms, practices and language in the research process (Massey University, 2015).

These link with the previously mentioned ethical principles as follows;

- the principle of respect of persons is extended to the whānau, hapū and iwi of all participants;
- the principle of informed consent is extended to the whānau, hapū and iwi of all participants (where applicable);
- the principle of privacy and confidentiality entails that the researcher acknowledges the collective ownership of information;
- the principle of research adequacy requires the researcher to acknowledge kaupapa Māori and Māori-focused methodologies;
- the principle of social and cultural sensitivity requires an acknowledgement of cultural diversity (Massey University, 2015).

3.4 Participant Selection

Purposeful selection was used to recruit the participants of this study. The criteria was brief yet specific. Information letters were sent to several potential participants and five of these were selected to take part in the study. All participants;

- Were of Māori descent
- Had obtained a tertiary qualification (Bachelor Degree of higher) OR
- Are currently working towards a tertiary qualification (Bachelor Degree or higher).

Those that were sent information letters had been referred to me through family and local community members. This is commonly known as a snowball technique in regards to how the research found its participants. Also, whilst gender was not a factor in selecting participants, a mixture was desired. Furthermore, the age range of participants was not specified as it was not a major

factor although an emphasis was put on the amount of time that had gone by since participants had completed their tertiary qualification (only for those who were classified as past students).

In conclusion to this selection process and its criteria - five participants were chosen. Three of these participants had obtained a Bachelor's Degree (or higher) and two were currently working toward their bachelor degrees.

3.5 Data Collection

The data collecting techniques used were directly linked to qualitative research. The chosen methods for collecting data were in-depth interviews and a focus group. They specifically endeavoured to take the experiences of the participants and answer the core research questions which were aimed at finding out what is needed to be an academically successful Māori; specifically internal attributes and external factors.

The entire process of collecting data was focused on taking a look into the educational lives of the participants in the hopes of finding commonalities. The interviews and focus group allowed the study to complete this area of the research seamlessly. What follows is a detailed overview of these two methods.

3.5.1 Individual Interview and Focus Group

Interviews are designed to help the researcher uncover as much information as possible about the relationship between the participant and the topic through the art of question asking (Bailey, 1996). In saying this, the study conducted the in-depth interviews as the first method of collecting data. The interviews had the definitive goal of locating experiences that were related to the schooling life of participants. Further to this was the express wish to understand their individual perspectives and observations of their childhood community and home life as they remembered.

What follows are the questions that were asked;

- Could you describe the type of community and home life you were raised in?
- What schools did you attend and where? Why these schools?
- What do you remember about school and its system?
- Do you think of yourself as being academically successful?
- Why did you attend university and what did you study?
- Did anyone or anything influence your education choices?
- Was there any difference between your experiences of education and that of your friends/siblings and if so, why?

These questions sought to gauge a basic understanding of each participant. They involved discussions around their home life and community environments and their experiences in education. The interview questions were kept general for the purpose of building rapport and trust with each participant. The nature of these questions helped in allowing the data to emerge easily and without force.

Bailey (1996) mentions the importance of reciprocal interviews which means the involvement of both the participant and the researcher in the dialogue of the interview. Hiller and DiLuzio's (2004) and their writings on how important reciprocity is in regards to conducting constructivist GT interviews offer more of an insight into its importance. The participant and the researcher are to converse easily over the questions encouraging a constant flow of data while simultaneously remaining neutral. This means refraining from directing the answers of the participants.

After the data that had been collected through the in-depth interviews and the findings were analysed (which will be discussed in the next segment of this chapter) the focus group method was used.

The focus group questions were focused more on refining the data that had already been collected and clarify any misunderstandings. The focus group also helped pinpoint the commonalities that the participants shared by allowing each

of them to speak freely about their time at school and university. These questions were a highly controlled variable in the data collection process and were tailored with specific guidance from the two, previously mentioned core research questions.

Below are the questions that were used in the focus group;

- What would you assume makes an individual academically successful?
- What did/do you personally have surrounding you that helped you become academically successful?
- What attributes do you personally have that helped you become academically successful?
- Why and how do you think these helped in your success?

The focus group questions were condensed for the purpose of encouraging deeper thinking and in turn providing deeper answers. The first question of the focus group was put in place to empower the participants. They were required to take note of all their assumptions in regards to the education system and what they assumed made someone more inclined to succeed or fail within this system. Frequent assurance by the researcher was used to keep the discussion going until the participants felt that they had sufficiently answered the question. The three remaining questions were aimed at extracting the unique internal attributes and external factors possessed by each individual. These were identified initially as key contributors to their academic success and were later refined and analysed using specific steps in the next segment.

3.6 Data Analysis

The data analysis process was one of the most important components of this study and was carried out in the same way as data collection was conducted. This was done through an emergent analysis method call constant comparative analysis (Charmaz, 2000). The goal of this was to ensure consistency between collection of data and the process of its analysis.

Parse, Coyne, and Smith (1985) support this goal of remaining consistent and use the word *dwelling* in regards to the researcher's time spent on interpreting the data. Streubert and Carpenter (2002) state that the data collection and analysis processes should happen simultaneously. This is to build rigour and ensure the research remained critical and systematic therefore the use of constant comparative analysis is fitting.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) identify comparative analysis as an essential feature of the grounded theory methodology. Throughout the analytic process, the constant comparative method was used to compare experience with experience. It was also used to identify the similarities and differences of each participants. This is a coding process that facilitated in the development of concepts and then categories (Strauss & Corbin 1998). These became the foundation to the final contextualised theory. There are five processes to constant comparative analysis (Charmaz, 2006) which are presented in the following segment.

3.6.1 Processes

This study used constant comparative analysis. It required two stages of data coding, the first being initial coding. This was used to examine the data thoroughly and was done line by line, paragraph by paragraph, experience by experience. As the process occurred, any repeats or irrelevant data were removed, leaving behind *clean* data. The second stage was focused coding. This allowed data to be re-examined and categorised. The most pronounced and frequent codes were labelled as concepts, which were then grouped into categories. While the progress of this coding process was slow, it resulted in undisputable, trustworthy findings.

Conceptualisation is the transition step in data analysis. The purpose of focused coding is to identify reoccurring codes and elevate them to categories. The strongest categories are then elevated into concepts which is the conceptualisation process. During the process of conceptualisation, only the most significant categories become concepts (Charmaz, 2006). Conceptualisation

is extremely important to the data analysis process. The concepts found during this stage became the foundations to the theory that eventuated.

Theoretical sampling followed closely behind coding. It simply meant seeking and collecting data that elaborates and refines categories that have *emerged* or *become apparent* from the initial and focused coding process. Charmaz (2006) says to expect questions to arise from the data. Furthermore, alongside these questions some gaps in data may become apparent with various other areas lacking substance. When this occurred, though not often, theoretical sampling encouraged to identify and then seek an answer to the question and close the disparities. This was achieved through returning to individual research participants, and clarifying with other research participants. This process of theoretical sampling achieved increased understanding and strengthened the categories found.

Following the coding process, conceptualisation and theoretical sampling is the saturation step. Saturation was seen as a goal for the data collection process. The term saturation in grounded theory is applied to a point in time when data collection ceases (Morse, 1995). This happened when the findings were sufficient and adequate - until no new information was or could be obtained. Charmaz (2006) states that saturation only happens when new theoretical perceptions stop occurring within the data.

It was imperative that all other components of data analysis were done correctly as saturation was determined by how well the data had been refined. Therefore, no matter how painstakingly slow the process of coding and theoretical sampling was, they played integral roles in the time it took for saturation to be reached. This form of analysis is specific to constructivist GT (Charmaz, 2006) hence why it was used. It ensures a thorough analysis and requires time and focus on behalf of the researcher. Once saturation was reached, the findings were refined once more and a contextualised theory was constructed. This, alongside the overall findings of this study have been presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR RESULTS & ANALYSIS

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings of this research project in a coherent manner. To ensure that this happens sufficiently from the outset, the use of participant narratives will be utilised. These narratives are imperative to understanding and interpreting the findings of this study. The narratives allow the reader to become more familiar with those who were involved in the research. These narratives were written and influenced by the interview transcripts of each participant. The narratives briefly outline the individual educational journeys as the participants recall.

In accordance with the participant narratives is the presentation of the research findings. The findings are presented in two sections which have been aligned with the two research questions. These findings then correspond with the core concepts that the research has found. The first results section is on a concept entitled *Internal Attributes*. Within this there are five synthesised categories that arose from the data, a diagram and extensive quoting of participant experience. This section, and all that it includes provides the answer to research question one, pinpointing what lays within the being of an academically successful Māori.

The second section of the results is based on a concept entitled *External Factors*. Residing within this concept are two categories which have been synthesised from the data. These categories, alongside a diagram and the extensive quoting of participant experience provide answers to research question two, pinpointing what can be found in the surrounding environment of an academically successful Māori at least as far as the participants in this study are concerned.

Finally, this chapter locates unique attributes or factors that were made apparent throughout the data collection process that did not pertain to all of the participants but had a resounding impact on the results.

4.1 Current Participant Narratives

4.1.1 Participant One (P1)

“I was born and raised in South Auckland, New Zealand. Some people may see that as a negative but, we were sheltered and never really experienced the rough side, well not in our home”. P1 grew up with her mother, father and younger brother. She was largely influenced by her immediate and wider family. She was aware of the negative connotations related to her community but believes that the positive strength and influence of her family ensured that she was not negatively affected by her surrounding environment. *“The schools we went to were very low decile, like, I was kind of picked on for being rich because to the other students I was, and they really had it rough”.* These schools were located locally for convenience and accessibility for a dual-working family with two children.

P1 began her high school education at the local college but soon opted to relocate. P1 and her mother decided that regardless of the zoning system used at the desired high school they were going to attempt to get P1 transferred. She was granted a space within the chosen school which she accepted. This change was not seamless and there were many difficulties, one being the travel. *“It was ridiculous. I spent four hours a day getting to and from home and school but as tiring as it was, I knew it was for the better.”*

P1 has always had a keen interest in her education and felt that she was naturally intelligent. She took advanced classes in high school which allowed her to leave a year early. P1 felt she was not supported by the faculty in school. She remembers having to constantly fight for support during her years at high school, especially on cultural matters but says she felt that no one ever listened. *“It didn’t matter what I said, didn’t matter how much sense it made. Māori was not a priority which meant I, a student, wasn’t one either. What kind of school is that?”*

P1 says she felt that her teachers and academic counsellors expected her to fail school because she was Māori. This low expectation and negative statistic made P1 want to go to university to get a degree that would help her and others. P1 says that this is the reason why she worked hard in school, no matter how much of a struggle it was to do it without internal school support. She worked hard until she got what was required to be accepted into the university degree she had chosen.

P1 strove to attend university for three reasons. It was what came after school, she was passionate about the area in which she chose to study and she was told she couldn't do it by teachers at school. P1 concludes by saying that her pride makes her successful. She is determined to prove she is more than a young, Māori female from South Auckland.

P1 wants to make her family proud. She is dedicated, tenacious and loyal to her journey of gaining a university education.

Regardless of her struggles P1 applied for a conjoint Law and Arts Degree at Auckland University majoring in psychology and criminology. *"I was 17 when I was offered a place at university. I was told that I would not make it without level 3 NCEA. I was accepted with discretionary entrance into a conjoint degree. I left high school and now I am currently in my second year."*

4.1.2

Participant Two (P2)

"I was born and raised in Tokoroa, my dad's family all grew up there and I guess he loved it because we haven't left". P1 did all her schooling in this small forestry town in the central North Island of New Zealand. She resided there with her parents, grandmother and three siblings. Like P1, P2 states that she is aware of the negative assumptions of her home town but says that despite that, the community influence ensured a close knit and personal family connection to those who also resided there. *"Being a part of a small community helped me have*

a stable and positive upbringing. I couldn't get away with much which definitely helped me stay on track".

For P2, money was never seen as being important, family and general happiness was. P2 attended schools that were based in the community. This was both convenient and traditional for her family. P2 attended school till the end of year 13, but does not see that as being successful. *"So, I stayed at school until I was 18, to be honest, I didn't want to get a job so, seemed like a good idea. I didn't get level 3 NCEA though or university entrance".*

P2 says that her teachers pinpointed her talent and then built her up to believe in these talents. *"Well, my brothers were out of school as soon as they could work a job, so like, 14? No one really told me what I was meant to do, not anyone in my family anyway. My teachers expected so much more though".* P2 stressed that it was because of these dedicated teachers that she applied for university.

P2 accepted a place at Waikato Institute of Technology (WINTEC) in Hamilton New Zealand, studying a Bachelor of Media Arts with a major in painting. P2's offer of place was based on her sample pieces submitted in a portfolio received by the institute. P2 is currently in her final year. *"Yep, I am almost done. Then one year of a teaching degree and I'm a qualified art teacher".*

4.2 Past Participant Narratives

4.2.1 Participant Three (P3)

P3 grew up on the Hibiscus Coast, a district located just north of Auckland city in New Zealand. *"The majority of the population up here is Pākehā and I'm pretty sure my family is one of the few Māori families that originally lived and grew up in this area".* P3 attended a local kindergarten, primary school and college. These education choices came down to convenience and tradition. *"My mum's name is on the award board at the primary and so is mine, it's pretty traditional, even my sister went there".*

When P3 discussed his time in school he talked a lot about being Māori. He attended schools that were high deciles and catered to predominantly European students. P3 says that because of this, being Māori meant being noticed and for him he thought it was one of the best things he had going. P3 did not enjoy being used as the go to for all Māori interactions held at the school. *“I was proud to be Māori but at the same time, I was expected to do heaps of extra stuff, pōwhiri and lead kapa haka, I mean it was good I guess but you know, no one else had to do it”*.

When asked about his education in its entirety, P3 does think that he was/is academically successful. *“It was only because I accomplished what was set in front of me. It wasn’t because I was smart as such”*. P3 says that his potential was identified well before he was even aware of it himself. After accepting that he had potential, P3 states that he was encouraged to fulfil this possibility. He accepted this responsibility and determined that as a responsible young man, he couldn’t turn that down.

“I left high school with NCEA level 1. Then I enrolled into a yearlong, full immersion Māori language course which got me a level four certificate in Te Reo Māori. Then my family got me to enrolled into a Bachelor of Education through Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi”. P3 was accepted into this degree because of his previous studies with the Wānanga. P3 was 21 when he graduated as a qualified teacher and began his teacher registration soon after at his old high school in the role of Te Reo Māori teacher. *“I left school, to go to school, only to end up back here teaching kids that were just like me”*.

4.2.2 Participant Four (P4)

P4 was born and raised in Kaitaia, a town situated in the far north of the north island of New Zealand. P4 attended local full immersion Māori schools until the age of 10 at which point she, along with her mother and two siblings relocated to Auckland. *“I was raised by a solo parent. Mum worked really hard for all of us*

but I knew my brother needed like, a male figure in his life, so he probably missed out the most”.

P4 was/is an avid sports woman. She spoke of her devotion to all sports during intermediate and high school and the support she received for the sporting choices she made from her mother who expected her to further develop her skills. *“I played at representative and national levels so that’s why I chose to move to a new school. My new one offered me the chance to play high level sport at the same time as keeping up with school work”.*

P4 stayed at school until she completed her final year. She left after she achieved NCEA level 3 and attained University entrance. At this stage P4 was 18 years old. *“I hated school. It was boring and slow. I just did what I had to, nothing extra really, just what was needed to pass”.* P4 knows what she wants and works hard for it, even if that means doing stuff that is not appealing or fun, P4 consciously makes the necessary sacrifices to reach a goal. She also believes that she and only she is responsible for accomplishing these goals.

P4 talked of the expectations that were placed on her and how her sport ran parallel to her education and if she wanted one she had to have the other. *“I knew I had to do well in school or sport would be dropped. Mum always said that, I think it was because of money too, it’s expensive to play sport”.* This meant that her grades and attendance percentage had to be high in order to attend trainings and games. This pushed P4 to commit and apply herself which meant further sacrifice and discipline.

“I went to university because I wanted to have a good career. My mum had to raise three kids by herself and just managed. If I have to do that I want to be prepared and capable so I can provide a good life for me and my children”. In saying that, P4 chose her degree based on this aspiration. At the age of 23, P4 graduated with a Bachelor of Business with Massey University with a double major in Marketing and Small Business Management and Entrepreneurship.

4.2.3

Participant Five (P5)

P5 grew up in Christchurch, a city located in the South Island of New Zealand. *“When I was born, my parents were already separated. I lived with my mum and I just remember moving around heaps”*. P5 talked about having a rough start in life and how he thinks it played a huge role in the first few years of his education. *“When I was three I was hospitalised for Kawasaki disease, which pretty much causes heart damage. The doctors thought I got it from the carpets of one of the different houses I had lived in with mum”*.

P5 openly talked about the beating he received from his mother’s boyfriend and how he went to live with his father and grandmother after they found out. P5’s mother visited on weekends and remained in constant contact. *“Dad found the bruises. It all seems like a massive deal but, mum wasn’t a bad mum, she just didn’t know it happened, she left him once they all found out”*.

P5 attended schools that were close to his home. He and his father lived with his nana until he was eight years old, at which point his father bought them their own house. P5’s primary school was right across the road from their house and the high school he attended was not much farther. P5’s school choices were based on convenience and tradition. P5’s father went to these schools also. *“I liked the social aspect of school. I was popular, well I think I was, like I had heaps of friends and I was a part of multiple sport teams and also took part in the school kapa haka group”*. P5 remembers one influential history teacher that he admired and liked. P5 talked about personally not enjoying the structure of the school. P5 felt that while he had no trouble making friends and fitting in socially, he felt he did not fit into the school system.

P5 left high school at the age of 18 after repeating his first senior year three times. After three years of trying, P5 walked away with School Certificate in three subjects – English, Mathematics and Biology. P5 enrolled into university and was accepted because of his age, at 18 he was automatically granted university

entrance. P5 says he wasted this year and left with no qualifications but walked away with a \$10,000 student loan.

After university fell through, P5 then started working at Dick Smith where he quickly learnt how to be the best. P5 said that this was where he learnt to be successful, as he was good at his job and was good with people. P5 excelled in his position, he shortly became the youngest store manager in all of New Zealand and Australia which he was formally acknowledged and awarded for. P5 says that he got the desire to study again after finding success through work. When P5 realised that he was an unqualified store manager, hiring people that had the qualifications, he knew he had what it took to go back to university.

“I went back to university with the help of my job. They funded my entire study, including my masters”. While he does think he is academically successful, he does not see himself as an academic. The qualifications he has acquired are just proof that he can do it. P5 says that he is successful because he knows what success is and what it feels like.

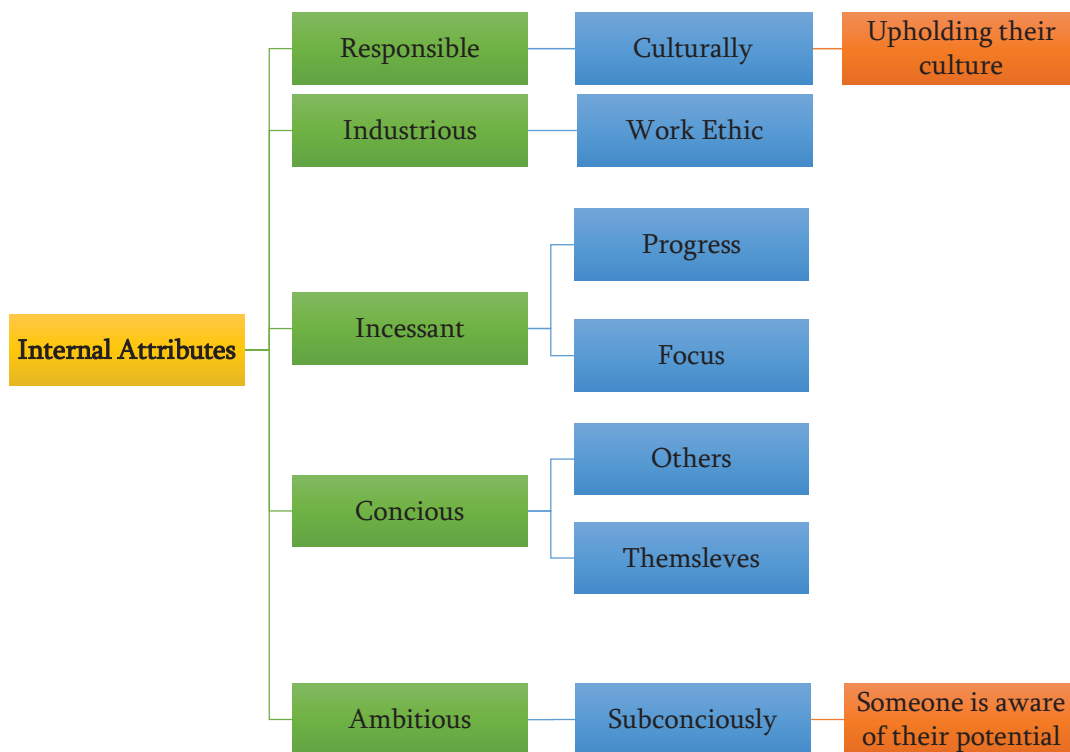
P5 believes he is different from friends and siblings because he has different priorities. P5 says he is not content with staying at a constant level and craves to change himself and make himself better. P5 attended university because he knew he had to. *“I began a Bachelor in Business Studies majoring in Marketing and Accounting when I was 28, but then I was asked by the university if I would fast track to a Masters of Business Administration majoring in International Business and Leadership”.* P5 completed this by age 30 and now at the age of 35 he is currently working towards a Master of Advanced Leadership.

4.3 Presentation of Analysed findings

The first core concept that this research project located was titled Internal Attributes. This concept is affiliated to the key research question that was aimed at pinpointing the internal attributes or qualities of an academically successful Māori. The internal attributes concept is made up of five synthesised categories

entitled; *responsible, industrious, incessant, conscious* and *ambitious*. When the process of analysis was complete and saturation was found, these five qualities were found to be the only internal, intangible attributes that all five participants possessed.

Figure 1: Concept One: *Internal Attributes*



4.3.1 *Responsible*

This category, the internal and personal attribute of being responsible, was found to be a common quality of all five participants. There is a direct link between this category and the *responsibilities* category found in the second core concept. In saying this, the first category of this core concept is the ability to be responsible. All five participants, regardless of their unique situations and circumstances, did not shy away from or neglect their responsibilities, instead, they were actively responsible.

P1 felt she needed to set a standard and be an example for other young Māori who wanted to do well in education. She was tasked with withstanding the stereotypes that she was boxed into during high school and university;

I was sick of the stereotypes so I'm proving them wrong. I'm responsible for that.

My friends would see that I had written on my curriculum vitae that I was Māori. I remember that one told me to take it off or I wouldn't get the job. I didn't do it. I wanted to be recognised as me.

For P2, attempting to gain a higher education was not something considered as normal. She was the first in her family to attempt university and from the outset they had doubted her. She had been actively responsible for her choice;

I made the choice to be different from everyone else. I always have self-doubt too so every time I felt like I couldn't do it I'd have to remind myself with like, little notes. Yeah, I am one of those people.

P3 felt that even though he did not choose a lot of the avenues of education that he has ventured down, he can see now, when looking back, that being responsible for these things were for the best. He likes to think that, those that are able should do it, and he was able;

If I didn't do it, if I didn't stand up at school who would have? There was no one else.

They had already signed me up to university, mind you, I didn't have any other plans and mum wouldn't let me do nothing, so I went with it. By not saying no, I automatically said yes.

P4 saw herself as being personally responsible for how far she progressed in life. This included how far she went with sport and school. In her mind, there were certain things she needed to accomplish to get what she wanted. She was responsible for whether or not she accomplished these;

I surrounded myself with good people who weren't into any stupid things. My mum expected me home after school so I could be ready for training or games. I had places to be or else I missed out.

P5 was extremely hard working. He believes this was because his job allowed him to be successful. It was from the hard work that he progressed and that accumulated more things to be responsible for such as staff members at work;

So within two years I was running my own store as a 20 year old with a 16 million dollar budget and 18 staff under my watch.

4.3.2

Industrious

This category, the quality of being industrious in their efforts, was common among all five participants. It was found that this internal attribute was something they all shared in regards to attaining their success. This meant that they persistently worked hard towards what they wanted to achieve. When interviewed in regards to being an academic success, the influx of data that revolved around or mentioned hard work was astounding. All five of the participants talked about how they managed to gain their success academically through working painstakingly hard and not giving up when it became too difficult – they were industrious.

P1 did exceptionally well in high school and was given an early acceptance into university. She worked with industrious effort to reach and remain at the level that was academically acceptable for her degree, regardless of how difficult it was or became;

In my first class I cried because I didn't know. I didn't know anything the lecturer was saying, he was using so many big words and I'd left school a year early and had never heard that stuff ever.

P2 knew that she possessed the talent to be a university student but was also aware that it took more than talent to gain a degree. She says that while her art work speaks for itself, she had to constantly work hard to pass written papers;

I didn't get university entrance, I didn't even get NCEA level three. That meant I had to work hard. The only reason I got into WINTEC was because of my portfolio which at that time had my best work in it.

P3 proved that he was an industrious work ethic due to the many struggles he faced along his journey of success, staying focused was hard but doing the work was even harder;

I'm not an academic so university wasn't the greatest experience for me. All I had in my head was little comments telling me I could do it, just do it, keep going, your almost done, don't stop now. Doing the work was the hardest part, but if I didn't do it, then what?

P4 wanted to be able to provide for herself and knew that the only way to do that was to gain a good education, nothing short of a university degree;

I found school boring and I didn't really want to go to university but I knew that I had to if I wanted certain things in life, and I did, I wanted good things so I had to get a degree which was a lot of hard work but necessary.

P5 simply had to work hard. In his mind, even though he may have been the best there was he knew there was always room to be better especially when at first he did not possess any qualifications;

So I worked hard. I worked seven days a week, weekends. I worked my ass off, because I knew that that was how you got where you wanted to go. You worked.

4.3.3 *Incessant*

This category, the application of incessant effort, was a common internal attribute among all five participants. This became apparent after data was collected in the focus group. The participants were asked to brain storm all of their assumptions of academic underachievement. They provided many reasons why and how one would not become academically successful ranging from wealth, health, trauma and even cultural disadvantage. In saying this, they were then asked to locate which of these reasons and assumptions they had defied along their personal journey to academic success. This resulted in the formation of the third internal attribute category. While majority of the five participants were resilient, they were all extremely incessant in their efforts to find academic success. This means that regardless of anything that should have caused them to fail, they incessantly pursued success.

P1 had set a goal in becoming an alternative statistic in light of all the negative statistics around the Māori culture and its young people. She intentionally pursued an education that would discredit the stereotypes she grew up with. In saying this, while she was still made to feel less, she set out to be more;

Every time I went to the career counsellors, they would tell me, and I'll remember this and them, their names for ever. They would tell me that I wouldn't be able to get in to university. Like, they said I had no chance because of my age, because I didn't have university entrance. I applied anyway.

P2 came to a point in her journey where failure would have been acceptable. In saying this, she incessantly progressed with her studies as she simultaneously struggled with a traumatic experience;

In my second year at WINTEC I became a victim of abuse which could have stopped me from carrying on. I mean it's a valid excuse but, I couldn't let that happen. I kept going, totally blinded by the incident but I was moving so it was something. Now look at me.

Like P2, P3 also came to a standstill during his time at university after his family went through a very rough and traumatic period. In saying that, he surpassed this;

While I was in my second year at University I lost my best mate, a cousin and my step dad died. That really affected me but I managed to hang in there and finish. It was hard work, having to be the man of the house, be there for my mum and sister but I did it. I had to keep rowing the waka, for me but especially for all those that couldn't do it themselves.

P4 was found to be extremely incessant. She openly admits to not enjoying school. In saying that, she, of all five participants, came away from high school the most successful. For her, it was all about doing whatever was necessary to attain the life she desired;

*I watched my mum struggle and I did not want that for myself. So, as boring as it was, I did the work.
I know how to get to where I need to be. I have drive and I won't stop, even if that means sacrificing a lot, which I did.*

P5 did not do well in school, and failed his first attempt at university. He openly admitted to not being an academic and talked of his struggles in fitting the guidelines of education. It was after he had found success in a job that he went back and tried again;

*I wanted to leave, because I didn't do very well in fifth form. I just didn't get it I think. But then dad convinced me to stay so I repeated the form again but I didn't get it so I tried again and actually walked away with school C with three subjects. It just, school, it wasn't meant for me.
Both mum and dad, they were workers. In terms of role models, I mean they are role models even today but they weren't academic role models, no one showed me. I learnt.*

4.3.4 *Conscious*

This category, the ability to be conscious, represents the participants' tendencies to be mindful. This internal attribute is very evident when looking at the entirety

of each individual recount of the participants. All of them were aware of how influential a university education was in today's society. When the participants were asked to look at how far they had come in regards to becoming academic successes, they were proud but not content. In saying this, when asked what they thought having a university education meant, they all talked about the more readily available future opportunities open to them. All participants were conscious of their efforts but were more conscious of what their efforts meant for the times to come. In short, the participants were mindful and conscious of the bigger picture.

It was made clear from the outset that P1 intended to gain a university education to inspire other Māori youth to leave their mark and make a difference. This was because she was aware of their struggle, as she has struggled too;

When I'm finished what I've started, I'll be able to help so many people. Māori people, the ones who need it but can't afford it. That'll be me.

The focal point of a university degree for P2 was its unknown potential. She was from a small town, where attending university was not necessary or common. She took this as a sign for how much more it could offer her in the future, outside of her hometown;

I want to work and enjoy it, not work because I have to. Not like my parents. Three years in Art and one more in teaching. I'll be teaching my talents, never working a day.

P3 saw his degree as a multi-facet tool under his belt, a single step in creating a foundation for his life, something to fall back on if ever his other ventures fell through;

My degree is something I'll have forever. I have it now and you know, when will teaching stop? I made a profession out of a something that will always be here. It's just the first of many steps.

P4 had grown up in a single parent home and to her, a university degree meant that if ever she had to be a sole provider in the future, she'd be able to accomplish that without stress;

I chose business because logically, there will always be business, meaning I'll always have work. It's versatile too. I can combine it with nearly everything.

If ever I had to do what my mum's done, raise a family alone, I'd be able to do that with this.

For P5, success had already been found through his job but for him, it was cementing this success. That meant getting the qualifications that showed his capabilities, he was aware of how important that was;

I worked out pretty quickly that if you want to effect change you have to get into a management position, a leadership position. So, that's what I did. I went and got the piece of paper that said I could do it. My next step would be something like a CEO position.

4.3.5 *Ambitious*

This final category, the art of being ambitious was a consistent theme through all that was shared in both the in-depth interviews and focus group. This internal attribute represents a sense of fearlessness that the participants possessed. It follows closely behind their conscious awareness of what higher education means as it is the act of wanting what higher education can offer. Simply put, their ambition for better, for change, for success over ruled any fear or uncertainty they had. None of the five participants feared success.

P1 contributed to this category when she was asked about her times of being unsuccessful. She talked at length about her pursuit of success and how having goals and failing is better than not trying at all;

Oh yeah, I've messed up plenty. I guess I set my standards pretty high for success which some people think is stupid but you know, if you want to get places you have to aim high.

P2 often looked at the choices her friends made in regards to leaving school and getting jobs. She knew she had made the best decision for herself by entering the world of higher education;

My friends influenced my choice too. They went and got jobs but hated it, I didn't want that. I also wanted to be the first in my family to get a bachelors.

For P3, his ambition resided in his need to be better, to change. This was noticeable in his interview when asked about the difference between him and his siblings;

I didn't leave the community to go to school like my sister did. I haven't been out of this area really so I guess my urge to leave and do great things is bigger. I'm not content.

P4 is led by her ambition to have and be the best. She, of all the participants aligns to this category the most as she rarely, if ever, compromises what she wants for an alternative option;

*I wanted the school that could offer me the best chances
I wanted a good career
I wanted to be independent
I did not want to struggle*

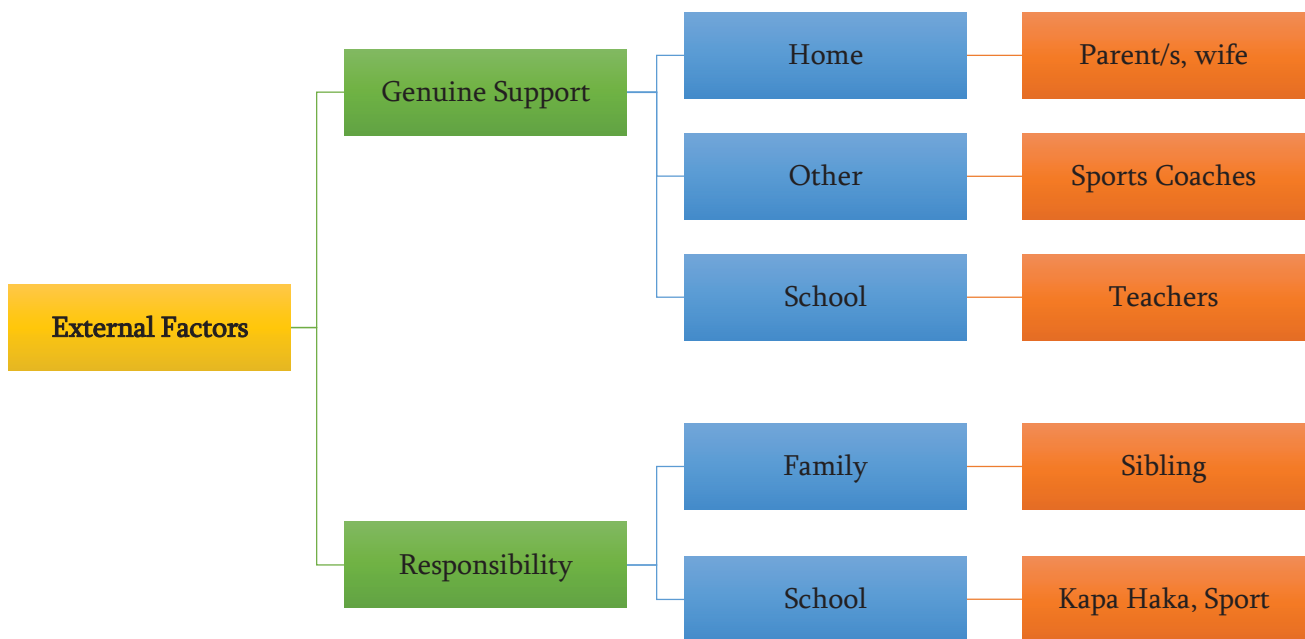
P5 talked at length about being accustomed to not fitting into the world of education. He said that it wasn't until after he tasted success that he figured out what he wanted and then how to get it. Now it's just the simple case of wanting it;

It's like my success staircase, I might not have felt it initially but I just focused on hitting those milestones to build up that success stair case, that momentum, things happened naturally. Even just thinking – ok this is where I want to go and I need this to happen – it just happens.

The *internal attributes* core concept has been defined by these five categories; *responsible, industrious, incessant, conscious* and *ambitious*. These categories are shared by all five participants who all spoke of the roles that they automatically stepped in to and how they were each accountable for something aside from their education. Further to that was the way in which they worked towards their goals. All of the participants talked of their difficulties and how, regardless of what was presented to them, they surpassed it industriously and incessantly. Alongside their work ethic was their ability to be mindful and their need to do well. Each participant was conscious of what their efforts meant and were not content to settle, they were all ambitious in where they set their sights. Overall, these categories were seen to have internally contributed to the academic success of the participants.

The second core concept that this research project pinpointed was titled External Factors. This concept aligns with the research question that had the express wish of discovering the external factors that were required for Māori to become academically successful. This concept is made up of two synthesised categories; *genuine support* and *responsibility*. These categories were both found dwelling within the confines of the participants influencing, personal environments. At the time of saturation, when data collection and analysis processes stopped, genuine support and responsibilities were the only resounding commonalities that all five participants shared.

Figure 2: Concept Two: *External Factors*



4.3.6 *Genuine Support*

This category, genuine support, represents a pillar of support which evidently, with the help of the in-depth interviews and the focus group, has been found in each of the five participant’s lives. After conducting these data collection processes it became clear that all participants possessed, in the least, one form of genuine support. As seen in figure 2 above, all participants attributed their success in education to one person or group that consistently supported their

educational desires and choices. This ranged from whole families, individual family members, sport coaches, spouses and teachers.

From the outset, P1 talked at length about the specific influence that her mother had on her journey through education;

Mum always said to me that I was intelligent and I guess looking back now I can see what she meant. She genuinely thought I was smart. I remember in year nine and ten and I wanted to do the arts subjects like dance, design and sport but then I guess Mum kind of talked to me and said that she would support me in that choice but that I shouldn't waste my biggest gift. She had my back.

P2 described her genuine support being in the form of the people who educated her. She talked about the benefit of forming positive relationships with her teachers;

So, my parents didn't want me to go to university. They didn't want me to get into debt for an Art degree. They thought it wasn't worth it and they told me that too. But, when I made up my mind, they were there to support me. My teachers supported me a lot. They knew what mum and dad thought so they pushed me. It's quite weird how it all happened though, they actually got the application for me, filled it all out and then after I signed it they sent it away. They totally believed that I could do it, even when I didn't, what kind of teachers do that? I was lucky.

P3 also talked openly about the unrelenting support that surrounded him. He mentioned how, everyone who knew him, wanted him to be successful;

I was pushed into a lot of what I've accomplished. I think it's because they all saw how capable I was, even when I didn't think I was or when I couldn't be bothered. Then, because they were so expectant of me to do well, they were with me the whole way. It was all riding on me, the only boy.

P4 reaffirms this idea of genuine support when she speaks of her mother and sport coaches;

She pushed me, but that's what I needed. She wanted me to do well. In school and in sport and I saw how much she had sacrificed for me and it meant a lot so I did it, I worked hard.

I think more than my teachers, it was my sport coaches. They always asked how school was. I had to keep my grades high to be able to play sport so they helped me. They encouraged me to be disciplined too.

P5's contribution to this category was how he found his genuine support in his spouse;

My wife. I met her in primary school, married her and she's had my two children. She is my number one supporter and I honestly couldn't have done it without her. I know she's biased but if I need to hear that someone believes in me, then she'll tell me, and it's true. All through school and even now.

4.3.7 Responsibility

This category, responsibility, represents what is simply described as a feeling of duty in each of the lives of the participants. As mentioned earlier, this category is closely linked to the *responsible* category found in core concept one. While we've seen that all participants proved to be responsible, this category highlights what they were being responsible for.

During the data collecting process the participants all talked in length about having some form of responsibility besides their commitments to their education. The participants talked of feeling or being accountable for a range of different things. These responsibilities related to family such the role of an older sibling or husband, also to culture and sports such as the multiple roles on the marae, kapa haka and sports teams. These responsibilities were far reaching and were found within school and the wider community.

P1 felt a huge responsibility to change how people viewed her Māori culture. She talked about the stereotypes that she faced, being Māori but appearing Pākehā, being young and female but qualifying early for a law degree;

I didn't want to be another negative statistic. I didn't want to have to take things out of my identity to make other people feel like everything was in order. It was kind of like my responsibility to lead other young, Māori students into that world, into university. I'm responsible for the future of my culture.

P2 felt the need to create an alternative option for herself and a range of options for her younger sister;

I feel like my brothers were expected to get jobs as soon as they left school. Like, they actually didn't have an option, but I did. I had my teachers who took care of me so I had to take care of my sister you know, I hoped she'd follow me and she did. She's on to her second course and she loves it.

P3 had his responsibilities bestowed upon him during his school years. He was directed into different roles both in and outside of school which required him to take these responsibilities on;

*I was the only male Māori student that was equipped to do things Māori at school. I wasn't brought up Māori but my uncle had taught me the basics. As soon as my Māori teacher found that out, well... I became the go to guy.
I once had to run a pōwhiri for Helen Clark when she came to the school. Had to stand up, speak, hongi her, everything. That was my job.
Prospect. I had prospect. I mean, I didn't see it but my teachers and family did. Well, everyone really. They saw it and I didn't.
Kept me out of trouble because I was too busy doing what they wanted me to do. They wouldn't let me not do it.*

P4 was dedicated to her sporting commitments which enforced that she do well in school. This meant maintaining school responsibilities also, being responsible for her school work and grades meant more game time;

Because sport was such a big part of my school life, it kind of kept me in line. I had trainings most nights of the week, tournaments every other weekend and this was all year round with my seasonal sports. Mum had always said though, that if my grades dropped then sport stopped. So I had to do that work, I was responsible for the outcome I guess.

P5 talked of the responsibility he had created at his job. He had made himself invaluable, a necessary aspect to the company and he had to continuously work to maintain this;

After I started as a sales person at Dick Smith I rose up to store manager really quickly. It was when I started hiring people that had degrees that I knew I was good. I had to upskill and get what they had. Not because it made me better but, it was a responsibility of being great at something. It was my job, my duty.

The *external factors* core concept has been defined by these two categories; genuine support and responsibility. These categories are both shared by all five participants. They all spoke distinctly about their support network consisting of at least one person that genuinely cared about the choices they were making in regards to education. The benefit of having these influential people or groups of people was that, education became a priority, a necessity to the participants. Alongside the genuine support that they received were the personal responsibilities each of them were accountable for. All of the participants had committed to certain duties, aspects of their lives that needed their attention, which evidently contributed to their academic success.

4.3.8

Further Findings

Aside from the seven commonalities experienced by all five of the participants in this study, one other aspect of their experiences was found to be important to their academic success. This aspect was not strongly common among all of the participants but held great significance in regards to P5 attaining his academic success.

When asked about success and whether or not he had always been successful, P5 talked about not really knowing what success felt like until he started working;

I think now, now I am but I don't think I'm an academic. With what I've got now, in terms of certificates, diploma, degree, the Whare Kura (secondary), MBA, it's sort of proven to me that I can do it – and I did have a big inferiority complex about it but I just felt that I wasn't meant for school. It actually took some successes in work which was when I started as a sales person at Dick Smith.

I didn't know what success was until I found it in something I was good at which turned out to be people, I was good with people.

This final factor has been entitled *recognition*. It is ultimately the act of recognising exactly what success is so that individuals on their journey to attaining this academic success know exactly what they are working towards. P5

openly admitted to never having felt what it was like to be successful, until he began working. It was from that point on, being successful was easy.

In the next chapter, a discussion will take place around these findings. This will run parallel to my interpretations and the presentation on the contextualised theory.

CHAPTER FIVE DISCUSSION

The main function of this chapter is to answer the two core research questions posed initially in the introduction chapter and reiterated throughout the thesis. This includes explaining how the results support the answers and, how the answers fit in with existing knowledge on the topic of Māori academic success.

This chapter contains three priorities. Firstly, to present my analysis of the research findings. Secondly, to explain the role these findings have within the field of Māori education and present the contextualised theory developed. Finally, to present the limitations of this study in order to declare any apparent challenges experienced that has or will determine the grounds of the final results.

5.1 Interpretation

Interpreting the findings, which have been presented in the form of a contextualised theory, is an integral component of this chapter. All further discussions derive from the meanings found through these interpretations. In its entirety, the research was determined to investigate the educational lives of five individuals who have or are currently finding academic success. From here, the study sought to identify commonalities among these individuals that pertained to *how* they found their success and use these commonalities as a foundation to develop a substantial formula of success for future Māori.

The results have concluded that there are seven identifiable commonalities apparent that emerged from the study of the five participants. This ultimately is the first step in answering the two research questions;

- What attributes reside within the being of an academically successful Māori?
- What can be found in the surrounding environment of an academically successful Māori?

Seven categories were identified as contributing attributes and factors to the academic success of the research participants. Five of these categories came under the first core concept that aligned with question one. These categories were the identified *Internal Attributes*. The remaining two categories came under the second core concept and were the identified *External Factors*. *These two* aligned with research question two. What follows are the interpretations of these findings.

5.1.1 *External Factors*

To clearly interpret the findings of this study, the external factors will be discussed first. This is because the aspects that reside in this concept are of a contributing and influential nature. This has a direct link to the categories that feature in the *internal attributes* concept.

The term *External Factors* was used to title the second core concept of this study as it became apparent that while only the individual on the journey to academic success is accountable for the outcome, there are other elements that have an influence on said journey. The range of diversities in regards to the contributing elements found, were vast. This range, consisting of both positive and negative influences, emphasises just how significant the findings were that align with this concept. Only two *factors*, were identified. These two were notably more influential than others as they were the only two that were common among all of the participants at the time of data saturation.

The first of the two categories was *genuine support*. All five participants mentioned the works of at least one person or group of people that stood out for them. These were people who were encouraging of goals and aspirations. They were honest with the participants and did not shy away from sharing opinions and contributing ideas in regards to educational decision making.

The most influential aspect of these support people were their propensity to understand the struggles and hardships of the participants but never acknowledging them as reasons for participants to not try hard and do well. Durie (2011) supports this idea of building relationships between students and other adults. He specifically spoke at length about the importance of positive, *genuine* relations between students and their teachers. In saying this, there were many different people the participants identified in their lives. These included teachers, sport coaches, mentors, spouses and parents. These genuine supportive people/s did not simply support the participants, they noticed, encouraged and supported their potential.

The second and final category was *responsibility*. The meaning behind this category was interpreted as all participants having duties. They provided their time and efforts towards an activity either by their own choice or because they were expected to do so. There was a close relationship between those who had been pinpointed as the participant's genuine support person or group of people and the responsibilities that they had acquired. For example, sport coaches and sporting commitments or Māori teachers and leading kapa haka roles. These people are both closely linked to the internal attributes found which is discussed in the next segment.

5.1.2

Internal Attributes

The initial core concept was titled *Internal Attributes* and refers to the personal, human qualities that each of the participants had in common. The research aim desired to find out the key ingredients that made these academically successful Māori participants, successful. Alongside this endeavour, it became evident that the possible origins of cause for their success came from within themselves, from existent attributes that lay within their being. These could be described as their unseen, intangible human qualities. While this idea became apparent because of the findings, it also stemmed from the notion that ultimately only the individual

on the journey to academic success is responsible for the outcome, whether they find and reach that goal of success or not.

The research found five common, internal attributes within the experiences of the five participants. The first of the five being their individual tendencies to be *responsible*. Each participant possessed attributes closely related to being responsible, such as being reliable or accountable. This category is closely linked to responsibility, the second category in the *External Attributes* concept. The slight difference between them is that while anyone can have responsibilities not everyone accepts that they are accountable for them. The participants of this research all displayed an integrity of intent in regards to fulfilling their duties and commitments.

This was evidently clear from the experiences they shared in extra-curricular activities that they took part in aside from their education. These activities expanded a wide range from kapa haka groups, sports teams, to leading roles within their individual families. These commitments, on top their education commitments highlights how dedicated these successful Māori were. The process of achieving academic success is not an easy one. The added commitment on their behalf, to extra-curricular activities, highlights their intestinal fortitude and unique aptitude. The fact that these participants actively involved themselves in their education whilst simultaneously accepting the responsibilities entailed, suggests a good supporting reason for why being *responsible* is an internal attribute of success.

The next category of the *internal attributes* concept was named *industrious* which refers to the work ethic of the participants. At the time of data saturation it had become evidently clear that all five of the participants were hard working and that their hard work resulted in them becoming academically successful. This was concluded simply because the participants talked at length about how difficult it was to become academically successful, and yet there they all were, at the pinnacle of academic success. The term *industrious* was used because the

participants were tireless, making sacrifices when needed, and pursuing their success constantly.

Category three of the *internal attributes* concept was titled *incessant*. This category was closely linked to the industrious category as it too speaks of the work ethic of the participants. The defining difference between the two was that to be incessant, one must experience negativity or aspects of adversity along the way to academic success. The participants were incessantly hard working. The accuracy of this category was found in the recounts of the struggles and hardships that each of the five participants faced. At first glance these struggles and hardships should have hindered the participant's ability in becoming academically successful.

Again, there was a range of adversity shared among the participants of this study. These experiences included divorce, physical abuse, sexual abuse, trauma, grief, wealth and single parent homes. In saying this, the study results proved that regardless of these struggle and hardships, the participants were still eventually academically successful. Remaining and working with *incessant* effort, alongside the other positive attributes possessed by the participants' prove that academic success can be found no matter the hardships experienced.

Category four was titled *conscious* and pertained to how the participants interpreted their own journey to success. At the time of data saturation, the research found all of the five participants to be extremely aware of their efforts and what they meant. The participants played an active role in their education and were mindful of how they gained a university education. They also acknowledge all else who were involved in their success and how significant this level of education was.

The findings in regards to this category were interpreted as being vital. Academic success was thought to be found by the participants because by being consciously aware of their educational journey and all that it consisted of, they

found purpose for it and in turn a purpose for themselves. The word *preparation* was used in the works of Durie (2011) in regards to students moving forward within education. He supports the idea of students being consciously aware of what education means and what it represents in their potential futures.

The final category was titled *ambitious* which had a close connection to the conscious category discussed above. This category encompassed the participants desire to have more in life, to have what could easily be obtained through becoming academically successful. The participants were not scared of what was required in being successful, their ambitious outlook overrode their insecurities making them fearless of any potential hindrance. This category was interpreted to mean that those Māori that became academically successful, did so because their desire or ambition outweighed any possible limitations of their realities.

This study concluded that the participants that contributed to this research were academically successful because of the seven commonalities they shared. Two of the commonalities were found within the surrounding environment of the participants and was defined as their external factors. The other five, which were found residing within their beings, were deemed as their internal attributes.

Interpreted as a whole, this study concluded that academic success begins and ends with the individual on the journey. They have to work hard, they have to push aside the excuses, they have to be aware and they have to pinpoint and strive for their goals. There are evident external factors that help them such as those people that reside in their social and supportive network. This, partnered with the opportunities that become apparent along the way evidently aids them in their journey to success. Ultimately, it is entirely up to the individual as to whether or not they attain this level of success academically.

5.2 Contribution

5.2.1 *Focus of Current Literature*

The findings of the research and the interpretations and conclusions drawn in the previous section, aim not to change the basis to the progress made by studies that already exist in the field of Māori education, instead it wishes to add to it.

The topic of this study was success of Māori in all education settings, especially mainstream education. As presented in the literature of chapter two, the Ministry of Education has developed multiple initiatives and strategies that aim to further improve Māori academic success in New Zealand's schooling systems. I say *further* improvements as a magnitude have already been instilled and recognised in the world of Māori education to date.

Four initiatives and strategies were presented as examples; the *Ka Hikitia Strategy*, the *Tātaiako Resource*, the *Te Kotahitanga Professional Development Programme* and the *Te Kauhua Pilot Project*. It is imperative to understand that these are merely four that were chosen to sample the field of Māori education initiatives. All four were developed in the 2000's, hence their use within this study.

Te Kotahitanga was designed for the educators of Māori students (Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh & Teddy, 2007; Milne, 2009). It stood as a professional development programme that aimed to encourage cultural changes to be made to the learning spaces and practices of those in charge of providing education to Māori students. Early on, *Te Kotahitanga* suggested that major concern was on the rise for relationships between teachers and students (Milne, 2009).

The development of *Te Kauhua* in 2003, bought with it the aim of improving Māori student social and academic outcomes in mainstream schools. The overall goal of this strategy was to produce classrooms that maintain and facilitate the goal of struggle free relations between teachers and students (Harris, 2009). The

implementation of Te Kauhua allowed the teacher to assume the role of both teacher and learner, cementing the value of equality in classroom education.

The Māori Education strategy *Ka Hikitia*, created in 2008, has been continuously updated over its duration, the most recent being in 2013. The focus of *Ka Hikitia* is to encourage contribution from all involved in Māori education. This extends beyond the educators and their Māori students, to parents and whanau also (Ministry of Education, 2013). Creating an “engaging and enjoyable educational journey that recognises and celebrates their unique identity, language and culture” is what *Ka Hikitia* intended to accomplish (Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 13).

Created under the auspices of the *Ka Hikitia*, *Tātaiako* was specifically designed to provide additional support for teachers with Māori students within mainstream education (Ministry of Education, 2013). It was designed with the intent of helping teachers if ever they were to come across unfamiliar or difficult situations regarding their Māori students and their unique perspectives.

5.2.2 *Target Areas*

The weight that these initiatives and strategies carry is vast. Therefore their common aspects and contained strategies should be noted. All four of these initiative and strategies had the same core target group which were all aligned to the same appropriate curriculum areas. On one hand, Te Kotahitanga, Te Kauhua and *Tātaiako* are aimed at supporting the teachers of Māori students. On the other, *Ka Hikitia* was designed to rapidly alter the current performance of the education system in order to improve the opportunities for Māori students to succeed (Ministry of Education, 2009).

These target areas are of huge importance which is reinforced in a number of other writings presented in chapter two’s literature review, such as Walker

(1991), Hook (2006), White, Oxenhan, Tahana, Williams and Matthews (2009), Walters, Phillips, Oliver, and Gilliland (1993) and Harris (2009).

The advocacy examples can be seen with White, Oxenhan, Tahana, Williams and Matthews (2009) who highly support the idea of teachers as target areas. They talk at length about Māori pedagogical professional development for teachers of Māori students. This is further supported by Walters, Phillips, Oliver, and Gilliland (1993) who have a firm belief in a child learning best when the teaching style used is culturally compatible to them.

It is fair to say that improvement is evident in regards to Māori success, partly due to these advocates and also the Ministry of Education's initiatives. A clear sign of this can be seen in outcomes of the Te Kotahitanga Project. Two years after it was implemented in schools around New Zealand, achievement rates rose by 13%. This meant that the passing rate for the students in year 11 who undertook NCEA Level one increased significantly.

It must be reiterated then, that this study does not wish to dismiss the contributions that these initiatives have made and the advocates that support them. It simply wishes to offer an alternative perspective that revolves around the development of a new target area. This target area is different to the others as rather than possessing a keen focus on teachers and the education system, it would instead have a direct focus on supporting Māori students and their personal development.

5.2.3

Recognition of similar studies

The origins of this study was birthed through the belief that not enough research had been conducted on 'what makes Māori educationally successful'. Therefore it was important to this study to investigate and acknowledge any other studies that had previously been conducted and centred on a similar topic such as this. This search resulted in minimal (in comparison to other Māori education topics)

discoveries. In saying this, two of these studies will be looked at within the next section of this segment.

In 2010, Hiria McRae, Angus Macfarlane, Melinda Webber and Candy Cookson-Cox, four prestigious Māori researchers, submitted a report on a pilot project called *Māori students experiencing success: A pilot research project* (McRae et al., 2010). This research project was focussed on “investigating Māori student success in one Rotorua secondary school” (p. 7). *Māori students experiencing success* related closely to this study as it wished to actively reposition its research stance and focus away from Māori educational failure (deficit view) and towards educational achievement.

Māori students experiencing success anticipated that their study would “provide sufficient impetus and evidence to inspire educators in this country as they continue to search for meaningful and responsive ways to enhance educational achievement for Māori students” (Macfarlane et al., 2010, p. 7). This runs parallel to this study with minor differences which will be present at a later time in this segment.

In 2014, these same Māori researchers who established *Māori students experiencing success: A pilot research project* co-wrote a report on a research case study called *Ka Awatea: An iwi case study on Māori students’ success* (MacFarlane et al., 2014). This research project was carried out by the above mentioned Māori researchers and funded by Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga (a Centre of Research Excellence for needs and opportunities arising in regards to Māori communities). This study ran on the foundation of Māori educational achievement. Its overall aim being “to conceptualise a ‘model for success’” in regards to those that participated in the case study (MacFarlane et al., 2014, p. 12).

We can see a clear connection between *Ka Awatea* and this study as they have both been centred on Māori educational success, more importantly, contributing

to the field of Māori education with ideas on *how* to raise the level of success for Māori students. This is evidently clear when *Ka Awatea* aligned itself with this study by simply stating that “few New Zealand scholars or educationalists have focussed their attention on the attributes of successful Māori students in mainstream education” (MacFarlane et al., 2014, p. 19). In saying this, this project presented specific conditions of the community, family, school and individual’s life that enabled Māori students to develop the qualities of success. While this is extremely relevant to this study, there are differences which will be discussed next in this segment.

5.2.4 *The Similarities and Differences*

As we now know, *Ka Awatea* identified eight personal, academic and cultural qualities that were apparent in successful Māori students. The Māori students who were involved in *Ka Awatea* were found to be highly motivated to learn in and outside of school. They were confident in all areas of their Māori culture. They were involved in extra-curricular activities that required them to be responsible. Finally, they all pinpointed an influential person or group of people that possessed a positive attitude to their learning (McRae et al., 2010; Webber, 2015).

The results of the *Māori students experiencing success* pilot project produced three categories of findings in regards to what made their participants successful; parents, teachers and students. These categories and their findings stemmed directly from the interviews conducted for the project.

For the parents, a strong presence of positive role models – especially a strong mother figure, contributed largely to educational success. Also, when education was valued and held in high esteem. Further to this was the influence of a supportive environment, encouragement of self-discipline and areas of Te Ao Māori (Māori worldview). These were all prevalent factors of success for Māori students in education.

For the students, they felt that their success was positively influenced by peer and teacher support and also, having confidence in their own abilities and self-motivation. Finally the findings for the teachers were that, those who had a strong work ethic, were self-motivated, maintained positive relationships and got involved in all aspects of school life were more likely to be successful in education.

I acknowledge the similarities that this study's outcomes, shares with the two studies we are currently reviewing. It must be noted at this juncture however, that the age of our participants and their tertiary level qualifications propose a clear difference in the parameters of our respective studies.

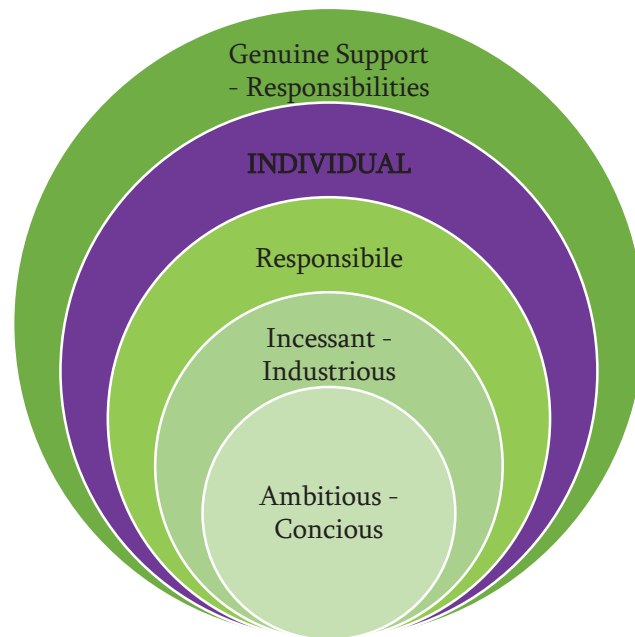
5.2.5

This Study

This study has found several commonalities between the five Māori participants who were, from the outset, identified as being academically successful. Following the identification of these commonalities and with the understanding that they facilitated each of the participants in their journeys to find academic success, this research project was left to decide where and how these findings could be used.

A theoretical model was developed for the purpose of highlighting how these research findings, or answers as such, relate to Māori academic success. This model was designed from the perspective of the individual undergoing their journey towards becoming academically successful. It aids in explaining the contextualised theory that has been constructed.

Figure 3: Theoretical Model



The individual resides within this model and has been represented as a different colour. Within the individual are the five common internal attributes that this research project has identified while outside the individual are the two common external factors.

The contribution that these findings offer to the field of Māori education is simple. It tenders new information describing a number of key aspects as basic requirements in order for Māori to become academically successful. This new information derives directly from the accounts and experiences of these selected Māori participants that have already determined their own academic success. In short, this study has not developed a new method to help Māori become successful in education. It has identified some aspects of what already has worked and what is currently working that's necessary for those that have and are currently attaining an education.

In closing, the contextualised theory of this study was constructed from the internal attributes and external factors found within the experiences of the participants when the research was concluded. The theory represents the belief

that an individual possessing these attributes and factors have a higher chance of attaining academic success, as the participants of this study have. This theory lends itself to the idea that, alongside teachers of Māori students and schools that cater to Māori students, the Māori students themselves should be a preferred target demographic for ongoing support and development.

5.2.6

Limitations

The short time factor awarded in which to conduct this study determined several limitations. Firstly, it only allowed for a small demographic represented by the participants. This undoubtedly reflects a minority based outcome. Second to this was the small range in participant age. Four of the five participants were aged between 18 and 24, while one was marginally older, at the age of 35. This meant that the experiences faced by four of the five participants had the potential of being similar, due to them going through education in the same era. In saying this, when participants were chosen, the location of where they grew up and attended school was taken into consideration. It is believed that while there was little disparity in age, a wider range was represented in their individual educational environments.

The contextualised nature of the study presented its own challenges. The final theory was constructed after analysing only the experiences of the five participants that contributed. While these were vast, the reality is that they do not encompass the entirety of the experiences applicable to those who are or will be setting out to attain academic success. Therefore the theory can be seen as only relating to the experiences of those that took part. In saying this, the study selected only participants with Māori descent in order to reveal culturally relevant and consistent results with the topic in mind. Consequently, it is hoped that these said experiences can be related to more easily by other people of Māori descent.

Finally, one particular strategy I employed to encourage participation from the contributors was to personally share and relate to their common experiences. Whilst I acknowledge that this particular method could be viewed as leading and biased, I do feel that a more culturally relevant relationship was established offering an ideal environment for more honest and meaningful exchanges.

In the following chapter we will briefly summarise this study's work, finishing with recommendations and final closing statements.

CHAPTER SIX CONCLUSION

6.1 Closing Statements

This research took a prescriptive approach towards addressing the deficit achievement issues impacting Māori within mainstream education. With an obvious personal stake in this study's outcome, as the researcher, I chose to take an affirmative repositioning stance in order to deflect the heaviness of some of the negative statistics facing Māori in education. It is hoped that this approach has aided the study in remaining positive and objective throughout.

Setting the foundation of this study was a brief review of the history of Māori education in general. This was important in order to understand some of the issues that contribute to the deficit achievement results of Māori within mainstream education today. It was noted that a key transitional time for the decline of traditional Māori knowledge began during the colonisation of New Zealand. The enforcement of western based education paradigms by government legislation once again negatively impacted Māori education. From these origins evolved numerous issues that scarred the academic achievement of the wide-ranging Māori populace throughout New Zealand.

The study moves on to explore a number of strategies employed by The Ministry of Education and Māori themselves, in order to address the apparent deficit achievement concerns. It was evidenced that numerous improvements have been made due to initiatives such as Ka Hikitia and Tātaiako (in mainstream education) or Kōhanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa (in Māori medium education). It is reasonable to state that problems still exist for Māori in both areas. It goes without saying that despite these issues there are Māori individuals who have and are making, significant contributions to education. The like of Sir Apirana Ngata and Ranginui Walker heading the list of academically successful Māori individuals reviewed in the introductory chapter of this study.

Kaupapa Māori and Constructivist Grounded Theories clearly influenced the research approach. Kaupapa Māori was the most appropriate given the cultural components that underpinned the entire study. This in turn proposing the incorporation of a range of techniques and steps that had the express wish of ensuring the participants and their contributions to the study were regarded with cultural sensitivity and respect. The constructivist grounded theory research approach offered this study the appropriate data collection methods used to extract the end results and the tools of analysis to interpret them.

The primary goal of this study was to identify key ingredients that contributed to the academic success of Māori. This involved personal interviews with five university educated Māori, who fit the pre-requisites of being academically successful as dictated for the purposes of this study. The analysis then presented information consistencies that were extracted to form the theoretical base for potentially formulating educational success for Māori. These findings were categorised and placed within two core concepts that have been discussed at length in chapter five. These concepts were entitled *internal attributes* and *external factors*.

Two key questions led the research;

- What attributes reside within the being of an academically successful Māori?
- What can be found in the surrounding environment of an academically successful Māori?

While the primary goal mentioned above directed the research from the outset, these questions later emerged subsequent to choosing the research design.

6.1.1 *Theory and Findings*

From within the two key concepts (internal attributes and external factors) emerged seven categories which were identified as contributing elements to the academic success of the research participants. Five of these categories came

under the first core concept (internal attributes) whilst simultaneously aligning with the first research question. The remaining two categories came under the second core concept (external factors) aligning themselves with the second research question.

In chapter five's discussion chapter, a theoretical model was presented which was designed from the perspective of the individual undergoing their journey towards becoming academically successful and was used as a visual aid in explaining the contextualised theory that has been constructed.

The internal attributes that were common among all five of the contributing participants are presented and briefly explained below followed by the two external factors;

- Responsible - possessing qualities closely related to being responsible, such as being reliable or accountable. Also, the ability to display an integrity of intent in regards to fulfilling their duties and commitments.
- Industrious – a constant and tireless work ethic in regards to pursuing academic success regardless if this meant making sacrifices when needed.
- Incessant – similar to being industrious but refers to continual hard work despite coming to pass any form of hardship, negative experience or aspects of adversity along the way to academic success.
- Conscious – the art of being mindful and aware of academic success and what it represents once it has been attained.
- Ambitious – the utmost desire to have more in life, to have what could easily be obtained through becoming academically successful. This desire outweighs any possible limitations.

- Genuine Support – the influence of at least one person or group of people that was encouraging of goals and aspirations, was honest and shared opinions and contributed ideas in regards to educational decision making. They noticed, encouraged and supported potential of the participants.

- Responsibilities – the unique duties, activities and commitments that required the time, attention and efforts of the participants either by their own choice or because they were expected to do so.

The contextualised theory constructed by these findings, supports the notion of a new target area. This study theorises that, in the presence of these key ingredients, a greater opportunity for academic success for Māori students, could be a likelihood.

6.1.2 Recommendations

This study has two recommendations. The first is directed towards the Ministry of Education and all of the other independent creators of education initiatives that affect Māori students within mainstream schools. This study recommends;

- That the findings of this study be offered as a basis for a practical application within mainstream schools and in particular be applied to supporting, developing and increasing the opportunities for academic success of Māori students.

The second recommendation proposes a wider scope to test this theory further, it is directed to those that wish to contribute to future research. Therefore this study also recommends;

- That a broader study be conducted that allows for a longer research time period, with access to more resources, and a broader range in research participants. The inclusion of a comparative study of other indigenous cultures in direct relationship to this one would be an added benefit.

This thesis began with a narrative in regards to my father and the education choices he made throughout his life. To me and from the perspective of this study, my dad is an academically successful Māori. It is through his success in

education that I was inspired to start on my own journey. So too for the many others that took part or were mentioned within this thesis. We have all established the need to begin the journey. It is hoped that this study's outcomes will contribute towards academic success for the multitude that will follow in our footsteps.

In closing, whilst we acknowledge the intrinsic aspects of the study's findings as key determiners to formulating academic success for Māori, we must not discount the importance of the two identified external values. These external factors are not just the sole responsibility of Māori but one that should resound within the heart of educational conscience. In accordance, it offers educators in general, the opportunity to work collaboratively with Māori, for Māori, in their endeavours to reduce deficit achievements for Māori in education.

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APPENDIX (A)

*Kei Roto I Te Tuakiri O Te Tangata Māori, He Rongoa Hei
Whakatutuki Matauranga? Formulating Māori Academic
Success.*

INFORMATION SHEET

Student Researcher:	Research Supervisors:
Awatea Nathan Massey University Whangaparaoa, Stanmore Bay. Awateanathan22@gmail.com	Spencer Lilley and Prof. Huia Jahnke Massey University Palmerston North S.C.Lilley@massey.ac.nz H.T.Jahnke@massey.ac.nz

Tēnā koe,

You are invited to take part in my study of Māori Academic Success. If you wish to accept, your participation will contribute directly to the completion of my Thesis. My research follows a qualitative design and requires an insight into the lives and education of five university educated Māori. This student research project is the final component of a 240 credit Masters of Education with Massey University.

This research project looks at the intangible qualities of past and present university educated Māori in search of any commonalities. It is specifically aimed at identifying the individual, intrinsic attributes required in order to be successful in university education for Māori. There is also the hope of developing a formula from these findings that can be instilled within our future Māori students who wish to become university educated.

There are minimal yet specific requirements in regards to the recruitment process and the identification of potential participants. Those applicable for this research project must be of Māori descent and be currently working towards or hold a Bachelor Degree (or higher). The research project requires five

participants only. If you chose to take part in this research you will be the main source of data. In saying this, the data collection process is entirely risk free.

There are two procedures that you will be required to take part in; an individual interview and a wānanga (focus group). The individual interview can be scheduled to a time that suits you and will take no longer than 1 hour. The wānanga process requires all five participants to be available to discuss the approved data collected from the individual interviews. This procedure will take between 2-4 hours and can again be scheduled to a time that is suitable for you. It must be noted that while confidentiality forms are to be signed by all who take part in this study and absolute confidentiality is an ultimate priority, it cannot be guaranteed. In saying this, all necessary steps will be taken in order to accommodate in fulfilling this goal.

Following these project procedures, the data collected will be transcribed and will go through a coding and memo-ing process that is specific to the research design and method. This is to strengthen the commonalities made between each participant and to ensure validity and legitimacy of the information obtained. The data from the procedures will be stored in two ways; audio recordings will be kept on a tape recorder and written notes will be stored on a personal hard drive. When the research project has been completed each participant will be provided with a personal copy of the project and the original data obtained will be disposed of accordingly.

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw from the study (specify timeframe);
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
- Be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.
- Ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview.

This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Dr Brian Finch, Director (Research Ethics), telephone 06 356 9099, extn 86015, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz.

You have been identified as someone of Māori descent that has successfully attained a university education – your contribution to this research would be truly appreciated.

*Nāku Noa,
Awatea Nathan*

APPENDIX (B)

*Kei Roto I Te Tuakiri O Te Tangata Māori, He Rongoa Hei
Whakatutuki Matauranga? Formulating Māori Academic
Success.*

INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

- I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.
- I agree/do not agree to the interview being sound recorded.
- I wish/do not wish to have my recordings returned to me.
- I wish/do not wish to have data placed in an official archive.
- I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature:

Date:

.....

Full Name -

.....

APPENDIX (C)

*Kei Roto I Te Tuakiri O Te Tangata Māori, He Rongoa Hei
Whakatutuki Matauranga? Formulating Māori Academic
Success.*

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

- I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.
- I agree not to disclose anything discussed in the Focus Group.
- I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature:

Date:

.....

Full Name -

.....

APPENDIX (D)

*Kei Roto I Te Tuakiri O Te Tangata Māori, He Rongoa Hei
Whakatutuki Matauranga? Formulating Māori Academic
Success.*

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I (Full Name - printed)
agree to keep confidential all information concerning the project
.....
.....
.....
..... (Title of Project).

I will not retain or copy any information involving the project.

Signature:

Date:

.....

Full Name -

.....