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**CULTURAL IDENTITY AND
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF
MĀORI UNDERGRADUATE
UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

**A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Science
in Psychology
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ABSTRACT

Cultural identity, academic outcome and psychological wellbeing were investigated among a non-random sample of 72 undergraduate Māori university students studying at Massey University. Student problems were examined to identify the types of difficulties that were most prevalent among this population. The relationships between student problems and academic outcome, and student problems and psychological wellbeing were then examined to assess the degree to which cultural identity moderates these relationships. Major findings are that (a) there are consistent negative relationships between student problems and grade point average, and student problems and perceived stress levels; (b) cultural identity is associated with a number of positive psychological and educational outcomes; (c) cultural identity moderates the effect of student problems on grade point average in that a high degree of problems were associated with decreases in grade point average among respondents with low cultural identity, while among respondents with high cultural identity student problems had little negative effect on grade point average; (d) cultural identity moderates the effect of student problems on perceived stress in that under conditions of low problems, students low in cultural identity have significantly higher levels of perceived stress in comparison with students high in cultural identity. Despite limitations the findings have important implications for Māori students, deliverers of tertiary education, tertiary education providers, and those involved in the development and implementation of tertiary education policy. The findings also highlight the need for further research aiming to optimise positive academic and psychological outcome among Māori students.

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