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**HIGHER EDUCATION IN NEW ZEALAND:
A FORM OF *FAKALAKALAKA* FOR EDUCATED
TONGAN WOMEN?**

A consideration of the perspectives of educated Tongan women on their experiences of higher education in New Zealand, and how this relates to *fakalalakaka*.

By

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ABSTRACT

The key focus of this research is to understand whether or not higher education in New Zealand is a meaningful form of *fakalalakalaka* for educated Tongan women.

This research firstly considers the analytic frames of educated Tongan women derived from theories in literature about *Pasifika* education, holistic dimensions, *fakalalakalaka*, Tongan culture and identity. Secondly, this research considers these ‘everyday’ frames of thought alongside the images built up from the data gathered from *talanoa* (dialogue) with educated Tongan women in New Zealand. It is in the comparison of these two aspects of information that we can ‘challenge’ theories in literature, as well as ponder the range of ‘perspectives’ presented in *talanoa* of educated Tongan women (Ragin, 2011).

This consideration of the perspectives of educated Tongan women seeks to inform university educators and New Zealand tertiary sector policy-writers of the significance of supporting the holistic dimensions of learners, particularly *Pasifika*, in their higher education. The *talanoa* of the educated Tongan women have been captured and re-told in this study with the hope that it will better pave the pathway of further *fakalalakalaka* for the next generation seeking higher education in New Zealand.

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“You will keep in perfect peace, all whose trust is in you; all whose thoughts are fixed on you.”

(Isaiah 26:2, NLT Bible)

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Fakamālō lahi atu!

I pray that the learning journey becomes enlightened as we move forward with a better understanding of who we are as educated Tongan women in New Zealand.

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