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**“BEING MAORI” AND “BEING
SUCCESSFUL” – MAORI GIRLS’
EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS AT
SECONDARY SCHOOL**

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of Masters in Education
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ABSTRACT

Why is there inadequate research that focuses on young Maori women's educational achievement? Clearly there is a need to examine the positive strategies that Maori girls utilise to achieve success. This study identifies the factors that promoted and/or hindered four bursary Maori girls' achievement, during their schooling in a single sex urban, mainstream secondary school. The construction of Maori women is examined through different spheres over time in context. Qualitative research using semi-structured interviews and open-ended questions were utilised to gather the data. Critical theory, Kaupapa Maori theory and Maori centred approach guided the research processes. The findings indicated six major themes that emerged from the data as significant, showing that Maori girls' success involves numerous complexities and contradictions. For instance, the definition, meaning and representation of success shifted and changed across context. The intersections of different interpretations of success within the same context, at times, located Maori girls in problematic positions. Further complexities involved Maori girls adjusting and modifying their identity in order to succeed. Maori girls' identities were shaped through social relations with whanau, peer networks and schools. This process involved constant negotiation of the girl's sense of being Maori and others definition of what it means. A number of theoretical lens were utilised to analyse and interpret Maori girls' educational experience. These included: hegemony; social and cultural reproduction; egalitarianism and equity. By sharing and examining Maori girls' educational experience, it helps us to better understand their realities.

Please note that when Maori words appear in the body of this thesis a glossary of terms is provided (p.135). The meanings given should not be read as definitive and full rather they are reflective of what the words mean in the context of this thesis and the conversations that underpin it.

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