Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.
Back to School - First Year University Experiences of Mature Māori Women

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of

Master of Educational Psychology

at
Massey University, Albany
New Zealand

Megan Lee Fitzpatrick

2015
Abstract

This thesis is an exploration of the first year experiences of five Māori women who attended a tertiary institution in Aotearoa as mature students. Situated in the context of higher education and student life, their first year experiences includes challenges related to childhood school experiences, language and culture clashes. The importance of collectivist Māori values as a form of Māori identification supports them through their academic journeys. Interviews with five mature Māori women revealed the conflict and cultural dissonance between western University values and Māori cultural values that impacted on their first years of study. It was also clear that Māori values such as whānau and whanaungatanga were critical to providing cultural support for these women. Findings also show that for these Māori women the practice of Māori values contributes to their identity as Māori women and also to the wellbeing of their whānau, hapū and iwi. These stories explore how the mature Māori women in this study, overcame the very powerful influence of negative experience as children within the state education systems, to begin tertiary study later in life.
Acknowledgements

Ko Tamatea te maunga
Ko Hokianga te moana
Ko Ngātokimatawhaorua te waka
Ko Tamatea te whare tipuna
Ko Te Rarawa te iwi
Ko Ngāi Tamatea te hapū
Ko Waimate Anaru te tangata
Ko Megan Fitzpatrick ahau

I would like to thank the inspiring women who shared very special moments of their life and academic journey with me. Thank you for the privilege of hearing, crying, laughing and sharing them with you. I hope this project honours your voice as Māori women, scholars and role models and sparks further sharing of your life stories as taonga for your whānau.

To my study buddies over the years – ngā mihi nui ki a koutou. It’s been a pleasure learning beside you, you helped make it a pleasure. You know who are. Let’s do this.

I am grateful to my supervisors; Professor Huia Tomlins-Jahnke and Doctor Jeanette Berman whose guidance and support complemented each other and buoyed me with what I needed to accomplish this task. Your direction and conversations instigated much reflection and learning, I have learnt much, thank you.

To my Mother, your constant support throughout my entire university journey has been unfailing. You have been there to see me off through all my life’s educational milestones - thank you for always being their at home time too.

Special thanks to all my whānau, my siblings, my in-laws and out-laws. Thank you for putting up with the many ‘I’m over it’s’ and encouraging me to keep going even though you knew I would. Thank you Donna for the special kete made from home. You gave it to me as I started my undergrad, it held my books and constantly reminded me of the challenge to pursue knowledge, while remembering who I was, and where I came from. The handles need strengthening but the kete is sound and ready for more. To all my nieces, nephews, children of my own and otherwise, –if I can do it, you can do it – just do it when you’re younger than me.

To my children – Haylee, Connor and Alyse – you rock. Always have, always will. Thank you for humouring me with the emergency whānau hui we would have when it felt like I was having a melt-down, oh wait, I was. Thank you for stepping up and stepping in when things
got crazy around assignment times. To my darling, thank you France for being the wonderful provider that you are for our family in so many ways – thank you for extra provision of support, love and patience, and for being there for me emotionally, mentally and spiritually.

Thank you Dad for those final words of advice you gave to me as a mother before you headed off to the ultimate whānau reunion, they have constantly supported and motivated me in my studies and hopefully motivate your mokopuna as well.

“Make sure they get a good education, so they can be in the best place to do the most good to help others”.

I hope all you kids are listening to Papa. I am.
# Table of Contents

Abstract ...................................................................................................................... i

Acknowledgements ...................................................................................................... iii

CHAPTER ONE ............................................................................................................... 1
Mature Māori Women in Tertiary Education................................................................. 1
    Introduction ............................................................................................................ 1
    Colonialism and Māori Women ........................................................................... 2
    Education and Māori Women .............................................................................. 4
    Te Reo Māori and Māori Women ....................................................................... 5
    Tertiary Education and Māori Women ................................................................. 6
    Mature Māori Women as Tertiary Students ......................................................... 7
    Previous Studies ..................................................................................................... 8
    Conclusion ............................................................................................................. 11

CHAPTER TWO ............................................................................................................ 13
Research Approach and Processes .............................................................................. 13
    Aims of the Research ............................................................................................ 13
    Positionality ........................................................................................................... 13
    Research Approach ............................................................................................... 14
    Kaupapa Māori ...................................................................................................... 14
    Mana wāhine ......................................................................................................... 15
    Research Process ................................................................................................... 16
    Selection of participants ......................................................................................... 16
    Participant consent ............................................................................................... 17
    Equipment and preparation .................................................................................... 17
    Interview preparation ............................................................................................. 17
    Ethical considerations and observations ................................................................ 18
    Process of analysis ................................................................................................. 18
    Limitation ............................................................................................................... 19
    Conclusion ............................................................................................................. 19

CHAPTER THREE .......................................................................................................... 21
Being Māori ............................................................................................................... 21
    Being ‘Raised Pākehā’ ......................................................................................... 21
    Being ‘Raised Māori’ ............................................................................................ 23
    The Loss of Te Reo Māori ................................................................................... 24
    Being Māori .......................................................................................................... 27
    Role of Māori Women ........................................................................................... 28