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**FONONGA 'A FAKAHALAFONONGA:
TONGAN STUDENTS' JOURNEY TO
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN
NEW ZEALAND TERTIARY
EDUCATION**

**A thesis
submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree
of
Doctor of Philosophy
at
The University of Waikato
by
Telesia Kalavite**



THE UNIVERSITY OF
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ABSTRACT

There is a national concern in New Zealand about the low academic achievement of Pasifika¹ students, including the Tongans as one of the specific groups. The literature shows that the problems associated with the academic achievement of Pasifika students derive from the cultural differences between Pasifika and the dominant *Pālangi*² culture. Since Tonga has a unique culture that is not the same as any other cultural group in the Pacific, this research set out to explore specific Tongan socio-cultural aspects that impact on Tongan students' academic achievement in New Zealand tertiary education. Culturally specific aspects that impact on Tongan students' academic achievement could better inform those who are concerned with the education of Tongans in New Zealand. The purpose of the research is to explore possibilities for enhancing the academic achievement of Tongan students that could bridge the disparity between Pasifika and *Pālangi* academic achievement.

This research used a Tongan, Pasifika, qualitative, phenomenological, ethnographical, methodological framework to explore the views of twenty five Tongan-born participants in New Zealand on the perceived socio-cultural aspects that impact on their academic achievement. It provided opportunities for the participants to reflect on their experiences as university and polytechnic students, as staff and educators, and as

¹ The terms Pasifika, Pasifiki or Pasefika refer to Pacific Islanders or Pacific Island people. The New Zealand Ministry of Education use of the term "does not refer to a single ethnicity, nationality or culture but is a term of convenience to encompass the diverse range of peoples from the South Pacific in New Zealand" (Fletcher, Parkhill, Fa'afoi, Taleni, & O'Regan, 2009, p. 25). These are people from the island nations of Samoa, Cook Islands, Tonga, Niue, Fiji, Tokelau, Tuvalu, Kiribati, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea, that is, the Pacific people from the three different racial groups of Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia. (These five terms are used interchangeably throughout this thesis, whenever referring to the same group).

² Referring to *Pākehā* or people of European descent in New Zealand.

parents. Sociocultural, postmodernism, and the Tongan *tā-vā*, (time-space) theory of reality were used to interpret the Tongan students' inter-cultural learning experiences at two levels of reality; the students' realities, and the global realities. The students' realities include their individual attitudes and choices based on their cultural worldviews that impact on their academic achievement. The global realities include the trends of postmodernism, biculturalism, multiculturalism, globalisation and change which are beyond the students' control.

The key findings of this research were that Tongan students perceived they were academically successful when all parties involved had a deep and mutual understanding of, respect for, and practice in, both Tongan and New Zealand social and academic cultures. In particular, the Tongan students and their Tongan supporters need a deep and mutual understanding of, respect for, and practice in, their own Tongan as well as New Zealand social and academic relationships. New Zealanders who are involved with Tongan students' education need a deep and mutual understanding of, respect for, and practice in, Tongan social and academic relationships.

Furthermore, flexibility within the two cultural relationships in terms of *tā* (time) and *vā* (space) should be considered by all parties to release social tensions and consequently enhance academic achievement. This two way process allows Tongan students to move fluidly within the two cultures, especially if they understand how *tā* (time) and *vā* (space) are manifested in relationships within their learning environments. This research is highly relevant for anyone concerned with Tongan students' academic achievement in New Zealand tertiary education; from the top level policy makers in the government to the Tongan students at the grassroots level.

DEDICATION

In loving memory of my great grandmother Telesia Hulutungua Puafisi, grandfather Sanualio Tu'uta Tau Puafisi, parents-in-law Sailosi and 'Ana Taiamoni Kalavite, as well as ten of my close family members who passed on during the course of this study. They were strong pillars and towers of strength throughout my educational journey. May you rest in peace my beloved:-

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- Uncle: Seteone Fineangakehe Mo'unga
- Uncle: Tongo Viliami Mo'unga
- Aunty: So'o Fa'afiaula Mo'unga Kioa
- Uncle: Supileo Leone Lanumata
- Cousin: Tohikoula Tu'uta Puafisi Vea'ila
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- AD - Anno Domini; In the year of our Lord; After the birth of Jesus Christ
APSTE - Association for Pasifika Staff in Tertiary Education
ATLAANZ - Association of Tertiary Learning Advisors of Aotearoa NZ
AUT - Auckland University of Technology
BC - Before Christ
BP - Before Present
CLANZ - Community Learning Aotearoa New Zealand
EFTS - Equivalent Full Time Students
IELTS - International English Language Testing System
MC - Master of Ceremony
MIT - Manukau Institute of Technology
MOE - Ministry of Education
MPIA - Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs
MSD - Ministry of Social Development
NCEA - National Certificate in Education Achievement
NZ - New Zealand
NZTTSA - New Zealand Tongan Tertiary Student Association
PAG - Pasifika Advisory Group
PhD - Doctor of Philosophy
PPASI - Pacific Peoples' Addiction Services Incorporated
PSSC - Pacific Senior Secondary Certificate
SUTT - Siasi Uesiliana Tau'ataina 'o Tonga
TEC - Tertiary Education Commission
TEI - Tertiary Education Institution
TLDU - Teaching and Learning Development Unit
Wintec - Waikato Institute of Technology
WUTTSA - Waikato Uni-Tech Tongan Student Association
ZPD - Zone of Proximal Development

STAGE ONE

FAKAHEKEHEKA:

PREPARATION FOR THE JOURNEY

CHAPTER 1

TALATEU: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Mo u ō 'o ako kemou 'aonga ki he fāmili, siasi mo e fonua
(Go forth be educated to be useful to the family, church and country)
- Famous Tongan saying

I. INTRODUCTION

This thesis was born from an extreme desire for my family to be successful in formal education. The desire began with my own journey towards academic achievement and when my sons started school my concern was for them to be successful too. It is widely accepted that success in tertiary education provides benefits to the individual and to society, not only in increased employment opportunities and income, but of personal wellbeing and social capital. People with qualifications have far higher employment rates than those with no qualifications and educational qualifications are also linked to incomes. In New Zealand, “wage and salary earners with bachelors degree or higher, currently earn around 80% more per hour on average, than those with no qualification” (Ministry of Education, 2009a, p. 2). This means that the higher the qualifications the more the employers are willing to pay for a person’s skills and knowledge. Furthermore, with the rapid changes in society, the economy and technology, the knowledge and skills can quickly become outdated so it is important that people continue to access education after they have completed their initial education. My roles in my family, community and formal education made me aware of the importance of students’ academic achievement in formal education and led to this research on Tongan students’ journey to academic achievement in New Zealand tertiary education. This is because some Tongan tertiary students in New Zealand have struggled in their studies and it is vital to know the reasons for their struggle so as to alleviate their problems. This chapter explains my

personal journey in formal education, the purpose of the research and the research question, and concludes with the structure of the thesis.

II. PERSONAL JOURNEY

I grew up in the small village of Nukuleka in the main island of Tongatapu in Tonga. The most important aspects in my life as a Tongan have revolved around my *fāmili* (family), *siasi* (church) or *tui fakalotu* (religious belief), *fonua* (referring to people or the physical environment) and *ako* (education). The main purpose of my life has been to have a good education so that I could be *'aonga* (useful or of practical value) by conducting my *fatongia* (commitments and obligations) to my *fāmili*, *siasi* and *fonua*. Having a good education has been an ultimate goal for me because I was told that it is the only way to be able to conduct my *fatongia* competently as psychological wealth is the individual's true net worth in life because it "includes the person's attitudes toward life, social support, spiritual development, material resources, health, and the activities in which [they] engage" (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2008, p. 3).

I was nurtured through a close knit extended family where I was moulded to *tauhi vā* (keep good relationships) within the practice of the Tongan core values of *fetokoni'aki*, *toka'i*, and *feveitokai'aki* (cooperation, consensus and maintenance of good relationships); *'ofa*, *fe'ofa'ofani* or *fe'ofa'aki* (mutual love, caring and generosity); *faka'apa'apa* or *fefaka'apa'apa'aki* (mutual respect); *fatongia*, *fai'fatongia*, *fua fatongia*, or *fua kavenga* (responsibilities and commitments to fulfilment of mutual prescribed obligations); *mamahi'i me'a* and *talangofua* (loyalty, commitment and obedience); and *Falatōkilalo* (humility and generosity). These core values are the breath of Tongan society, in the homes, the churches and the schools. I was expected to live these core values and believed that commitment to them would benefit my *fāmili*, *siasi* and *fonua*. I followed

these core values and passed them on to younger members of my *fāmili*, especially my sons. My *fatongia* are very important and they motivate me to work hard in everything that I do, especially in formal education. I am always proud to fulfil my *fatongia* and when for any reason I did not, I felt distressed. Therefore, for me as for many other Tongans, the goal for our education is to be able to help our *fāmili*, *siasi* and *fonua*.

My primary school years in the 1960s were well supported by my *fāmili* so I was always amongst the top three positions of my class at the end of the year. Similarly, at high school I did very well keeping at the top of my classes to the contentment and honour of all my *fāmili*, *siasi* and *fonua*. My family were very proud when I received prizes at annual graduation ceremonies. However, I married just after high school which changed my pathway in life as I entered a world of multiple roles: being a wife, a mother, an aunty and a teacher, amongst others. In the struggle to make ends meet with a young family, my husband and I decided that I would pick up my study again because we saw it as a promise for a better future for our family. Therefore, while working as a teacher in the Ministry of Education (MOE), and my career in Tonga, there were times when I was studying for higher qualifications (including this qualification). Thus, it is fair to say that at this point in my life, formal education has been my journey of life itself.

While teaching at primary, secondary and tertiary levels in Tonga, part of my role as a teacher was to assess students' academic achievement, a role that I sometimes took for granted. Although I knew that student achievement was a vital element in educational pedagogy that impacted on students' future lives, the technicalities behind assessing students' achievement were of little or no concern to me. When I was teaching in the schools I never questioned the reasons for teaching the subjects that I

taught or even investigated why some of my students did not achieve well in some of their subjects. Being a student and a teacher in Tonga I took many things for granted, possibly because Tonga is a mono-cultural country and there was no point of difference between us and any other ethnic group there to interrogate the curriculum or the education system. As a teacher, I taught my students to pass their exams so that they too could have good qualifications and better future. As a Tongan, I did what I was told to do in my teaching profession. I neither had the knowledge nor the authority to question anything related to the cultural differences between Tongan and western knowledge in educational pedagogy. I only wanted the best for my students and I did my very best for them to be successful through teaching what I was supposed to teach in my classes.

My success in formal education was a struggle. I took it for granted that this was the necessary pathway for success in my educational endeavour. I did not understand some of the reasons why I struggled in formal education. The politics of what kind of knowledge I was learning in formal education and the cultural differences between Tongan and western knowledge were of no concern to me. I strived to be successful regardless of whatever my situation was or whatever was going on around me. I saw success in formal education as my ultimate goal and that I should learn whatever was taught in schools, and to pass my exams without questioning. Hence, I was told to go to school, learn what was given there and be successful. Therefore, I viewed my struggle as normal in the path to success. I never thought that part of my struggle was due to cultural differences between me as a Tongan and the western knowledge that was taught in schools. I did not think of education as more complicated than rote learning subject content, passing exams to honour my family, and getting a good qualification. And, since I wanted the best for my family, I pushed really hard to educate them. This took us to a

point where education was the priority, and in that case, we had to leave Tonga in search of better educational opportunities for my sons. This is because there were more educational opportunities for them in New Zealand than in Tonga. There are no universities in Tonga for them to pursue their desired qualifications and it is also more affordable to attend university as New Zealand permanent residents than coming as international students.

When I left Tonga after 40 years of living there, I thought that I had achieved my mission there as an educator. I was a good student, and a good teacher and I was very proud of my achievement both as a student and a teacher. In New Zealand I have taken up a support role for Pasifika students at one of the tertiary educational institutions. My major role at the institution is associated with the retention of Pasifika students and the successful completion of their programmes of study. Throughout my daily work, I am involved in the nationwide concern about Pasifika students' achievement at all education levels. I have attended conferences and community meetings, set up staff and student forums particularly to discuss Pasifika students' achievement and how to improve it. I have become very concerned about the academic achievement of Pasifika students in my work because many of them struggle to pass their courses.

In the course of my work I undertook a research project on *Constraints to academic achievement of Pacific Island students at the Waikato Institute of Technology in Hamilton, New Zealand* (Kalavite & Hoogland, 2005). This project stemmed from the termination of an international Pasifika student's scholarship because she failed more than fifty percent of her courses. I wondered why a person of such promise had failed and what could be done to assist and support Pasifika students, like this student, at tertiary institutions. That research identified only the cultural features that

were common to all Pasifika groups. They were categorised under cultural, economic, academic and bureaucratic constraints and are applicable to both New Zealand and international Pasifika students. These are cultural constraints of what Thaman (2002) referred to as ‘cultural gap’ which is the “distance between the expectations of the school curriculum and those of the cultures in which students are socialised” (p. 5). What also came through strongly in this research was that it was unwise to treat all Pasifika students in the same way as if they have the same culture. This supports Manu’atu (2000a) claim that the term ‘Pacific peoples’ contained considerable cultural and historical diversities as each Pacific island is uniquely different, so “a Pacific perspective is without grounds [and that] a common identity might be established through recognizing the diversity between and among cultures” (p. 124). I have presented the findings of this research at a number of conferences both in Tonga and New Zealand.

Because my role as a Pasifika learning advisor was directly related to students' academic achievement in tertiary education, I was becoming more and more aware of the difficulties that Pasifika and Tongan students faced. Nevertheless, my situation in New Zealand compelled me to venture into formal education again, not only as a teacher but as a doctoral student. I found this a great opportunity to explore the reasons for my own struggles, my sons' struggles as well as the struggles of Tongan students in New Zealand tertiary education. This is the origin of this thesis.

However, Tongans, who like me are academically successful, are highly respected in Tongan society because academically successful people are seen to be more successful in life. Good education is also seen to give social goods, such as social mobility in the class system in Tonga (Gould, 1993). Therefore, the saying *Mo u ō 'o ako kemou 'aonga ki he fāмили, siasi mo e*

fonua (Go forth be educated to be useful to the family, church and country), is meant to motivate students to be successful in education not only for themselves but for everybody who is related to them. This is a strong community outlook which also articulates the very core of Tongan culture of *tauhi vā* and *fetokoni'aki* through *ngāue fakataha* (working together or cooperation) demonstrated through commitments to fulfilling certain *fatongia*. Education then, is a journey that suggests *tauhi vā* and *fetokoni'aki* or *ngāue fakataha* through fulfilling certain *fatongia* towards academic achievement for the collective benefit of everyone in the *fāmili*, *siasi* and *fonua*. Nevertheless, when Tongan students enter formal education there would appear to be a belief amongst their parents that they all can be clever and successful, but it is not as easy as it sounds because formal education is a very complex socio-cultural aspect of life to understand, let alone accomplish. Some Tongan students in New Zealand do struggle to be successful and research is needed to uncover the reasons for their struggles and how to alleviate their problems of underachievement in formal education (Fusitu'a & Coxon, 1998; Manu'atu, 2000a).

III. PURPOSE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Tongan people in New Zealand are classified under a collective entity of the Pasifika ethnic group (Ministry of Education, 2002, 2007a, 2008a; Statistics New Zealand, 2007b). Much of the literature on academic achievement in New Zealand tertiary education focuses on the Pasifika group which is inclusive of Tongan people. Research shows that Pasifika students struggle to pass their courses at universities (Cowley, Dabb, & Jones, 2000). They are amongst the lowest achievers in formal education (Anae, Coxon, Mara, Samu, & Finau, 2001; Cowley et al., 2000). Research also indicates that these problems of underachievement derive basically from the cultural differences between Pasifika cultures and that of the dominant *Pālangi* culture (Graves & Graves, 1985; Jones & Schuster, 2003).

As Pasifika students are from different cultural backgrounds, they tend to perform differently from *Pālangi* students in the classroom (Anae, Anderson, Benseman, & Coxon, 2002). They have different learning styles which affect their learning and these should be considered in teaching and learning situations (Anae et al., 2002; Taufe'ulungaki, 2003). For example, Pasifika students are often too shy to ask questions because it can be seen as being disrespectful to their elders. Alternatively, if they consistently respond to teachers' questions in class it can sometimes be interpreted by their peers that they are trying to be smart and show off, or may be seeking the favour of the teacher (Taufe'ulungaki, 2003). Eckermann (1994) also emphasised the learning difficulties of Pasifika students who are studying under the influence of western ideologies. This is because many Polynesians use an inclusive style that promotes the formation of integrated groups, feelings of solidarity, and cooperation, while many *Pākeha*/European people use an exclusive style that promotes individualistic and competitive life styles (Anae et al., 2002; Finau, 2008; Graves & Graves, 1985; Taufe'ulungaki, 2003).

Furthermore, culturally specific differences are those related to language problems (Fletcher et al., 2009), inadequate study skills (Kalavite & Hoogland, 2005), inadequate computer skills (Latu & Young, 2004), too many cultural, family and religious commitments on both the students and their families, (Hill & Hawk, 1998), low socioeconomic status (Anae, Coxon, Mara, Samu & Finau, 2001; Pasikale, Yaw, & Apa, 1998), and lack of knowledge of survival skills in New Zealand (Gendall, Spoonley, & Trlin, 2007). Not knowing the culture of the academy or how the institution works has also been identified as contributing to the underachievement of non-*Pālangi* students (Burdess, 1998; Yao, 2005). These barriers to Pasifika students' academic achievement in New Zealand tertiary education are, according to Kalavite and Hoogland,

(2005) cultural, economic, academic and bureaucratic. According to Adams, Openshaw, and Hamer (2005), Anae et al., (2002) and Manu'atu, (2000b), some of New Zealand's education policies and education structures disadvantage Pasifika people, (including the Tongans). This includes such things as the lack of policy for Pasifika people in the education sector, and a lack of funding and resources to address Pasifika education issues effectively. In addition, there is an under-representation of Pasifika people at all levels in the education sector (Peterson, Mitchell, Oettli, White, Kalavite, Harry, 2006). The under-representation of Pasifika people in the government sector contributes to the low priority of addressing Pasifika students' needs. The majority of initiatives to raise achievement for Pasifika people are instigated by Pasifika people themselves (Tofi, Flett, & Timutimu-Thorpe, 1996; Tongati'o, 1994). According to Anae, et al. (2002), and Peterson et al., (2006) many Pasifika people are not very clear about how the tertiary system operates. However, Anae, et al. (2002) stated that although Pasifika peoples' participation has increased in New Zealand "over the last decade it is still lower than that of the general population, and there is a lack of understanding about why the 'gap' persists" (p.1). Although some research has been conducted in New Zealand to address this issue, more is necessary to continue the quest for knowledge to help Pasifika people to achieve academically.

Pasifika people are not a homogenous group, and there is little research that specifically focuses on Tongan students. Manu'atu (2000a) in her research on Tongan secondary school students in Auckland, New Zealand, suggested that the voices of the Tongan people are not always distinct since the Pacific Islanders' voice dominates so Tongans are an oppressed people and they often speak from a blurred site of denying themselves, their language and their culture. Therefore, exploring the

socio-cultural factors that impact on Tongan students' academic achievement may help Tongan students studying at tertiary level. According to Manu'atu (2000a), the "low achievement experienced by *Tongan* students cannot be transformed in a learning model that homogenizes them" (p. 210) with all other non-Tongan students. Therefore, because I am Tongan, the focus of this research is on Tongan students only and their journey towards academic achievement in New Zealand tertiary education. The purpose of this research is to explore the perceived socio-cultural aspects that are seen to impact on Tongan students' academic achievement, especially the reasons why some Tongan students are academically successful and others are not. According to Anae et al. (2002), there is a need for research of this nature because of the considerable gap in participation and achievement of Pasifika peoples in tertiary education in New Zealand.

Furthermore, there is a need for a specific study on Tongan students, because in New Zealand the idea of understanding the Tongan people's identity emerges only from the collective understandings of Pacific island histories, values, language and cultural practices. This, together with a comprehension of Pacific island social, cultural, and political situations, supports the need for this research (Manu'atu, 2000a) as "in New Zealand, the ethnic-specific information about Tongan people is scarce" (Koloto, 2003a, p. 37). The research to date on the issues of Tongan students' academic achievement in New Zealand is Fusitu'a (1992); Fusitu'a and Coxon (1998); Manu'atu (2000a); Wolfgramm-Foliaki (2006); and 'Otunuku and Brown (2007). The statistics on Tongan people's education in New Zealand shows that in 2007, 64% (16,041) of adult Tongans had a formal educational qualification (secondary school or post secondary school qualification) which was lower than for the total Pacific and New Zealand

adult populations, 65% and 75%, respectively (Statistics New Zealand, 2007b). Therefore, the main research question is:

What are the perceived socio-cultural aspects that impact on Tongan students' academic achievement in New Zealand tertiary education?

Other questions derived from this major question are:

- (i) Why are Tongan students in New Zealand tertiary education apparently low achievers?
- (ii) What is Tongan cultural knowledge in comparison with western knowledge in education?
- (iii) What is the purpose of education to the Tongan people?
- (iv) How do Tongan and New Zealand cultures influence Tongan students' academic achievement in tertiary education?
- (v) How do Tongan culture and western culture interface during Tongan students' studies in New Zealand tertiary education?

These questions guided the journey of this thesis. They helped me to explore ways of knowing and meaning for my struggles not only with my own education, my sons' and the Tongan students' education but also with the major part of my role as a Pasifika learning advisor in tertiary education. However, my personal experiences as a mother, a teacher, a Pasifika learning advisor, and a mature tertiary student, have inspired me to embark on the most important academic journey of my life; exploring how to be successful in western academia. Therefore, this study is derived from a personal urgency to explore ways of how to make study more pleasurable and successful for me, my sons, the Tongans, and the Pasifika students that I work with every day. In which case, the key groups of Tongans living in New Zealand that are of interest in this research are those born and educated in Tonga, before emigrating to New Zealand and those who were born in Tonga and educated in both Tonga and New Zealand. Within these groups, there are people with and without

qualifications obtained either in Tonga or New Zealand. Therefore, all the participants in this research were born and raised in Tonga. Some of them had education in Tonga up to high school age before they migrated to New Zealand. They were all born to Tongan parents and they all speak fluent Tongan. All of them have attended tertiary education, although only some had already graduated with degrees.

The major finding of this research is that Tongan students have support and constraints towards their education from the bureaucracy, their *fāmili*, *siasi* and *fonua* (wider community). It is evident in the literature that the differences between the Tongan and New Zealand cultures affect Tongan students' academic achievement. This research found that the differences between the Tongan and the New Zealand physical and social environments meant that the Tongan students found themselves in a different *tā-vā* (time-space) *kāinga* (relationships) with the bureaucracy, their *fāmili*, *siasi* and *fonua* (community) which impacted on their education. Therefore, when Tongan students and their supporters manage their time-space relationships *tā-vā kāinga* effectively, it helped them to succeed in New Zealand tertiary education.

IV. STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The metaphor of a journey is used in this thesis in the sense that education is all about communication, and a journey is a means of communicating usually with a sense of purpose born from a desire to move towards a goal. To achieve this goal the student/traveller will move out of an unsuitable state; meet the need for a change in direction; experience growth; prepare for anticipated change; and achieve a sense of ascent or success (Taitoko, Mathews, Waitai, & White, 2008). This thesis on Tongan students' movement towards success in formal education encompasses all these elements. This journey, both as an individual and as a group,

impacts on every individual Tongan student at an intellectual, spiritual, physical and societal level. As the title of this thesis states: *Fononga*³ ‘a⁴ *Fakahalafononga*⁵: Tongan students’ journey to academic achievement in New Zealand tertiary education, literally means the journey of *Fakahalafononga*, Venus, the star that provides a way for a journey of traditional Tongans. Metaphorically, I refer to *Fakahalafononga* in this research in two ways. Firstly, *Fakahalafononga* as referring to the student who is journeying in education. The student is the star that gives out light to show the way for travellers to follow to get to their destinations. This star signifies enlightenment and knowledge through education that can help *fāмили*, *siasi* and *fonua*. Secondly, *Fakahalafononga* refers to the ways that Tongan student(s) journey towards academic achievement. There are paths that Tongan students follow to reach a destination and this thesis explores the means to direct Tongan students towards academic achievement. Since *Fakahalafononga* (the Morning and Evening Star) separates night time from daytime, I refer to it as the interface of light and darkness which fits with the purpose of this thesis, working within the interface of two different cultural groups.

³ To travel or journey, move onward, in time (Churchward, 1959).

⁴ Of (preposition) (Churchward, 1953, p. 16).

⁵ *Fakahalafononga* is the Tongan name for the planet Venus which is one of the brightest objects in the sky. Venus is always near the sun so it sets and rises with the sun. The one that rises with the sun is the ‘Morning Star’ and the one which sets is the ‘Evening Star’ (Windows to the Universe, 2000). The name *Fakahalafononga* given by the Tongans to Venus literally means ‘providing a way for the journey = *faka* (providing), *hala* (a way), *fononga* (journey). This is because *Fakahalafononga* is one of the guiding stars for the Tongan people’s journeys in ancient time. It tells them the time of the day where a new day is coming as shown by the ‘Morning Star’ and another day is gone, as shown by the ‘Evening Star’. *Fakahalafononga* separates night time from day time. Metaphorically, it is the interface of light and darkness. The appearance of the Morning Star always cheers travellers with the promise of an approaching day (Collocott, 1922).

This thesis also implicitly acknowledges the significance of the endless multiple journeys of Tongan people in general, throughout their entire life time. This refers especially to their journey through time and space from their place of origin to settle in Tonga as well as their journey from their homeland, Tonga, to live in New Zealand, and in particular their educational journey in tertiary education. This is at a very complex level because these journeys encompass changes at different levels. In terms of education, these include changes in the physical and social environments from Tonga to New Zealand, as well as a change of Tongan cultural knowledge to western knowledge. However, the metaphor of a journey connects with the core activity of Tongan students searching for western knowledge to move from “*vale* (ignorance), to *'ilo* (knowledge), to *poto* (skill)” (Māhina, 2008, p. 69), in a western academic context. It is a move from a state of not-knowing to proficiency and excellence; a movement through time and space of their reality. Applying the concept of a journey as a metaphor for this research allows for a range of elements and aspects of Tongan students’ sociocultural and sociological wellbeing in their educational endeavours. It is during these journeys that Tongan students, in general, address their relationships with their *fāmili*, *siasi* and *fonua* in their struggles for higher education to improve their own well being. The well known Tongan saying: “*Mo u ō 'o ako ke mou 'aonga ki he fāmili, siasi mo e fonua*”, also alludes to the theme of a journey in as much as it makes reference to, physical, social, academic, economic, political and spiritual environments. These environments include nuclear families, extended families, Tongan people, non-Tongan people and western education, and are all journeys in themselves. In particular, these journeys are within the specific journey under investigation which is some Tongan students’ journey to academic achievement in New Zealand tertiary education.

The thesis also employs the metaphor of the journey in its structure. When considering the range of different sections and chapters that make up this thesis, the journey theme was used to identify and make explicit each chapter and its role and function in the overall thesis. Therefore, the thesis is structured in three major sections, similar to the three major stages of a journey. Stage one, is *Fakahekeheka*⁶: Preparation for the Journey. Stage two, is *Takavaha*⁷: Actual Journey. The third stage is *Taufonua*⁸: Arrival of the Journey.

Stage One of *Fakahekeheka* – Preparation for the Journey, is in four chapters: Chapter 1: *Talateu*⁹ – Introduction and Overview is the beginning of the journey through the introduction and overview of the whole thesis where it begins with the Tongan saying of *Mou ō 'o ako kemou 'aonga ki he fāmili, siasi mo e fonua*. This chapter discusses my personal educational journey, the purpose of the journey of this research as well as the structure of the thesis.

Chapter 2: *Tefito 'o e Fekumi*¹⁰ – Research Interest in Context, explains the context of the research by explaining the contexts of Tongan people living in New Zealand. The chapter is guided by the Tongan proverb *Hangē ha fanā fotu* (Like a mast shown from afar) meaning, *ko ha kaveinga 'oku taumama'o kā 'oku mahino 'ene 'asi* (Things of great worth have long-lasting value). It explains facts of the physical geography of Tonga, Tongan

⁶ To see someone off. To say good-bye to people who are travelling by boat, plane or motor vehicle.

⁷ To be at sea, on the way (when voyaging) (Churchward, 1959, p. 442).

⁸ The arrival.

⁹ Introduction.

¹⁰ Research.

culture, the Tongan people in New Zealand, tertiary Tongan students in New Zealand, and finally posits that culture counts in education. These are features of great value for the journey of this thesis.

Chapter 3, *Tūkufua*¹¹ *ki he Fekumi* – Theoretical Framework, is guided by the Tongan proverb *Kataki e mama mo e hopohopokia*¹² (bailing out water from a leak, with seas coming on board as well) meaning that participants and the researcher are encountering many problems in education, all at the same time. This proverb is therefore used to introduce the notion of multiple theoretical lenses to explore the research question. These theoretical lenses include sociocultural and postmodernist theories, as well as the Tongan *tā-vā* time-space theories of reality.

The final chapter of the *Fakahekeheka* stage, Chapter 4 is the *Founga*¹³ *Fekumi* – Research Design is guided by the Tongan proverb *Tākanga ‘enau fohe*¹⁴ (Their oars move in unison) which explains how the journey of this research was conducted to its destination. The major discussions in this chapter are on the use of both western and Tongan research methodologies, data generation, research quality and ethical consideration, and data analysis.

¹¹ To steer for; *‘ai taumu’*a, *tūkunga* (Churchward, 1959, p. 508). *Tūkunga*: what is steered for or *kaveinga* (Churchward, 1959, p. 509).

¹² *Ko e hoko fakataha mai ha mama ‘a ha vaka ‘o hake mai ‘a e tahi ki he loto vaka ‘o ‘ikai ke taha pē ‘a e faingata’aa ka kuo ua* (It is a dual misfortune when a boat leaks and water floods in; leaking and flooding are two different problems). *‘Uhinga ia ki ha taha kuo taulofu’u ki ai ha ngaahi faingata’*a. (It means that someone encountered too many problems at the same time).

¹³ Way in which something is done; method, procedure, plan or rule (Churchward, 1959, p. 197).

¹⁴ *‘Oku ‘uhinga ki hā kakai ‘oku nau uoungataha mo fetokoni’aki ‘o ngāue fakataha*. (When people work together, helping each other) (Māhina, 2004b, p. 197).

Stage Two, that of *Takavaha* – Actual Journey where the findings of the research are presented is in Chapter 5, *Ola*¹⁵ ‘o e *Fekumi* – Research Findings. The findings chapter is guided by two Tongan proverbs. ‘*Auhia ka e kisu atu pē*¹⁶ (Though carried off by the current, they pushed on) portrays the challenges that the Tongan students’ encountered during the journey and highlights the constraints on their educational journeys.

The other proverb *Tu’u e lā mo e pou pou*¹⁷ (The sail standing with support) explains the support that Tongan students had during their educational journeys. These support are extremely important for them to succeed in western education. The Tongan students throughout their relationships with the bureaucracy, their *fāmili*, *siasi* and *fonua* encountered constraints and support to their academic achievement. The findings of this research are presented in six sections: the students’ *tā-vā* (time-space) relationships with the bureaucracy, their *tā-vā* (time-space) relationships with their *fāmili*, their *tā-vā* (time-space) relationships with their *siasi*, their *tā-vā* (time-space) relationships with their *fonua* (wider group), Tongan values and the *tā-vā* (time-space) relationships of Tongan tertiary students. The last section is about the students becoming bicultural and negotiating the cultural interface between the Tongan and western cultures.

Stage Three of *Taufonua* – Arrival of the Journey is in two chapters: Chapter 6, of *Tālanga* – Discussion is guided by the Tongan proverb *Fofola*

¹⁵ Result or outcome

¹⁶ ‘*Oku ‘uhinga ki ha taha ‘oku tofanga ‘i ha faingata’a ka ne kātekina pē.* (When someone endures although they have been placed under great pressure) (Māhina, 2004b, p. 65).

¹⁷ *Ko e lā ‘o ha kalia na’e pau ke ‘ai ma’u pē hano pou pou koe’uhi ko hā fakatamaki ‘e hoko pea pēhē foki ki ha fanā na’e pou pou’i ma’u pē.* (The sails and *fanā* of the Tongan ships - *kalia* were always supported in preparation for disasters) *Ko ha me’a kuo tokateu’i kei mama’o ke fakapapau’i ke hao ‘o ka hoko ha fakatamaki* (The enduring preparation of something to ensure its safety before a disaster strikes or when a given task is performed to a standard that is over and above what is required) (Māhina, 2004, p. 184).

*e fala ka e alea e kāinga*¹⁸ (Rolling out the mat for the kin to talk). This is where all aspects of the Tongan tertiary students' journey are discussed and evaluated. The findings are evaluated where new findings unique to this study are theorised and discussed in eight major sections: the state of flux; the importance and impact of relationships; tensions and confusions; attributing success to others; understanding the culture of the academy; negotiating the cultural interface; redevelopment of identities; and the metaphors of *fakatoukatea*¹⁹, *mo'ui fetokoni'aki*²⁰ and *mo'ui fakapotopoto*²¹. Finally, the central argument of this thesis is revisited.

The final chapter, Chapter 7, of *Aofangatuku*²² *mo e Tātātulivoaka*²³ – Conclusions and Recommendations is guided by two Tongan proverbs: *Lūsia ki taulanga*²⁴ (Though weather-worn, the boat sails right into the

¹⁸ 'Oku 'uhinga ki ha fakataha mai 'a ha kakai ke nau alēlea ki ha me'a ke ma'u ai ha'anau lelei fakalukufua. (When a group of people come together to sort out their differences for the collective good) (Māhina, 2004b, p. 74).

¹⁹ (Double hulled or both *katea*) *Ko e katea ko e sino 'o e popao pea na'e fa'a meimei tatau pē 'a e katea mo e hama 'i he ngaahi popao pe tongiaki 'a e kakai Tonga.* (*Katea* is the hull of the canoe and some of the Tongan canoes or *tongiaki* the hull is almost the same size as the *hama* or outrigger) *Ko ha ongo me'a kuo na mali pea na fakatou tatau 'i he meimei me'a kotoa hange ko e poto, talavou mo e 'ulungaanga pē ko ha me'a 'e ua kuo na tatau ai. 'Oku 'uhinga ki ha ongo me'a 'e ua 'oku na tu'otu'a tatu 'i he anga pea mo e mo'ui.* (This means that two people or things are compatible in every way (Māhina, 2004b, p. 57). In this thesis it is taken to mean skilful in both Tongan and New Zealand cultures.

²⁰ Supportive livelihood.

²¹ Sustainable livelihood.

²² Final act or effort, the last thing that one does (Churchward, 1959, p. 13).

²³ 'Oku 'uhinga ki hano faka'ai'ai ha ngāue ke mafai'fai kae'oua ke toki lava lelei. When a group of workers are persuaded to persevere until the work is successfully completed. *Na'e ma'u 'a e lea ni mei he lova vaka, 'a ia na'e fa'a tā ma'u pē lali ko e faka'ai'ai ki he kau 'a'alo pē kau ngāue vaka ke nau to e 'a'alo pē ngāue mālohi ange.* The saying was derived from boat-racing, when the drummers beat the drums, encouraging the rowers or racers to give it their all" (Māhina, 2004b, pp. 129-130).

²⁴ 'Oku 'uhinga ki ha taha kuo fepaki mo ha ngaahi faingata'a ka ne tutui mālohi pē ki he ngata'anga. (When someone endures to the end, despite the hardship involved) (Māhina, 2004b, p. 86).

harbour): and *Pata 'i lā kuo tu'u*²⁵ (Rejoice in a full-blown sail), This is where the conclusions are drawn from what was explored during the journey, not only for the students and the researcher but for the Tongan communities in New Zealand. This is where the significance and limitations of the research are discussed and further research and development suggested. A final word and the epilogue from the researcher are given to encourage Tongan students in their journey towards academic achievement in New Zealand tertiary education. This is the final setting where Tongan students rejoice at the successful arrival of their academic journeys. It is also the arrival of the journey of this thesis which is an academic achievement of a Tongan *Fakahalafononga*.

²⁵ *'Oku 'uhinga ki he tumutumu 'o ha fiefia 'i ha ngāue lahi kuo lava.* (When jubilation is at its peak because a great deed has been achieved) (Māhina, 2004b, p. 129).

CHAPTER 2

TEFITO E FEKUMI: RESEARCH INTEREST IN CONTEXT

Hangē ha fanā fotu
(Like a mast shown from afar)
-Tongan Proverb

I. INTRODUCTION

As this research is centred within a Tongan worldview of education, it is extremely important to discuss Tongan culture and the situation of Tongan people in New Zealand. Firstly, I provide some general information on Tonga such as its geography, people, politics and the economy. I then give a brief description of the Tongan culture in terms of kinship ties, customs and traditions, core values, language, religious beliefs, and education. Thirdly, I explain the Tongan people and their lives in New Zealand and how *fāмили*, *siasi* and *fonua* relationships are important. I also discuss Tongan identity and fourthly, explore the place of Tongan students in the New Zealand education context. Finally, I posit that 'culture counts in education' where I discuss the knowledge to be learnt, who educates, pedagogy and the goals of education.

II. TONGA IN GENERAL

Also known as the Friendly Islands, Tonga is geographically located between 15^o and 23^o south and between 173^o and 177^o west. Tonga consists of a total of 171 small islands of which only 43 are inhabited (Guile, 2005). There are three main island groups: Tongatapu, Ha'apai and Vava'u (Crane, Vao, & Vaka, 1992) and they are divided into five main divisions of 'Eua, Tongatapu, Ha'apai, Vava'u, and the Niua (Guile, 2005). The total land area is about 750 square kilometres and there is 700, 000 square kilometres of ocean (Crane et al., 1992). "Tonga is said to be where time begins" (MacIntyre & Todd, 2003, p. 6) because the International Dateline

which marks the world's time zone, runs through Tongan waters (Buckland, 1997; Luke, 1954).

Historical scientific evidence shows Tongans to be Polynesians who are descended from the Lapita people (Guile, 2005; Howe, 2006; Poulsen, 1977). Tongan ancestors are believed to have migrated from South East Asia and discovered the Polynesian Pacific about 3,000 – 4000 BP (Before Present), settling in Tonga about 1000 BC (Before Christ) (Campbell, 2001; Poulsen, 1977; Siers, 1978). Recent research by Professor Burley, of Simon Fraser University in Canada, found that the village of Nukuleka (my village), on the island of Tongatapu, is Polynesia's first settlement. Pottery found there was dated back to about 2900 BP, making Tonga the birthplace of Polynesia (Field, 2008). Although there are various theories as to where the Polynesian people came from, according to history, Polynesians are bold, expert and skilful navigators who wandered through the wide Pacific Ocean and settled in Tonga (Siers, 1978; Wood, 1943).

While Tonga is the world's smallest kingdom, it is ruled by one of the oldest dynasties in the world (Luke, 1954). Legendary history declared that the *Tu'i Tonga* (King of Tonga) was the descendent of *'Aho'eitu* (The first *Tu'i Tonga*), the son of an earthly woman and a God from heaven (Campbell, 2001). *'Aho'eitu's* descendents made the three lines of Kings in Tonga; the *Tu'i Tonga*, *Tu'i Ha'atakalaua* and the *Tu'i Kanokupolu* dynasties, the last of these being the present dynasty that rules the Kingdom. Tonga is a constitutional monarchy and has never been ruled by outsiders due to King George Tupou I's wise dealings with European countries during his reign from 1845 to 1893 (Guile, 2005; Samate, 2007). Tonga was a British protectorate from 1900 to 1970 and became fully independent and a member of the Commonwealth of Nations in 1970 (Guile, 2005; Jones,

2001a, 2001b; Taumoefolau, 2004). Since the late 1970s, the Tongan people have advocated a change from the constitutional monarchy form of government into a more democratic one. This has resulted in some political unrest (Human Rights & Democracy Movement Tonga, 2003; Maama, 2006a, 2006b; Moala, 2002; Po'uhila, 2006).

Tonga has a traditional subsistence economy characterised by a large non-monetary sector built on agricultural production. Fishing and tourism industries also bring money into the country but the country's economy is heavily dependent on remittances from more than half of the country's population who live abroad, mainly in the United States, Australia and New Zealand (Evans, 2001). According to the 2006 Census, about 82% of the country's population received remittances from their families either within Tonga or from overseas (Tonga Department of Statistics, 2008).

III. TONGAN CULTURE

According to De Vito, (2000) culture consists of values, beliefs, artefacts, ways of behaving, and ways of communication. It also includes everything that members of that social group have produced and developed, such as language, modes of thinking, art, laws and religion. Culture may also involve belief in a supreme being; attitudes towards success and happiness; and values placed on friendship, love, family, money or education. All of these cultural aspects are inherited, passed on from generation to generation and bind the society together (Gotved, 2006; Pivonka, 2004).

Tongan peoples' lives and educational outcomes are a product of their individual attitudes and choices as well as the outside influences and distractions that make everyone unique. Kluckhohn (1953) cited in Egan (2002) stated that:

Every man is in certain respects a) like all other men, b) like some other men, and c) like no other man. First, all individuals have a number of things in common. There are universals. Second, groups of individuals share characteristics that other groups do not. There are groupings. Third, each individual is in some way unique [There are personals]. (p. 9)

First, Tongans are human social beings, living with other humans on earth and there are universal laws and global influences on their lives that they cannot escape from, that is; universal culture. Universal culture is constructed by people responding to the physical, social, economic, spiritual and political laws of the planet. Universal laws also include changes and the emergence of different eras such as premodern, modern or the postmodern age (Pivonka, 2004). These changes naturally occur as knowledge grows and ideas are challenged throughout space and time.

Second, Tongan people belong to a different group through ethnicity and nationality, that is; group culture. Group culture is that of the group which the individual belongs to. It refers to cultural norms that are translated into rules, guidelines, imperatives, habits, regulations, customs, rituals, and the like which drive patterns of group behaviour. These behaviours are both internal and external. Internal is the way members of the group tend to think, see the world, plan, imagine, dream, and so forth. External, is the way they tend to act in public (Egan, 2002). Culture is not synonymous with race or nationality but because members of a particular race or country are often taught similar beliefs, attitudes, and values, their similarity makes it possible to speak of a particular culture (Buckland, 1990). This is like the Tongan culture which is translated as *tō'onga faka-Tonga, anga faka-Tonga* or *mo'ui faka-Tonga* (Churchward, 1959, pp. 503, 507, 369). *Mo'ui faka-Tonga* relates to how relationships impact on relative ranks, and how these types of relationships determine the kind of communication and exchange that can take place between the Tongan

people. The linkages within the Tongan society, “continue to be constructed through gift exchange practices, operating within a particular construction of traditional social relations” (Evans, 2001, p. 26).

Third, the Tongans as individuals are unique and independent with a free will to make individual choices in their lifetime, that is; personal culture. All human beings are born with a free will to make their own choices. However, individuals show great differences in the ways they express the culture of the group to which they belong. Personal culture is the way an individual interprets and integrates the beliefs, values, norms, and behaviours of his or her culture and subcultures into his or her personal behavioural style. This style is not only a product of the person's culture and subcultures but of all the other diverse factors such as age, class, community, disability, education, family structure, gender, life history, marital status, mental and physical characteristics, national origin, personality, political context, religion and spiritual values, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status, that make him or her this particular human being. For example, I am a Tongan and my personal culture describes the way I think, that is my personalized package of assumptions, beliefs, values, and norms, and the way I do things, the patterns of behaviours that characterize me which I have both inherited and acquired over time (Egan, 2002). These interactions produce my personal norms of behaviour. I have my own knowledge about the world and I am free to choose what I want to do.

These factors would make me a Tongan like other Tongans but also a Tongan who is different from other Tongans. There are 100,000 Tongans living in Tonga and about the same population outside Tonga but all of them are not Tongans in the same way. They can all be classed as Tongans but because they have their own personal, group and universal cultures

where they are free to position themselves, they are not the same Tongans. This multiple positioning shapes their multiple realities which define what humans do, and determines survival and growth as individuals.

These three significant levels within the individual person enable people to make decisions, which could in turn either positively or negatively impact on their lives and their education. Tongans generally are very proud of their unique culture and heritage (group culture) which has evolved over a long period of time. However, the Tongan culture “is more than just Tongan traditions, it is also an ideology, a set of prescribed rules about how things should be done” (Runarsdottir, 2003, p. 43). There are six fundamental aspects of Tongan culture that are important, are still practised today and are significant to this study. These are: *Nofo 'a kāinga* (kinship ties), *ngaahi tukufakaholo*, (customs and traditions) *ngaahi 'ulungaanga mahu'inga faka-Tonga*, (Tongan core values) *Lea Faka-Tonga* (Tongan language), *tui fakalotu* (religious beliefs) and *ako* (formal education). These features are described in the following sections in no particular order of importance.

1. Tongan Kinship Ties or Structure

The Tongan kinship ties or structure (*nofo 'a kāinga*) is based on the Tongan social hierarchy (*fakatu'utu'unga 'o e sosaieti Tonga*) and the kinship circle (*seakale 'o e nofo 'a kāinga*). The lives of Tongans are very much controlled by their positions in the social hierarchy as well as how Tongans are related to one another as relatives (*fāмили* or *kāinga*) in the kinship circles.

The *fakatu'utu'unga 'o e sosaieti Tonga* (Figure 1) is a hierarchical social structure of four “successive layers, or strata, of people each with their own code of behaviours, rights and duties and accepted living standards” (Crane, 1978, p. 33). The king (*Tu'i*) or queen and his/her royal family (*mo*

hono fale) are at the apex, nobles (*nōpele*) and the chiefs (*hou'eiki*) are in the second layer, an emerging layer of elite are in the third, and at the base of the hierarchy are the commoners (*tu'a*).

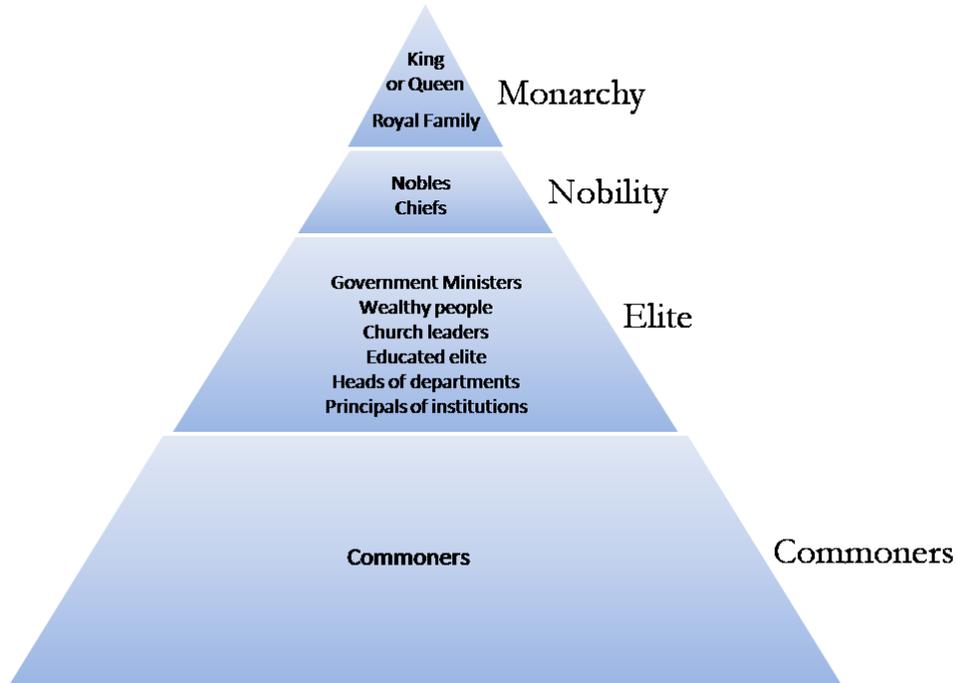


Figure 1. Tongan Social Hierarchy

Further details of relationships amongst these different groups in the Tongan social hierarchy are given in Appendix A. People at all levels of the hierarchy are expected to be educated to a tertiary level if they are able. Education is a way of social mobility for commoners (i.e. non-noble, and non-royalty). Social hierarchy is very important in Tongan society, because the higher a person is in the hierarchy, the more power, respect and *mana*²⁶ they have and the easier life is. A good education helps to increase their status up the social strata and to cross social barriers to achieve high posts in the government. Tongan tertiary students in New Zealand are aware of and mindful of these social hierarchies in their

²⁶ "Supernatural power or influence or attendant circumstances" (Churchward, 1959, p. 330).

communications with Tongan and non-Tongan teachers and other students. In the classroom, Tongan students who are commoners in the Tongan social hierarchy may feel they are the least important people in the room. On the other hand, a noble person may feel more important. As there are more commoners than there are nobles and members of the royal family, there are more people who feel inferior. This way of thinking impacts on Tongan students' academic achievement as will be discussed later.

The *seakale 'o e nofo 'a kāinga* (Figure 2) is the basic social unit of *anga faka-Tonga*. This is how a person is related or tied to other people as a *fāmili* or *kāinga*. These are a series of ever-widening circles (Crane, 1978). The core is the *'api* (household) which is the inner circle of close relations. It is the smallest but the hub of the kinship circle and the social group. The *'api* is based on the nucleus of the father, mother and children although it may include other kinfolk such as adopted children, grandchildren, sons-in-law, cousins, uncles, aunts, daughters-in-law, and grandparents. They all live together in one *fale* (house) or *'api* and the head of the *'api* is the *tamai* (father). The next outer circle is the *fāmili*, which is the wider circle of close relations. It is an extended family consisting of varying numbers of kinship households, and may include 50 to 100 relatives, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and in-laws. The head of the *fāmili* is the *'ulu'i fāmili* or *'ulumotu'a* (head of the family). The outer circle of distant relations is the *kāinga* or *matakali* (tribe or village) which usually includes all the members of a village so that people coming from the same place would consider themselves as belonging to the same *kāinga* or *matakali*. The head of a *kāinga* could be a *nōpele*, or *'eiki* (Crane, 1978).

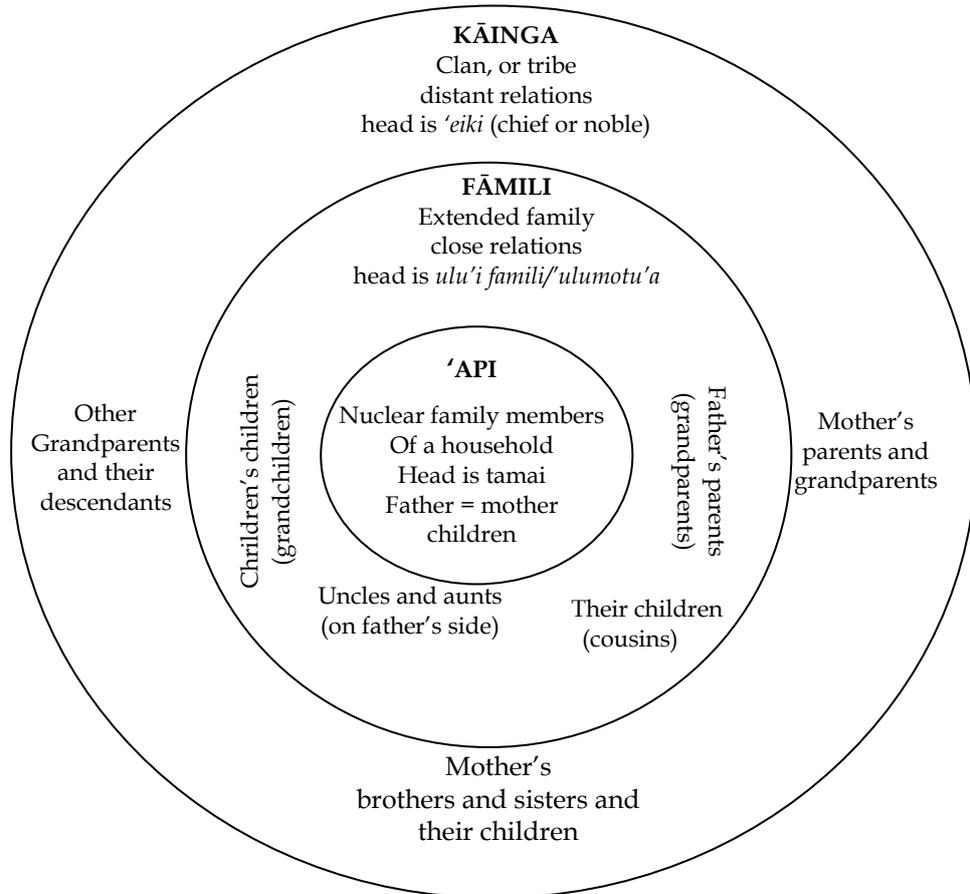


Figure 2. Kinship Circles

(Adapted from Crane, 1978 p. 8)

The *seakale 'o e nofo 'a kāinga* serves as a social welfare system where the obligations and responsibilities are reciprocated. Although the royal family and the nobles are able to extract favours from the commoners, they likewise must extend favours to their people through obligations and responsibilities. Priorities for Tongans are that *fāmili* come first, then the *siaisi*, then the *fonua* and lastly the *fakatāutaha* (individual). Detailed explanations of the relationships amongst these circles are presented in Appendix A. "Within the families, all wealth, belongings, work, problems and even shame are shared by all the family members" (Keller & Swaney,

1998, pp. 28-29). It is in these extended kinship ties that Tongan people share everything, even their children (Westra, 1964). People's position in relation to others determines very much the way they act towards them. Although Tongans are adopting many modern ways, some traditions have not changed and the *fāmili* for Tongans is still the centre of most people's lives (Guile, 2005). This is where the concept of *kāinga* is so fundamental in Tonga that:

[T]here are no separate words for 'brother/sister' and 'cousin' [they are all referred to as *tuonga'ane/tuofefine*]. Aunt and uncles may also [be referred] to as 'parents' and all older people may be considered 'grand parents' by the younger generation. The notions of childless families and orphaned children are unknown. Parents have no real sense of 'possession' of their children and children are frequently shifted from one household to another. In the end, they are effectively reared by the entire extended family and may have several places to call home. (Keller & Swaney, 1998, p. 29)

All Tongans gain security and strength from their kin relationships. Bound by the spirit of *'ofa* (love), all Tongans try "to grant the requests of a needy [*kāinga*] for food, clothing, hospitality, labour, money, or land for crops" (Crane, 1978, p. 9). However, close relatives are more obliged than distant ones to give help. At times, attending to educational goals and activities, may be prioritised below those of *fāmili*. In a classroom situation, Tongan students may feel more comfortable when there is a teacher, family member or another Tongan to whom they can relate.

2. Tongan Customs and Traditions

Another important aspect of Tongan culture is the customs and traditions of human existence (*tukufakaholo 'o e mo'ui 'a e tangata*), of births, marriages and death (Bain, 1967). Tongans celebrate these events through *fai'aho* (birthdays), *mali* (weddings) and *putu* (funerals). There are specific customs and traditions as to how these rituals are conducted. These customs and traditions are explained in more detail in Appendix B.

*Koloa*²⁷ or *koloa faka-Tonga* and *pola* (table of cooked food for a feast) is also important to Tongan people because these *koloa* and *pola* are used to *fua e ngaahi fatongia*, *pē fua kavenga*²⁸ to other members of *kāinga* during birthdays, weddings, and funerals. These *koloa* and *pola* are the most expensive artefacts and the *koloa* now has a more commercial value. Everyone within the family and the community who is related to the key players in the ceremonies should know their relationships and their status within the family to conduct their *fatongia* during the occasions. However, *fai'aho*, *mali* and *putu* can be very elaborate affairs and put considerable financial pressure on the *kāinga*. The royal and noble celebrations of birthdays, weddings and funerals follow similar, fundamental procedures though on a larger scale that involves more people, *koloa* and *pola* and many more days of celebrations (Marcus, 1980). This also puts financial pressures on many more people because these occasions involve the whole country as specific nobles and their people carry their *fatongia* to the King and nobles.

No two persons in Tonga hold the same rank within a kinship group (Bain, 1967; Gailey, 1987). A person's status can be higher or lower, in relation to other people within the group, depending on age, sex, or distance of relationship with other members of the society (Gailey, 1987). With some of the person's kin there will be rights, and with others, duties (Blamires, 1939; Gailey, 1987; Luke, 1954). This reciprocal role is best illustrated during cultural celebrations in terms of the roles of people in

²⁷ Tongan goods, wealth, riches, possessions such as fine mats and ngatu that Tongans have and value.

²⁸ To bear the weight or burden of, like carrying or lifting something on the shoulder or the arm without a stick (Churchward, 1959, p. 198). In other words, the fulfilment of responsibilities and obligations.

the *fahu*²⁹, *fā'ehuki*³⁰ and the *liongi*³¹ positions. For example, the *fahu* is the highest position at birthdays, weddings funerals and cultural celebrations, and the person in this position and their families are honoured and have rights to everything (Rutherford, 1996). On the other side, the *liongi* and *fā'ehuki* hold the lowest position where they and all their families have to serve everyone and they have no rights whatsoever during these celebrations. "If the higher side demands anything from the lower side, it is given" (Crane, 1978, p. 9). This is how *anga faka-Tonga* positions everyone in Tongan society. Individuals are positioned as the *fahu* with their mother's *kāinga* but a *liongi* with their father's *kāinga* and everybody has these dual roles throughout their entire lifetime. There are key players throughout the procedures of birthdays, weddings, and funerals but these essential roles or statuses between the *kāinga* relationships are significant and extremely important. The *Fahu* is usually the *mehekitanga*³² and *fā'ehuki* and *liongi* is usually the *fāētangata*³³. These key roles within the *fāmili* are

²⁹ *Fahu* is usually the father's eldest sister or her children who are especially chosen at funerals, weddings, and first birthdays to receive the best *koloa* (mats and bark-cloth) and highest ranking cuts of meat; the *fahu* sits at a special and highest place during the ceremony and may also be given the right to decide on the distribution of presents and food.

³⁰ *Fa'ehuki* is usually the maternal relatives, usually one of mother's brother, who accompany and serve the bride, groom, the birthday person during the wedding or birthday ceremony or carry the deceased to his or her grave during a funeral ceremony. They are lower in rank to the married couples, the birthday person or the deceased, and they are meant to serve those concerned during the ceremonies. *Fa'ehuki* literally means that the grooms, brides and birthday people sit on their laps during the ceremony. Some people put their feet on the *fa'ehuki's* laps to symbolize the idea of them being lower in rank to the bride, groom or the birthday person.

³¹ *Liongi* is usually the maternal relatives of the deceased. They are the mother's families usually the mother's mother's families. They are lower in rank and were meant to serve anyone during the funerals. They wore the biggest, raggiest and ugliest *ta'ovala's* to show their lowest rank. Their usual place is the cooking areas where they cook to cater for the people attending the funerals.

³² Paternal aunt; father's sister or father's female cousin.

³³ "Male mother" maternal uncle - mother's brother or male cousin.

very important for the Tongan students as they determine the kind of *fatongia* during cultural occasions which impact on their education. Nevertheless, formal education is seen as a priority over traditional society when they are educating youth about customs and traditions. This confuses Tongan youngsters' right at the outset when their culture does not support what is taught in the schools.

3. Tongan Core Values

Every society or ethnic group has its own core values (*'ulungaanga mahu'inga*) that are embedded in their socialisation processes. Values are basically emotional reactions which are “combinations of cognitive processes and physiology [and] they are affected by cultural learning experiences plus local linguistic formations” (Cowling, 2005, p. 140). They are deeply held beliefs about what is important and desirable that are expressed through the ways in which people think and act (Ministry of Education, 2007a). The overarching core value in the lives of Tongans is *mo'ui fakatokolahi* (living together in a cooperative lifestyle) and *fetokoni'aki* where they *tauhi vā* towards each other. The underlying purpose of the lives of Tongan people is to maintain good relationships and strong communities that are based on social capital (Taufe'ulungaki, 2003).

These principles are based on *tauhi vā* within the practice of Tongan core values of *fetokoni'aki*; *'ofa*; *faka'apa'apa*; *fatongia*; *fakatōkilalo*. *Fakamā*³⁴ and *fakafalala*³⁵ are two other significant behaviours that are practical in the lives of the Tongans, although they are not values. These cultural behaviours are socially constructed into the emotions of Tongan people because of the way they live (their culture) which are also part of their

³⁴ Causing shame, shameful, disgraceful, ignominious (Churchward, 1959, p. 65).

³⁵ To depend or be dependent.

identity. These values and behaviours are discussed in more detail below in no particular order of importance.

i. Value of *Fetokoni'aki*

Fetokoni'aki is when people help each other or co-operate through *fengāue'aki* (work for each other), *felave'aki* (concern or affect each other), *fekapokapoaki* (help without being asked to do so), *fetu'akoi'aki* (to be neighbourly to one another), *fe'utungaki* (to help one another by mutual sharing), *fevehi'aki* (eager to do things for each other) and *feveitokai'aki* or *toka'i* (to respect or honour one another) (Churchward, 1959). This crucial human quality helps with peace and harmony within the human race and this is quite important within Tongan Society. Good Tongan citizens show *fetokoni'aki* and *feveitokai'aki* in their daily lives and those who do not show these qualities are not very popular within their families and communities. The exchange of gifts as in *fai fatongia* is a means of showing *fetokoni'aki* and *feveitokai'aki* within the community.

ii. Value of 'Ofa

'Ofa, *fe'ofa'ofani* or *fe'ofa'aki* means "to love, to be fond of, or to be kind to one another" (Churchward, 1959) and it "is used for all the forms of human love, including romantic love" (Cowling, 2005, p. 145). *Ko e 'ofa ko e me'a mahu'inga* (love is very important) which resonates with a well known verse from the Bible: "'Aua! Ka 'oku tolonga pē 'a Tui, 'a 'Amanaki, 'a 'Ofa; 'a e tolu ni pē: pea ko honau tu'ukimu'a ko 'OFA" (There are three things that last: faith, hope and love, and the greatest of these is LOVE; 1 Corinthians 13: 13; Tongan Translation). 'Ofa, "is still an important, even overworked, notion in Tongan society" (Cowling, 2005, p. 145). *Fe'ofa'aki*, in this sense means mutual love, caring and generosity towards one another. *Fe'ofa'aki* within the Tongan *fāmili* is crucial. It is expected Tongans show love and compassion to their kinsmen. In that way, 'ofa and

fe'ofa'aki for the Tongans means that they are expected to give assistance to the needs of their *fāmili* because if they 'ofa to their *fāmili* they know and expect a return of their 'ofa from them. *Fe'ofa'aki* is reciprocation and designation of love for each other.

'Ofa can also mean *māfana*³⁶ or an expression 'ofa *māfana* in Tongan. Tongans are expected to “maintain harmonious relationships with others at all times and be willing to express love to others through helpfulness (*fe'ofa'ofani*) and sharing” (Cowling, 2005, p. 144). 'Ofa is also a Christian percept which Tongans strongly hold to as a basic Christian belief. The greatest commandment in Christian teaching is 'Te ke 'ofa ki ho 'Otua 'aki ho loto, *laumālie mo ho 'atamai kotoa*. “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind” 'Te ke 'ofa ki ho *kāinga 'o hangē ko ho'o 'ofa kiate koe* which translates as “You shall love your neighbour as you love yourself”, (Mathew 22: 38-39). This Christian love steers all kinds of love within the Tongan society.

Having 'ofa at the centre of the Tongan family makes members of the *fāmili* to *tauhi* their *vā* between themselves through *talangofua*, *fefaka'ap'apa'aki*, *lototō* to *fetokoni'aki* in carrying their *fatongia* to help in their lives for the benefit of the *fāmili*. It is through the practice of these values that members of the *fāmili* cater for the individual members' physical (*sino*), spiritual (*laumālie*) and psychological ('*atamai*) needs. 'Ofa bonds the family together in keeping this *tā-vā* time-space relationship between the students and their parents. 'Ofa facilitates hard work amongst them to achieve their goals, such as being successful in education. When the parents 'ofa their children, they will work hard to educate them and when the children have 'ofa then they will return the 'ofa of their parents through hard work to be

³⁶ (a) *māfana* of the mind: means fervent, enthusiastic (b) *māfana* of love: means warm, heartfelt, friendly, cordial.

successful in education. 'Ofa is the core value within family relationships, and it guides all the other values or principles, such as *talangofua*, *fefaka'ap'apa'aki*, *lototō*, *fetokoni'aki* and *fatongia*. It is through this 'ofa that they *fetokoni'aki* and *feveitokai'aki* for the development of all the members of the *fāmili*.

iii. Value of *Faka'apa'apa*

Faka'apa'apa or *fefaka'apa'apa'aki*, is key in Tongan family life and society. It is the showing of mutual respect amongst the family members. *Fefaka'apa'apa'aki* is a combination of Christian and Tongan commoners' moralities (Cowling, 2005). *Faka'apa'apa* is widely emphasised as a principal motivation or value for modern Tongan societies. The concept of *faka'apa'apa* according to Johansson-Fua, Manu and Takapautolo (2007) is often loosely translated in English as 'respect' but

.... [it] is more than respect as understood within a Western context. *Faka'apa'apa* is an unwritten social contract that all Tongans aspire and adhere to in various degrees and contexts. *Faka'apa'apa* begins with a shared understanding that this is relational social contract between two people. *Faka'apa'apa*, as much as it is a value, must be demonstrated through behaviour, speech, dress code and meeting cultural and familial obligations. (p. 677)

Faka'apa'apa is associated with *talangofua* (obedience), *lototō* (generosity), *fakamolemole* (forgiveness or reconciliation) and *anga fakama'uma'u* (restraint). *Faka'apa'apa* or *fefaka'ap'apa'aki* is expected to be practised in Tongans' everyday lives. *Faka'apa'apa* is also shown for those considered superior to oneself and people become more guarded and deliberate "in the presence of royalty, nobles, high commissioners, politicians or religious leaders" (Keller & Swaney, 1998, p. 29). In extreme cases, for example, in the presence of royalty, nobles, and people of higher ranks *faka'apa'apa* translates into veneration and the Tongan commoners wear

*ta'ovala*³⁷ as a sign of respect. Tongan people of lower rank physically lower themselves before a royal or person of higher rank who are standing up, to demonstrate their willing subservience. At any gathering where royalty or people of higher rank are to be present, everyone will be seated before the guests of honour arrive. Anyone who enters a room or other place where “people are seated lower than they are, or where people are sitting while they are standing, should utter ‘*tulou*’ or ‘excuse me’” (Keller & Swaney, 1998, p. 29).

There are certain *faka'apa'apa* between the different members of the family in terms of language and behaviour. There are certain taboos or signs of *faka'apa'apa* between brothers and sisters, children and their parents as well as cousins, grandparents and amongst their extended families. For example, brothers and sisters should not sleep in the same house or room. Children should not eat the leftover food from their father's plates, or even touch the head of their father. In terms of language, it is taboo for brothers to swear or talk about sex in front of their sisters or female cousins and vice versa.

iv. Value of *Fatongia*

Fatongia, *fai fatongia* or *fua kavenga* is the responsibility to commit duty or obligation to all the members of the *fāmili*, *siasi* and *fonua*. Tongans have all sorts of *fatongia* within their families, their communities, and the whole Tongan society. *Fatongia* protocols are taught or moulded into their lives by their families. Each *fāmili* has their own *fatongia* towards one another;

³⁷ It is a dress mat that is part of the traditional costume of Tongan men and women; this woven mat is worn round the waist over the *vala* expressing humility in the presence of a person of higher rank, especially on ceremonial occasions (Rutherford, 1977). There are different kinds of *ta'ovala*, eg. one with coconut sennit beautifully embroidered with colourful beads called *sisi kafa*. Another one is women's *ta'ovala*, also called a *kiekie* which is a grass skirt-like waist dress. They are made from pandanus, *kaka*, fibre or other similar materials. Without a *ta'ovala*, a Tongan is not considered properly dressed.

for example, the *fatongia* of children towards their parents and vice versa; the *fatongia* between brothers and sisters; the *fatongia* between children and their aunts and uncles within their *'api*; their *fatongia* within their *kāinga* (extended families); their *fatongia* towards their chiefs, nobles, king and royal family; their church; the school; the village and so on. *Fatongia* is taught and practised by the family and forms part of the Tongan society daily life.

Gift giving or gift presentations are part of *fatongia*. Gift giving is ubiquitous within Tongan society and a common practice as a way of showing *fai fatongia*, and *fua kavenga*. Therefore, “[g]ifts are given ceremoniously and accepted graciously” (Keller & Swaney, 1998, p. 29). During the *fai fatongia*, gifts are presented to family members, kings, nobles, church ministers, guests and appropriate people, by a family whenever there is a birth, death, wedding, christening, graduation, *fakaafe* or *feilaulau* (church feast), unveiling, first holy communion, and sometimes to visitors and new friends. These gifts are usually items such as pigs, intricately designed fine mats, immense rolls of *tapa*, or money. The type of gifts given will depend on the occasion. For example, some gifts will be in the form of agricultural produce and some will be in the form of money or *koloa*. According to Keller and Swaney (1998) “when Tongans leave on a visit abroad they are laden with gifts to be presented to their families, friends and acquaintances who are living at their destination and they are also likely to return laden with reciprocal gifts” (p. 29) from overseas.

A gift will most often be prefaced by verbal self-abasement, such as ‘We are poor family and our gifts is therefore very humble and insufficient to convey the honour you deserve but please be so kind as to accept it as it represents the best that we are capable of producing’. This speech will often refer to a fine mat which represents hundreds of thousands (yes, thousands!) of hours of work. Although the giver of the gift downplays its worth, the recipient praises the gift and shows how delighted they are to receive it. (Keller & Swaney, 1998, p. 29)

Fatongia are responsibilities of Tongan people to their *fāmili*, *kāinga*, *siasi* and *fonua*. Living as a collective, everybody is expected to *fetokoni'aki* and *feveitokai'aki* in Tonga. When people do not do their *fatongia* to their *fāmili*, *kāinga*, *siasi* and *fonua* then they will be considered as *ta'e'ofa* (no love), *ta'e'aonga*³⁸, *ta'ehounga*³⁹ *ta'efietokoni* (not wanting to help) towards the members of their *fāmili*, *siasi* and *fonua*. Tongans are very proud to show that *fatongia* are conducted appropriately. It is a great shame if *fatongia* are not met, and as a result, some people take extraordinary measures at times to be able to carry out their *fatongia* to the best of their ability. For example, at the expense of their family, some people give all they have (money and traditional wealth) to support an educational project because they see this as their *fatongia* to do. Manu'atu (2005) pointed out some common Tongan expressions, often heard when Tongan people gave their all while they *faifatongia*. These are:

- *tuku ai pē 'apongipongi ki he 'apongipongi, 'e 'ai e teu ke lahi na'a lau'i kitautolu 'o tala kuo tau kaipō!* (Forget about tomorrow lets prepare as much as we can lest people gossip about us being slier on food);
- *ko e koloa pē lava 'a e fatongia, ka 'i ai ha toki me'a ke fakalelei'i pea toki vakai ia kimui* (Our responsibility is the most important, lets worry about that now and leave the rest until later);
- *Kae hangē ko e lau: mālō pe si'i lea, he ko e fiefia ia 'oku 'ikai toe lau ha me'a ko e 'aho ni pē ke ongo'i langilangi mo fiefia pea 'alu e talanoa na'e 'ikai hano ua e kātōanga 'ene lahi!* (Like the saying; 'thanks but no thanks', because nothing is as important as the joy and honour that we have today, and we want this occasion to be reported as the biggest ever happened!);
- *sai pē, he ko e faka'osi ē 'oku 'ikai ha me'a ia 'e mahu'inga ko e koloa pē 'etau kei ma'u e manava mo'ui!* (That's fine, as this is the last and final time for it to happen, so it is of great importance to commit ourselves; so long as we are still breathing!). (p. 144)

³⁸ Not useful; of no practical value; not helpful; not worthwhile.

³⁹ Not to be appreciated; not to be a cause of gratitude.

These four expressions implicitly describe Tongan peoples' collective attitudes of foregrounding the importance of the collective rather than the individual. Their priority is the welfare of other people before they concern about themselves.

v. Value of *Fakatōkilalo*

The terms *fakatōkilalo* or *anga-fakatōkilalo* or *lototō* mean humility, generosity, modesty or being subservient, they are culturally valued and may restrict overt demonstration of knowledge or expertise in front of elders (Taufe'ulungaki, 2003). Tongans show their humility by not boasting or showing what they are capable of in front of other people. *Anga-fakatōkilalo*, also means *lototō*, *anga-vaivai*, and *anga fakamā'ulalo*⁴⁰ is closely related to *talangofua* and it sometimes is a very confusing element of *anga faka-Tonga*. Other Tongan synonyms of *fakatōkilalo* are words such as *faka'aki'akimui*⁴¹, *mo'ulaloo*⁴², *fakavaivai*⁴³, which can also mean *fakatōkilalo* although sometimes they have slightly different meanings. *Lototō* where it means "willing, ready (in mind), eager" (Churchward, 1959, p. 305) is the willingness, eagerness or mental readiness of someone to do something. Children are expected to obey their parents, people of lower ranks in the social order should obey and show humility to those of higher ranks, those of the younger generations should obey and show humility and generosity to those of the older generations, wives should obey their husbands and church members should obey their leaders. This concept is very important and parents incessantly teach their children the value of

⁴⁰ to make low or lower, to act humbly.

⁴¹ to speak of one's ability or one's work etc. in a self-derogatory manner.

⁴² to be in subjection to, to be under the control or domination of another; also, to be beholden to, subservient or submissive.

⁴³ to be humble, to give in, to give way, yield, relax, or relent.

humility and generosity. Disobedient children are severely reprimanded, often with physical punishment or violence. Although young adults state they obey their parents out of respect for them, some of the younger children do so out of fear (Morton, 1996). Girls are expected to ask their parents for permission to marry and expected to accept the decisions made by their parents (Runarsdottir, 2003). *Anga fakatōkilalo* encourages *mamahi'ime'a*.

vi. Value of *Mamahi'ime'a* and *Talangofua*

The term *mamahi'ime'a* translates as loyalty and commitment. *Talangofua* means “submissive or habitually obedient” (Churchward, 1959, p. 448). It is an important value in the Tongan culture. It is the loyalty and commitment towards all the *fatongia* to the *fāmili*, *siasi* and *fonua* that Tongan people *tauhi* their *vā* and keep good relationships with all the members of their *kāinga*. When Tongans are *mamahi'ime'a* it means that they do their utmost to fulfil their obligations to their *fāmili*, *siasi* and *fonua* including being successful in education. Tonga College, one of the Government High Schools in Tonga, shows this value of loyalty and commitment to Tonga in their motto of ‘*Mate ma'a Tonga*’ (Diehard for Tonga). Sometimes failure to *talangofua* and not *mamahi'ime'a* can cause *fakamā*.

vii. Behaviour of *Fakamā*

Fakamā means shy, to cause “shame or shameful, disgraceful or ignominious” (Churchward, 1959, p. 65). *Fakamā* is a cultural behaviour for Tongans. Tongan students in general are taught and expected to be *fakatōkilalo* and reserved, as a result they are shy and quiet. *Mo'ui fakatokolahi* as the overarching value of *anga faka-Tonga* compels all Tongans to prioritise the needs of the collective before the individual. They are the fundamental principles of the *kāinga*. This Tongan social

lifestyle is where everybody seems to know about everybody with the implication that:

Shame and loss of face are not taken lightly in Tonga. An individual who has been seriously shamed or caught (or even suspected of) doing something considered socially unacceptable endures untold measures of self-imposed personal agony. In extreme cases people are driven to suicide. (Keller & Swaney, 1998, p. 29)

In Tonga there is a saying that: *Meimei ko e kovi kotoa pē 'oku tukuaki'i ia ki he vale mo e ta'e ako pea ko e kape mamahi ia e pēhē, vale ta'e ako*. This literally means that most of the dreadful things are said to be the consequences of being ignorant and uneducated. To say that you are an uneducated person is the worst insult. Therefore, it is *fakamā* to say that you are *vale* and this highlights the value Tongan people place on education. Tongans come from tight, close families, and they do not want other people to know that they are from poor, and incapable families (Morton, 1996). It is *fakamā* to let down one's family.

viii. Behaviour of *Fakafalala*

Fakafalala is being dependent, especially on people. *Mo'ui fakataha* is *anga faka-Tonga* and when Tongan people work together in small communities they sometimes (depend) *fakafalala* on other people to avoid making mistakes and being *fakamā*. *Fakafalala* is part of Tongan identity and there is often confusion around being too dependent or too independent because of *anga faka-Tonga* (Foliaki, 2008). Tongan children are not allowed to leave home and be on their own before they get married. This prolongs young Tongan adults' dependency on their parents and this impacts on their lives as their parents are the major decision makers in the home (Morton, 1996). The *fakafalala* behaviour of the Tongan people (especially those living in Tonga) is also aggravated by remittances from their families. This is referred to by Maka (2006) as the "dependency syndrome of 'survival by remittances'" (p. 26).

All of these core values and behaviours shape Tongan families and they practice these values and behaviours throughout their entire lifetime. These distinct values and behaviours determine the uniqueness of Tongan people. These *'ulungaanga faka-Tonga* mould, sustain and keep the Tongan family together. Kinship sheds further light on the core values of *anga faka-Tonga*. The *talangofua*, *fe'ofa'aki*, *'ofa*, *tauhi vā*, *feveitokai'aki* that is felt between family members and the sense of *fatongia* or *faifatongia* and *faka'apa'apa* or *fefaka'apa'apa'aki* contribute to the continued strength of the extended family, and this relationship in turn reinforces the key values of *anga faka-Tonga*. This collective ideal ensures that resources, including human resources, are shared out and potentially benefit a larger group of people. Tongan students' education is greatly determined by their commitment to these core values and can either enhance or hinder their academic achievement.

4. Tongan Language

Another important feature of any culture is language and because “[l]anguage is a complicated business... we can't *really* appreciate a culture without knowing the 'language'” (Downes, 1998, p. 1). Language is conceived as being self-evident and a part of culture (Risager, 2006). Language as a means of communication is a powerful agent in a society because it is not only a way of communicating with all the members of the society but also preserves some of the cultural features either through its oral or written forms (Barry, 2008). Language is very important because it is a way of communication at the core of social interaction, “language is not just an instrument for communication but also – often – an important, even constitutive feature of a community's identity... the loss of a language may do serious harm to the community's identity and culture” (Ferguson, 2006, p. 78). It also helps to accelerate cultural changes within the society (Downes, 1998).

The official languages in Tonga are Tongan and English (Guile, 2005). The Tongan language (*Lea faka-Tonga*) is one of the most ancient of the Polynesian languages and is a branch of the Austronesian language family (Campbell, 2001; Taumoefolau, 2004). *Lea faka-Tonga* has unique characteristics and is historically significant because it “includes many old words and expressions for ancient customs and cultural items that are now extinct. The *lea faka-Tonga* has several levels of vocabulary and usage that reflect Tonga’s hierarchical social structure” (Ministry of Education, 2007c, p. 7). Different vocabularies are used for the king, nobles and the commoners. Tongan vocabulary aids effective communication amongst the people. Taumoefolau (2006, p. 30) maintains that if Tongans do not know how to speak in Tongan, many of the meanings in conversations will be lost. This prevents the smooth transfer of meaning from Tongan into English because the structure of the Tongan language is different from the structure of the English language (Taumoefolau, 2004). Many Tongan words have no English equivalent and, therefore, cannot be translated correctly and effectively. Some examples include the words expressing the core values such as *lototō*, *fua kavenga*, and *mamahi’i me’a*. The language used for teasing people and the special speech style to show deference for royalty and nobility does not have an English equivalent, for example, the word *tangaki* synonymous to the word *hila* for the king that means “to glance” or “turn the eyes”.

Taumoefolau (2006) also stated that Tongans who do not know how to speak in Tongan will find it hard to understand and conduct Tongan *tukufakaholo* or *ngaahi me’a tu’ufonua* (Tongan customs and traditions). Another important function of the Tongan language is that it identifies a person as a Tongan, which is very important in certain situations such as social gatherings of delegates from different ethnic groups. The *lea faka-Tonga* as a means of communication is crucial to communicate the correct

'ulungaanga faka-Tonga (main/real Tongan way), which is the essence of the whole of Tongan society.

However, literacy and numeracy foundation knowledge are essential for students' academic success in their later education years (Fletcher et al., 2009). Some of the students with language problems find it difficult to follow instructions, and as a result do not understand the content of their courses. Literacy problems encountered by Tongan tertiary students in their education in New Zealand are sometimes related to how well they speak the Tongan language (Tongati'o, 2006a). Taumoefolau (2006) found that Tongan students who cannot speak Tongan also have many problems with the English language.

5. Religious Belief

Another important feature in the lives of Tongans is their *tui faka-lotu*. Tonga is a Christian country with 98% of the population belonging to a Christian church (Department of Statistics, 2008). The connection to Christianity is illustrated in the Tongan flag, which is red with a bold red cross on a white rectangle in the upper hoist-side corner. The red background stands for the blood of Jesus Christ, the Red Cross represents the Christian religion and white stands for purity (Guile, 2005). Tongans are free to express their religious beliefs in different forms as they belong to many churches, but all believe in one God in three persons, known as the Holy Trinity: God the father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. This concept of one God has strengthened Tongan beliefs about love, joy, peace and the guiding principles of life. The Tongan Christian belief is that God is the source of all good things and God blesses those who truly believe in him and live the Christian faith. God has the power to protect and empower people. Every blessing is from God who rewards those who believe and follow the teachings. The main Christian churches are Roman

Catholic, Free Wesleyan of Tonga, Free Church of Tonga, Church of Tonga, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Seventh Day Adventists, Tokaikolo Fellowship, Gospel Churches and the Baha'i Faith (Howard, 2004; Latukefu, 1977; Suren, 2004; Wood & Wood Ellem, 1977). The Wesleyan missionaries once they gained a permanent foothold in Tonga in 1826, provided continuing influences on Tongan social, cultural and political life, especially the education of its people (Latukefu, 1977; Wood, 1943). Many of the activities throughout the year are to do with the church, and are supported with money and goods. The education of the Tongan people is influenced by the church and people's Christian beliefs.

6. Education

Collins and O'Brien (2003) describe education as a process of fostering cognitive, physical, social, or emotional growth and development in individuals or groups, which implies a value system, and may proceed informally or formally as in schooling. Peters' (1966) criteria for education include firstly, education should be a transmission of worthwhile knowledge; secondly, education should involve the acquisition of a body of knowledge and understanding which surpasses mere skill, know-how or the collection of information; and lastly, that the processes of education involve at least some understanding of what is being learnt and what is required in the learning so that people are not 'brain-washed' or 'conditioned' into education (Winch & Gingell, 1999). However, education can also be described as informal education which is worthwhile learning that is neither organised nor institutionalised; formal education which is worthwhile learning that is organised and institutionalised, in early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary; and non-formal education that is organised but not institutionalised (Thaman, 1988). Tertiary education includes higher educational institutions such as universities and polytechnics or institutes of technology. Education is a social institution

that guides the transmission of knowledge, job skills, cultural norms and values. This research on Tongan students' academic achievement in New Zealand tertiary education explores ways to help Tongan students, and Tongan people in general, to educational success.

Tonga is a small island nation with limited resources and education represents an agent of development. Tongans strive very hard to give their children a good education. This is reflected in the 98.5% literacy rate of Tonga's population, one of the highest in the world (Tonga Department of Statistics, 2008). Tonga, at one time, had the most PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) holders per capita in the world where "there is a proliferation of educated people almost to the point of oversupply" (Ewins, 1998, p. 127). The most important outcome of education to Tongans is the well-being and development of Tongan people in all aspects. Tongans want to succeed in formal education because a high quality education provides the best opportunity and foundation for achieving future success and social mobility in the social hierarchy. Tongans also believe that well-informed and educated people are fundamental to the society's well-being.

In Tonga, formal education (schooling) has been the major focus throughout the reigns of the Tongan Christian kings: George Tupou I (1845-1893), George Tupou II (1893-1918), Queen Salote Tupou III (1918-1965), Taufa'ahau Tupou IV (1965-2006), and the present King George Tupou V (since 2006) (Campbell, 1992; Ewins, 1998; Guile, 2005). Schooling in Tonga begins with kindergarten or early childhood education, and continues with primary, secondary and tertiary education. Pre-school education is primarily the responsibility of the parents in Tonga. The state primary schools are free from age six up to the age of twelve. The secondary schools are mostly run by the churches (77.5%) and by the government (22.5%) and charge fees (Catherwood, Taufa, Scott, &

Cook, 2003). The government is responsible for 60% of tertiary education institutions, while the churches are responsible for 40%. The entry criterion is usually a Pacific Secondary Senior Certificate (PSSC), but places are increasingly filled by students with Form 7 (Year 13) completion and qualifications (Catherwood et al., 2003). When tertiary students from Tonga go overseas to study, most of them have already completed Form 6 or Form 7. If they complete a tertiary qualification in Tonga before going overseas, they often have some recognised qualification in their field. However, they still might not be ready for academic study overseas because of the particular schooling system in Tonga which is culturally based (Thaman, 1988).

The Tongan Ministry of Education (2004) “acknowledges that Tonga is fast becoming part of a global village, and education needs to develop the skills of Tonga’s people so that they can participate in the wider world and return benefits to the country” (p. 17). Formal education is extremely important to the people of Tonga who often refer to it saying “*Ko e lotu mo e ako ka e mālohi ha fonua*” (religion and education is the strength of a nation). King George Tupou I “was convinced that the only [feature] that differentiated the white man from the Tongans in their ability and wisdom was their possession of superior knowledge” (Latukefu, 1977, p. 130). As a result he supported the missionary schools. King George Tupou I’s favourite saying was based on a bible verse from the Book of Hosea, 4: 6, ‘*Oku ‘auha hoku kakai ko e masiva ‘ilo* (My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge) and steered his passion for western education (Latukefu, 1977). Every good habit is believed to be learnt from school and when someone behaves badly they are frowned upon saying “*Ko e hā hono ‘aonga e ō ‘o ako*” (what is the use of going to school?). This remark is aimed at having a strong disciplinary, yet positive, effect on people. Tongan people see formal educational success as not only giving better job opportunities

but also as strengthening the development of the moral and cultural values that underpin Tongan society.

“The post-colonial 1970s and 1980s saw something of a boom in [Tongan people having] university education in Tonga” (Ewins, 1998, p. 123). Tertiary education is now seen as valuable in its own right by the Tongan people. The Tongan Ministry of Education’s vision for education is for the people to achieve an excellent education that is unique to the country, so Tonga will become a learning society (Ministry of Education, 2004). Formal education has continued to modify and modernise Tongan values as well as Tongan educational ideas, and educational institutions are still regarded by many Tongans “as both an agent of change and a vehicle for the transmission of traditional cultural values” (Thaman, 1988, p. 244). While this is true within Tonga it might not be the case for Tongan people who live outside Tonga, such as in New Zealand, who are educated in a different cultural context.

In summary, Tongan culture and society relies on good relationships within the social hierarchy of kinship ties, and kinship circles is where core values, religious beliefs, customs and traditions, and education are transmitted through the *lea faka-Tonga* as illustrated in Figure 3.

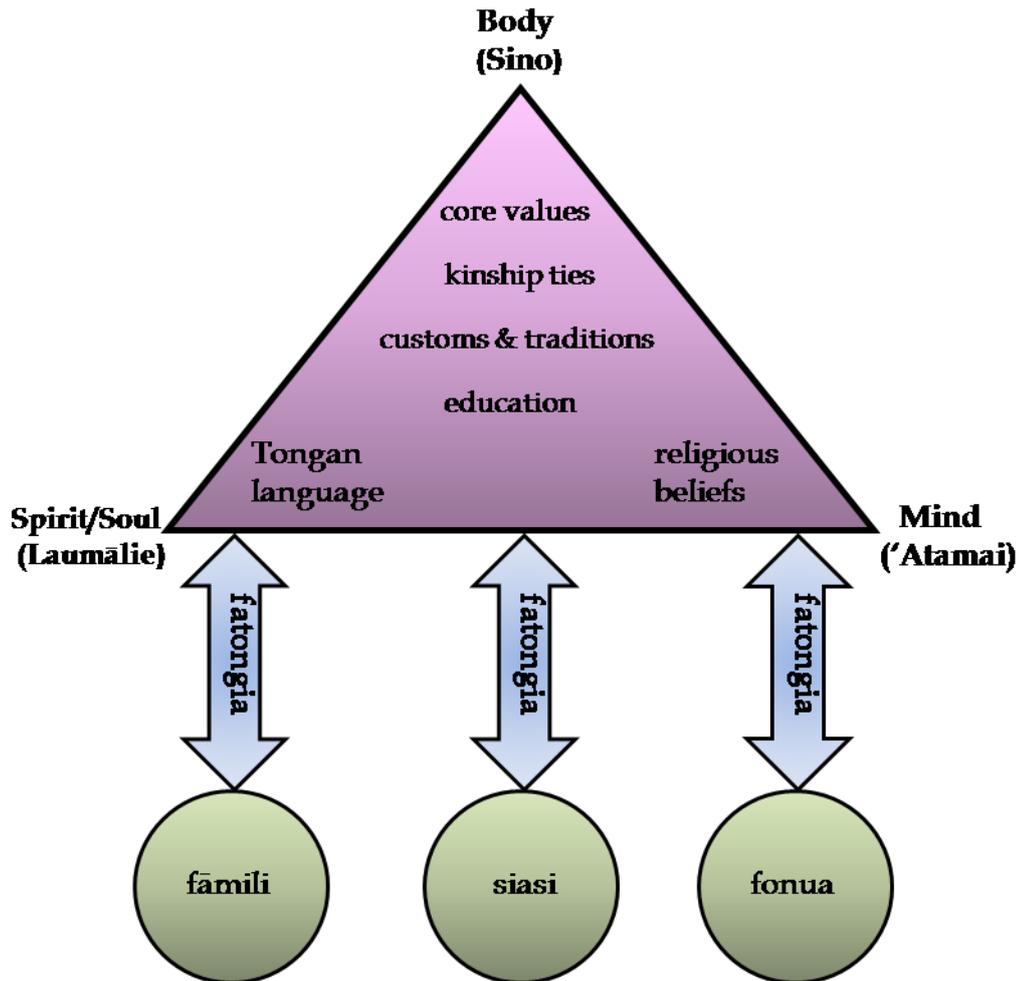


Figure 3. Tongan Personal Cultural Reality

Figure 3 summarises the reality for a Tongan person with three linked/integrated dimensions of *sino* (physical body), *laumālie* (spirit/soul) and *'atamai* (mind) in the Tongan worldview (Tu'itahi, 2005). Embedded in a Tongan person's life are the Tongan core values, kinship ties, customs and traditions, education, language, and religious beliefs. A Tongan person is connected to his/her *fānili*, *siasi* and *fonua* through *faifatongia*. This is where a Tongan person is moulded into the Tongan culture. However, Tongan culture is changing. These changes in Tongan culture and society are evident in the situation in New Zealand which changes the ways people do their *fatongia*.

IV. TONGAN PEOPLE IN NEW ZEALAND

*Aotearoa*⁴⁴ New Zealand lies southwest of Tonga, has a larger landmass than Tonga, of 268,704 sq km and is cooler, with a temperate climate (Carlisle, Deutch, & Rodgers, 1990; Kirkpatrick, 1999, 2005). It has a diverse, multicultural population of 4,027,947, making it one of the world's least crowded countries in the world (Statistics New Zealand, 2006a, 2007a). Much of New Zealand contemporary culture is derived from British roots, and the indigenous Māori *iwi*⁴⁵ (*tangata whenua*⁴⁶), but also includes significant influences from the United States of America, Australia, other European cultures, and Pasifika and Asian cultures. Europeans are the largest of the major ethnic groups, with 2,609,592 people, 67.6% of the population. Māori make up the second largest group, with 565,329 people, or 14.6%. The Pasifika group is the fifth largest group of 281,379 people, 6.9% of the country's population. The Pasifika population is increasing rapidly and had the second-largest increase from 2001-2006 Census (Statistics New Zealand, 2007a). Table 1 shows the population of the seven largest Pacific Peoples' ethnic groups of 2001 - 2006.

⁴⁴ The Māori name for New Zealand which means 'The Land of the Long White Cloud' (Carlisle et al., 1990).

⁴⁵ A Māori word for tribe or clan.

⁴⁶ Māori indigenous people, also known as the 'man of the land'.

Table 1. Seven Largest Pacific Ethnic Groups in New Zealand.

Seven Largest Pacific Peoples Ethnic Groups 2001-2006				
<i>Ethnic Group</i>	<i>2001 Count</i>	<i>2006 Count</i>	<i>Percentage of Change</i>	<i>2006 Percentage</i>
Samoan	115,017	131,103	14.0	49
Cook Islands Maori	52,569	58,008	10.3	22
Tongan	40,719	50,481	24.0	19
Niuean	20,148	22,476	11.6	8
Fijian	7,041	9,864	40.1	4
Tokelauan	6,204	6,819	9.9	3
Tuvaluan	1,965	2,628	33.7	1
TOTAL	243663	281379		

Note. From *QuickStats About Culture and Identity: 2006b Census* (p. 5), by Statistics New Zealand, 2006, Wellington, New Zealand.

Tongan people have migrated to New Zealand for various reasons such as their desire to help and improve the family's status and standard of living, contribute to family pride and gain more respect for the family, enable families to increase their giving to the church and village projects, help the development of Tonga, and to demonstrate love amongst family members (Cowling, 1990).

In recent years, job opportunities for educated Tongans have become limited in Tonga; consequently some scholars have stayed overseas after they have completed their education (Runarsdottir, 2003). The population of Tongan people in New Zealand (50481) is over half of the total (101,991) population of the Tongan people who are currently living in Tonga (Department of State, 2007; Department of Statistics, 2008). Table 1 shows that the Tongan population is the third largest Pasifika ethnic group, 19% of the Pasifika population (Statistics New Zealand, 2006b). As Tongan people in New Zealand are a minority group in a multicultural country, they relate to, and participate in, the cultures of different ethnic groups within New Zealand. They are bicultural because their way of life has changed and developed to be part of New Zealand society and economy.

This does not make them less Tongan but it contributes to the complication of their lives as Tongans living in New Zealand. To appreciate Tongan culture “it is essential to place it in the context of the social relationships in which it is embedded” (Runarsdottir, 2003, p. 121), such as Tongan culture in New Zealand.

Tongan people in New Zealand are not a homogenous group, and are different in a variety of ways, depending on whether they were born and educated in Tonga or New Zealand. The four key groups of Tongans living in New Zealand are those who were born:

- i) and educated in Tonga, before immigrating to New Zealand;
- ii) in Tonga, and educated in both Tonga and New Zealand;
- iii) in New Zealand, and educated in both Tonga and New Zealand;
- and
- iv) educated in New Zealand.

Some of the Tongan people in New Zealand struggle to understand the society they live in and this impact on their lives including education (Peterson et al., 2006). This has changed Tongan culture as illustrated in the following poem, *Island Fire*, which is true for Tongan people in Tonga as well as those in New Zealand:

ISLAND FIRE

Embers
Of once blazing
Fire
Sleep through an
Endless night
Fraught with the din of
Billiard balls
Hollywood violence
Rock 'n roll music
And the slow turning of
Foreign text book pages
The embers wait
Perhaps never to be
Rekindled by
Dry coconut leaves
. . . kerosene is easier!

Konai Helu Thaman
(Thaman, 1974, p. 14)

Konai Thaman alluded to cultural shift and transformation in Tonga (or any Pacific island) due to western influences. The Tongan culture (fire) that was once innocent and pure is now troubled, oppressed and dying out because of westernisation and perhaps it will never be recovered again because the western ways of doing things seem to be easier for Tongan people (Small, 1997). Some of these associated problems are social dislocation, family disintegration and cultural deterioration which impact on people's lives, including their education (Finau & Finau, 2007).

A key difference between Tongans living in New Zealand is their use of the Tongan language. According to the 2006 Census, only 61% (28,186) of the Tongan population in New Zealand can speak or hold an everyday conversation in Tongan. This means that there are fewer opportunities in the home to speak Tongan. A higher proportion of Tongans born in Tonga than New Zealand-born Tongans were able to speak the language (81% and 40%, respectively). Furthermore, the proportion of outside of

New Zealand-born Tongans, who are able to speak Tongan increased steadily with age, indicating that younger outside of New Zealand-born Tongans may not be learning the language at home. On the other hand, the proportion of New Zealand-born Tongans who are able to speak Tongan increased from birth to a high of 50 percent for the 15-19 year age group, at which point it decreased to a low of nine percent within the 45-49 age group with no significant increase evident in the older age groups (Statistics New Zealand, 2007b).

The loss of the Tongan language is of concern to Tongans because spoken language is a key aspect in maintaining the Tongan culture in New Zealand. Language underpins other aspects of the *anga faka-Tonga* such as the Tongan traditions and customs. Maintaining and transmitting the Tongan language to the next generation is important because it will help them to know who they are and this will in turn help with their success in life (Ferguson, 2006). If Tongan people take pride in their language and “its fate matters deeply to them, then the concern for the survival of that language, and for the possibility of its transmission to the next generation, is part of respecting what those individuals consider to be meaningful and worthwhile” (Ferguson, 2006, p. 79).

Tongans in New Zealand may aspire to a new way of life, but not at the expense of their Tongan culture. They wish to integrate aspects of their *anga faka-Tonga* with western culture and be bicultural. I, personally, have noted that *anga faka-Tonga* and *anga faka-Pālangi*⁴⁷ co-exist in the life of Tongan people in New Zealand. Sometimes the mixture of the *anga faka-Tonga* and *anga faka-Pālangi* has allowed for the emergence of new cultural

⁴⁷ Western culture; this term is sometimes used to explain improper behaviour, especially those of foreigners or returned migrants and is opposed to *anga faka-Tonga*. Otherwise it denotes the way young people dress, in jeans and t-shirts, and the types of music they listen to on the radio (Runarsdottir, 2003).

traditions, which are debated in terms of cultural authenticity. The dilemma for Tongans is the extent and nature of the changes and the impact of these on traditional customs and practices. Travelling to New Zealand for education is a collective undertaking. In their local environment they have strong relationships with their *fāmili*, *siasi* and *fonua*. The importance of these relationships has created particular settlement patterns for the Tongan people in New Zealand.

Although Tongans still operate strongly on the extended family kinship ties platform, the global social and cultural influences have changed much of *anga faka-Tonga* both in Tonga and abroad. Whatever is happening in Tonga, affects everyone of the *kāinga* all over the world and vice versa. For example, the drop in the Tongan economy since the riot in Nuku'alofa on the 16 November 2006 is affecting Tongan people both in Tonga and overseas (Maama, 2006b; Po'uhila, 2006). This is because the people in Tonga face the consequences of not having the services of the shops destroyed during the riot. Consequently, the Tongan people overseas have to send more money to their *fāmili* and *kāinga* in Tonga, indirectly affecting the overseas family's studies. The impact of remittances to Tonga on the diasporas such as Tongan people in New Zealand are huge and have an impact on students' academic achievement (Morton Lee, 2003; Niumeitolu, 2008; Vaiangina, 2008).

Current technological improvements enable the fast movement of people from country to country with the result that people are becoming more bicultural and multicultural. In Tonga and New Zealand, capitalism, global relationships and development have impacted on the way of life of the people. New Zealand "is now firmly embedded within a global network of migrants and trade/exchange [and] ideas, goods and money are flowing into the country" (Runarsdottir, 2003, p. 41). The effects of

globalisation⁴⁸ have been felt by the Tongan people in New Zealand. Tongan people in New Zealand have experienced global impacts on Tongan customs and traditions and they are sometimes feeling lost in their new environment. Mafite'o (2005) in her study on social work, however, stated that Tongans are not passive victims of globalisation as they are not amalgamated into a homogenous global culture as the "Tongan culture is being reproduced and transformed with the Tongan diasporas, ensuring the survival of *mo'ui faka-Tonga* against and within the currents of globalisation" (p. 32). All of what has happened to the world through physical evolution and social interactions are related (*kāinga*), and their relationships are fundamental to the existence of the world today. This universal culture continues to challenge Tongan people, especially the Tongan students in their endeavour to be successful in New Zealand tertiary education.

1. Importance of the *Fāmili*

In Tongan culture, like any other culture, the family is a divine institution and it is the foundation of human life and the prototype of every social order (Monsignor Eggleton, Sunday, 30 December 2007). The family unit is the basic source of support for its members where sustenance for the individual's body *sino*, *laumālie* and *'atamai* are given. The importance of the *fāmili* to Tongans in New Zealand is shown by their geographical distribution in New Zealand where in 2006, 95% (47,979) live in the North Island. Most of the Tongans, 80%, live in the Auckland region which is the most ethnically diverse region in New Zealand. The city has the largest Polynesian population in the world (Statistics New Zealand, 2006a), followed by the Wellington region, 5%, with 3% each in the Waikato and

⁴⁸ Globalization is defined as the movement of values, ideologies, goods, services and practices across national boundaries (Taufe'ulungaki, 2003).

Canterbury regions (Statistics New Zealand, 2007a). Living in close proximity to one another shows the importance of the extended family lifestyle where people value working together to support each other.

Similarly, statistics show that Tongans were more likely to live in a family situation than the total New Zealand population; 87% of Tongans lived as members of a family. The comparable figure for the total Pacific and New Zealand populations were 86% and 79%, respectively. The most common family type was a couple with children, which accounted for 70% of all Tongans living in a family. The comparable figures for the total Pacific and New Zealand populations in 2006 were 28% and 17%, respectively. A higher proportion of Tongans (45%) were living in an extended family (*kāinga*) situation than the total Pacific (41%) and total New Zealand populations (14%) (Statistics New Zealand, 2007b). In 2006, Tongans, as well as Pacific peoples in general, were more likely to live in multi-family households in New Zealand than members of the wider population. Tongans, however, were less likely than those in the total population to live in shared living situations such as flatting, or to live alone (Statistics New Zealand, 2007b).

Extended family kinship ties have played a vital role in the survival of Tongan people wherever they live. Many Tongans in New Zealand live in areas with extended communal family clusters. Tongans characteristically work together as a group to help each other within their *fāмили*. This is illustrated by the amount of unpaid and voluntary work recorded in the 2006 Census, with 86% of the Tongan adult population in New Zealand reporting involvement in unpaid or voluntary work inside and outside of the household. The figure for the total Pacific and New Zealand population was 86% and 89%, respectively. The most common category of unpaid work was 'household work, cooking, repairs, and gardening for

their own household'. A higher proportion of Tongans (and Pacific peoples in general) compared to the total New Zealand population reported carrying out unpaid activities that involved looking after a child who was a member of their household. The members of the Tongan and Pacific populations were also more likely to report looking after a sick or disabled member of their household (Statistics New Zealand, 2007b). According to the New Zealand Ministry of Education (2009b), lack of family support can seriously affect Pasifika students including Tongans. However, along with *fāmili*, *siasi* is also an important aspect of Tongan society in New Zealand.

2. Importance of the *Siasi*

Siasi, or the church, for the Tongan people is the representation of God and his people on Earth. “*Ko au pē 'a e vaine, ko kimoutolu 'a e ngaahi va'a*” (I am the vine and you are the branches) John 15:5. This is a Christian perception of the church whereby the vine is imagery to express the mystery of God in the church; God is the vine and the people its branches. Tongans show the importance they place on the church with financial support. Money is saved and given cheerfully during the church annual donations at the *misinale* (Methodist churches) or *kātoanga'ofa* (Catholics). The bigger the amount given, the more praise received from their fellow church members (Crane, 1978; Tatafu, 1997). Tongan children grow up in an atmosphere of Sunday schools, church attendance, prayers and Bible readings in the home. They learn the “Christian ideals of behaviour and the values of generosity, peaceful solution of human problems, respect for the person and property of elders, loyalty and helpfulness to the family” (Crane, 1978, p. 25). The church ministers, through their preaching in the pulpit, teach people what is right and wrong, and are very powerful activists for people's rights. The church continues to influence the lives of the Tongan people abroad including those who are living in New Zealand.

In the 2006 Census, just over 2 million people, or 56.6% of the New Zealand population were affiliated to a Christian religion (Statistics New Zealand, 2006b). However, 90% (42,813) of the Tongan population stated an affiliation to at least one religious denomination and 98% of these people said that they belonged to a Christian denomination. The most common Christian denomination was Methodist, making up 45% (18,858), followed by Catholic at 21% (9,006), and Latter Day Saints at 12% (5,025). The rest belonged to Pentecostal and other Christian denominations (Statistics New Zealand, 2007b). This reflects a similar trend in Tonga where the Methodist church has the largest congregation. Christianity and duties involving the church are an important component in the lives of Tongan tertiary students and can impact on their education in New Zealand.

3. Importance of the *Fonua*

The importance of the *fonua* to Tongan people is shown through working together to support the *fonua*, both in Tonga and New Zealand. Tongans in New Zealand help with donations to send to Tonga for educational, religious, village or family projects. Most Tongan people put tremendous efforts to *fua* (carry or meet) their *fatongia* because generally their socio-economic status in New Zealand is not very good compared to other Pasifika groups and the total New Zealand population. The 2006 Census showed that the labour force participation⁴⁹ rate for the adult Tongan population in New Zealand is 57.8%. This is somewhat lower than the comparable rates for the total Pacific and total New Zealand adult population, which were 65% and 69% respectively (Statistics New Zealand, 2007b).

⁴⁹ The labour force participation rates refers to the proportion of people who are of working age, that is age 15 and over, and are classified as either employed or unemployed.

Of the adult Tongan population, 19% had no personal income, 38% received under \$20,000, and 3% received over \$70,000 per annum. The Tongan adult population median annual income of \$17,500 is much lower compared with the total median income of Pasifika and New Zealand populations of \$20,500 and \$24,400 respectively. Of Tongan adults, 29% received income support which is the same as the total Pasifika population but much higher than the total New Zealand population (17%) (Statistics New Zealand, 2007b). The statistics show that Tongans in New Zealand do not earn enough to cater for all the *fatongia* and consequently this puts pressure on tertiary students to work to help their families financially.

In 2006, 19% of Tongan adults in New Zealand owned or partly owned the dwelling that they lived in which is lower than the total Pasifika (22%) and New Zealand (53%) populations. The highest rate of home ownership within the Tongan adult population was in the 55-59 years age group (42%). A higher proportion of overseas-born Tongans (78%) owned or partly owned the dwelling they lived in compared with New Zealand-born Tongans, (22%). However, in 2006 over half of Tongans (55%) were living in privately owned rental accommodation in New Zealand. A further 43% lived in Housing New Zealand Corporation accommodation. The comparable figures for the Pacific and New Zealand population were 37% and 13%, respectively.

In 2006, 94% of Tongans in New Zealand lived in households with access to a motor vehicle, which is very similar to that of the total Pacific (92%) and New Zealand (95%) populations. This reflects Tongan people's communal values of connectedness where they have to attend family occasions and travel to church. Sometimes, Tongan people own vehicles to portray financial stability in the family because owning a vehicle gives an impression of being rich. Of Tongans in New Zealand who lived in

households, 81% had access to a telephone. This was considerably less than the New Zealand population (92%). Tongan households were also less likely to have access to the internet 36% compared to the total New Zealand population (60%) (Statistics New Zealand, 2007b). This reflects the limited access that Tongan people have to technology because of affordability. This is a barrier for tertiary students as they can only use the TEIs facility, which limits their flexibility to use these facilities.

The perception of Tongans living in Tonga is that Tongan people residing in New Zealand are rich. Easy access to monetary wealth, living in good houses, owning good vehicles, eating good food, borrowing money and all the other benefits that New Zealand has to offer creates an illusion of affluence. In New Zealand, Tongan ideals and culture are transformed and adapted to their new socio-cultural context (Runarsdottir, 2003) and as a result *anga faka-Tonga* is changed. Although their knowledge and perceptions of Tongan culture are still the same, the way they conduct their customs and traditions has adapted to the different environment. This is true of such aspects as the *fokotu'utu'unga 'o e sōsaieti Tonga* and the *siakale 'o e nofo 'a kāinga* as people know and try to keep to these *anga faka-Tonga*. What makes the huge difference that impact on peoples' lives is in the way they try to *fua fatongia* or *fua kavenga* to the *fāmili, siasi, and fonua*. There is competition in the way people *fua* their *kavenga* as people are looking for status, fame and power which can result in financial problems. Big, expensive weddings and birthday celebrations are beyond the means of some Tongans and lead to financial hardships afterwards. This adversely affects families in New Zealand and their children suffer because people donated more than they could afford to these occasions (Vaiangina, 2008, 2009). Similar financial problems happen to some Tongan families in Australia, and the United States (Morton Lee, 2003, 2007; Niumeitolu, 2008). As a result, the nature of the relationships

between the extended family and the nuclear family is changing. Although families retain their relationship with their extended family, their individual allegiance is now primarily to their nuclear family. Extended family are involved only to mark major milestones such as funerals, weddings and birthdays and less for daily needs (Morton Lee, 2003).

Remittances to relatives in Tonga create the perception that relatives overseas are wealthy. Although this is sometimes true, in many cases it is not, and some Tongans in New Zealand are trying very hard to meet their basic needs. Nevertheless, Tongan residents ask for money and goods from their families and relatives in New Zealand. This puts considerable financial pressure on families in New Zealand as they feel obligated to send money and goods as it is their duty to *fua* their *fatongia* to show *'ofa* to their *kāinga*, *siasi* and *fonua*. There are advantages and disadvantages to Tongan people both for those who give and those who receive these gifts of money and goods which impact on their lives. What is important to this research is the impact of this gift giving on Tongan people and their education in New Zealand.

4. Tongan Identity

“Social identity is defined and asserted through difference” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 172). Different life-styles derive from different habitus, which not only function within themselves but also in relation to others (Runarsdottir, 2003). Therefore, identity is a process that is socially constructed and is historically patterned (Liu, McCreanor, McIntosh, & Teaiwa, 2005). It is also constructed out of a dynamic interaction between people and their aims (Liu et al., 2005). Identity can also be defined as the individuality, uniqueness, distinctiveness, characteristics and personality of an individual human being. The heart of the matter is that identities are

values and worldviews that groups draw on to stake claims, defend positions, justify actions and legitimise policies (Liu et al., 2005).

People of a group or a country can be identified by their looks (physical make up), the language they speak and the way they behave and do things. Much of our individual identities come from being connected to groups of one sort or another. Therefore, a clear definition of a Tongan identity are those who look Tongan, that is, have the genetic makeup inherited from Tongan parents or ancestors (Silipa, 2004), speak the Tongan language, think Tongan and do things in the Tongan way (Morton Lee, 2003). However, Tongan identity is problematic for some Tongans living in New Zealand. This is because not only are they a minority group in New Zealand but there are Tongans of mixed ethnicity.

The 2006 Census shows that 19% of Tongans in New Zealand reported as belonging to one other ethnic group, and 17% of Tongans reported belonging to two other ethnic groups. Further analysis of Tongans who gave one other ethnic group shows 38% belonging to the Pacific ethnic group; 32% belonging to the European group; and 27% belonging to Māori. Of those Tongans who reported that they belong to two other ethnic groups, the most common combinations were Tongan/Pacific/European (24%) and Tongan/Māori/Pacific (13%). The Tongans belonging to other ethnic groups were more likely to fall into the younger age groups. This is evident in the fact that 58% of Tongans who reported as belonging to one other ethnic group were under the age of 15. Furthermore, just over two thirds (67%) of Tongans who reported as belonging to three ethnic groups were under the age of 15 years (Statistics New Zealand, 2007b).

Knowing and being able to converse in the Tongan language is an important feature of Tongan identity. This is because “language is not just [an] instrument for communication but also - often - an important, even constitutive, feature of a community's identity [and] the loss of a language may do serious harm to the community's identity and culture” (Ferguson, 2006, p. 78). The Tongan language therefore is a significant feature of *anga faka-Tonga* because, as mentioned earlier, language and culture are linked.

Ferguson, (2006, p. 79) explains:

[I]ndexically in that the language most historically and intimately associated with a given culture is best attuned to express the artefacts and concerns of that culture...; symbolically in that a community's language and culture come to stand for each other in the minds of insiders and outsiders...; in part-whole fashion in that parts of any culture (e.g. its songs, proverbs blessings and curses) are verbally constituted. It follows, then, that loss of a language may indeed produce cultural dislocation.

Therefore, if a person can speak and communicate in Tongan, then they could claim to be a Tongan. However, language is a very contentious issue. For example, there are non-Tongans who can speak Tongan fluently and, conversely, Tongans of Tongan heritage who cannot speak Tongan. These are discussed in great depth by Morton Lee (2003) and Taumoefolau, (2006). They believe that the Tongan language is extremely important to claiming one's Tongan identity. According to Morton Lee (2003) the:

concept of *anga fakatonga*, which, together with the Tongan language, is viewed by many Tongans as *defining* Tongan identity – even to the point that some claim it is possible for someone with no Tongan 'blood' to be accepted as Tongan if they are competent in these respects. (p. 235)

The Tongan “identity is the expression of the [Tongan] values, cultural beliefs, social conditions and life histories” (Runarsdottir, 2003, p. 34). This construction of the ideal Tongan identity includes the concepts of tradition (*tukutala, talatukufakaholo, tala*); custom (*anga, nānunga, tō'onga,*

fatungamotu'a); language (*lea faka-Tonga*); and values (*ngaahi me'a mahu'inga*). These are transmitted through education and are supported by the Christian beliefs of love and good service of the fellow men (Cowling, 2005). Thus, a Tongan is a person who has all the three aspects of genetic inheritance, speaking the Tongan language and also living and behaving in *anga faka-Tonga*. This definition is also problematic as there are some people who are physically Tongan with Tongan genetic inheritance but cannot speak Tongan or do not practice *anga faka-Tonga*. My definition of identity for this thesis is that people can claim their Tonganness with any one of the aspects described here.

Mo'ui fakatokolahi (communal lifestyles) is the overarching value of Tongan identity. Through *mo'ui fakatokolahi* the Tongan people practise their Tongan values where they *tauhi* their *vā* towards all other members of the society. This thesis defines a Tongan person as one who has Tongan ancestors and/or has knowledge of *anga faka-Tonga*, which “encompasses all values, beliefs, and practices that are regarded as elements of Tongan culture and tradition” (Morton Lee, 2003, p. 1). The Tongan people who have come to call New Zealand their home have long histories of their culture but “what is clear is that the process of identity-making here is dynamic” (Liu et al., 2005, p. 11). It “evolves over time and postmodernists hold a view that identity is contingent, fluid and constructed” (S. May, 2001, p. 95). Tongan people who live in New Zealand have struggled to maintain their own cultural heritage as well as to adopt the cultural identity of New Zealand, their host country (Koloto, 2003a; Mafile'o, 2005; Makisi, 2003; Morton Lee, 2003; Tu'itahi, 2005). In New Zealand, there is a continuum from being a conservative Tongan to an avant-garde. Some people who have been in New Zealand a long time are at the avant-garde end. There is a cultural gap in their knowledge and understanding about their Tongan culture. Alternately, those on the conservative end lack

understanding about the New Zealand culture and since the world is becoming increasingly homogenized, with western values dominating, everything is contested (Taufe'ulungaki, 2003). These differences in Tongan peoples' worldviews could confuse some of the Tongan people in New Zealand and impact on their education.

In summary, Tongans have a unique way of doing things and the paradox of being unique is the greatest challenge for Tongans who want to be successful in western academia. Taufe'ulungaki (2000), argued that Tongan values and belief systems are where they create meaning and structure reality, develop ways of knowing, categorize and process information, get rules and regulations that govern their behaviours, construct institutions and their characteristics, and transform abstract notions into concrete living worlds. The lives of Tongans are based on a collective foundation whereas to be successful academically in a New Zealand context needs an understanding and practice of individualistic values (Māhina, 2008). Therefore, an understanding of both cultures in their relationship to the education of Tongan students in New Zealand would seem to be very important.

V. TERTIARY TONGAN STUDENTS IN NEW ZEALAND

Tertiary education in New Zealand is very broad. It ranges from foundation education and training bridging people into further education and training or work, through to world-class doctoral studies (Ministry of Education, 2007a). The major tertiary institutions are universities, polytechnics, *wānanga*⁵⁰ and colleges of education. The students in tertiary education come from a range of ethnic and social backgrounds, and have a variety of education needs. This diversity includes differences between

⁵⁰ *Māori* word for university, wise informant, lore, place of learning.

groups of students, as well as differences amongst the individuals who make up those groups (Ministry of Education, 2006a). Relatively open access to enrolment and easy access to student loans has increased the number of Pasifika students focusing on part-time, course-based study and those trying to combine work with study (Ministry of Education, 2008a).

According to the New Zealand Ministry of Education (2007), evidence shows that Pasifika students do not achieve as well as other students from similar backgrounds. Pasifika adults have lower English literacy and numeracy levels than other ethnic groups. Many Pasifika people are bilingual or multilingual and English is their second, third or fourth language (Ministry of Education, 2009b). The New Zealand Ministry of Education (2007a) notes that Pasifika full-time students are more likely to complete a qualification than part-time students. Internal students are more likely to complete a qualification than those studying extramurally. Students who are combining work with study are less likely to complete than those coming directly from school. Māori and Pasifika students, in particular at postgraduate level, have lower completion rates while Asians have the highest completion rates. Younger students are more likely to complete than older students at bachelors level, but older students have higher completion rate after adjusting for study differences, for example, older students are more likely to be studying part-time or combining study with work. Full-time students have significantly higher qualification completion rates than part-time students. International students are more likely to achieve qualifications than domestic students (Ministry of Education, 2003, 2006a).

The New Zealand government has made several attempts to reverse the continuing trend of academic under-achievement by Pasifika students in

New Zealand (Pasikale, 2002). The New Zealand government, through the Pasifika Education Section, has endeavoured to improve Pasifika people's participation and achievement throughout the country. This is where the Ministry of Education's 'Compass for Pasifika Success' (Figure 4) is evident; it draws on the connections and relationships fundamental in understanding Pasifika people's education. The Pasifika students' link to the education system is by building strong learning foundations and smooth transitions across the education system; from home through to the schools and to the Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education, 2009b).

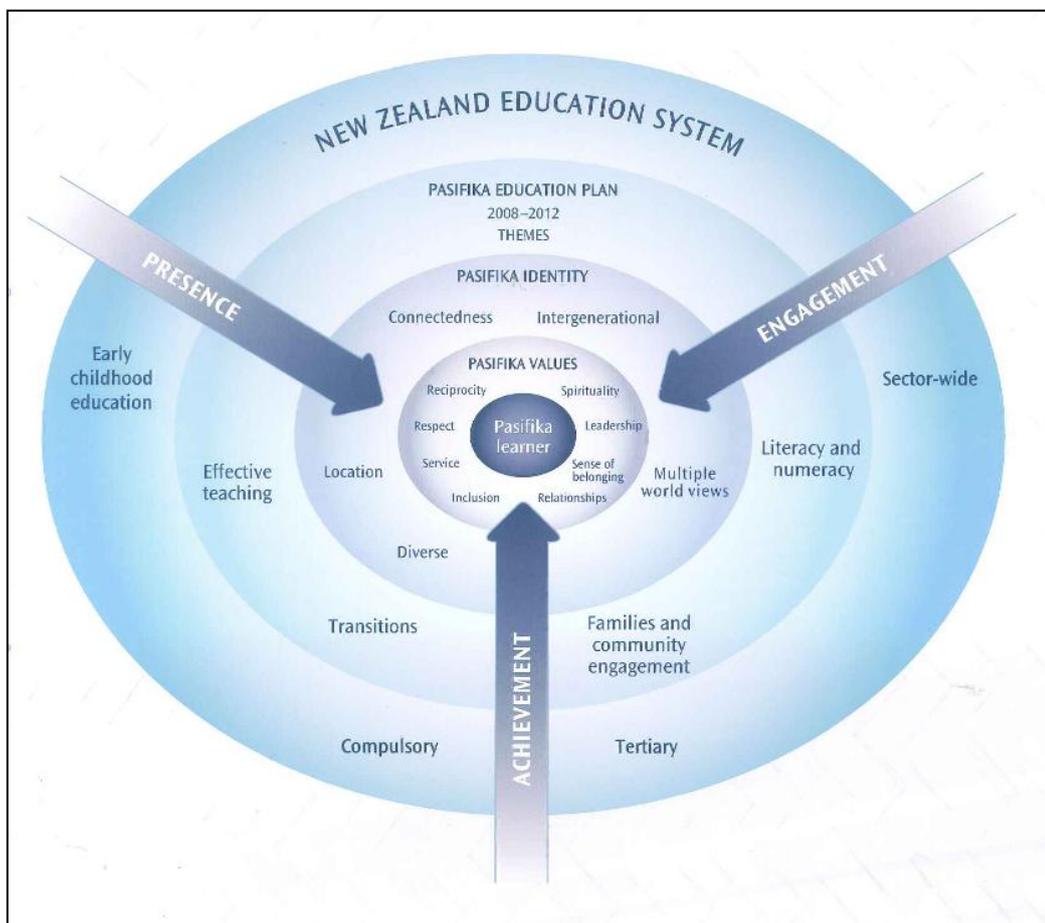


Figure 4. Compass for Pasifika Success.

From *Revised Pasifika Education Plan 2008-2012*, by Ministry of Education, 2009b, Wellington, New Zealand.

The Pasifika Education Plan 2008-2012 states the New Zealand government priorities, vision, goals, targets and actions in order to improve Pasifika participation and achievement (Ministry of Education, 2008b). The Ministry of Education Pasifika Section's overarching mission is to raise achievement and reduce disparity (Ministry of Education, 2007a). This goal encompasses all stages of learning, from a child's first learning experiences to becoming a lifelong learner as an adult. It also encompasses high levels of access and participation in quality early childhood education, effective transitions and pathways through school, and high levels of participation and success in tertiary education (Ministry of Education, 2006a).

There is an initial culture shock for international Tongan students when they first arrive in New Zealand. It takes a while for them to adapt not only to university life but also to other aspects of living. They face new physical, cultural, social, economic and political environments where they encounter new places, new ideas, new freedoms, and new people (Anae et al., 2002). According to Cleverley (1996), Pasifika students (including Tongans) when they first arrive in New Zealand are in awe of their new and more developed environments, making it hard for them to keep up with tertiary academic demands. Cleverley further stated that once students fall behind, it is very hard for them to keep up with their assignments and to catch up with all their work. As a result, they may fail their courses or barely pass them. Tongan students also experience estrangement, disaffection, unfriendliness, hostility, separation and distancing throughout their studies (Pasikale & Tupuola, 1999; Thaman, 1994). This is because of rapid social changes, especially in the breakdown of traditional relationships in goods and services they are used to in their own Tongan cultural settings (Small, 1997). For instance, for some it is the absence of extended family benefits, of borrowing from relatives and

harvesting food from their own family plantations to help them in times of financial hardship that is difficult.

According to the Ministry of Education (2008a) statistics, Tongans represented 16 percent of total domestic Pasifika students in New Zealand tertiary education with 4,250 enrolments in 2006. There are four major groups of Tongan tertiary students in New Zealand as explained earlier. These groups are similar in some ways and very different in others. For example, those who were born and raised in New Zealand might speak fluent English, while those born and raised in Tonga might not. These groups have an important similarity in that most Tongan people have strongly held Christian beliefs. Although all Tongan people are from the same ethnic group, there can be some differences among them because of where they were raised (Anae et al., 2002). Tongan students who were born and raised in New Zealand have different problems from those born and raised in Tonga. These problems are identified by Coxon, Jenkins, Marshall and Massey (1994) and Donn and Schick (1995) who emphasised the influence of colonial rule and western ideologies, and the developmental progression and structural inequalities faced by many Pasifika people in New Zealand. Those that are born and raised in New Zealand and immigrants who have been in New Zealand for a long time are much more familiar with the New Zealand system than those who have recently migrated to New Zealand.

Most of the Tongan tertiary students in New Zealand attend one of the eight universities and 20 polytechnics (Statistics New Zealand, 2004). Tongan students' enrolments fell by 3.9% in 2005-2006 although there was an increase of 0.4% Equivalent Full Time Students (EFTS): 1,336 students studied at universities, 1,522 at institutes of technology and polytechnics; 14 at Colleges of Education and 283 at *wānanga*. Table 2 shows some

characteristics of the Tongan tertiary education students in 2005 and 2006. Figures also show that more than 30% of the Tongan tertiary students studied management and around 5% studied information technology courses. One in five Tongan students studied in the field of society and culture. In terms of age group, most of the students were between 20 and 39 years of age. There were 987 Tongan students who completed a qualification in 2006, an increase of 3.7% from 2005. There were also 1,072 qualifications completed in 2006, an increase of 4.7% from 2005 (Ministry of Education, 2008a).

Table 2. Tongan tertiary education students by selected characteristics.

Type of Qualification (domestic students)	Student enrolment			Equivalent full-time students		
	2005	2006	% change 05-06	2005	2006	% change 05-06
Students in formal qualification >0.03 EFTS ¹	4,417	4,245	-3.9%	2,779	2,790	0.4%
Students in formal qualification <0.03 EFTS ²	1,619	968	-40.2%	56	39	-30.4%
Students in informal education programmes ³	1,335	785	-41.2	92	56	-39.1%
Domestic students enrolled in formal qualification > 0.03 EFTS¹						
Qualification Level						
Certificates 1-3	2,304	2,046	-11.2%	1,108	1,037	-6.4%
Certificates 4	542	679	25.3%	309	402	30.2%
Diplomas 5-7	670	676	0.9%	420	428	1.9%
Bachelors	1,136	1,072	-5.6%	849	828	-2.5%
Honours and Postgraduate cert. / dip.	71	90	26.8%	41	45	11.0%
Masters	52	44	-15%	29	25	-13.8%
Doctorates	25	25	0.0%	24	25	6.3%
Age group						
Under 18 years	332	242	-27.1%	183	169	-7.7%
18 to 19 years	605	709	17.2%	502	601	19.8%
20 to 24 years	1,159	1,108	-4.4%	860	822	-4.4%
25 to 39 years	1,559	1,470	-5.7%	860	829	-3.6%
40 years and over	762	716	-6.0%	375	369	-1.5%
Female/Male						
Female	2,578	2,541	-1.4%	1,667	1,724	3.4%
Male	1,839	1,704	-7.3%	1,113	1,066	-4.2%
Common Fields of Study						
Agriculture, environmental and related studies	48	48	0.0%	15	18	21.4%
Architecture and building	142	155	9.2%	80	95	18.2%
Creative arts	152	159	4.6%	108	121	12.2%
Education	261	250	-4.2%	175	160	-8.7%
Engineering and related technologies	305	319	4.6%	171	166	-3.2%
Food, hospitality and personal services	137	147	7.3%	86	95	10.3%

Health	219	252	15.1%	146	165	12.7%
Information technology	207	228	10.1%	103	106	2.8%
Management and commerce	1,481	1,339	-9.6%	760	797	5.0%
Mixed field programmes	799	669	-16.3	386	352	-8.7%
Natural and physical sciences	148	142	-4.1%	107	108	0.5%
Society and culture	953	894	-6.2%	641	607	-5.3%
Sub-sector						
Universities	1,405	1,336	-4.9%	1,037	1,029	-0.8%
Institutes of technology and polytechnics	1,668	1,522	-8.8%	772	746	-3.3%
Colleges of education	8	14	75.0%	6	10	63.0%
Wānanga	392	283	-27.8%	198	140	-29.1%
Public providers	3,385	3,096	-8.5%	2,012	1,925	-4.3%
Private training establishments	1,158	1,257	8.5%	767	865	12.8%
Study Type						
Full-time full-year	1,686	1,721	2.1%	1,759	1,788	1.6%
Full-time part-year	942	881	-6.5%	488	461	-5.7%
Part-time full-year	683	725	6.1%	310	336	8.1%
Part-time part-year	1,106	918	-17.0%	222	207	-6.8%
Gaining Qualifications						
Number of students who completed a qualification	952	987	3.7%			
Number of qualifications completed	1,024	1,072	4.7%			
¹ Students enrolled at any time during the year with a tertiary education provider in formal qualifications of greater than 0.03 EFTS (more than one Week's duration).						
² Students enrolled at any time during the year with a tertiary education provider in formal qualifications of less than 0.03 EFTS (less than one week's duration).						
³ Students enrolled at any time during the year with a tertiary education provider in informal programmes, i.e. programmes not registered on the New Zealand Register or Quality Assured Qualifications.						
Note: The equivalent full-time student count used in this report does not equate to the funded equivalent full-time student count. The data is also not adjusted to allow for students who do not complete their study programme.						

Note. Adapted from *Pasifika Tertiary Education Students by Ethnicity* (p. 6), by the Ministry of Education, 2008a, Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Education.

In summary, Tongan students are enrolling in tertiary education in New Zealand, but of concern are their low completion rates. To date, explanations have been based on the cultural differences between Tongan students and the western education system (Fusitu'a & Coxon, 1998; Māhina, 2008; Manu'atu, 2000b) In other words, the culture of a student counts in determining educational achievement.

VI. CULTURE COUNTS IN EDUCATION

Culture counts in education because education is a part of society and to understand education is to understand society (Ball, 2006). To understand education today there is a need to understand the culture and society in which it exists. All human beings belong to a culture and all human beings use symbols and actions to show who they are and what they believe in. One of the most remarkable facts about the human species is that although there are very little genetic differences between them, there are huge differences in their beliefs, activities and the ways they live (Wadham, Pudsey, & Boyd, 2007). Furthermore:

Humans are cultural beings and we can't understand them without recognising the cultural dimension of their lives. We also can't understand this cultural dimension of human beings unless we recognise that education and schooling are two of the most important ways in which we learn to live within and contribute to our own cultural lives. Simply put, culture shapes education, and education shapes culture. So it's absolutely vital to understand what culture is and how it is connected to the education system if we want to understand our students and the world of which they are a part of. (Wadham et al., 2007, pp. 1-2)

Culture impacts on education in terms of the kind of knowledge learnt, who educates, the pedagogy and goals of education. These are discussed in the following sections.

1. Knowledge Learnt

Culture impacts on the knowledge a society regards as valuable for students to learn. That is, the knowledge that is passed on in any educational process is not free of cultural impact since every individual has their own culture (English, 2006). Through education, knowledge of, or knowledge from a particular culture is passed on (Gillborn & Youdell, 2000). Therefore, education and culture are interdependent. However, according to Taufe'ulungaki, (2003) Tongans believe that knowledge is holistic and personalised; validated through consensus, collaboration, external sources and dreams; closed and changed incrementally over time; and debates and criticisms are taken personally and cause shame. "Tongan knowledge is cultural knowledge [where] it can be accessed when students know how to perform the basic cultural requirements, understand how to relate to the teachers, other students and, to other cultural ways of being and doing" (Manu'atu, 2000a, pp. 212-213). Manu'atu also argued that if "Tongan concepts and ideas about 'achievement' are understood then they can be used to contribute to better and more informed ways of improving the achievement of Tongan students" (p. 53). This may also contribute to the improvement in achievement of other Pasifika people. Manu'atu further stated that if "the notion of achievement is discussed from a Tongan perspective, one that is grounded in a world-view" (p. 53) where the students are engaged in a learning process where they are acknowledged for their wholeness of who they are, with their language, values, beliefs, and cultural practice then there is hope for improvement in Tongan (or other Pacific Island) students' academic achievement (Manu'atu, 2000a, 2000b).

In Tonga, some other important values that Tongan children learn at home and through schools are co-operation with, and loyalty to, the

group. They also learn respect for elders and the nobility, and the special language used when addressing members of the royal family or the nobles (Crane, 1978, p. 25). Since the church controls most of the secondary schools in Tonga, this affects the kind of values taught. This is important background knowledge to consider in cases of those who had their secondary education in Tonga before they leave Tonga for further education.

The western curriculum is taken as valid knowledge and Tongan students have no claim to the ownership of the knowledge that they already have in order to use it as an expression of their academic achievement, for example, to use their own language in assessment procedures or to use their experiences as topics for class discussions (Tuioti 1994, as cited in Strachan, 1997). Sometimes students cannot see the value of their cultural knowledge in the teaching and learning process as western knowledge dominates the learning situation (Thaman, 1995a). This has a negative effect on learning because “while Pacific traditional education is also ‘worthwhile learning’, it is largely informal, contextualised, task-specific, practical, interactive, inter-personal and life-long” (Taufe'ulungaki, 2002, p. 5). Students tend to disregard their own cultural knowledge entirely and adapt to western knowledge since western knowledge is “taken to mean formal compulsory education and its achievements are usually defined and measured in terms of basic literacy and numeracy skills” (Taufe'ulungaki, 2002, p. 5).

2. Who Educates?

I acknowledge that not all *Pālangi* people and not all Tongan people are the same but there are some characteristics that are generally seen as aligning more to one culture than to the other. According to Māhina, (2008), the western culture is singular, individualistic, analytical and linear

while Tongan culture is plural, collectivistic holistic and circular. Taufe'ulungaki (2000, 2003) stated that western culture is based on individual rights and freedom, independence, justice in terms of equality and access, privacy, competition, consumerism and science while the Tongan culture is based on cooperation and consensus, respect, generosity, loyalty, sharing, humility, reconciliation, fulfilment of mutual obligations and reciprocity. Taufe'ulungaki (2003) further stated that the underlying purpose of western culture is to create personal wealth and individual wellbeing which is based on economic capital, while the underlying purpose of the Tongan culture is to maintain good relationships and strong communities and is based on social capital. These cultural differences influence education.

However, the world is becoming a place of global relationships on an extraordinary scale where the developments in communication and transport have effectively resulted in the compression of time *tā* and space *vā*. The movements of people, money, goods and ideas are now taking place at an accelerated pace resulting in the transformation of local cultures. This is often perceived as cultural imposition and dominance from the west (the centre) towards the rest of the world (the periphery). This discourse of cultural imperialism has assumed that it would lead to the homogenisation of the world cultures but research has shown that rather than leading to global uniformity the local cultures are now expressed in more diversity in relation to global influences because there is an increase of cultural flows not only from centre to the periphery but vice versa (Runarsdottir, 2003). Furthermore, the world today is dominated by consumption and people's sense of self is fashioned to a large extent by the items they buy, the clothes they wear, the countries they live in, and the schools they attend. There is an ever-increasing number of consumer goods and commodities that people presumably

should have and people's lives are shaped by the growth of megaplexes⁵¹, improved technology that shrinks the world through information, and communication technology and advertising imageries (Wadham et al., 2007). People's lives are becoming more complex and commodified. Parents, children, churches, communities and "governments are involved in schooling but increasingly so are the media, consumerism and the global economy, for good or bad" (Wadham et al., 2007, p. ix). Therefore, there is an increasing importance in the connection between what the world is today and people's personal identity which affects the way they live and how they perform in formal education.

This means considering the social forces that have shaped our world in recent history... The chaotic and rapid pace of global social transformation seems to be leading to greater nihilism and confusion for some people, while others see opportunities here for humanity to grasp. Wars, terrorism, global poverty, the spread of rampant consumerism, environmental damage – these are just some of the problems we face at a planetary level today. (Wadham et al., 2007, p. ix)

According to Bloland (2005), there is a transformation taking place in this postmodern age that involves how people think, understand, and live in a knowledge-saturated society and in a changing culture where the world appears to be breaking up and reorganizing itself:

Globalism, the information revolution, science and technology, fluidity in the definitions of identity and self, and terrorism are producing a society filled with contradiction: an open society with almost unlimited possibilities and options yet constricted by increasing regulation and surveillance, the threat and actuality of war, and a growing maldistribution of wealth. A host of unanticipated consequences flows from the rapid concurrent changes taking place, creating a world of such complexity that it produces a widespread sense of anxiety, dislocation, ambiguity, and risk. (pp. 126-127)

⁵¹ City complexes where shopping centers of mega food courts, supermalls, entertainment areas, such as movie theatres and performances stages are.

Globalisation through migration, gradual monetization of the economy and technological advancement has led to changes in the traditional extended family and the Tongan social hierarchy both in Tonga and New Zealand. The western influence of *tā mo e vā* (time and space) of reality has infiltrated the lives of the Tongans and they are now governed by the clock, which has positive and negative impacts on the traditional ways of doing things, and can impact on students' academic achievement. In Tonga, the increasing educational opportunities, expanded media penetration and foreign influences introduced through the country's extensive diaspora have raised the political awareness of Tonga's commoners and stimulated dissent against the current system of government. In the past two decades, calls for political reform have gained wide-ranging support and the momentum that led to the decade's greatest riot in the capital Nuku'alofa on the 16 November 2006 (Maama, 2006b; Po'uhila, 2006).

Culture also impacts on who educates in terms of formal, informal and non-formal education. That is, "strategies and types of social organisation used for the purpose of education vary from culture to culture, and in relation to economic, political, and religious or ideological influences" (Donn & Schick, 1995, p. 26). It is the function of any society to educate young people to learn the values and beliefs of the society to enable them to fit successfully into the life of the community as they become adults (Crane, 1978). Education for the Tongans is a shared responsibility in which the parents and the family play a vital role in caring, nurturing and providing for the emotional, social and physical welfare of the individual as they grow and develop from infancy to adulthood (Tongati'o, 2006a, 2006b).

The low socio-economic background of the majority of Tongan students means they have attended low decile secondary schools in New Zealand (Kalavite & Hoogland, 2005). This has resulted in Tongan students entering tertiary education with lower entry qualifications than their *Pālangi* and other ethnicities (for example, Asian). These early schooling experiences have influenced their later achievement in academia (Anae et al., 2002). Consumer culture is reshaping school culture, and many countries struggle to keep up with the rest of the world, in education.

3. Pedagogy

In the Pacific, including Tonga and New Zealand, the development and education paradigms adopted by the governments are western-derived and are based on western values, beliefs and knowledge systems with “a legacy of foreign, predominantly western influences” (Thaman, 1988, p. 256). “These characterise, at least in theory, the aims of most of the educational programmes of institutions of higher learning” (Thaman, 1988, p. 255). Since formal education is value-laden, the underlying values and assumptions are associated with western concepts and ideas. As culture and education are fundamental aspects of the learning process, the Tongan students’ culture plays an important role in their education as “learning and education take place when Tongan language and culture, context and history, theory and practice are not disqualified on the stage, in the classroom, or in school” (Manu'atu & Kepa, 2001, p. 7). The Tongan cultural practices are still very strong in Tongan homes in New Zealand, even though they may be bicultural or multicultural. Seventy-one percent (35,601) of the Tongan population in New Zealand gave Tongan as their sole ethnicity in the 2006 Census (Statistics New Zealand, 2008). This signals that there is still a need for a Tongan pedagogy in formal education. The census figures imply that the lives of the Tongan people in

New Zealand still have a very strong cultural tie to the motherland. So, for most Tongans like me, our lives still revolve strongly around the importance of our *fāmili*, *siasi* and *fonua* and all related cultural practices.

Some Tongan students who have finished their secondary schooling in Tonga, struggle with their schooling in New Zealand because of strongly established Tongan cultural constructs. On arrival in New Zealand they discover the gap between Tonga and New Zealand cultures is wide and the process of acculturation affects their academic performances (Nash, 2000). Many of them find the transition from Tonga to New Zealand very difficult, trying to acculturate to a western way of life and educational pedagogies. The teaching and learning styles in New Zealand are different from what they are used to in Tonga (Coxon et al., 1994; Donn & Schick, 1995; Kalavite & Hoogland, 2005). There is a mismatch between the norms and expectations of their learning environment in schools and classrooms, and/or culture in Tonga and that of New Zealand. The curriculum, teaching strategies, teaching resources, teaching styles and teaching models are different (Kalavite & Hoogland, 2005). Most often, students “regularly have to try and express their ideas about learning, knowledge, teaching, assessing and so on in a language that is foreign to them” (Thaman, 2002, p. 22).

According to Thaman (1995b), many Tongan students are alienated by western philosophies both inside and outside the classroom, including western pedagogy and teachers’ views on education. As education is value-laden, how New Zealand schools cater to Tongan students’ academic needs is particularly alienating (Thaman, 1988). “Education in New Zealand is predominantly of the west and it grew out of the west, sharing things pertaining to the west. It is a western institution of the western culture” (O. Māhina, personal communication, August 19, 2005).

It is difficult for students who are brought up in a totally different culture, to match up with the movement that grew out of the west, as well as a world that is rapidly changing.

4. Goals of Education

In Tonga “the essence of education is the development of the individual to realise his or her potential as a human being, living a self-fulfilling life and as a worthy member of Tongan society and the wider world” (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 17). Although New Zealand has a different cultural base to Tonga, the Tongan student’s views and goals for education are not much different from that of the *Pālangi* people in New Zealand. People from both cultures have similar views about the worth and goals for education. Both cultures see education “as a key vehicle to increase national and individual incomes and bring *economic growth* [and a] major force for social change and *modernization* of attitudes, values and economic and social behaviours” (Gould, 1993, p. 3). The difference only lies in the process of how to achieve their educational goals because different cultures use different processes.

According to Thaman (1988), the underlying philosophy of modern educational development emphasises intellectual goals that are the development of the potential of the individual child which is motivated by an ethic of competition. This is different from that of the Tongan’s communal and group lifestyles. Thaman (1988) further stated that the traditional:

Tongan philosophy of education (ako) is rooted in an ideology that gives weighting to social and moral, rather than to intellectual considerations: it is group-oriented and motivated by an ethic of caring and social usefulness... which emphasises the uniqueness and cohesiveness of the group. (p. 252)

Currently, the Tongan concept of education is a combination of both Tongan and western interpretations of their own realities. *Ko e ako mo e lotu ka e mālohi hā fonua* (Education and Christianity are the strength of a nation) is one of the Tongan sayings which incorporates the two most important aspects of Tongan society. Tongan people value education so much that they see education as one of the keys to success with Christianity guiding them. When Tongan students go to university, they take their culture with them. When they are in the classroom, they study a different culture in a different language which presents challenges for them.

The two cultures can never be the same and people cannot return to the past but there must be a way to mediate the differences to allow for a two-way transition between the western and the Tongan worlds so that Tongan students can move backwards and forwards fluidly and benefit from the best of both worlds. This research is exploring ways to create a platform between the two cultures so Tongan students will be able to perform better academically in New Zealand tertiary education. It is understood that change is a universal law. The changes in the world also changed education's focus. Today's highly technological age means that it is important for schools to prepare students to cope with a variety of complex information and to be flexible enough to adapt to ongoing change (Monahan, 2005). Tongan students also need to develop these skills and continue learning throughout their lifetimes. They need to understand what knowledge is necessary to be learnt, who is educating them, the kind of pedagogy used, where their education is taking place, and the goals of their education relative to their current situation.

VII. SUMMARY

A knowledge of the Tongan society and *tō'onga faka-Tonga* is essential to understand how they are manifested and contradicted in the education system in New Zealand. Understanding Tongan culture and how it impacts on tertiary students' academic achievement could result in improvement in educational outcomes. Tongan values, customs and traditions as well as their religious beliefs and education all impact on Tongan students' academic achievement. *Anga faka-Tonga* is evolving in New Zealand shaped by many environmental and social influences. Changes in physical, political, social, economical, spiritual environments, together with the impact of globalization have contributed to the evolution of *anga faka-Tonga* and this impacts on Tongan students' as they struggle to achieve in New Zealand tertiary education. The next chapter presents the theoretical framework used to guide this thesis.

CHAPTER 3

TŪKUFUA KI HE FEKUMI: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Kataki e mama mo e hopohopokia
(Bailing out water from a leak with seas coming on board as well)
-Tongan Proverb

I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the theoretical framework (*tūkufua ki he fekumi*) that guides this research. Since culture counts in education as posited in the previous chapter, the theoretical framework, paradigm or “net that contains [my] epistemological, ontological, and methodological premises” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003b, p. 33) is sociocultural with an orientation towards postmodernism within the Tongan framework of *tā-vā* (time-space) theory of reality. These theories are used to explain how Tongan students are trying to make sense of an educational institution that is individualistic in culture. The sociocultural theory is drawn from Vygotsky’s work and is used to explain the Tongan students’ social learning process. The postmodernism theory is from Lyotard and Baudrillard’s work and is used to discuss the postmodern situation of the world today and how Tongan students cope within their educational environments in New Zealand in an era of globalisation. *Tā-vā* (time-space) theory, postulated by Māhina (2008), is used to make sense of how Tongan students are trying to be successful in a non-Tongan tertiary education system. It is through the recognition and utilization of a Tongan worldview in education that Tongan students achieve academically “as they secure their survival amidst the assimilating impacts of globalization” (Mafile’o, 2004, p. 255). These three theoretical lenses are used to theorize the findings of this research as the Tongan students’ *kataki e mama mo e hopohopokia*, during their journey to academic achievement.

This implies that Tongan students' realities are based on how they culturally relate to *tā* (time) and *vā* (space) in New Zealand in a postmodern age.

II. SOCIOCULTURAL THEORY

The sociocultural theoretical underpinnings of this research are drawn from Vygotsky's (1978) theories of learning. He emphasised that learning is a social practice and in order to understand the inner mental processes of human beings, their sociocultural context must be considered (Alfred, 2002). That is, an explanation of human behaviour is both in the depths of the brain as well as their social-historical forms of existence (Van der Veer, 2007). Sociocultural theory, according to Jones and Young (2006), "explains human behaviour in terms of interaction between cognitive, behavioural, and environmental influences" (p. 14). Vygotsky's work includes key concepts such as the zone of proximal development, mediation, constructionism, scaffolding and internalisation (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky believed that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition by stating that:

Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, between people (interpsychological) and later, on the individual level, inside the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attentions, logical memory and formation of concepts [where] all the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals. (p. 57)

Therefore, the notion of context in sociocultural theory extends beyond physical location to include individual, cultural, social, institutional and historical locations (Kozulin, 1999; Yao, 2005). This is where "the physical, technological, socioeconomic, and intellectual environments and their complex interdependency determine the individual's possibilities" (Van der Veer, 2007, p. 21).

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of learning involves three interrelated concepts, "namely that social interaction informs the development and character of mental processes, that cultural tools mediate psychological functioning, and that development advances through the zone of proximal development" (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p. 287). John-Steiner and Mahn (1996) stated that Vygotsky's sociocultural theory is "based on the concept that human activities take place in cultural contexts, are mediated by language and other symbol systems, and can be best understood when investigated in their historical development" (p. 191). However, an implicit argument in this thesis is that Tongan people are from a particular culture and possess or carry with them different, invisible cultural beliefs and assumptions which impact on their studies although they may not be fully aware of this. More theoretically, this thesis aims to interpret findings from a sociocultural and postmodern perspective within the Tongan framework of *tā-vā* theory of reality on the perceived socio-cultural aspects that impact on Tongan students' academic achievement in tertiary education. Hence, I describe the main tenets of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, in the following sections.

1. Zone of Proximal Development

Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is one of Vygotsky's greatest and most profound influences on cultural and educational psychology of the West (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). ZPD is Vygotsky's term for the range of tasks that are too difficult for the child to master alone but that can be learned with the guidance and assistance of more skilled adults or older counterparts (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996). That is, "children can imitate a variety of actions that go well beyond the limits of their own capabilities" (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p. 269). It is the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving, and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving

under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1978). Simply put, they are the range of abilities that a person can perform with assistance or “under the tutelage of adults” (Mercer & Littleton, 2007, p. 13). That is, the ZPD captures the child’s cognitive skills that are in the process of maturing and can only be accomplished with the assistance of more skilled people.

Scaffolding is a concept closely related to the idea of ZPD, which means, the changing level of support (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Vygotsky, 1987) where children and adults co-construct knowledge (Mercer & Littleton, 2007). Over the course of a teaching session, a more skilled person adjusts the amount of guidance to fit the child’s current performance, usually through dialogue (Mercer & Littleton, 2007). Dialogue is an important tool of this process in the ZPD because this social process is where knowledge and learning are generated (Choules, 2007). In dialogue, unsystematic, disorganized, and spontaneous concepts of children are met with the more systematic, logical and rational concepts of skilled helpers (Jaramillo, 1996; Santrock, 2004). The full development of the ZPD depends upon full social interaction (Mercer & Littleton, 2007). This is where members learn concepts through socially negotiating meanings in an authentic context of a complex learning environment (Jaramillo, 1996). This is fundamental to knowledge transmission of any society, such as indigenous culture in traditional societies such as Tonga (Morton, 1996). Tongan children in unique ways learn about life through socialisation in their own societies (Morton, 1996).

2. Cultural Mediation and Internalization

Vygotsky's (1978) fundamental claim is that higher forms of human mental activity are mediated by culturally constructed auxiliary means. That is, human development is the product of a broader system than just

the system of a person's individual functions. This broader system include social connections and relations, collective forms of behaviour and social cooperations and relations (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). *Cultural mediation* occurs when the habits of a culture, including speech patterns, written language, and other symbolic knowledge, are learnt through interactions with parents and other adults (Wertsch, del Rio, & Alvarez, 1995). This is where meanings and the construction of cultural knowledge are obtained. People grow and develop within these particular contexts and take on the particular understandings, patterns of behaviour, skill at using specific tools and artefacts, belief systems and ways of doing things within cultural settings (Robbins, 2003).

The interweaving of cultural and biological inheritances gives rise to higher mental functions. These are functions such as memory, attention, rational thinking, emotion, and learning and development that come under the intentional and voluntary control of the person (Renshaw, 2003). Human language activity is implicated in the interaction among all of the factors (Vygotsky, 1994). For this reason, Vygotsky argues that human consciousness, that is, the awareness of and control over mental abilities, is mediated through culturally constructed and organized means (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). The specific knowledge gained by children through these interactions also represents the shared knowledge of a culture where children's development and learning are culturally constructed, tied to their particular context and the important goals and values of that community (Robbins, 2003). This process is known as *internalization*. It can be understood in one respect as *knowing how*, for example riding a horse or turning on the television are tools of the society and initially outside and beyond the child (Santrock, 2004). The mastery of these skills occurs through the activity of the child within society (Wertsch, del Rio, & Alvarez, 1995).

A further aspect of internalization is *appropriation* in which the child takes a tool and makes it his own, perhaps using it in a way unique to himself or herself (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996). Appropriation is when a child can use a pen to draw something new rather than claiming exactly what others in society have drawn previously (Santrock, 2004). That is, he can draw a tree which is different from any other tree that was drawn by any other person in the society. Internalization is a “transformation of certain (material) forms of individual external activity into other (mental) forms of that same external activity, and as a specifically human form of appropriation of new knowledge and skills” (Arievitch & Haenen, 2005, p. 158).

Therefore, the cultural mediation and internalization of Tongan people in New Zealand are bound to be bicultural or multicultural because they are living within two or more different cultures. This means that while some people choose to live as Tongans in New Zealand there are some who choose not to practise some of the Tongan cultural values. That is, they can choose whether to live as Tongans in New Zealand or not; and specifically, whether to fulfil their obligations towards their *fāmili*, *sisasi* and *fonua* which impact on Tongan students’ lives and academic achievement.

3. Thought and Language

One of Vygotsky’s most important theories concerns the inter-relationship of language development and thought, “Vygotsky described language as a tool that humans use to share social meanings among [sic] one another and to explain how [people] advance developmentally from natural processes to higher mental processes” (Jaramillo, 1996, p. 138). Vygotsky (1962) established the explicit and profound connection between speech (both silent inner speech and oral language), and the development of

mental concepts and cognitive awareness. Vygotsky (1962) also described inner speech as being qualitatively different from normal (external) speech and postulated that *thought* develops socially because although inner speech develops from external speech via a gradual process of internalization, its mature form, inner speech, would be unintelligible to anyone except the thinker. This would not resemble spoken language as we know it.

Speaking however, has developed along two lines, the line of social communication and the line of inner speech, by which the child mediates and regulates his/her activity through his/her thoughts which in turn are mediated by the semiotics (the meaningful signs) or inner speech. This is not to say that thinking cannot take place without language, but rather that it is mediated by it and thus develops to a much higher level of sophistication. Inner speech is not comparable in form to external speech. External speech is the process of turning thought into words. Inner speech is the opposite; it is the conversion of speech into inward thought (Santrock, 2004). However, the construction of meaning is always about interpretation or reinterpretation of concepts that are invariably culturally specific and need to be examined within that particular context. Therefore, *anga faka-Tonga* certainly changes because people are speaking Tongan in a foreign environment. This is because the absence of some of the symbols, objects and spatial Tongan characteristics will of course affect, alter, reduce or change the Tongan language. For example, some of the trees that are found in Tonga such as *uhi*⁵², *heilala*⁵³ and *mohokoi*⁵⁴ are not found

⁵² Bush bearing tiny white flowers. (*Evodia hortensis*). Its leaves are used in treating persons believed to be under the spell of a fa'ahikehe (devil) (Churchward, 1959, p. 524).

⁵³ The most sacred of Tongan plants (*Garcinia sessilis*), the unusual bright red flowers of which are used in special garlands (Thaman, 1993, p. 91).

in New Zealand, so Tongans who had never been to Tonga could not conceptualise these concepts and for the rest of the people they did not think much about these trees all the time as they are not part of their physical environment. The New Zealand environment is a constraint to the maintenance of the Tongan language which is vital to *anga faka-Tonga*.

The Tongan language's:

demise can also be linked to globalisation in so far as they [it has] been hitherto sustained by geographical isolation, socio-economic marginalisation and the perceived absence of opportunities for joining the mainstream, all of which traits tend to be undone by the increased interconnectedness, urbanisation and time-space compression associated with globalisation. (Ferguson, 2006, p. 7)

Furthermore, when Tongan students are not fluent in the English language which is the medium of communication in New Zealand educational pedagogies, they face difficulties with their studies because language and learning interact deeply (Yao, 2005).

In my experience, this lack of fluency in English means that most Tongan students tend to rote learn to pass examinations which does not give them meaningful understanding of what they were studying in their courses, so they are not able to relate it to their everyday lives. This is because a sociocultural perspective on human action locates the essence of social life in communication through the notion of mediational means. The means can be visual and physical in addition to verbal (language) and are related to students' lived experiences or their culture (Hall, 2002). Guthrie and Hu-Pei Au (1981) refer to this as cultural deficit in language acquisition. So, Tongan students circumvent classroom miscommunication and reading miscomprehension as the content of the subjects are not in the Tongan students cultural context (McCollin & O'Shea, 2008; McDermott &

⁵⁴ Ylanglang or perfume flower tree (*Canangaodorata*) the unusual spider-like fragrant yellow flowers of which are used in garlands and to scent coconut oil (Thaman, 1993, p. 93).

Gospodinoff, 1981). Therefore, when the concepts “are not learned in context, the practice is a prescription of skills that [learners] learn by rote and mimicking [which] can only lead to confusion as students [have] only received deposits of fragmented information transmitted by the teacher” (Manu'atu & Kepa, 2001, p. 5).

4. Constructionism

Constructionism is an ontological position that asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being constructed by social actors (Vygotsky, 1987). It implies that social phenomena and categories are not only produced through social interaction but that they are in a constant state of revision (Vygotsky, 1994). Burr (1995) stated that social constructionism has four basic principles. They are, critical stance towards taken-for-granted knowledge; historical and cultural specificity; knowledge is sustained by social processes; and knowledge and social action go together:

i) Critical stance towards taken-for-granted knowledge

This is a caution to be ever suspicious of the assumptions about how the world appears to be. This means that the categories with which we as human beings apprehend the world do not necessarily refer to real divisions. For example, just because we think of some music is *classical* and some is *pop* does not give the assumption that there is anything in the nature of the music itself that divides it up in that particular way.

ii) Historical and cultural specificity

The ways in which the world is understood such as categories and concepts we use, are historically and culturally specific. Whether one understands the world in terms of men and women, pop music and classical music, urban life and rural life, past and future and so on, depends on where and when in the world one lives. For example, the notion of childhood has undergone tremendous change over the centuries. What it has been thought *natural* for children to do has changed, as well as what parents were expected to do for their children.

iii) Knowledge is sustained by social processes

People construct their knowledge of the world between them. It is through the daily interactions between people in the course of social life that their versions of knowledge become fabricated therefore, language is of great importance. The goings-on between people in the course of everyday lives are seen as the practices during which their shared versions of knowledge are constructed. Therefore, what is regarded as *truth* varies historically and cross-culturally, i.e. the current accepted ways of understanding the world, is a product not of objective observation of the world, but of the social processes and interactions in which people are constantly engaged with each other.

iv) Knowledge and social action go together

These *negotiated* understandings could take a wide variety of different forms, such as talking of numerous possible *social constructions* of the world. But each different construction also brings with it or invites a different kind of action from human beings. For example, before the Temperance movement, drunks were seen as entirely responsible for their behaviour, and therefore blameworthy. A typical response was therefore imprisonment. However, there has been a move away from seeing drunkenness as a crime towards thinking of it as a sickness, a kind of addiction. *Alcoholics* are not seen as totally responsible for their behaviour, since they are the victims of a kind of drug addiction. The social action appropriate to understanding drunkenness in this way is to offer medical and psychological treatment, not imprisonment. Descriptions or constructions of the world therefore sustain some patterns of social action and exclude others. (pp. 3-5)

Constructionists are poststructuralists who are concerned about how people construct knowledge. They respect multiple realities where truth and knowledge are constructed in people's heads and people have multiple identities. Constructionism "include the notion that social and cultural meanings are constructed in and by language; that subjectivities and power relations are formed and contested through signifying practices; and that the politics of representation has the power to produce social change" (Mikula, 2008, p. 174). In Tonga, an example is the change in explanation and understanding of phenomena over time and space. An example is illness. In the past, the concept of *puke faka'āvanga* was seen as sickness caused or believed to be caused by a supernatural being. These days *puke faka'āvanga* rarely happens because we now call this

behaviour/sickness, mental illness and so people do not talk about bewitching by *tēvolo* (supernatural beings) anymore.

Another Tongan example of constructionism according to Burr's (1995) principles, above, is that in being Tongan "there are differences in the management of the way in which [they] can act out their feelings or articulate their concerns" (Cowling, 2005, p. 139). The concept of truth (*mo'oni*) is a good illustration. Fernandez-Armesto (1997), proposed that truth can be classified under four headings: the truth you feel, the truth you are told, the truth of reason or the truth you think for yourself; and the truth you perceive through your senses. He further stated that these headings represent very broadly the dominant trend of a phase or periods which "were always around, competing or co-operating with one another as ways of discovering truth, in varying degrees" (Fernandez-Armesto, 1997, p. 6). Tongan people experience all these different and multiple types of truth. But when truth is shadowed by *anga faka-Tonga* it sometimes causes major difficulties in Tongan people's daily lives. Bain (1967) wrote a postcolonial view of the Tongans' perception of *truth* saying that:

Whoever said *truth is absolute* can't have spent any time in the Friendly Islands. The Tongan is a skilled exponent of the art of evasive responses. Domestic and social diplomacy is a highly developed feature of his art of living. He is also a manipulator of words - words the unequivocal meaning of which was not previously in issue. The man of rank may find it hard to get at the whole truth. The reason is that the commoner tells his chief what he thinks the chief wishes to know or would like to hear. Unpalatable findings are guarded from his ears. Tongan society flourishes on a condoned freedom to mix near-truth with mild inaccuracy. (p. 95)

Bain (1967) also stated that "[t]he first Tongan phrase to make its mark on the newcomer is *mahalo pē*. If translatable at all, this means 'maybe', or 'perhaps'. More refined variations include 'maybe yes', 'maybe no', or 'I don't really know, but I'm certainly not going to admit it'" (p. 95). The

mahalo pē attitude is constructed from the Tongan core values discussed in Chapter 2. Tongans will say *mahalo pē* because of *faka'apa'apa* as they do not want to be seen as boastful and disrespectful and to avoid gossip or being criticised; they show *fakatōkilalo* when they pretend not to be higher than the person spoken to; they did not want to be *fakamā* and so will not admit that they do not know something; or if they know that telling the truth is not what their listener expects; although they feel it is their *fatongia* to respond to the conversation. Keeping up with these Tongan core values make it hard to speak the truth about matters so some people tend to *anga fakalāpulu*⁵⁵, *fakamatamata lelei*⁵⁶, *faka'alینگalelei*⁵⁷ and *fakangalingali*⁵⁸ on certain occasions. This is because, if sticking to the truth or responding truthfully would bring their identity into disrepute, they would not reveal it. Sometimes, not saying the truth is mixed up with *heliaki*⁵⁹, another Tongan construction. *Heliaki* is when one thing is said which means another, or speaking ironically or metaphorically. For example, when the best *fala* is presented in Tonga to someone as a gift *anga fakatokilalo* is displayed in the speech by saying that the *fala* is the worst and the ugliest in the island. The audience knows exactly what the intention of the speech is. *Heliaki* then is an art in the Tongan culture especially when used in speeches, music, and poetry. However, this can be a barrier for Tongan students in the classroom. The concept of truth becomes vague and elusive. This means that some Tongan people take certain actions just to

⁵⁵ To say complimentary things to a person's face or in his presence but speak against him behind his back.

⁵⁶ To put on a pleasant or friendly look which is not genuine.

⁵⁷ To act as if everything were all right when it is not really so: especially in reference to persons who are not on speaking terms with.

⁵⁸ Causing to seem good or to be done in such a way as to look or seem good.

⁵⁹ To speak ironically, or to say one thing and mean another.

avoid being ridiculed by others. They worry about good reputations and relationships so they can live a life of *fakangalingali lelei*. Some of these constructions of the truth are sometimes related to the Tongan core values of *fetokoni'aki*, *'ofa*, *faka'ap'apa mamahi'ime'a*, *lototō*, *fakamā* and *fakafalala* discussed in Chapter 2.

However, constructionism also includes the notion that a researcher's own accounts of the social world are constructed. In other words, a researcher always presents a specific version of social reality, rather than one that can be regarded as definitive (Bryman, 2004). The Tongan tertiary students in New Zealand construct, reconstruct and co-construct their own realities within their own physical, social, cultural, economic, political and spiritual world. Hence, the underlying position of this thesis is that education theory and practice is socially constructed and that culture is a key factor in that construction.

III. POSTMODERNISM

Postmodernism is a broad term encompassing a number of theoretical positions and interrelated concepts which refer to a form of contemporary culture (Eagleton, 1996). According to Mikula, (2008) "postmodernism is characterised by its investment in culturally situated knowledge, libidinal economy, fragmentation, dispersion, co-presence and empty simulation" (p. 159). Everything is contested in the postmodern world and there is uncertainty, fragmentation, diversity, and plurality that is characterised by an abundance of micro narratives" (Lyotard, 1984, p. 7). There are many truths, and all generalizations, hierarchies, typologies, and binaries are contested, troubled, or challenged (Atkinson, 2003; Merriam, 2002). In a postmodern stance "there are no absolutes, no single theoretical framework for examining social and political issues" (Merriam, 2002, p. 374). Postmodernists "celebrate diversity among people, ideas, and

institutions, [and by] accepting the diversity and plurality of the world, no one element is privileged or more powerful than another” (Merriam, 2002, p. 275). Postmodernism is a collection of loosely linked ideas which combine and recombine in numerous ways and contexts (Atkinson, 2003). It is a time of tremendous conflict and confusion because there is no absolute truth (Pivonka, 2004). Lyotard (1984) posited that it is more helpful to think of postmodernism as an intellectual trend or condition during the postmodern era after the Second World War. This is “a period of multiple changes in society, involving information advances, consumerism, the omnipresence of simulations, and the rise of a post-industrial order... globalization, rapid scientific and technological change... and terrorism” (Bloland, 2005, p. 123). However, the postmodernism tenets according to Kahn Jr and Lourenço (1999) are:

(a) anti-essentialism where there are no essences to be discovered inside people or in the external world; (b) anti-realism where there can be no such thing as an objective fact; (c) historical and cultural specificity of knowledge and values where all forms of knowledge and values are historically and culturally specific; (d) language as a precondition for thought where language does not reflect a pre-existing social reality, but constitutes that reality of us; and (e) the primacy of interpersonal processes where explanations are not to be found on the level of the individual mind or of social structure, but of the interpersonal processes in everyday life. (p. 94)

There is a poststructuralist view within the postmodernism paradigm which has at its “core a self-reflexive discourse that is aware of the tentativeness, slipperiness, ambiguity and complex interrelationships of texts and meanings” (Peters, 2004, p. 1). This allows an investigation into relations between the individual and the social context in specific sites (Lee, 1992). A poststructuralist paradigm adopts the ontological position of multiple realities. This was of value in this research for hearing stories from different people because each has different realities.

Poststructuralism confronts the question; Whose knowledge, and whose reality counts? According to Bloland (2005):

Poststructuralism emphasises the indeterminacy of language, the primacy of discourse, the decentring and fragmentation of the concept of self, the significance of the *other*, a recognition of the... unbreakable power/knowledge nexus, the attenuation of a belief in metanarratives, and the decline of dependence of rationalism. (p. 122)

A good example of poststructuralism is “in biblical studies [where] renewed emphasis was placed on the Bible, not as literal truth, but as a literary text open to hermeneutic analyses wherein one allows for multiple, equally cogent interpretations” (Kahn Jr & Lourenço, 1999, p. 94). This means that there are many interpretations of the Bible where none of the interpretations is exclusively true, since the others are also true (Burr, 1995).

The postmodern theoretical perspective of this research is based on Lyotard’s (1984, 1988, 1991, 1992, 1993) and Baudrillard’s (1988a, 1988b, 1990, 1991, 1994a, 1994b, 1998, 2000, 2001) postmodernist notion of culture. Lyotard’s and Baudrillard’s notions of culture focus more on the social and:

political constructedness, multiplicity, hybridity, fluidity, malleability and discontinuity of culture. [This means that] individuals and groups act interactively, autonomously, spontaneously, contingently with hybridity and reciprocity, and they are also free of the tight webs of meaning but subsequently underplay the importance of cultural traditions. (Yao, 2005, p. 11)

This is in contrast to the fixed patterns of meaning and the mechanism for the normative regulation of behaviour (Geertz, 1993). So, to explicate the notion of postmodernism in exploring the research question, it is important to consider the work of Lyotard and Baudrillard in further detail.

1. Lyotard

Lyotard (1924-1998) is a French poststructuralist philosopher known as the father of postmodernism theory (Woodward, 2006). Lyotard's (1984) hypothesis is that the status of knowledge is altered as societies enter the post-industrial age and cultures enter the postmodern age. This is where the leading sciences and technologies deal with the phonology and theories of linguistics, problems of communication and cybernetics, modern theories and artificial intelligence (Lyotard, 1992).

The status of knowledge in computerized societies was where Lyotard (1993) used *legitimation* as a variable to question both knowledge and power. According to his philosophy, knowledge and power are two sides of the same question; Who decides what knowledge is, and Who knows what needs to be decided? Lyotard (1984) believed that in the computer age the question of knowledge was more than ever a question of government. This was because of the vast amounts of knowledge stored digitally in databases where the questions of who decides what knowledge is worth storing (what is legitimate knowledge) and who has access to these databases are vital to human existence. According to Woodward, (2006) Lyotard saw legitimation, the basic social bond which is the minimum relation required for a society to exist, as moving within *language games*.

Lyotard (1984) stated there are two types of knowledge; narrative knowledge and scientific knowledge. Narrative knowledge is the kind of knowledge prevalent in primitive or traditional societies, and is based on storytelling, sometimes in the form of ritual, music and dance. Narrative knowledge has no recourse to legitimation. Its legitimation is immediate within the narrative itself, in the timelessness of the narrative as an enduring tradition. It is told by people who once told it to listeners who

will one day tell it to others. There is no question of questioning it but there is incommensurability between the question of legitimation itself and the authority of narrative knowledge. In scientific knowledge, the question of legitimation always arises where it includes only denotative statements, to the exclusion of all other kinds of knowledge. “Lyotard did not believe that science has any justification in claiming to be a more legitimate form of knowledge than narrative [knowledge]” (Woodward, 2006, p. 91932). This supports the idea that Tongan knowledge, which is narrative, is legitimate knowledge and thus as important as western knowledge.

Information is constantly changing and knowledge is becoming extremely important as an economic factor (Lyotard, 1993). Lyotard believed that knowledge in the postmodern age has become primarily a saleable commodity, where one day wars will be waged over the control of information. Similarly, knowledge has largely lost its truth-value; or rather, the production of knowledge is no longer an aspiration to produce truth. The seeking of knowledge is not for knowledge’s sake and worth but for what people can do with it. According to Lyotard, (1998) students today no longer ask if something is true, but what use it is to them. Lyotard also believed that computerization and legitimation of knowledge by the performativity criterion is doing away with the idea that the absorption of knowledge is inseparable from the training of minds. He predicts that in the near future, education will no longer be given to people as a preparation for life. Rather, it will be an ongoing process of lifelong learning to update the knowledge base in order to function in their work and daily life (Woodward, 2006).

2. Baudrillard

Baudrillard (1929-2007) is also a French poststructuralist philosopher who is regarded as the high priest or the prophet of postmodernism theory (Gane, 2000; Merrin, 2007). He is seen as a theorist who has traced, in original ways, the life of signs and impact of technology on social life that speeds up our world (Kellner, 2008). Kellner (2007) notes that:

Baudrillard argued that fashion, sports, the media, and other modes of signification produce systems of meaning articulated by specific rules, codes, and logics. His analysis of advertising, packaging, display, fashion, emancipation sexuality, mass media and culture, and the proliferation of commodities multiplied the quantity of signs and spectacles, and produced a proliferation of sign-value. (p. 3)

Baudrillard (1998) claims that commodities are not merely characterized by use-value and exchange value but also by sign-value which is an expression and mark of style, prestige, luxury and power. He also believed that the entire society is organized around consumption and display of commodities, where individuals gain prestige, identity, and standing. In this system, the more prestigious one's commodities (houses, cars, clothes, and so on) are, the higher one's standing in the realm of sign value where there is an increasing power of the object over the subject.

Baudrillard (1998) applied the semiological theory of the sign to describe how commodities, media, and technologies provide a universe of illusion and fantasy in which individuals become overpowered by consumer values, media ideologies and role models, and seductive technologies like computers which provide worlds of cyberspace. He developed an account of postmodern society in which consumer and electronic images have become more real (hyper real) than physical reality and in which simulations of reality (simulacra) have displaced their originals, leaving only "*the desert of the real itself*" (Baudrillard, 1994b, p. 1). Television, film, and the internet separate us from the real even as they seek to reproduce it

more fully or faithfully. This is the hyper-reality of communication and of meaning (more real than real) that is how real is abolished (Baudrillard, 2001). He also presupposed a contradiction between human nature and capitalism where he maintained that humans *by nature* gain pleasure from such things as expenditure, waste, festivities, sacrifices, and so on, in which they are the ruler and free to spend excessively their energy which is their real nature. The capitalist necessity for labour, service, and savings by implication are not natural to human beings (Baudrillard, 1998). The “terrestrial space today has been virtually completely encoded, mapped, inventoried [and] saturated” (Baudrillard, 1994b, p. 123). The world through globalization is now shrunk and has become a collective marketplace not only for products but also for values, signs, and models (Baudrillard, 1994b).

Baudrillard (1994b) compared Ballard’s book *Crash* to the postmodern age saying, that “everything is hyper-functional; traffic accidents, technology and death, sex and simulation are all like one single, huge synchronous machine” (Baudrillard, 1991, p. 8). According to Kellner (2008):

Baudrillard’s main thesis of his postmodern social theory is that what he calls RADICAL SEMIURGY, the production and proliferation of signs, has created a society of SIMULATIONS governed by IMPLOSION and HYPERREALITY”... [He claims that this is] a new era of simulation in which social reproduction (information processing, socialization and knowledge industries, media, cybernetic and control models, etc.) replaces production as the organizing principle of society. In this era, labour is no longer a force of production but is itself a *sign among signs* (Baudrillard, 1973, p. 23)... images, spectacles, and the play of signs replace the logic of production and class conflict as key constituents of contemporary capitalist societies. (p. 6)

Therefore, according to Lyotard’s and Baudrillard’s postmodern viewpoints, we are living in postmodern world conditions where developments in technology, in media and mass communication make available to us many different kinds of knowledge, such as varieties of

natural and social scientific disciplines, many religions, alternative medicines, a choice of lifestyles and so on, in which each of them are operating as a relatively self-contained system of knowledge that we can dip in and out of as we please. Therefore, “what has been or is considered true, real, or right can be questioned; and there are multiple interpretations of the same phenomenon depending on where one is standing” (Merriam, 2002, p. 374).

The Tongan people in New Zealand are living in this postmodern world which affects, influences and impacts on their lives. The students’ and their families’ value systems and life expectations are placed on commodity. This creates tension and confusion as whether to get a degree for better jobs in the future for more income or whether they take the job now for less income as they need the money. Central to this thesis is that the Tongan people in New Zealand face a dual dilemma; that of the differences between their own Tongan culture and the New Zealand culture, as well as the world situations of global changes that also impact on their lives.

IV. *TĀ-VĀ* TIME-SPACE THEORY OF REALITY

Tā-Vā (time-space) is a boundless, four-dimensional continuum where everyone moves serially and sequentially from one stage to the next over time and space, through building upon and absorbing each preceding stage, which is thereafter reproduced throughout the joint influence of heredity and socialization (Wilson, 1999). However, there are many philosophers throughout history who have studied time and space. Isaac Newton (1953, 1968) viewed space as absolute; Leibniz (Clarke, Leibniz, Newton, & Alexander, 1956) thought that space was a collection of relations between objects; Kant (1929) described space and time as elements of a systematic framework which humans use to structure their

experience; and Einstein (Einstein & Infeld, 1938) in his theory of *general relativity* proposed that space and time should be combined into a single construct known as *spacetime*. Siegfried (2008) stated that nobody has ever noticed a place except at a time, or a time except at a place. In that sense, time and space are joined not because that is the way the world is, but because that is the only way that humans can comprehend it. Furthermore, in this postmodern world the information network and the social network overlap and intertwine with time-space (Gotved, 2006). Spaces and places are not isolated entities. They are material and symbolic constructions that work as meaningful and practical settings for social action. This is because of their relations to other spaces and places through time (Richardson & Jensen, 2003).

1. *Tā* (Time)

Callender and Edney (2001), believed that time is as much a mystery now as it was for St Augustine in AD354-430 but science and philosophy have sharpened the questions and now people understand that time might be absolute, relational, conventional, tensed or tense less, or unreal. Einstein believed that time is illusionary where the separation between past, present and future is only an illusion (Siegfried, 2008). Nevertheless, time is associated with social activities, and is socially constructed (Birth, 2004; Lippincott, Eco, & Gombrich, 1999; Mackenzie, 1997), and “not all cultures define or experience time in the same way [as] nearly every major culture on Earth seems to have a unique understanding of what time is” (Lippincott et al., 1999, p. 017). However, the world is becoming very complex and busy, and time is becoming very important (Peace, 2001). People believe that they are becoming less able to control their time-keeping because human creativity increasingly has to adjust to the demands of machinery and technology (Jonsson, 1999). Their relationship

with time is the keystone in the structure of human lives. Jonsson suggests:

In the past, time was sovereign in nature. Its rule was a wonderful way of preventing disorderly events. Nowadays, it is as though the ordering function of time has been cancelled out by demands that almost everything should happen simultaneously. The invisible pressure, which used to sort the temporary from the lasting, has lost its effectiveness... Our attempts to speculate about the distant future seem irrelevant now, because the distance in fact seems so short. (p. 28)

In the Tongan language time “*tā* [italics added] means to beat, to mark, to form, or to perform” (Ka’ili, 2008, p. 15) as in the heart beat marks the time, rhythm, pace, and frequency of the pulse, “For example, *tā nafa* (beating drum), rhythmic beating of drums, and *tā sīpinga* (setting examples), setting examples, are both processes of marking time. *Tā nafa* marks time through drumming beats, and *tā sīpinga* marks time through social acts or behaviour” [italics added] (Ka’ili, 2008, p. 15) which means showing good behaviours so that others can follow. However, Tongan people organise their time differently to *Pālangi* people. Tongans as Pacific people are renowned for doing things late or dragging and prolonging occasions. And the expression *Pacific Time* or *Tongan Time* (*taimi faka-Tonga*) is alluded to in any problem with time, especially when things are late according to western time (Bain, 1967, 1993; Māhina, 2004a). Nevertheless, Tongan people have their own perception of time, where:

[I]n a circular style, people walk forward into the past, and walk backward into the future, both in the present, where the seemingly fixed past and elusively, yet-to-take-place future are constantly mediated in the conflicting, ever-changing present... It is paradoxically yet philosophically, like looking forward into the past, and looking backward into the future... this is reflected in Tongan thinking which allegorically characterises the past as *ono’aho* (age-of-light) and present as *onopō* (age-of-darkness), pointing to the respective actual, yet opposing, states of enlightenment and ignorance. (Māhina, 2008, p. 79)

There is also a Tongan perception about *ako* and time whereby it is believed there is a time to study or attend formal schooling. That is, people can only go to school when they are still young. Once they get married then they need to stay home and look after their families. The many responsibilities expected of an adult Tongan mean that they would not have enough time to study successfully. This attitude has changed and today married people are going back to study again to better themselves. However, some of these students can find it difficult to complete their courses because they have their family commitments on top of their course work. Thus, there still is the belief that it is better to finish tertiary education before one gets married because Tongan students can achieve better when they do not have too many responsibilities.

2. *Vā* (Space)

Space is the boundless, three-dimensional extent in which objects and events occur and have relative position and direction (Richardson & Jensen, 2003). In spatial practice with reference to places there is a:

relationship of local and global; the re-presentation of that relationship; actions and signs; the trivialised spaces of everyday life; and, in opposition to these last, spaces made special by symbolic means as desirable or undesirable, benevolent or malevolent, sanctioned or forbidden to particular groups. (Lefebvre, 1974 cited in Richardson and Jensen, (2003, p. 10)

The philosopher, Gottfried Leibniz (1987; 1956) believed that space was a collection of relations between objects, given by their distance and direction from one another; he held that space is no more than the collection of spatial relations between objects in the world. Similarly, Bourdieu (1991) stated that agents or groups of agents in the social world are “defined by their *relative positions* in space [where] each of them is confined to a position or a precise class of neighbouring positions” (p.

230). Therefore, space is constructed in different ways by different people (Richardson & Jensen, 2003).

However, *vā* space in the Tongan language means the “distance between [or] distance apart; [or] attitude, feeling [or] relationship, towards each other” (Churchward, 1959, p. 528). This definition shows that space is related to place and is “not isolated and bounded entities, but material and symbolic constructions that work as meaningful and practical settings for social actions because of their relations to other spaces and places” (Richardson & Jensen, 2003, p. 11). Therefore, the concept of space is connected to relationships. In terms of the social context, according to Ka’ili (2008);

Vā is a space that is formed through the mutual relations between persons or groups, and it is also an indicator of the quality of the relationships [where] *vālelei* refers to harmonious and beautiful social space between people, and *vātamaki* signifies a disharmonious social space between people [italics added]. (pp. 16-17)

Vā, as in keeping good relationships amongst the Tongan people, is very important. It is important for Tongan students to understand how to keep their *vā* with their *fāмили*, *siasi* and *fonua* so that they *vālelei* (have good relationship) all the time which could enhance the support for their education.

3. *Tā-Vā* (Time-Space)

I am Tongan and this research is on Tongan students so it is also essential to use Tongan as well as western theorising. Mahina’s (2008) Tongan *tā- vā* (time-space) theory of reality informs my research. Mahina’s general *tā-vā* theory of reality is based on the ontological (philosophy of the mind) and epistemological (philosophy of human knowledge) organisation of time and space (Māhina, 2008; Māhina, Ka’ili, & Ka’ili, 2006). Ontologically, Māhina (2008) suggests that *tā* and *vā* (time and space) are the common medium of all things that exist; nature, mind and society, in a single level

of reality. Epistemologically, he also believes that time and space are arranged differently within and across cultures (Ka'ili, 2008; Māhina, 2008). For example, Tongans living in New Zealand share New Zealand as one reality (ontological dimension of time and space) and we create and recreate our lives in New Zealand in our own respective or cultural ways (epistemological dimension of time and space). Māhina explains:

In Tonga we emphasise collective more than the individual while as in the west generally speaking they emphasise the individual more than the collective and this impacts on education and how we make use of that reality, the reality of education. All of us from different cultures are here to do education in just one country, New Zealand (one reality). We approach education from different cultures because we were brought up in different ways where we organise time and space differently. That is we organise time and space on a collective basis and *Pakehā* organise time and space on an individual basis. (‘O. Māhina, personal communication, August 19, 2005)

Māhina (2008) suggests that *tā-vā* (time-space) theory of reality has many tenets including:

- Ontologically *tā* and *vā* (time and space) are the common medium in which all things are, in a single level of reality;
- Epistemologically *tā* and *vā* (time and space) are social constructs, concerning their varying social arrangement across cultures;
- The relative coalition of *tā* and *vā* (time and space) across cultures is conflicting in nature;
- All things, in nature, mind and society, stand in eternal relations of exchange to one another, giving rise to conflict or order;
- Conflict and order are permanent features of all things within and across nature, mind and society;
- Conflict and order are of the same logical status, in that, order is itself an expression of conflict;
- *Tā* and *vā* (time and space) are the abstract dimensions of the *fuo* and *uho* (form and content of all things) in nature, mind and society;
- *Fuo* and *uho*, (form and content), of things in reality, are the concrete dimensions of *tā* and *vā* (time and space); and

- *Tā* and *vā* (time and space), like *fuo* and *uho* (form and content) of all things in nature, mind, and society, are inseparable in both mind and in reality. (p. 78)

This means that Tongans organise time and space differently from other cultures which can affect social relationships between them and people of other cultures. However, an understanding of the differences between time *tā* and space *vā* of the west and that of the Tongan is deemed important in this research. According to Māhina (2008), the differences of *tā-vā* (time-space) between these two cultures are:

The past, present and future are, in the west, organised technologically and individualistically in a linear and singular fashion, where the respective past and future are placed permanently behind and before the present, squarely fixed in the middle, all in that idealistic, evolutionistic and rationalistic order. Therefore, there is a sense of realism, classicism and aestheticism underneath the Moana [Pasifika] unique sense of spatio-temporality, in opposition to the rationalism, evolutionism and utilitarianism at the base of the western view. (p. 79)

Therefore, I theorise that the problems for Tongan students in tertiary education stem from these cultural differences in *tā-vā* time-space relationships between Tongan culture and New Zealand cultures. Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural views of learning are that Tongan students learn through the process of social interaction. As well as learning through sociocultural practices, Tongan students also learn through mental practices (Bell, 2005). Furthermore, "mental activities of individuals and an individual's meaning making are considered along with their socially and historically situatedness" (Bell, 2005, p. 43). This social and historical situatedness is the essence of the postmodernism and *tā-vā* (time-space) theories in this research.

Research to date suggests that Tongan students are trying to be successful in their learning in New Zealand which has a different *tā-vā* (time-space) reality to them as Tongans in this postmodern age (Māhina, 2008).

However, Tongan students' academic achievement in New Zealand tertiary education is vested in their capabilities to cope harmoniously within the interface of the Tongan and New Zealand cultures. The harmonious interface between the two cultures depends on the judicious practice of *tā-vā* time-space relationships of Tongan students' within their personal, group and universal cultures, especially their *fāмили*, *siasi* and *fonua*. When *tā-vā* time-space relationships are in serenity with both cultures they support Tongan students' academic achievement but when they are not, they become constraints. This means that although Tongans primarily engage in *tauhi vā* to create harmonious beauty, and experience feelings of warmth, joy, or honour as Ka'ili (2008) stated, if students and their supporters do not perform *tauhi vā* within the students' limits or boundaries with relationship to their studies then it creates confusions and tensions that can jeopardise their education.

V. SUMMARY

Tongan students' learning is through the construction of knowledge within their socio-cultural contexts in a postmodern era. They are constructing and co-constructing knowledge within their socio-cultural context where they position themselves in multiple realities. This multiple positioning is where they operate in tertiary education and this impacts on their achievement. The sociocultural, postmodernism and *tā-vā* time-space views of learning have been used to theorise the perceived sociocultural aspects that impact on Tongan students' academic achievement in New Zealand tertiary education. They need to understand and negotiate the differences between Tongan and New Zealand cultures in order to achieve in the tertiary education system in New Zealand. The journey of this thesis moves along to the *tukufua ki he fekumi*, the research design chapter which discusses the research methodology, methods and processes.

CHAPTER 4

FOUNGA FEKUMI: RESEARCH DESIGN

Tākanga 'enau fohe
(Their oars move in unison)
-Tongan Proverb

I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research design (*founga fekumi*) which is “a plan or strategy [that is] aimed at enabling answers to be obtained for the research questions” (Burns, 2000, p. 145). As the Tongan students’ academic achievement in New Zealand tertiary education is situated within the social organisations of the bureaucracy, *fāmili*, *siasi* and *fonua*, it is within these social contexts that the theoretical framework for the research as well as this research design was chosen, as discussed in the previous chapter. Both tools help to make sense of the Tongan students’ worlds within their social interactions in these organisations and institutions that contribute to their academic performance (Renshaw, 2003). The research methodologies, methods for data generation, research quality and ethical considerations as well as the data analysis process are both Tongan and Western. The research design recognises the importance of both cultures in the lives of Tongan tertiary students in New Zealand and the impact of these two cultures on their academic achievement. The inclusion of both cultures in the research design means that they work together as in the Tongan proverb, *tākanga 'enau fohe* (their oars move in unison) and thus inform quality and credibility of the research.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology “refers to the overall epistemological paradigm adopted within a particular discipline or tradition, or within a specific research project, which may be interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary or

transdisciplinary” (Mikula, 2008, pp. 127-128). The methodology used in this study is described as Tongan, Pasifika, qualitative, phenomenological, ethnographic and auto-ethnographic. It involves Tongans, as participants (phenomenological ethnography) and also includes the Tongan researcher’s experiences as one of the participants (auto-ethnography). Although this research is driven by Tongan and Pasifika methodologies, it has also borrowed from western methodologies. Using both Tongan and western methodologies was appropriate, as the Tongan participants are operating within a New Zealand context and this provided insights into the different cultures. This is because the western scholarly perspective on research is that truth and knowledge are the logical end products of people’s search for meaning, order and control of a seemingly chaotic natural universe (Taufe'ulungaki, 2003). On the other hand, the Tongan perspective on research is that truth and knowledge, in the Pacific traditions, are integral parts of the natural universe, as much as living and non-living things as they are in us and around us (Taufe'ulungaki, 2003). Thaman’s (1987, 1988, 1999) poem *Our Way* shows us the importance of looking at both ways, that of the Tongans and that of the west/New Zealand, although at times the tensions between the two different worldviews are very painful. Konai Thaman used this poem to illustrate the synthesis of both Tongan and western points of view on educational development and analysis for her PhD thesis: *Ako and Faiako: Educational concepts, cultural values, and teacher role perceptions in Tonga* (Thaman, 1988, p. 19). Thus:

OUR WAY

your way
objective
analytic
always doubting
the truth
until proof comes
slowly
quietly
and it hurts

my way
subjective
gut-feeling like
always sure
of the truth
the proof
is there
waiting
and it hurts

Konai Helu Thaman
(Thaman, 1987, p. 40; 1999, p. 88).

There are differences in the ways that Tongan and *Pālangi* people think which affect what they feel as well as their belief systems.

1. Pasifika Research Methodology

Although Pasifika methodology is still in its infancy, some Pasifika researchers such as Anae et al. (2001) have suggested that “if research is to make meaningful contributions to Pacific societies, then its primary purpose is to reclaim Pacific knowledge and values for Pacific peoples” (p. 8). These researchers also stated that research concerning Pasifika peoples and education must go beyond the assumptions that underpin Eurocentric, western structures, institutions, and knowledge. The models should develop research that reflects Pacific worldviews underpinned by Pacific values, belief systems, and ways of sharing knowledge. According to Anae et al. (2001), Smith (2004), Manu’atu (2000a), Nabobo-Baba (2004), Taufe’ulungaki (2003), and Vaioleti (2003), there is a need for Pasifika

researchers to create their own pedagogy and symbolic orders, their own sources of identity, authority, mediating structures and appropriate standards in development and education that are rooted to their own Pasifika values, assumptions, knowledge, processes and practices. Pasifika peoples have often been the focus of research and writing that has not highlighted or captured the Pasifika peoples' abilities to connect, relate to one another and also benefit from their relationships (Nabobo-Baba, 2004). There is a need for Pasifika methodologies to reflect and take into account Pasifika people's different cultural backgrounds.

It is important to acknowledge the Pasifika research methodologies that have emerged from the work of some Pasifika researchers such as the Tamasese, Peteru, Waldegrave and Bush (2005) *Fa'afaletui*⁶⁰ Model from Samoa; the Ma-Ua Hodges (2000) *Tivaevae*⁶¹ Model from the Cook Islands; the Kupa (2009) *Te Vaka Atafanga*⁶² Model from Tokelau; the Nabobo-Baba (2006) *Vanua*⁶³ Model from Fiji; the concept of the *researcher as the first paradigm* of Mitaera (1997) from the Cook Islands; and the Bishop (1996) and Smith (1999a) *Kaupapa Māori*⁶⁴ research methodology from New Zealand. These are valid theoretical frameworks for Pasifika research as they are based on Pasifika values and use methods that are most appropriate for Pasifika peoples. They are used when researching with, for and by Pasifika people contributing to the body of knowledge about

⁶⁰ It is the critical process of weaving (*tui*) together all the different levels of knowledge frames from within the 'houses' of collective representation, in order that the Samoan world view is substantially enhanced, and added to (Tamasese, 2008, 22-23 September).

⁶¹ Cook Island patch-quilt.

⁶² Tokelau boat or canoe also called *te paopao* (*pōpao* in Tongan).

⁶³ Fijian term for land; and *fonua* in Tongan.

⁶⁴ It is a Māori plan, a philosophy, and a way to proceed. Embedded in the concept of kaupapa is a notion of acting strategically, of proceeding purposefully (Smith, 1999b).

Pasifika people (Kupa, 2009; Nabobo-Baba, 2006). They involve a community context which is the collaboration and participation of Pasifika people in the research (Thaman, 2002). There is also a public context through the information made available by the research (Prescott, 2008; Vaioleti, 2006). And, there is also a personal context which is the role of the *self* in the study (Mitaera, 1997; Pasikale, George, & Fiso, 1996).

According to Smith (2004), “[Pasifika] researchers have played an important role in exploring the intersections of colonialism, gender, race, class and difference through the lens of native people and against the frame of colonization and oppression” (p. 5). Research is not just a highly moral and civilised search for knowledge, but it is a set of very human activities that reproduces particular social relations of power as in New Zealand:

... building research capacity and capability is seen as an important policy strategy to help nudge reforms in higher education towards a more instrumental relationship between education, research, knowledge transfer, development and wealth creation. It is very much a privileged and privileging discourse that positions particular kinds of knowledge creation, approaches to knowledge and systems of knowing as more desirable and worthy of support because of the perceived economic benefits that will be derived from such developments. (Smith, 2004, p. 4)

Therefore, it is important that Pasifika people conduct research with Pasifika people in order to get true and accurate information in such a political situation. Rigney, (1999), cited in Smith (2004), stated that more recently there has been a slight shift by indigenous researchers to “not only disrupt hegemonic research forms and their power relations, but [also] to alleviate and reinvent new research methodologies and perspectives” (p. 5). A Tongan research methodology was relevant in this research because as a Tongan educator and Pasifika researcher, there is a call for an intellectual and spiritual connection between my Tongan participants and myself. It was an opportunity for me to conduct the

research and re-record Tongan knowledge, histories, languages and culture, and envisage the future. In doing this, I was representing the voices of the Tongan people in the appropriate cultural contexts by ensuring that everything was done in the most appropriate cultural way (Nabobo-Baba, 2004).

This enables a shift by the Pasifika researchers from seeing themselves as passive victims of research to seeing themselves as activists who are engaged in a counter-hegemonic struggle over research (Smith, 2004). Hence, the aspiration to use and expand the Pasifika research methodologies. However, although Pasifika peoples come from very diverse cultures in the Pacific, these Pasifika methodologies draw on their similarities in philosophies and working principles (Health Research Council of New Zealand, 2004). They all have the principles of relative autonomy, cultural aspirations, culturally preferred pedagogy, mediation of socio-economic and home difficulties, extended family structure, and a collective vision philosophy (Anae et al., 2001). The Pasifika research methodologies work within a *whānau* (Māori) and *kāinga* (Tongan) extended family framework. The use of the *kāinga* framework in this research meant that we trusted each other as family and believed that I, the researcher would make good use of the information, so whatever was used and co-constructed during this research would be for the benefit of all the *kāinga*. Therefore, this research was guided by the Tongan research methodologies explained in the following sections.

2. Tongan Research Methodology

Tongan research is an emerging methodology. The significance of works by Tongan researchers such as Thaman's (2002) model of *Kakala*⁶⁵; Ka'ili's

⁶⁵ Sweet-smelling flowers, or trees or plants bearing sweet-smelling flowers, of any kind (Churchward, 1959); a garland of sweet-smelling flowers.

(2008) and Māhina's (2008), model of *Tauhi Vā*⁶⁶; Manu'atu's (2000a), model of *Mālie-Māfana*⁶⁷; Vaioleti's (2003, 2006) and Prescott's (2008) model of *Talanoa*⁶⁸, were used and discussed in this research. I also introduce the model of *Toungāue* (working together) as a contribution to Tongan research methodology.

i. Kakala: Pedagogical Model (Thaman)

Kakala is Thaman's (2002) metaphor for making a garland of flowers in Tonga where the process involves three important steps, namely *toli*, the gathering of flowers, *tui*, the making of the garlands, and finally *luva*, or the process of giving away or presenting the *kakala* (Johansson-Fua et al., 2007; Thaman, 1995b, 2005; Wolfgramm-Foliaki, 2005). Tongan women, when they *toli*, carefully pick the most beautiful flowers to use. They *tui* the garland by arranging the flowers to create a *kakala*, that is not only attractive, but also suitable for presentation. The subsequent process of *luva* is when they present the garland to invited guests or visitors in the various social contexts. Thaman's metaphor of *kakala* symbolically refers to *toli* when the researchers select and gather the relevant information needed for the research topic; *tui* when the information is written up in the report, and *luva* is when the information is given out to the public to be used for the benefit of everyone. The *Kakala* metaphor symbolises how this research was conducted. The researcher (myself) went out and *toli* (did the research – gathered the data) then I took my *kakala* (knowledge) and *tui* (interpreted and wrote up the findings) carefully in a way that is beautiful, unique and suitable to *luva* (presented the final product to other

⁶⁶ Keeping good relationships.

⁶⁷ Aesthetically pleasing state and the emotional feeling of warmth.

⁶⁸ To talk (in both formal and informal ways), to tell stories or relate experiences etc. (Churchward, 1959)

people). The *Kakala* research methodology is favoured by some Tongan researchers such as; Johansson-Fua et al., (2007), Koloto (2003b), Koloto and Sharma (2006), Mafile’o (2004, 2005), Manu’atu (2000a), and Wolfgramm-Foliaki (2005, 2006).

ii. *Talanoa*: Communication Model (Vaioleti and Prescott)

Talanoa as a research methodology is a personal or group encounter, where a space is created for people to story their past, their issues, their realities and aspirations, and, using their own cultural methodologies, to produce a more authentic Pacific knowledge (Vaioleti, 2003, 2006). Manu’atu (2000a) also referred to *talanoa* as a process of construction, reconstruction, and deconstruction of Tongan social realities. Vaioleti (2003) argued that integral to *talanoa* is skilful and cultural synthesis of the expressions, humour, nuances, emotions and theorising which produces more authentic possibilities for addressing Pasifika issues. Vaioleti (2006) also argued that the researcher needs to be a person of the same culture. Alternatively, Prescott (2008) stated that in researching people from the Pacific, *talanoa* is a specific form of communication that is parallel to interviewing and that addresses the challenges of race, culture, beliefs and society. In this sense, I (the researcher) am Tongan and the research is on Tongan people so *talanoa* was used extensively in this research about Tongan students’ academic achievement, not only with my selected participants, but also with my *kāinga* in Tonga and New Zealand.

Through using *talanoa* with Tongan participants in different situations, Tongan perspectives, differences and purposes for tertiary education were portrayed as the participants and I had trusting relationships and a sense of cultural connectedness (Prescott, 2008). Since I am fluent in both Tongan and English, we conversed in the language that best communicated the concepts and ideas clearly during the *talanoa*. Through

talanoa within a *kāinga* framework, I was able to gather the authentic information necessary for this investigation. As Vaoleti (2003) stated, the *talanoa* methodology is a derivative of oral traditions, therefore, it should be at the control of an experienced researcher to maintain the “continuity, authenticity and cultural integrity of [the given] knowledge” (p. 2). The participants and I were equal and inseparable where we had space to story our experiences and meanings on issues, and constructed solutions where necessary (Prescott, 2008). Our focus during the *talanoa* was to reach a state of understanding on the research topic. This was very helpful to me as a Tongan researcher working with Tongan people.

iii. *Mālie* – *Māfana*: Pedagogical model (Manu’atu)

“The notion of *māfana* is associated with the notion of *mālie* [where] *māfana* is a movement of warm currents that energises the process of *mālie*... *mālie* and *māfana* are inseparable... as they are the process and energies” (Manu'atu, 2000b, p. 77). Manu’atu (2000a) suggested that *māfana* and *mālie* produced in the context of the *faiva* is generated in good pedagogy, and contributes to Tongan students’ success because *mālie* espouses a philosophy of process, energy and transformation of cultural productions that provide access to cultural knowledge. Therefore, Manu’atu’s ‘*Mālie-Māfana*’ pedagogical model proposes that both Tongan teaching (researching/researcher) and learning (researched/participants) are the process and outcome, as in Tongan *faiva* (performing arts), where “both performers and viewers are symmetrically unified in harmony in order that they commonly experience *mālie* (the aesthetically pleasing state) and the emotional feeling of *māfana* (warmth)” (Māhina, 2008, p. 72).

In research, when both researchers and participants perform their task *faiva* (dance) effectively (symmetrically unified in harmony) in producing the research outcome, all those involved would feel *mālie* and *māfana*. In

other words, the good relationships between the researcher and the participants is *mālie* which generates *māfana* and therefore produces excellent research outcomes. Without the presence of *māfana* and *mālie* there is very little passion from within the spirits of the researcher and the participants to mobilize them to perform and achieve in the research (Manu'atu, 2000a). This is because “people are not the subjects in the contexts in which they live, rather they must critically and actively pursue the relationships in these contexts in order to produce and to experience *mālie* and *māfana*” (Manu'atu, 2000a, p. 218). In the *faiva* (research), the *talanoa mālie* and *māfana* between the participants and me was where we constructed and co-constructed new knowledge. Manu'atu's model is also related to the *tā-vā* time-space theory used in this research, as for the performance (research or achievement) to be *mālie* and *māfana* they have to be in the interface, that is a specific/right *tā* and *vā* time and space.

iv. *Tauhi Vā*: Value Model (Māhina)

Tauhi vā, according to Ka'ili (2008), “is a Tongan performing art that symmetrically marks time (*tā*) in space (*vā*) to create beauty (*mālie*), and that beauty evokes powerful Tongan emotions such as warmth (*māfana*), elation (*hākailangitau*), or honour (*lāngilangi*) among the performers of *tauhi vā*” [italics added] (p. 2). This *tauhi vā* was evident amongst everyone in this research. It included my participants, my supervisors, technical supporters, families and friends. I fostered and maintained good relationships with all of them throughout the process of my research. This means that I responded to some of the needs that some of my participants had such as attending family occasions or doing things that they asked of me. My *vā* with my supervisors was kept when I tried to attend scheduled meetings and to meet deadlines for submissions of various parts of my thesis. My *vā* with my technical supporters and friends was kept through friendly conversations and responding to their requests. My *fāmili* is also

very important and I fulfilled all my *fatongia* in terms of family occasions and needs. I have had to work hard as I am the only source of income for my immediate *fāmili* and thus had to contribute to all the family *fatongia*. This included national and international travel to family funerals and other occasions such as weddings, birthdays and graduation ceremonies.

v. *Toungāue*: Cooperative Model (Kalavite)

Toungāue is co-operative work within a group of people in Tongan communities. All those involved or all the members of the group work for one member one time/day, then for another person on another day, and so on until everyone has had their turn to be helped by the group. The work rotates throughout the year. *Toungāue* is a means of *fetokoni'aki* amongst the Tongan people so that they can produce things more easily and quickly. This is a well known group work model for women when they are making *fala*⁶⁹ (*toulālanga*), and *ngatu*⁷⁰ (*toulanganga*). Making *ngatu* and *fala* involves much work and each *fala* or *ngatu* takes a long time to complete. As it takes days and months to prepare the *lou'akau*⁷¹ and the *feta'aki*⁷², in order to make a *fala* or *ngatu* people tend to work together to speed up the process. Therefore, women commonly work together (*toungāue*) in *toulālanga* and *toulanganga*.

In a typical *toulālanga*, women come together with their *lou'kau*⁷³ to the house 'o e tokotaha 'oku 'o'ona 'a e 'aho ngāue (of the person whose turn it is

⁶⁹ Mats.

⁷⁰ Painted tapa cloth.

⁷¹ Dried pandanus leaves for weaving mats.

⁷² Piece of tapa cloth before it is stained or made into a *ngatu*.

⁷³ Dried pandanus leaves or flexes.

for the group work that day). Then they use their *lou'akau* to *fatu*⁷⁴ the *fala* and work the whole time weaving. They take turns (rotate) to work on each other's mats. Sometimes it can take them as many as three to four turns to be able to finish a mat for one person, depending on how many women are in the *kautaha* (group). Similar to *toulālanga* is *toulanganga* where women come together with their pieces of *feta'aki*, called *langanga*⁷⁵ to where they are going to make *ngatu* for the person whose *'aho koka'anga*⁷⁶ (day it was to make the *tapa* cloth). The group then makes the *ngatu* in a form of *launima*⁷⁷ or *fuatanga*⁷⁸ or whatever kind of *tapa* cloth that is wanted. Usually a *ngatu* is produced in a person's *'aho koka'anga* so they move on to the next person in the group to make her *ngatu* the next *koka'anga* day.

When men work in groups in their plantations as *toungāue*, it is called a *kautaha toungāue* (Small, 1997). Men can also produce more food in the bush when they work in their *kautaha toungāue* because the crops are well looked after when men work together planting and weeding. In a *kautaha toungāue*, men go into the bush and do whatever is needed to be done by the person whose *'aho ngāue* is that day. Usually, they work by the hour (*kautaha lauhoua*) because they have to work an equal number of hours for

⁷⁴ Begin/start making.

⁷⁵ Distance or space between two consecutive transverse stripes on a piece of *tapa* cloth: usually 18 inches or more. A length of from 4 to 7 or these is called a *fola'osi*; from 8 to 10, a *fatuuu*; 50, a *launima*; 100, a *lautefuhi*; a *fuatanga* can be specifically made in a one whole, 4, 5, 6, 8 or 10 *langanga* (whole/complete piece of *tapa*).

⁷⁶ The making of *tapa* cloth (*ngatu*). It is the staining and making of *ngatu*.

⁷⁷ Fifty *langanga* where one *langanga* is the distance or space between two consecutive transverse stripes on a piece of *tapa* cloth which is usually 18 inches or more (Churchward, 1959, p. 282).

⁷⁸ A *fuatanga* can be specifically made in a one whole, 4, 5, 6, 8 or 10 *langanga*.

each person in every round. Then they move from one person to the next, day by day until they have completed the round; then they start again. Therefore, whatever they can do at the plantation of the individual *'aho ngāue* in the given hour, then that is it for the day.

Toungāue was used in this research. Like *toulālanga*, *toulanganga* and *kautaha toungāue* we *fetokoni'aki* with all my participants in New Zealand. Some of the participants are those with whom we work together in the NZTTSA, others in TEIs and others in the wider community. As families, students, staff and community members we helped each other in a similar way to the *toungāue*. We all came together with our knowledge and experiences to help one another. Therefore, as Tongans we *toungāue* through *'ofa*, *faka'apa'apa*, *fetokoni'aki*, *faifatongia*, *tauhi vā*, *anga fakatōkilalo*, and *anga fakalotu*. We consistently helped one another during the journey of this thesis. I hope that the outcome of this research through this *toungāue* will help the Tongan people to produce a pathway to help them in their education, similar to the production of the *ngatu* and *fala*.

However, these models of Tongan research methodology used in this research are anchored within the framework of western qualitative, phenomenological ethnography and auto-ethnography research methodologies.

3. Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena (Merriam, 2001). It includes “the traditions associated with... post-structuralism, and the many qualitative research perspectives, or methods, connected to cultural and interpretive studies” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 1). It engages with the complexity of analysing human action in terms of meanings (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007).

Qualitative research is a powerful tool for learning more about our lives and the socio-historical context in which we live where the key to understanding lies with the idea that meanings are socially constructed by individuals while interacting with their different worlds (Merriam, 2002). Qualitative research “sets out to provide an impression: to tell what kinds of *something* there are; to tell what it is like to be, do or think something” (Bouma & Ling, 2004, p. 165).

Conducting qualitative research is about participating in other people’s lives and writing about that participation (Cohen et al., 2007). The description of the social processes that make life meaningful is at the heart of good qualitative research (Ezzy, 2002). This study about the perceived socio-cultural factors that impact on Tongan students’ academic achievement in New Zealand tertiary education utilised qualitative methodology in the explorations of the students’ journeys. The participants were free to share their stories, their perceptions, their feelings and what was important to them (Bouma & Ling, 2004). Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world where it consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible, where they transform and turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Therefore, in its focus, this research was qualitative. The next section discusses the concept of phenomenological thought that underpins all qualitative research.

4. Phenomenological Ethnography

Phenomenology emphasizes direct observation of phenomena (Merriam, 2001). “[It] is part of the humanistic tradition that emphasizes the common experience of all human beings and our ability to relate to the feelings of

others” (Bernard, 2002, p. 23). It is also “concerned with the question of how individuals make sense of the world around them and how in particular the researcher should bracket out preconceptions in his or her grasp of the world” (Bryman, 2004, p. 14). Phenomenology focuses on the subjective experience of the individual and phenomenological research addresses questions about common, everyday human experiences (Merriam, 2002). From a theoretical point of view, phenomenology “sees behaviour as determined by the phenomena of experience rather than by external, objective and physically described reality” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000, p. 23). The emphasis of my research lies on how individual behaviours are determined by the phenomena of experience rather than by external, objective and physically described reality (Bernard, 2002; Burns, 2000). It focuses on the experiences of the Tongan people in relationship to their education in New Zealand tertiary education.

Ethnography literally means writing about people. It is a form of qualitative research employed to study human society and culture (Cragg & Cook, 2007; Merriam, 2001). Ethnography in a broad sense “encompasses any study of a group of people for the purpose of describing their socio-cultural activities and patterns” (Burns, 2000, p. 393). Ethnographic study is where the researcher is immersed in a social setting for an extended period of time, observing behaviour, listening to and engaging in conversations, interviewing informants, collecting documents about the group, developing an understanding of the culture of the group and people’s behaviour within the context of that culture and writing up a detailed account of that setting (Denzin, 1997; Holmes & Earcus, 2005). For a qualitative study to be ethnographic, it must present a socio-cultural interpretation of the data. Therefore, ethnography is not

defined by how data are collected, but rather by the lens through which the data are interpreted (Bernard, 2002; Merriam, 2002).

An ethnographic study is “also about *emic explanations* of how things work – why people think they are poor, why they think some ethnic groups are successful and others aren’t” (Bernard, 2000, p. 345). Alasuutari, (1998) stated that ethnographic interest lies with the “questions related to the difference, to the otherness of the collectivity or group of people concerned” (p. 61). However, the purpose of ethnographic research is to uncover social, cultural, or normative patterns which “involves an analytic description in terms of a social setting, organisation, behaviour, and activities” (Burns, 2000, p. 395). Ethnographically, this research encompassed a group of Tongans for the purpose of describing their socio-cultural patterns in New Zealand in the tertiary education system. The participants’ views and experiences in New Zealand’s tertiary education were elicited in order to explore the research question.

Therefore, phenomenological ethnography is concerned with the world of everyday life. It sets out “to treat practical activities, practical circumstances, and practical sociological reasoning as topics of empirical study, and by paying attention to the most commonplace activities of daily life” (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 24). A methodology that studies people and their daily lives is most appropriate for this research. I am a Tongan and all the participants are Tongan. We shared our experiences and views during the data collection period. Our experiences informed the investigation of our academic achievement in New Zealand tertiary education.

5. Auto-ethnography

Auto-ethnography, according to Denzin and Lincoln (2003a), is the writing for and about the community in which one has grown up and

lived, or at least achieved some degree of insider status. This type of ethnographic experience has also been called “ethnology, ethno-ethnography, autoanthropology, and autoethnography where it produces engaged writing that centres on the ongoing dialectical political-personal relationship between the self and other” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003b, p. 184). So, auto-ethnography “refers to self-centred ethnographic research in which the central narrative threads are the selves of the researchers and/or researched” (Crang & Cook, 2007, p. 167). The topic for this research emerged from a very personal interest in what my family and I had experienced during our educational endeavours. Since my experiences are included in this research, I adopted auto-ethnographical methodology where an ongoing comparison and reflection relative to my experiences was forged during the research (Crang & Cook, 2007; Jones, 2005).

III. DATA GENERATION

The research method is the actual research practice used to generate data (Mikula, 2008). This is where I generated the information on the informant’s perception of themselves, their environment and their experiences. The research method for data generation in this research was *talanoa*, through semi-structured and un-structured interviewing. Interviewing is a conversation, an art of asking questions and listening “to what people themselves tell about their lived world, about their dreams, fears and hopes, hears their views and opinions in their own words” (Kvale, 2007, p. 1). During the *talanoa* I tried to draw from participants’ in-depth knowledge of factors about my research topic (Blaxter, Hughes, & Tight, 2001; Cohen et al., 2000; T. May, 2001; Neuman, 2000). *Talanoa* is the preferred means of communication because it captures the traditions and protocols of Pacific islands (Prescott, 2008). In Tonga, *talanoa* literally means to talk or to tell stories or relate experiences (Churchward, 1959). It

is also “consistent with the conveyance of knowledge, stories, views and feelings both in the personal and formal sense” (Prescott, 2008, p. 128).

Using *talanoa* as a Tongan research method meant that the conversation with the participants was more meaningful when Tongan cultural protocol was followed as well as when Tongan language is being used for clarification of concepts and ideas. Experiences of the research topic were able to be comfortably shared without cultural impediments. The *talanoa* research method can be in a form of structured, semi-structured or unstructured interviewing in a formal or informal way. Formal *talanoa* is where a time and place is set for the particular *talanoa* to be conducted on a particular topic. Informal *talanoa* occurs when the topic under investigation has emerged from a *talanoa*, or the topic is initiated during a gathering that was not meant for the purpose of discussing the research topic; for example, a discussion at a birthday celebration or at a conference where the issues about the research topic emerged. The Tongan method of *talanoa* led the research but was anchored within the western methods of semi-structured and unstructured interviewing. In other words, *talanoa* worked alongside semi-and unstructured interviewing and was integral to the interviews. As an interviewer I took Kvale’s (2007) metaphor of a traveller with an anthropological and postmodern comprehension of knowledge as socially constructed. This is where my “conception leads to interviewing and analysis as intertwined phases of knowledge construction, with an emphasis on the narrative to be told to an audience” (Kvale, 2007, p. 20).

1. Formal *Talanoa*

Formal *talanoa* in this research occurred when I formally asked people to participate in the research, following all the protocols of the University of Waikato ethical guidelines and an interview schedule guided the research

(Appendices C, D, E and F). The formal *talanoa* with participants took place within a seven month data generation period. This formal *talanoa* was scheduled for one hour at an agreed place and time. I used semi-structured interviewing to guide the *talanoa*. The interview questions designed for particular groups of participants are in Appendices H, I and J. It is not a neutral tool, for the interviewer to create the reality of the interview situation where the responses are given (Blaxter, Hughes, & Tight, 1996; Blaxter et al., 2001). The interview produces situated understandings that are grounded in specific interactional incidents and as such, the interview data are co-constructions of the interviewer and interviewee (Edenborough, 2002). The interview method is influenced by the personal characteristics of the interviewer, including class, ethnicity, and gender (Blaxter et al., 1996, 2001; Carspecken, 1996). Nevertheless, because I am Tongan and the participants were all Tongan (of the same culture) I encouraged the participants to *talanoa* openly about their experiences in New Zealand tertiary education.

Semi-structured interviewing refers to the situation where pre-established and broad questions were used to guide the *talanoa* (Appendices H, I, J). The guiding questions were only used when necessary to keep the *talanoa* on the research topic (Blaxter et al., 2001; Bouma & Ling, 2004; Bryman, 2004; Patton, 2002). The preparation of the guiding questions followed the guidelines of clarity, simple and direct questioning, addressing the right people, avoiding informal terms and abbreviations, avoiding the use of colourful and emotional language, not placing participants in an impossible situation, not making assumptions, and trialling the questions before conducting the interview (Bouma & Ling, 2004; Edenborough, 2002). All of these were adhered to in the preparation for the interview; the questions were trialled with a member of my family. However, according to Strauss and Corbin (1998), interview questions have to be

limited within the available time and money as was the case with this research. Each interview was restricted to an hour to cover as many participants within one visit so as to cut down travelling expenses.

Using semi-structured interviewing (*talanoa*) in this research was effective because it helped to put the participants at ease and they were willing to share their knowledge and experiences with me. The conversations were flexible which enhanced communication and a free flow of important information. Semi-structured interviews helped to ensure that the discussion remained focused on the issues, while still being flexible enough to allow interaction between the interviewer and the participants by giving more space to the participants to tell their stories of their experiences (Edenborough, 2002; Keats, 2000). The use of semi-structured interviewing helped to increase the rapport between the participants and myself (Kvale, 2007). The participants told their stories in their own cultural context where there is equal status between the participants and myself because of our common Tongan origins. The use of the interview questions provided opportunities for me to probe, clarify and follow up conversations to achieve specific and accurate responses from the participants (Cohen et al., 2007; Othman, 1997).

The *Talanoa* relied heavily on the quality of social interactions. At the beginning of every *talanoa* session we usually talked informally if we knew one another but if not we *hohoko* (talked genealogy to connect our family relationships) (Ka'ili, 2008; Mafile'o, 2005). This put the participants at ease and set the scene for the *talanoa*. Then we moved on to fill in the participants' personal details (Appendix G). Sometimes, I subtly redirected the participants when the conversation or *talanoa* stray too far off the research topic. I tried to keep to one hour although with some participants the interview took longer because there was an indication

there was important information yet to come. The *talanoa*, were audio taped because of the “obvious advantage of recording the subject’s responses verbatim along with the added advantage of freeing the [researcher] to participate in the dialogue rather than having to concentrate on note-taking” (Othman, 1997, p. 52).

2. Informal *Talanoa*

The informal *talanoa* was when I gathered knowledge and reconfirmed findings about the research topic through other forums such as family occasions, community meetings, church meetings and conferences. Informal *talanoa*, which equated to unstructured interviewing, began during the period of the semi-structured interview (formal *talanoa*) sessions and continued to the writing up stage of this research project. Through participating in various community groups, I informally *talanoa* with other people about the research topic. This was when I used unstructured interviewing where “the style of questioning is usually very informal and the phrasing and sequencing of questions vary from interview to interview” (Bryman, 2004, p. 314). Unstructured interviewing (informal *talanoa*) was characterized by a minimum of control over the respondent’s responses. According to Bernard (2000), unstructured interviewing is used in situations where the interviewer has plenty of time and can interview people on more than one occasion. It can occur just about anywhere. In this case, working within a *kāinga* framework, I was able to gather information. The purpose was to get people to open up and express themselves in their own terms and at their own pace. The content of the interviews was shaped by what the respondents told me. When I guided the respondent into particular areas, the path followed was usually decided by either the participant or me, depending on the information required (Tolich & Davidson, 2003). Unstructured interviewing parallels *talanoa* in that the researcher and the participants are talking about the

issues relating to the research in a much more informal way although the researcher can guide the conversation to draw out the information needed for the research (Prescott, 2008).

During meetings and conferences I took notes and talked to key speakers, presenters and elders on certain aspects of the focus of the research. Sometimes, I had permission from them to tape-record their presentations and use them in the research. Also, as president of WUTTSA (since 2004) and as the President of NZTTSA (since 2006) I had the opportunity to observe and talk to many other students who were not participants in this research. Working within the *kāinga* framework, the participants and I had trust and confidence that the information they shared was valid and useful. The participants trusted that I would effectively use the information in a culturally appropriate way. The participants also trusted that the findings from the research would help the Tongan people's education in the future. They knew the reasons for the *talanoa* and a sense of *kāinga* between the participants and me in a foreign land (New Zealand) enhanced our communications. We constructed and co-constructed useful knowledge for the research.

3. Research Procedure

This section presents the details of the fieldwork during the data generation period. Tongan research methodologies were conducted firstly, by ensuring that the appropriate Tongan cultural protocols and processes were embedded in the research design, implementation, analysis, report writing and dissemination of the information; secondly, by upholding Tongan ownership of the objectives and processes of the research, through seeking and utilising Tongan input at all stages of the research and by using consultative and participatory processes; thirdly, by approaching appropriately in the Tongan cultural contexts and ensuring that language

was not a barrier to participation; and lastly, by careful recruitment of participants. The interviewing process, data analysis and the writing up of the research findings were monitored closely to guarantee the relevance, credibility and authenticity of this study. The process began with the selection of participants throughout the data generation and to the writing up stage.

Participants in this research were all Tongans who were born in Tonga. Some of them had finished their secondary education in Tonga and others had been to secondary school in New Zealand before they entered tertiary education. All had tertiary education experience, although not all had tertiary qualifications. Tongan staff and educators from higher educational institutions in New Zealand were key participants. The key participants were people who are highly competent in particular areas such as the Tongan culture; people who are competent in the New Zealand tertiary education system; and people who were ready and willing to walk with me through our Tongan culture throughout this research (Bernard, 2000). The successful and effective use of the key participant interviews provided a quick way of canvassing the collective views of all the “communities of interest” (Tolich & Davidson, 2003, p. 131). However, the judgement on the selection of participants was made using three key factors; the number of participants; the parameters of the participants; and the access to participants (Cohen et al., 2000).

The number of participants in this research project was “constrained by costs, in terms of time, money, stress, administrative support, the number of researchers, and resources” (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 93). It was also determined to some extent by the methodology and methods of the research (Cohen et al., 2000). In ethnographic and qualitative research it is more likely that the number of participants is low (Cohen et al., 2000).

There were 25 participants in this research, although other members of the *kāinga* participated during the informal *talanoa*. The importance of a range of participants was considered (Cohen et al., 2000). All participants identified as Tongans. There were local and international tertiary students from undergraduate (Certificate level through to their final year, Year 3) to graduate levels (honours, diploma, masterate and doctoral students). A gender balance was also considered but there were more females than male participants due to their availability. Tongan students who came to tertiary education straight from secondary schools as well as mature students, tertiary staff/educators and Tongan parents were also included. The group ranged from 20 to 50 years of age.

Four different groups of people were interviewed (Appendix L). The first group consisted of 13 students selected from students in tertiary educational institutions (A group = A₁ – A₁₃). The second group consisted of two well educated female participants (B group = B₁ – B₂). The third group was two male parents with no university qualification (C group = C₁ – C₂). The fourth group was eight parents who are staff or academics in higher education (D group = D₁ – D₈). The latter were those who are recognised for their contributions to and understanding of the education of Tongan people in Aotearoa.

According to Bryman (2004), “the selection of participants in ethnographic research is often a combination of convenience, purposive and snowball sampling” (p. 301). The participants were from Auckland in the North Island through to Dunedin in the South Island of New Zealand. It took two months to select and make initial contact with the participants through word of mouth, phone calls, emails and letters. So, sampling was based on convenience (Bernard, 2000; Bouma & Ling, 2004; Bryman, 2004; Burns, 2000) and purpose (Bouma & Ling, 2004; Maxwell, 1998). My role

as the Pasifika learning advisor as well as the president of WUTTSA and NZTTSA enabled me to access many Tongan people as well as Tongan tertiary students throughout the country. As a Pasifika learning advisor there was a purpose for me to work together with Tongan students and their *kāinga* throughout this research. I wanted to explore ways of how to support them to succeed. For the research, it was fitting in my line of duty, to have these participants for the purpose of working towards the improvement of their academic performance in tertiary education. Snowball sampling was also used as I learnt from members of WUTTSA and NZTTSA as well as my other Tongan network in the community of other people that would be valuable to include in the research (Bernard, 2002; Bouma & Ling, 2004; Bryman, 2004; Davidson & Tolich, 2003). The coding system is shown in Appendix L and the participants' profiles are shown in Appendix M.

The formal *talanoa* data generation process lasted seven months. This was when I undertook the interviews, transcribed the interviews and analysed the information gathered. The informal *talanoa* data generation process started at the same time as the formal *talanoa* and went through to the writing up process of the research.

IV. RESEARCH QUALITY AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Quality research is genuine, indisputable, legitimate, valid, acceptable, robust, dynamic and authentic (Cohen et al., 2007; Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Patton, 2002). Validity is an important key to effective research which “usually means whether a method investigates what it purports to investigate” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 327). Validity is when the information gathered is addressed through “honesty, depth, richness and scope” (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 105). The research could be invalid if there was bias by the researcher and the research participants. Therefore,

validity is also judged through the recognition of the degree of bias and subjectivity of the participants' opinions, attitudes and perspectives (Cohen et al., 2007). Therefore, during the *talanoa* sessions I had to ensure that we were honest about what we talked about as well as going into details on certain issues. I was also aware of the bias of some of the views. However, I worked around that during the *talanoa* to minimise our bias towards some of the issues. I made sure that all aspects of this research, from the participants' culture, contents of information gathered, theories and methodologies used in the research, were culturally appropriate thus adding to the validity of this research.

Quality research has a concise but strong rationale firmly grounded in the conceptual framework, and specific data collection methods (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Using the Tongan research methodologies made me confident that the information that I obtained from the participants was genuine and honest not only because we are from the same culture but also because it affirmed my own experience as a Tongan and as a Tongan student. High quality research considers inter-subjectivity, trustworthiness, ethical consideration and information analysis. These are discussed in detail in the sections below.

1. Intersubjectivity

Intersubjectivity is very important in ensuring quality in educational research because it “involves a sharing of knowledge between the researcher and the participant[s] which includes the researcher's own experiences, details of the research process so there is no hidden agenda, and an input by the participant into the research process” (Strachan, 1997, p. 95). This is where the researcher builds trust and maintains good relationships with the participants through respecting the norms of reciprocity and considering ethical issues “because the conduct of the

study depends exclusively on the relationships that the researcher builds with participants” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 78). The theoretical framework and the research methodology adopted in this research design helped to establish the inter-subjectivity of this research. The sharing of knowledge between the Tongan participants and myself through *talanoa* sessions “flattens the power relations inherent in positivistic research and acknowledges that it is impossible for researchers to be neutral and value free” (Strachan, 1997, p. 95). This sharing of knowledge between the participants and myself also resulted in the development of special relationships between us. These good relationships helped to ensure that valuable and relevant information was provided and so gave credibility to this research. Many Pasifika researchers argue that credible research outcomes on Pasifika emerge from Pasifika researchers researching Pasifika people (Anae et al., 2001; Smith, 1999a, 2004; Taufe'ulungaki, 2003). In this research, I knew all the participants as they were either biologically or culturally related to me. This kind of close relationship is true of Tongans because we come from a small country with strong kinship ties where we relate to each other as *kāinga* from Tonga.

2. Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is when the research is believable, valid, trustworthy, transferable, dependable, confirmable and authentic (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The skill, professionalism and integrity of the researcher play an important part in establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research (Patton, 2002). This research had ethics approval, I was trained as a researcher and the research was supervised by the university. This research also ensured that participants trusted the researcher during the research through careful implementation of the Tongan cultural protocols so that the information generation process can be seen as trustworthy.

Trustworthiness entails keeping complete records of all the phases of the research process, starting from problem formulation to selection of research participants, fieldwork notes, interview transcripts, data analysis decisions and so on, in an accessible manner (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). This research project followed all this procedure as discussed earlier in the research process. Dependability also means believability and this is when the researchers demonstrate that their findings and interpretations reflect the way participants experience reality (Jefferies, 2000). Bryman (2004) used the term credible instead of believable, meaning that the researcher needs to ensure that research is carried out according to the canons of good practice and that research findings are submitted to the participants for confirmation that the researcher has correctly understood their social world.

Quality and trustworthiness are also concerned with ensuring that, while recognising that complete objectivity is impossible in social research, the researcher can be shown to have acted in good faith, and in other words, it should be apparent that she has not overtly allowed personal values or theoretical inclinations to sway the conduct of the research and findings deriving from it (Bryman, 2004). Since I am of the same ethnicity as the participants and I conducted the research in Tongan cultural ways, trustworthiness was enhanced in this research.

Authenticity means that the study should be fair, educative and ontologically authentic (Bryman, 2004; Steinke, 2004). The study is of the experiences of those Tongans who experienced tertiary education and its foundation cannot be disputed as it is demonstrably an original, and not a copy of any type or source (Merkens, 2004; Steinke, 2004). This is true of this research because I was tactical in trying to gain the relevant information from my participants who had experience in tertiary

education, through conducting the research in the most culturally appropriate way. I am fluent in both Tongan and English and so quality and trustworthiness were enhanced. There was no language barrier or any point that could be missed out because of miscommunication or language problems. All information related to this research is ontologically authentic (Bryman, 2004).

Transferability is when qualitative research:

typically entails the intensive study of a small group, or of individuals sharing certain characteristics (that is depth rather than the breadth) where qualitative findings tend to be oriented to the contextual uniqueness and significance of the aspect of the social world, being studied. (Bryman, 2004, p. 275)

This is where the findings can be useful to others in similar situations with similar research questions. The findings of this research can be transferrable to a study of another group of Tongan students or any other Pasifika group of students in tertiary education. This is because it was conducted in a Tongan way through the use of a Tongan Pasifika research methods and methodology. The findings could be useful to both Tongan and the Pasifika communities in New Zealand and abroad. Although this research makes no claims to generalisability to a bigger population, the extent of external validity can be judged by the reader.

3. Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are vital in any educational research, and include a consideration of potential harm to participants (Bernard, 2002; Bouma & Ling, 2004; Kvale, 1996), informed consent (Cohen et al., 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003d; Kvale, 1996), and right of withdrawal from the research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003c; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Of primary importance is to ensure that there is no harm done to the participants in the research (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008). Therefore, a good qualitative study is one that has been conducted in an ethical manner

(Denzin & Giardina, 2007). The validity of a study also depends upon the ethics of the researcher (Maxwell, 1998; Merriam, 2002). Confidentiality is very important so that participants will not feel threatened and, therefore, willingly share with the researcher (Bouma & Ling, 2004; Kvale, 1996; Patton, 2002). Informed consent is also very important to make sure that both the researcher and the participants have a mutual understanding of their relationship so that commitment from both parties is genuine (Blaxter et al., 2001; Burns, 2000).

I ensured that all ethical procedures were closely followed so that ethical relationships between the participants and me were not breached while conducting this research because “the rights of the people are greater than the researcher’s *need to know*” (Bouma & Ling, 2004, p. 192). As a social researcher, I have the responsibility not only to my profession in the search for knowledge but also for the participants I depended on for the research; that is, I have to preserve the dignity of my participants (Cohen et al., 2000). Therefore, doing no harm to participants meant that this study strictly complied with The University of Waikato’s ethical guidelines (The University of Waikato, 2001) where the participants were informed that their participation in this research project was entirely optional and that they could withdraw up to their confirmation of their interview transcript (Appendix C). The participants were also sent a letter inviting them to participate (Appendix D). They were given information about the research, and how they would be involved, to ensure that the consent given was informed (Appendix E). They were also assured that all their responses were confidential and that the findings would be analysed and presented in such a manner that they would not be individually identifiable (Appendix D). Furthermore, they were informed that all the materials related to the study would be securely stored for five years after the completion of the study then all materials, interview tapes and

transcripts would be destroyed or returned to the participants if they wanted them (Appendix C). Informed consent is very important as it gives the participant rights to freedom and self determination to participate in the research (Cohen et al., 2000; Kvale, 1996). A consent form was sent to participants (Appendix E). An accompanying letter was attached to the transcripts informing the participants that they could amend the transcript, that a one page summary of the research findings would be given to them for comment and discussion, and that the final research report would be made available to them (Appendix F). Confidentiality is extremely important as it ensures that participants “private data identifying the subjects will not be reported” (Kvale, 2007, p. 27). The participants were, therefore, informed that the access to the information obtained from the interviews was restricted to the participants, myself and my supervisors, and that any additional access to the information would only be granted with the permission of the participants (Appendix C). Every participant was thanked by letter (Appendix F) to *tauhi* our *vā* throughout the research.

V. DATA ANALYSIS

The purpose of analysing the data is to find meaning in the data, and this was done by systematically arranging and presenting the information (Creswell, 2008; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Ezzy, 2002; Merriam, 2002). Data analysis and interpretation was guided by my set of beliefs about how the world should be studied and understood (Strachan, 1997). The information was “organised so that comparisons, contrasts and insights can be made and demonstrated” (Burns, 2000, p. 430). Theoretical constructs were derived from the qualitative analysis of the information given by the participants. This qualitative analysis was examined and interpreted “in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 1).

I transcribed the recorded *talanoa* of every session soon after it was conducted and when I was not sure about information I talked to my participants about it. Therefore, the process of interviewing and transcribing was done at the same time. At the completion of each recorded interview, the transcript was sent to participants via post or email with an accompanying letter inviting them to comment on the transcript (Appendix K). This was to reaffirm the relationship by further seeking their permission to continue using the information given in the *talanoa*, giving them the opportunity to omit information that they did not want included in the research or add any information to the transcript.

After receiving comments on the interview transcripts from all participants, I followed Marshall and Rossman's analytic procedures (2006) of "(a) organizing the data; (b) immersion in the data; (c) generating categories and themes; (d) coding the data; (e) offering interpretations through analytic memos; (f) searching for alternative understandings; and (g) writing the report" (p. 156).

(a) Organising the Data

Although I tried to organise the data throughout the data generation period, I also did a final cross check between the typed transcripts and the written field notes on the informal *talanoa*. I typed in any new information that I did not capture in the audio tapes of the transcripts. I then combined the data into one file. I logged everything under the headings of the name of the interviewee, code used, age group, gender, educational qualification, city of residence and date where the *talanoa* was taken place (Appendix M). Then I printed out the whole document to have a hard copy as well as the electronic version. I had 391 pages of bound hard copy data.

(b) Immersion in the Data

I read and reread through the data many times to familiarise myself with all the ideas that came through as well as reflecting on the actual *talanoa* sessions. While reading the transcript I jotted down my thinking. It took me two months to complete this work.

(c) Generating Categories and Themes

It took me more than three months to categorise my data into common themes. I found this the most difficult, complex, ambiguous, challenging and creative part of my data analysis. I went through a process of inductive analysis as I discovered the patterns, themes and categories in the data. There were 53 common ideas, issues or themes that came through after reading and rereading the transcripts. This was when I identified the “salient, grounded categories of meaning held by [the] participants” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 159). I was overwhelmed by the ideas that came through from the interviews. Some were confirmations of my experience as a Tongan student; some were emerging thoughts that came through from younger participants.

The themes that emerged from the data generation process were theorised using sociocultural theory, postmodernism, constructionism and *tā-vā* theory of reality framework as discussed in Chapter 3. The data analysis process and theme analysis identified the factors that contribute to academic performance of Tongan students. The analysis of the data was done throughout the formal data generation period. Therefore, data analysis in this research was an ongoing process. This research is exploratory and descriptive and stresses the importance of the context, setting, and participants’ frames of reference.

(d) Coding the Data

I used highlighters and drew together the most common themes from the 53 common ideas that I already had. I used both colours and numbers to differentiate the themes. I ended up with 26 themes which I refined into nine major themes, and finally to six major themes for presenting the findings of this research. The six broad themes that emerged from the data analysis were Tongan students' *tā-vā* relationships with bureaucracy, *fāmili*, *siasi* and *fonua*, the Tongan values and *tā-vā* relationships with Tongan tertiary students, as well as Tongan students becoming bicultural where they negotiate the cultural interface.

(e) Offering Interpretations through Analytic Memos

Since I had written more notes on my thoughts and insights on the much reduced number of themes, I also offered interpretations through “attaching significance to what was found, making sense of the findings, offering explanations, drawing conclusions, extrapolating [ideas], making inferences [and] considering meanings” (Patton, 2002, p. 480). This is where “I evaluated the data for their usefulness and centrality” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 162). I started to tell a story to my colleagues and my supervisors about the interesting findings that my data was producing.

(f) Searching for Alternative Understandings

After making interpretations and talking about some of the interesting themes arising from my data, I began the process of evaluating the plausibility of developing understandings and exploring these in the data. As I developed the categories and patterns that came through, I then looked for alternative explanations of the themes that emerged. This enabled me to gain a holistic view of the information given by the participants.

(g) Writing the Report

The writing process was not separated from the analytic process as I did some free writing under the various headings that I had and I started to create electronic files of these separate headings. Then I structured the chapters in what I thought was the most appropriate way.

VI. SUMMARY

The Tongan, *kakala*, *talanoa*, *mālie-māfana*, *tauhi vā* and *toungāue* methodology led the research. The research also adopted the western qualitative, phenomenological and autoethnographical methodology. The data generation process used formal and informal *talanoa* research methods that involved both structured and semi-structured interviewing in the research procedure. Quality research and ethical consideration in terms of intersubjectivity, trustworthiness, validity, and information analysis were also considered in developing the research. The data analysis procedure discussed how the data was generated, coded, interpreted, organised and written. The next stage of the journey of this thesis is the *Takavaha*: Stage 3, the actual journey where *Ola 'o e Fekumi*: The Research Findings are discussed in Chapter 5.

STAGE TWO

TĀKAVAHA:

ACTUAL JOURNEY

CHAPTER 5

OLA 'O E FEKUMI: RESEARCH FINDINGS

'Auhia ka e kisu atu pē

(Though carried off by the current, one pushed on)

'o (and) *Tu'u ē lā mo e poupou* (The sail standing with support)

-Tongan Proverbs

I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research findings on Tongan students' journeys to academic achievement in New Zealand tertiary education and the main reasons they are held back or supported in their studies. The findings are endorsed from my lived experiences as a Tongan and Pasifika tertiary learning advisor. The support and constraints that Tongan students experience in their education come from the bureaucracy and their *fāmili*, *siasi* and *fonua* (community) are investigated. Many sources of support were also seen as obstacles as they are interwoven in the complexity of peoples' lives. Differences between the Tongan and the New Zealand physical and social environments meant students found themselves in a different *tā-vā* (time-space) relationship that was ordered individually rather than collectively (Māhina, 2008). It became clear that the differences between these two cultures affect Tongan tertiary students' academic achievement. The findings of this research are presented in six contexts: the *tā-vā* (time-space) relationships of the students with bureaucracy; with their *fāmili*; with their *siasi*; with their *fonua*, which includes both physical and social environments; and with Tongan values. Also explored are the experiences of Tongan students when they become bicultural through negotiating the interface between the Tongan and the New Zealand cultures.

II. STUDENTS' TĀ-VĀ RELATIONSHIPS WITH BUREAUCRACY

Tongan students in New Zealand have certain relationships with bureaucracy that either constrain or support their studies. The bureaucratic support for Tongan tertiary students is provided by government organisations, such as the Ministry of Education (MOE), the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs (MPIA), TEC and (TEIs). These organisations offer cultural, economic and academic support. Although these agencies enhance Tongan students' academic achievement there are also constraints that Tongan students encounter that hinder their ability to succeed.

1. Government Agencies

Thirteen participants recognised the support that government agencies gave Tongans in New Zealand to successfully complete their degrees. The TEC and the MPIA worked together with the MOE to help TEIs to achieve the government objectives for Pasifika Education as acknowledged by some participants: "The government is trying to make a difference for Pasifika people through lots of financial support by the MOE and TEC" (D₃). "The government student loan scheme through the MSD helped with the education of Tongan people in New Zealand" (C₂); "We cannot afford to get our students to university if it was not for the help of the government" (D₅).

Although there is support for Tongan students through government agencies, participants in this study identified some constraints. As the New Zealand education system is very different from the system in Tonga, (see Chapter 2) some participants believed that the support that government agencies give might not be "sufficient or misplaced or misdirected because the donors may not know the source of the students' problems and the government needs to be very clear on these things so as

not to confuse the people” (D₄). The government giving generalized support to Pasifika students means there is often insufficient support for Tongan people, which is a barrier to their studies (Peterson et al., 2006). Specific problems for Tongan students mentioned by the participants are not having Tongan specific mentors to help them; not enough scholarships; and no funding to set up tertiary students’ learning centres.

This study found that living in a welfare state reduced Tongan students’ motivation to study. Eight participants believed that some students do not have the urge to study hard for a qualification because they know that the government will provide for them. So, if Tongans do not get good qualifications they can still survive. Therefore, having a good education is not a top priority for some students: “People are not desperate for jobs as the government system could support them through various welfare systems” (D₂).

The availability of student loans was also a demotivator for some students as they did not have to depend on families for support and thus students did not feel the obligation to do well. This is because they cannot see any sacrifices made by their parents and families to educate them as was normally the case back in Tonga. A comment made by one of the student participants illustrates this point:

In Tonga, my parents always reminded me of our financial situations and the sacrifices we went through to pay for my school fees so I always tried hard. Here, I lost that motivation and I did not try hard as I am paying for my own fees through student loan. (A₁₁)

Another academic educator questioned whether students were really motivated to go to university: “There is then the query of their motive on going to university, whether they want better qualifications, or they only enrol to access to student loans and other financial benefits that they could get from the government” (D₇). This differs from the problem of high

international student fees for Pasifika students which constrained some students. This is because domestic students and their families have to help their families who are private international students and they all struggled financially in their studies. Another immigration related matter that was a constraint for some Tongan students is the time-consuming process that they get involved with when they try to settle in New Zealand. As one migrant student participant noted:

At first we had to fix our papers and then from there if we want to study we need to complete all documentations to go through the system. It took some time to establish in a new country and by the time we were ready we were far behind the others. We spent half the time adjusting and when we adjusted ourselves then it was almost half the time gone and we are in big trouble with our courses. (A₁₃)

Similarly, participants in this study talked about the support and constraints that Tongan students experience in educational institutions.

2. Tertiary Educational Institutions

All the TEIs of the participants interviewed encouraged their students to use the various support services available to them. Their lecturers were seen as very helpful for the students in their studies. The lecturers initiated help for the students when they perceived they were having problems and students approached them for help when needed it. Eight of the participants said that some lecturers went the extra mile, in offering help when they realised that students were having difficulties. As one student participant said: “Sometimes it was my lecturers who chased me around to help with my assignments and I appreciated this very much” (A₁₁). Six of the academic educators, currently working in TEIs, and seven of the student participants talked about all the support offered in their institutions such as the Pasifika learning centres, Pasifika and non-Pasifika staff members and also the Tongan student associations. These services provide pastoral, cultural, learning and academic support to students.

Eleven of the participants believed that most of the Tongan students felt more comfortable going to Pasifika centres rather than to mainstream support. The kinds of pastoral and cultural support that Tongan students get from Pasifika centres are related to finance, family problems, personal grievances related to their courses, specific ethnic issues and other personal problems. One of the student participants (A₁) said that she always went to their Pasifika centre whenever she needed financial support for their Tongan student association and they were always successful in obtaining funds.

Most of the students and academic participants in this study said that Pasifika staff members in Pasifika centres were very supportive. However, the participants highlighted the role of Pasifika staff within the TEIs as equally important in giving support to the Pasifika students, including the Tongans. The support of Pasifika staff, who were not directly working in the Pasifika centres, was also a finding of this research. Most Pasifika staff helped in the Pasifika centres in their support roles whenever they could. One academic educator (D₈) said that in their institution, the Pasifika coordinator set up a Pasifika staff support group to help with the educational aspirations of Pasifika people. This group is very active in supporting all Pasifika activities in the institution and encouraging Pasifika students in their studies which benefitted the Tongan students too. The referral role of Pasifika staff was mentioned by some participants, particularly the need for a Tongan mentor. One of the students also commented on the help that was given to her by one of the Pasifika staff in the institution, saying that one semester she was in trouble with her assignments because she had some family problems so “I went and saw one of the Pasifika staff in the department. My problems were sorted and I completed my first degree through constantly talking with this staff member. We became very good friends since” (A₁₀).

The findings of this study indicate that subject specific support was very important and only the subject teachers could help the students. The majority of the participants stressed that it was important to set up specialised support for students. “If we can set up something like our Tongan homework centres for this kind of help, I am sure it will benefit our Tongan students” (D7). The availability of Tongan teachers as both role models and providers of help to the Tongan students was seen as very important by ten of the participants in this study. As one academic educator stated: “We need more Tongans in the teaching profession as role models to help our Tongan students. I am sure that our Tongan students would be more confident around our own Tongan teachers and communities” (D8). Having Tongan mentors or staff members to help Tongan students was also alluded to by one academic educator (B2) who talked about how she, as a senior lecturer, had talked sternly to six Tongan students who were at the university, so that they could finish their education. She felt that these students needed the kind of support that their family would have given them and being Tongan she felt compelled to take up this responsibility. She invited them to her office and gave them a real *tafulu* (growling or scolding) asking them who their parents were, where they came from, which school in Tonga they went to, and their reasons for coming to university. She said that after the biggest *tafulu* most of them had ever had, she let them go. After that day they all changed their study habits and came back and thanked her when they graduated.

However, non-Pasifika staff members in the institutions sometimes were seen to also help Tongan students if they were asked, as illustrated by these comments made from two of the participants: “I know that some non-Tongan staff members wanted to help our students if they asked them for assistance” (D6); “*Pālangi* staff members are very supportive of the students’ study when students asked them for help” (D7).

As well as help from non-Pasifika staff members, there is also support given by the Tongan student associations. Many of the student participants commented on the support that they received from these associations. Tongan students have two forms of support because as well as belonging to the mainstream student associations at their various institutions, they have their own culturally-based Tongan associations. At the time of this study, 11 TEIs in New Zealand have a Tongan student association. They are the University of Auckland, Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT), The Auckland University of Technology (AUT), The University of Waikato, Wintec, Massey University, Victoria University of Wellington, Whitireia Community Polytechnic, Tairāwhiti Polytechnic, The University of Otago, and Otago Polytechnic. The Tongan student associations from these institutions form the NZTTSA, which is a national body working to support Tongan students in their studies in Aotearoa. All the student participants in this research came from member institutions of the NZTTSA. This study found that 15 participants greatly valued the support they received from the Tongan student associations. The support included pastoral care, learning about leadership, learning about the Tongan culture, socialising, working together and academic support such as research presentations and also spiritual support. An ex-NZTTSA president's comment was:

I learnt a lot from being the president of the association. I learnt leadership roles, how to apply for funding, how to get the students together, how to support them whenever they needed help. This was where I practiced my life skill experiences and the Tongan culture. I know that those who were involved with the association benefitted from it too as we help each other in our studies. (A₁)

Some participants in this study stated that some of the Tongan people do not understand how the system functions, so part of their problem is a lack of understanding of how the institutions operate. As one of the participants said: "Some of our Tongan parents have limited knowledge

about universities so they cannot give the right support for their children's education" (D₃). On the other hand, ten of the participants believed that the TEIs sometimes do not give Tongan students the right support because they do not know what the students need. On some occasions there is insufficient funding and at other times there is plenty of funding, but funds are not allocated effectively. Some of the funding is not directed into the kind of support that could ensure that Pasifika students succeed.

According to one academic educator:

[In] some TEIs the responsibilities for Pasifika students are given to academic staff members to take on as part of their roles and often it was not taken care of very well. There should be different staff members employed to look after Pasifika students and funds allocated specifically to support their roles. I believe that Pasifika staff knows best how to deal with Pasifika students. What makes the difference are actually initiated by Pasifika staff members on their own in their knowledge of how things ought to happen. (B₂)

Most of the 25 participants (18) stated that the Tongan students sometimes find it hard to relate to some of the *Pālangi* support services because the way things are done is very different, like booking appointments to see the lecturers or support staff. Usually, when students desperately needed last minute help, they could not access the support services because they had to book appointments. At other times they needed to make contact if they did not make it to their appointments, but did not. The Tongan students felt *fakamā* and thought of not pursuing their needs with regards to their courses, for example:

It is easier for me to just turn up and see if I could see someone to help me there and then, but often they said that I should make an appointment and I never come around to doing that so I tend to struggle alone on my studies. (A₁)

Academic and career advisors in TEIs need to ensure that they do not accept weak students who sometimes do not have the entry requirements. Seven of the participants commented on this. An example of their comments is that:

Unfortunate students who were encouraged or advised by some TEIs for further studies are caught up in a sad situation. Our people aspire for higher qualifications sometimes made wrong choices. Therefore, they ended up doing courses that were too hard for them. (D₂)

Some Tongan students and their parents are confused about the assessment systems used and some parents have wrong impressions about the achievement of their children. One of the academic educators said: "Some parents don't understand the education system itself and how National Certificate in Education Achievement (NCEA) works. They think that when their children reached Form 7 they are quite capable to go to university but sometimes they are not" (D₇).

However, there are, of course, personal issues that are associated with Tongan students in TEIs that constrained them in the successful outcome to their studies.

3. Students' Personal Issues in TEIs

The New Zealand education system is a western type of education catering for independent learning which is very different from the Tongan students' learning styles where the learners rely on teachers to tell them everything that they should know and do. Tongan students, with their dependency mode of learning, sometimes waited to be told everything they need to do: "You learn this, you can find this here, do this and so on and so forth, they are used to a very kind of dependent learning and when they left on their own, they got lost" (D₃). This study found that Tongan students had their own problems that they take with them to universities, and these become constraints to their academic achievement. These constraints can be language problems; unfamiliarity with educational pedagogies; a lack of learning or study skills; prior academic qualification; and the transition to tertiary education from high school.

i. Language Problems

All of the research participants agreed that they found the use of the English language as the medium of instruction in their studies a major barrier because for most of them it is their second language. Usually the Tongan international students do not have to sit the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) because classes in the secondary schools in Tonga are in English but their level of English is often limited. Two academic educators, (D₃, D₆) talked about four different categories of English proficiency of Tongan students at tertiary level. These four levels are students born and educated in Tonga then have their tertiary education in New Zealand; students born in Tonga or New Zealand, and educated in both countries; students born in either country, and educated in both, with secondary education incomplete; and those born in either country, educated in New Zealand and completed secondary education.

- i) Those who were born and educated in Tonga before immigrating to New Zealand have very limited English proficiency so most of them find it hard to read and understand the required readings. Since their spoken English is limited, they cannot communicate with their lecturers to complete their assignments satisfactorily. Some of these students fail or pass with low grades.
- ii) Those who were born either in Tonga or New Zealand and educated in both Tonga and New Zealand but did not complete their secondary education take longer to cope with university study. Some of them are at risk of failing their courses.
- iii) Those who were born either in Tonga or New Zealand and educated in both Tonga and New Zealand, and have completed their secondary education have minor problems which are quickly

resolved, and if able to overcome shyness, can cope very well within a short period of time.

- iv) Those who were born either in Tonga or New Zealand and educated in New Zealand who had completed their secondary education go to university speaking fluent English. They are able to understand and communicate very well with their lecturers. However, their weakness is in their reading and writing. They cannot express themselves in academic writing. It does not take these students long to cope with university studies.

The participants in this study fall into the third (iii), and last (iv) categories. Regardless of which category a student may fall into, those with poor English skills will experience difficulty coping with university level study.

However, language problems sometimes made students feel marginalised so they did not contribute to class discussions as they lacked confidence and were embarrassed. Some participants stated that the Tongans are oral people who rely on just talking and not writing, so they did not do their readings to prepare for class, therefore they did not have the knowledge to contribute in class discussions. One academic educator said: “They had poor reading skills, as Tongan students often read about only a third of their allocated readings” (D₆). They also did not like to speak up because they were embarrassed about their lack of vocabulary and speaking ability. Another academic educator said that “because of students’ language problems, they have very little time to study the contents of their courses which undoubtedly is another negative spin off effect” (D₃). Some of the educators in this research reflected on their own experiences with the English language during their educational journeys which echoed the

experiences of some of the younger Tongan students in the study. One academic educator, who came to study at the university in the 1970s, spoke about her struggle with the English language. She said:

When I was in Tonga I went to Tonga High School⁷⁹ where everything was taught in English and I spoke English well. When I came to New Zealand it seems like people are speaking a different language. It was different English, like everyday English. I realised that I wrote and spoke like a textbook. I knew what a full sentence was and my sentences were grammatically correct but nobody spoke like that and I had to relearn the structure of everyday English so that I could speak it. Even though I could write it much better than speaking it but I realised that I did not have to only converse with textbooks but I had to converse with lecturers (D₃).

The lack of confidence in spoken English meant that Tongan students did not speak up in class so they could not operate efficiently in their classes. Thirteen student participants said that they were very shy and did not want to be embarrassed by their broken English. One of the participants in this study (D₃) said that some students cannot speak in Tongan and they cannot speak well in English and they seem to be torn between the two worlds. The Tongan students in New Zealand not only have language problems but they also encounter unfamiliar educational pedagogies.

ii. Unfamiliar Educational Pedagogies

Unfamiliar educational pedagogies are experienced by international Tongan students. Three of the academic educators (D₃, D₄, D₈) and one student participant (A₁₃) said that some of the students are not familiar with how they were expected to study at university or how learning and teaching happens at universities. One academic educator commented:

If the message does not get through in the classroom, it is the way that it had been delivered. It was not the best way for those students to learn. On top of that, at tertiary environment, lectures just happened and then they [lecturers] disappear. Learning actually

⁷⁹ Best and premier high school in Tonga.

happened through tutorials and further work in the library [self directed learning]. The lecture is to set the pace and the thinking by giving students references and let them go and do the rest of the work themselves, like a follow up. (D₃)

Sometimes Tongan students did not realise that they are different and that they are from a different cultural group and society where teaching is done differently and that “the universities in New Zealand are predominantly of the west and that their struggles are basically because of that” (D₄). Some students had problems with assessment and once they fell behind with their work it was very hard for them to catch up. Consequently making a good start is very important:

I did not have a good start! The first assignment was not good then the second assignment wasn't good either and I failed it too so I dropped this course. It is quite reasonable because there was no point in going on when I knew that I am going to fail the course anyhow. I found my first year really tough that does not mean that I did not try. I just did not know much about my struggles then. (A₁₃)

Some of the student participants in this study were concerned about how their ideas would be viewed in class as in the classroom there are cultural conflicts such as racial prejudice, whether conscious or unconscious, by lecturers and/or students which can also be a problem. Some of the lecturers did not appear willing to accept differences in classes and their teaching practices did not appeal to the Tongan students. Five of the participants mentioned that they recognised racial prejudice in the classroom. One of them stated that people would never say that they are racist but students could easily tell that some of them were by the way they behaved. She said:

In one of my classes there were an Indian and a ni-Vanuatu student. When questions were directed at them and while they were trying to answer, the teacher sometimes said 'Stop beating around the bush and get to the point'. It was sad because towards the end of the semester these students dropped out from the course. (A₈)

Tongan students are not used to the high degree of freedom and choice at university and this created problems for some of them. One of the academic educators said: “Some Tongan students found the university environment too independent so they took advantage of it to dodge classes and not commit to their studies” (D₆).

Some students in this study could not associate their course work with their own everyday lives, “They cannot give examples relative to their own background knowledge and experiences” (D₈). Another academic educator provided this insight:

There was lack of resources in Tonga and students learnt from notes and text books rather than practical, and first hand experiences. The educational pedagogies in New Zealand are geared towards western environmental and cultural values which are different from the Tongans. In Tonga, most of the learning is based on Tongan concepts and the western concepts are only found in textbooks. The university students in New Zealand learn from real life experiences that support their education on western concepts. So these are the differences which affect the Tongan students in universities here. (D₄)

This study found that Tongan students did not study and revise their work because there were too many distractions for them when they got home. Tongan culture has a strong pull and Tongan families have different priorities. One of the student participants commented:

When we got home we do other things while as the *Pālangi* students did their assignments and revised their work, so the more the brain revisits the schoolwork the more that they could remember it. But for us we got home and there were other things to do rather than studying. (A₉)

In addition to their unfamiliarity with the educational pedagogies, some Tongan students are constrained in their tertiary education by their lack of learning and study skills.

iii. Lack of Learning and Study Skills

Most of the participants believed that some Tongan students lacked learning or study skills. These lacks included communication skills, time management, planning skills, library skills, examination techniques, writing and reading skills, and computer or technological skills. While learning and study skills are not taught specifically in Tonga, they are incorporated into some of the subjects in the school curriculum. It is often assumed students have mastered these skills as they proceed to higher levels in the schools, when, in fact, many have not. Many of the participants stated that there are many support services available in TEIs in New Zealand to support students' learning skills but as one of the academic educators said "unless it is spelt out that there are support services available to use, or they are shown where to find the place they will never go and use them" (D₃). Many of the Tongan students did not admit that they needed help in this area. Many leave it until it is too late to seek support. Nineteen of the participants noted the lack of Tongan students' study skills before they go on to tertiary education. One academic educator said:

I wondered what was wrong because I know that I tried very hard but I did not get results that I should get. Luckily, in my second year, I took a study skills course which taught me ways to study effectively. I learnt a lot of things about life such as staying healthy, regular exercise, good rest and good time management and study techniques in order to maximise my learning. (B₂)

Eleven participants believed that setting clear goals for their future is very important so that students could stay focused on their studies and be successful. However, some of the Tongan students have 'last minute attitudes'. As one participant in this study said "Oh! Time management is really bad. The Tongans leave things to the last minute and they just do not present their best. They are so used to cramming and swotting at the last minute" (D₃). Work ethics relating to time or their attitudes to time

were commented on by many of the participants. One of the academic educators said: “Tongan people grew up with the attitudes to do things at the last minute, and it was a very cultural thing. We are last minute people and it happened everywhere which affected Tongan students’ education” (D₃). Another academic participant said:

We toil on our assignments tonight to hand in tomorrow. That’s very cultural with us I suppose. And when we come to western education it requires a completely different time management. Time management change, work ethics change. No postponing, procrastination and all that as we need to do things on time and hand it in on time. That was a struggle and I think that we need to adopt the western cultural ways of doing things to survive. (D₅)

One of the aspects that is related to time management skills is planning. All the participants agreed that good planning and prioritising their daily routines helped them in their studies. Furthermore, they believed success comes from careful planning. The findings of this study showed that lack of planning and self-reflection skills are problems for some Tongan students. They do not want to be criticised and may resent criticism from parents, teachers and others and are resistant to making changes in their lifestyle and study habits. One of the participants said:

I think it is sometimes very hard for us to accept our weaknesses and to move on. We are not critics and we are not taught or born critical, so we rely on other people to tell us what is best to do. It is not our habit to do that as we always hide the truth about us and the feelings that we have. (D₂)

A lack of prioritisation as the first step in planning is a common weakness that many of the interviewees talked about. All the participants concurred that Tongan students do not prioritise their future needs and so they do not give enough time for their studies. One of the academic educator participants said:

Many of them did not have short and long term plans for their lives. Education is most important in the students’ lives so they should make education as their priority but that was not often the case. They were wasting their times doing other things like going to church,

going to celebrations that they should not attend, watched TV, talked to their friends, went to parties and so on. If they have some time left then they did their studies and this is ridiculous! (D₃)

Seven participants commented that some students do not have planning skills like self evaluating to identify problems and improve their plans. Their planning skills are too broadly based and they lack revision, general overview statements and do not plan the steps necessary to achieve their goals. The plans are not revised or evaluated. As one of the student participant reflected on his planning skills:

I just plan like at the beginning of the year. I wrote down what I am going to do, like doing my assignments, passing my courses and all that and then only looked at it at the end. In between, I never plan anything, whatever happened, happened! So I think it is critical to revise all along like in between the little details, not just at the beginning and at the end! (A₁₂)

Another participant commented that, the Tongans seem to live in the here and now, and never stick to their plans, while as the *Pālangi* people live in the future, and they stick to their plans. The *Pālangi* are always ahead of themselves while as the Tongans are not. He said:

I realised in my work that *Pālangi* people plan on travelling like up to eight months or a year in advance and they booked everything ahead but for us we do things last minute. We have shorter time to book our travels. Sometimes we do not do it because we do not know what will take up our future as cultural issues such as family obligations dominate our lives therefore we do not bother looking too far into the future. (A₁₃)

Another view by some participants is about the oral nature of the Tongan culture which related to people not being used to writing down plans and keeping records, which created problems. One participant (D₂) stated that many events in the *Pālangi* world are recorded and people keep records of things so when they were written people can always refer to them at a later date, “When *Pālangi* people planned they wrote their plans, and they would never forget them as they were recorded. They could refer to their plans later and readapt them when necessary” (A₁₃). But for the Tongans,

they are so dependent on memory and when they do not remember certain things then their plans can be useless. Some of them live for the moment, a day to day living.

A lack of computer skills is another problem faced by many Tongan students. As one of the participants said: “Using the computer was my problem when I first started uni so basic computer skills are very important so everyone should have these skills before they start university” (A₁₁). Therefore, study skills are important and some Tongan students struggled with these which impacted negatively on their studies.

iv. Prior Academic Qualification

Prior academic qualifications can be a constraint to students' academic achievement. The qualifications that some Tonga students obtained before coming to New Zealand were not equivalent to qualifications in New Zealand. This made it very hard for some Tongan students to cope or keep up with their courses because of the wide gap between their existing knowledge and that of the New Zealand curriculum. Many of the academic educators in this research believed that some of the students, who had their secondary education in Tonga, found the syllabus quite different when they came to New Zealand. They seemed to be learning new information and “it took some time for them to re-establish themselves when they first came and by the time they find their feet, assignments were piled up and it frustrated them which did not even help” (D₂).

Similarly to problems with their prior academic qualifications are the transition problems from secondary schools to tertiary education faced by some Tongan students.

v. Transition from Secondary Schools to TEIs

Moving from the more structurally organised environment in secondary schools to a more independent learning environment in TEIs is a challenge for some Tongan students. Nine of the participants believed that transition was a major difficulty for some Tongan students because moving from high school to tertiary education was a major step up. At that level, it was the first time the students realised that they were on their own and they could no longer totally rely on their teachers. One academic educator said:

At university the students have to read, write and submit their own piece of work on time to pass their courses. It was a totally different learning environment as students are becoming very independent learners at this level where they have to make choices on their own regarding their education. At tertiary level, they have to critique things which are very new and they have to unpack things that they read and so on. This freedom and the kind of mindset change was the major downfall for most of our Tongan students. (D₇)

When students first went to university some of them could not find their way around, had problems with their courses and enrolments and by the time they were familiar with the university environment they realised that their first year had gone by. One of the student participants said, “When I first entered university it took me ages to get sorted which affected my studies, of course” (A₆). For some of the Tongan students it was beyond everything they imagined, the high expectations, the large classes and the age differences. Some of them were afraid of speaking up in class for fear of making mistakes as there were not only many students but there were older and brighter students in the classes. One student participant said “My goodness, I walked in to the lecture theatre there were about 500 students in class from all different races and ages, I was scared” (A₁₀).

On the other hand, some student participants excitedly talked about the thrill of the freedom that they had when they first started university because they could do whatever they wanted. At high school they were

told what to do by the teachers and more constantly reminded by teachers of the need to work. One of the students commented about his challenges:

There were many new things. You were not getting told what to write down, and you were not given the exact notes that you needed to study for the exam at the end of the year. At uni they gave you a whole heap of information then sometimes you have to go and look for them, and also you need to cut them down to the main points and everything. So towards the end of the year you just don't know what to study, you somehow totally lost. It is just the structure of what is done at uni and what is done at high school is very different. And if you are not careful you can fail your courses. (A₁₂)

The transition process is vital and the students' *fakafalala* way of life they had at secondary schools had to change because study at tertiary level was more of an individual journey. They needed to perform, read, write and submit their own work to pass their courses.

In summary, the support from the government through TEIs' support services such as the main stream support services, Pasifika learning centres, Pasifika and non-Pasifika staff and student associations helped them to be academically successful. However, specific bureaucratic problems affected students' academic achievement: limited knowledge of the New Zealand educational systems; language problems; the lack of learning and study skills; an unfamiliar academic culture; financial problems; lack of policies for Pasifika students; shyness in seeking help; transitional problems; underrepresentation of Pasifika staff in tertiary institutions; and too much freedom at the tertiary level. For many students these problems proved insurmountable and they failed their courses.

III. STUDENTS' TĀ-VĀ RELATIONSHIPS WITH FĀMILI

The Tongan students' tā-vā relationships with their families are familial. Familial relationships are constructed in the Tongan culture as a total commitment or obligation to the welfare of the family through core values of the Tongan society as discussed in Chapter 2. The use of the concept

fāmili here refers only to students' nuclear families and whoever is staying in the students' *'api* or household.

The participants in this study see Tongan students' relationships with their families as very important. They commented on the support from their families which contributed to their success in tertiary education. However, as with the bureaucracy mentioned in the previous section, their relationship with their family could also be a constraint.

The support that students get from their families is pastoral, cultural and moral, and spiritual too which gives them confidence and belief that they can achieve their goals. All the participants talked about the importance of family support during their studies. The participants discussed how their families had supported them through providing appropriate resources, motivation, and expectations. However, the constraints on some of the Tongan students by their families which deprived them of time and space for their studies are family issues, poverty, intergenerational gap and the students' wider family and community networks.

1. Appropriate Resources for Students' Education

Families support students by giving them appropriate resources in terms of time and space, finance, academic assistance and spiritual guidance.

Tongan students have many competing demands on their time. Many of the students indicated that they often found it hard to get enough time to study, especially when there were too many family *fatongia* to conduct. All 25 participants in this study stressed the value of having enough time to study. They stressed the importance of ensuring that students had ample time to study at home in addition to time spent at tertiary institutions during the day. Some of the students spoke about how their families gave them enough time to study by other family members taking care of family

responsibilities. One student, whose parents both had a good education said: “My parents gave me all the time that I needed to study. They even paid for me to move from home and stay in a hostel so that I can have enough time and space to study because of the many interruptions from our extended families” (A₁₁). An academic educator said: “Whenever I indicated to my parents that I would like to study, jobs were shifted to my other brothers and sisters. I often escaped duties at home this way” (giggles) (B₂). Some parents in this study ensured that they gave their children time and they put considerable emphasis on time. As one of them said: “Whenever my children said that they will not attend any church activity or Tongan cultural occasions because they have school work to do I let them stay home and study” (D₃). The importance of allowing specific space at home for the students to study was illustrated by the comment of one of the participants: “To finish my degree I had to move from my aunty’s house and live in a hostel to get a quiet place to concentrate on my study” (B₂). Twelve participants identified space as an important resource.

Students need resources for their studies and many of the students need financial support which was given to them by their families. Sixteen of the participants believed that being supported financially and being free from financial worries was vital for academic success as illustrated by one participant whose parents and brothers provided everything while she was at university as an international student:

Money was never a problem for me because my brothers, one here and two in the United States, provided for all my financial needs. They even bought me a car to use. I never forget how fortunate I am to have the love of my family, especially my brothers. I also appreciated being Tongan because some other ethnic groups would never do that. (B₂)

One student participant appreciated staying at home under her parents’ care and all the financial support that her family gave her:

I am still living at home although I am almost 30. My parents paid for everything like electricity, water, accommodation and phone bills. They never asked me to pay anything because I still live with them. Some of us Tongans take that for granted and never appreciated what our parents have done to support us financially. (A₁)

Borrowing money to pay for students' high international fees was a normal practice for some Tongan parents in Tonga. One academic educator stated that her father borrowed from the bank in Tonga to pay for her high international fees studying in New Zealand, "My family made a lot of financial sacrifices to save money for our education. This is my greatest motivation and so when I finished my education I worked to help my own family" (B₁).

Only a few of the participants talked about the academic support that their families gave them. One student participant commented on how he completed his degree with this type of support from his family. Here is his reflection on what happened:

My final semester was very tough and I could not have made it without the help of my family. Something had gone very wrong during the semester and I realised that I had less than two months to complete eight assignments [45 days to be exact], for the four courses that I took. I told my family that I had a major problem so all of them decided to help. As soon as I had permission from my lecturers to hand in my assignments late, tasks were quickly allocated amongst all the members of my family: My brother who was also a university student helped looking for information both in the library and the internet: My dad did all the household chores while my mother helped in discussing my assignments, giving me ideas of what I should write about: My wife typed my assignments and she helped my mother in proofreading: What I did was reading, thinking, and putting my thinking down on paper. I realised that this part of my study was like a race against time. I knew what I should put down on paper but I did not have the time to do it so the help of my family got me to beat the time. Time was everything in this situation. I needed time to look for information, time to read and write my thoughts, time for personal tasks, time to rest when I was mentally tired, and all that. However, this team work not only saved a lot of time but enabled me to hand in all my assignments, passed my courses and graduated. I owe this to them and I cannot thank them enough for what they did. I will never forget this, ever! (A₁₃)

Success for this student and his family was through a group effort (*toungāue*). This is an excellent example of what Tongati'o (2006a) and Koloto (2003a) referred to as education as a shared responsibility.

Ten student participants in this research said that their families also gave them spiritual support in terms of encouraging them to attend church services. They also have *efiafi lotu fakafāмили* (family prayer evenings) to pray for their studies. As one of the participants said: "Our family prayed almost every evening for us to be successful in our studies" (A₁₂). However, while students get all the resources they need from their family they also were motivated by their families to be successful.

2. Motivation

This study found that students can be motivated to study hard to be successful. They can either be intrinsically or extrinsically motivated; intrinsic motivation is inherent to the self or the task and extrinsic motivation originates from outside of the self or task (Corpus, McClintic-Gilbert, & Hayenga, 2009). In this study, many of the students said that extrinsic support was the emotional and psychological support from their family which motivated them to achieve. Parents reminding them of the benefits of good education, and the appropriate behaviours as Tongans were strong extrinsic motivators as one of the student participant indicated:

My greatest support and motivators were my parents. They always talked to me about good education. They always said that good education is the key to success in life. It would give me more job opportunities as well as a better lifestyle. (A₂)

For some international students, this motivation was provided when they returned to Tonga in the holidays. This encouraged them to study harder to achieve their goals. One of the academic educators stated:

Going back to Tonga helped me because all my family and the village knew about me and my achievement. This in itself greatly motivated me to do even better to get me ready for the next phase of my academic journey. (B₁)

Similar comments were made by one of the academic educators, who studied as an international student in the 1980s. In particular, she said: “I went home every year to get myself recharged to get ready for the following year’s university study” (B₂). The hardships that students encountered within their own families also motivated them to study harder. Separation from loved family members was another motivating factor, as is illustrated by the comment of one of the student participants:

The greatest motivation was my mother whom I missed a lot as she made lots of sacrifices to meet the expenses for my education. At times when I mucked around and not study I thought about my mum and all that she went through to send me to university. I want to finish my degree and go back to Tonga to help her. (A₇)

Competition between families and village gossip motivated some students. One participant, whose parents paid international fees for her to study in New Zealand, said that she remembered in their village, her parents got all the gossip from the community about whose children were doing well in school and who were not. These stories stimulated her and her sister to work hard at school to please their parents, “We want our family to be the best in the village and that’s what drives us really. Our parents were very proud which encouraged us to be successful” (B₁). Another international private student also commented on village gossip saying that: “Some people were just trying to compete with us, so this rivalry in the village really pushed me through my studies. Competition is one of the factors that motivated me to be successful in my studies” (A₃).

One of the motivations that is often hidden within family daily life is the importance of parent’s belief in their children. As one of the parent participants said: “We have to show them that they can be successful. I am

quite positive that my children would finish their degrees. I know that they are capable and I am sure that they would finish it” (D₁). This is related to parents being supportive of students’ goals which helped to make some Tongan students successful. One of the participants’ said, “Yes, my parents’ knew that I wanted to be a lawyer when I was eight years old and so they supported me all along to get my law degree, and now I have a Master in Laws Degree” (B₁). The following is a fascinating analogy that another participant used to explain this similar belief. He said:

It’s just like when a cart got stuck in the mud. Although the horse finds it hard to get out of the mud but once it gets to a dry place it will go. When the horse had the support of the harnesser, the passengers and everybody else surely it will finally get out of the mud. So we need to keep on pushing and I am sure they will soon finish. We have to show them that we believe in them. (C₂)

Not wanting to let the family down motivated many Tongan students. One of the participants said: “I wanted to graduate from the same university where my mother got her degrees. I knew all the gossip when people asked me about what I did, but yes, the biggest motivation for me was the good reputation of my family” (A₁₃). Another mature student participant who is a widow, said: “Well going back to study as a mature student is quite hard but my family situations motivated me to work hard and not to humiliate my family by not graduating” (A₅).

Successful family members were good role models for some Tongan students. Six participants were inspired by the successful members of their families to work harder and finish their degrees. One of the academic educators who wanted to be like one of her cousins who came from Tonga, did her degree in the 70s and then returned to Tonga and worked for the government said: “This was very encouraging for me at the time to complete my own degree not only to please my family but to impress the

community too” (D₈). This was also reinforced by one of the current student participants (A₁₃) saying that his mother was a good role model for him because she had many degrees and he would like to follow her pathway because he saw the benefit that his family received from his mother’s academic achievement, especially when they moved around the world through her work.

This study also found that social mobility motivates students. They understood that a good education is a means of achieving status in the Tongan hierarchical social structure. The following comments illustrate this point: “Now we can see some of the commoners, who are Ministers of the Crown in Tonga, only because they are well educated” (A₉); and “Having a good education could make you a wealthy person and you can do things that a commoner cannot do, so it pays to have a good education to earn the respect and trust of the people” (A₇).

Being the first people in the family to have a university degree motivated some students. One current student said: “There are 10 of us in our family and *‘oku ou feinga ke u tā e ‘uluafi* (I am trying to be the very first one in the family with a university degree)” (A₅). Similar thoughts came from another academic educator who stated: “Wanting my father to have a PhD, I mean his name. I carried his name and I wanted a Doctor [name of her father] for my father and so that motivated me to do a PhD” (B₂). Another student participant talked about the influence that his wife had on his study, pushing him to complete his qualification: “My wife had to make sure that I did my work all the time to complete my degree” (A₁₃). Both family motivation and expectations helped to support the Tongan students achieve academic success.

All the participants in this research agreed that increased earning capacity is the driving force for their own education. “Money is central to everything and this is the very reason why people want a good education because having a higher qualification means more money” (A₆).

3. Expectations

All the participants talked about the expectations of their families and what they did to show their appreciation for the support that their families had given them. They said that the least that they could do for their families was to live up to their expectations. One of the academic educators said: “It was a rewarding feeling when I saw my family happy when I got my results from university. I even did my Masters and my Doctorate because of the strong support from my family” (B₂). Another academic educator, who studied in New Zealand as an international student, reflected on her parents’ expectations and her obligation to help her family, because they made many sacrifices to pay the high fees for her tertiary education. She said:

I know that my family still suffer and they need my help financially so I worked and sent them money to help. I am so lucky to have such support from my family. Now it is my turn to help them as that was their expectation of me. (B₁)

Responsibilities to meet parents’ expectations are also very important for some of the Tongan students, as illustrated by this student participant:

I think it is my responsibility to both my biological parents and my foster parents to study hard to get a good job to help them. They have high expectations of me to finish my qualification, have a good job and help them. I am so lucky that I have these many parents to help me so I have to help them in return. (A₁₁)

Although the participants’ education in this study was supported by their families, there were also constraints that hindered academic achievement. These constraints include family issues, poverty, intergenerational conflicts, and wider family and community networks.

4. Family Issues

This study found that students who were separated from their parents found it difficult to cope without the support they were accustomed to from their families. Seven participants alluded to the problems of being lost and helpless because they did not have the support of their families. One academic educator commented: “Students were too dependent on their parents and extended families and they really missed that. Usually for these students, their parents were always the decision makers for them so they were lost when they first arrived in New Zealand” (D₇). Nineteen participants commented on the problems faced by some students who left their families in Tonga and came to New Zealand to study. This separation weakened family communications and connectedness as there was too much interpersonal emotional distance from their families. An academic educator who came to study in one of the universities in the 1970s said:

What I had in Tonga I did not have here. I had my parents to go to PTA [Parents Teachers Association], and lots of parents’ support. My parents were at home and when I went home after school, food was ready. But as soon as I got here I was kind of left there alone and they were out in Tonga. So, basically, I lost the support and did everything myself. It took me longer to complete my degree. (D₈)

An issue for students who were New Zealand based was their parents’ busy lifestyles in New Zealand. Some parents did not have the time to get to know their children and find out what they needed from them to support their studies. Some students were left to do their studies on their own so there was little motivation. One of the student participants whose mother is a university lecturer said:

Sometimes mum when she got home after work she was too tired to help us. This is a very tough life for our family and sometimes I did not blame her because I understand that she was exhausted working to put food on the table. (A₁₂)

Health issues in families affected some students as they did not get the support that they needed from their families and sometimes at the university they could not concentrate on their work. They missed classes and got into trouble with their assignments as illustrated by one of the student participants:

My grandmother is very old and she often got sick, my mother has cancer, and my sister has a lung problem. Unfortunately, my father was already passed away and I am the eldest of six children. I am expected to take up all the responsibilities. It is very hard to fit in my family, church, and studying now. I wondered whether my education is worth pursuing. (A₆)

One of the factors that caused a lack of support for students' education was due to men habitually attending *kava* parties and not staying home to help their children study. Ten participants in this study said that this caused problems for some Tongan families. The lack of time spent with families creates greater emotional and caring distance in family relationships. In these circumstances, physical and emotional family communications and connectedness are diluted, resulting in a lack of discipline and guidance. This is illustrated by one of the participants:

These days, many of the Tongan men are going to Tongan kava party almost every night. Some of them hardly stay home at night with their families for some quality time to see what everyone in the family had gone through during the day, least of all helping or showing an interest in their children's education. (D₁)

Not having families close together means that it is hard for students to ask family members for assistance in their studies. Family issues can also be related to being poor which impacted on the majority of the participants in this study.

5. Poverty

The majority of Tongan students in New Zealand are from economically poor backgrounds. As a consequence, many students live in overcrowded homes with no study spaces, and time to dedicate to their studies is

limited. However, ten of the participants in this study said that the hardships that students encountered within their own families motivated them to study harder. Some student participants, who had a western individualistic outlook on life and who represented the younger Tongan viewpoint, commented that:

I think that it is very important for me to study hard to get a good job because I want to have a good future with my own family. Before I think about having a family of my own I have to stand on my own two feet. In that way I can better look after my own children. (A₂)

Many participants in this study (15) still remembered the hard lives of people in Tonga, so they wished to have a good education to help their families, especially relatives who are still in the islands. They said that remembering where they came from, like the poor backgrounds and the struggles that they have in life, motivated them to be successful. The Tongan phrase "*Manatu ki he tupu'anga*", meaning the remembrance of where one comes from or one's roots, is the popular saying that motivates them to work harder because it is a kind of constant reminder. One of the student participants said:

The main reason for us coming to New Zealand is to have better education for a better future for our families. I still remember the harsh lifestyle, like when I studied in candlelight back in Tonga. I would never forget that. I do appreciate everything that I have here which help me with my studies. (A₁₁)

Although being poor motivated some students to study hard, some students found it a constraint to their own studies. Some students in this study lacked discipline and some were unhealthy because of overcrowding related matters such as lack of sleep, unstable financial status, and lack of support. So, some students worked to help their families financially. Most Tongan students feel obligated to share what they have, especially money, with their relatives, hence students lived on very tight budgets. Finding and maintaining employment, meeting

cultural commitments to their *fāmili*, *siasi* and *fonua* and studying within an education system that is geared towards financially secure full-time students is a challenge that sometimes cannot be met by Tongan students.

Some Tongan students could not afford to buy the expensive textbooks and necessary stationery for their studies as one of the students said: “I tend to use the library resources which often wasted a lot of time running around trying to get the books that I needed” (A₈). Poor students in this study had low self esteem and were not confident because they did not get what they needed. Poverty is also related to budgeting skills. Some Tongan students with financial problems said that they did not know how to budget their money. As one of the student participants said:

Unlike Tonga, it is very easy to get a well paid job here. But some students don't know that they have a lot of things to pay like the house rent, car, food and all that. When all has been paid off there was only a few dollars left and since they have other family commitments like sending money to Tonga, or on needing money for a funeral or wedding and so on they got into trouble. Sometimes the issue is not having enough money but it is the way that they spent their money. (A₁₂)

Some of the students are so independent, especially with their finance and living in a disposable society where they just use things and throw them away such as plastic cutlery (forks, spoons, plates, napkins etc.) that their attitudes towards things changed which somehow affects their lives at different levels including education. One academic educator participant said: “Now we can see all the expensive things that they bought with their money, I could not have imagined buying those things when I was their age. And they go partying, and they can buy things, and spend a lot of money” (D₈). So poverty or the need for more money is no longer a motivation for some students.

All the participants believed that *fetokoni'aki* through *faifatongia* to *fāmili*, *siasi* and *fonua* exacerbates students' financial problems. This happens

when students tend to overstretch their resources trying to fulfill their *fatongia*. One of the academic educators said “Our ways of life helping one another is beautiful but the problem is when people tend to give beyond their means then problems occurred and these people started complaining” (D₆). These aspects are further discussed later in the thesis. Some Tongans find it hard to express that they are poor or need help: “Often we did not want people to know that we are poor so we tend to present our best to everybody all the time. We have to go beyond our own means to show people that we are not incapable or poor” (D₁).

Poverty and the need for money is a purpose or reason to have a good qualification so students study hard for better qualifications but if they have money then they cannot see any reason to get a good qualification and do not study hard. Some of the students said that sometimes weighing up all the difficulties, a good education does not seem worth the effort because they can easily get jobs in New Zealand to get money:

The driving force for me is money; it is my priority so as soon as I got this job which paid me well I did not finish my degree. I did not think that it is important to finish my degree because education to me is just a vehicle to get money. Now I am satisfied with the money that I got so there is no need for a degree anymore. (C₁)

Putting pressure on students because of poverty discouraged some students from studying, as is illustrated by this parent participant’s comment:

Sometimes we tell our children to study hard so that they can get good jobs to help their other families especially their poor families in Tonga. We should refrain from giving our children this kind of encouragement because we are putting a lot of pressure on the students which could frustrate them and they do not perform well in their education. (C₂)

Some students in this study were caught up in family intergenerational conflicts.

6. Intergenerational Conflicts

Intergenerational conflicts sometimes occurred in the families when parents were conservative Tongans, and lacking the knowledge of how to support their children's education. For some parents, education was not a priority and this often resulted in family clashes when students are committed to their studies and lacked commitment to family obligations. High expectations by parents also put pressure on some students who then felt hostile towards their parents. Some students ended up running away from home or dropping out of university because they could not achieve what their parents wanted. One of the student participants said:

Sometimes my parents wanted me to do things the way that they did it. They wanted me to finish high school and to complete my first degree at the age of 21. I tried very hard but the more I tried the more difficult it was for me to achieve that goal. Now I am 28 and I am still trying to complete this degree. I got fed up listening to them talking about my degree all the time. I think if they had left me alone I could have finished it earlier. (A₁₃)

Unnecessary pressure from some parents through too much *tafulu* made it harder for some students to be successful in their education:

It was sickening listening to *tafulu* all the time about my education. The same issues over and over again. Every time my parents talked to me about my education it was growling and scolding about not performing well. Sometimes it put me down when they said why is it that we [my parents] are successful and you are not? This is simply saying that why is it that I am not like *them*. This was very discouraging and it pulled me down all the time. I believed that there should be some kind of balance in their comments, like encouraging or positive comments and not just negative all the time. (A₁₂)

Some parents' obsession with academic success resulted in their imposing their own goals on students' education by choosing the subjects that they wanted their children to take, regardless of their children's capabilities or wishes. As a consequence, many students do degree courses to please their parents and end up struggling and dropping out:

My parents had too much expectation. They wanted me to do a teaching qualification and to go back to Tonga to teach. But when I

arrived here my situation changed and I could not cope so I ended up dropping out from university. I did other things for many years before I went back and finished my teaching qualification that my parents wanted. I finished the qualification but still I do not have the satisfaction of having my degree because I did it for my parents and not for me. (D₈)

When boundaries or limits were not set by parents, problems often occurred. Some students reported they had too much freedom to do whatever they wanted with their own time and went wherever they wanted. The *tā-vā* relationships between the students and their parents were not monitored to live within the limit or boundaries that they should be as parents and children. Students crossed the boundaries and took up their parents' mature roles and made decisions about things that within Tongan culture were not seen as their right to do:

If there were any pressures to restrict me from going out that would have been better. My parents thought that I was old enough to be more responsible but I wasn't at the time so I got into lots of trouble. It would have been better if I was under surveillance and reminded of what I should be doing for my studies. (A₁₃)

Some of these students fell into the trap of too much drinking and partying and did not commit to their studies. One of the students said: "You know with us boys we can go out at night without the permission of our parents. Well, before we realised it we are hooked on partying and we did not do our studies well" (A₉).

Tongan ways of rearing children are different from any other group in New Zealand. Children in New Zealand are taught about their rights but traditional Tongan culture enforces obedience to parents and children to do as they are told. Five of the participants talked about the concept of *children's rights* and one of them said:

Tongan children who are born in this country are brown in skin but they are white in their thinking as they are exposed to all the things of this country. Most of our children are confined to western concepts and ideas when they go to school. For example, there are text books

in Year 10 Health where children are taught about their rights. Some Tongan parents have no clue about what is going on. This is why some parents cannot stop 16 year olds from going out at night. (D₅)

This concept undermined Tongan parents' discipline and has resulted in some Tongan students going out at night partying and drinking. This caused unwanted pregnancies and other youth problems in New Zealand. This is a huge family conflict for most of the Tongan youth in New Zealand. Eight student participants talked about children's rights and their desire to put a bigger physical distance in their relationships with their parents by moving away from home because they could not tolerate family clashes. There was evidence in the comments of resistance to this acceptance of cultural norms by younger students as they did not want to keep depending on and listening to their parents all the time. One of the student participants said:

Fakaongoongo ai pē he taimi kotoa! (Constantly relying, obeying and listening to them) I am confused and don't know what to do in this situation. Independent and critical thinking is one of the skills in western pedagogies so there is a need for us to live in an environment that enhances those skills. We cannot become good at it if we keep on depending on our parents. We should train ourselves in these types of things. (D₇)

Both parent and student participants said that the freedom of younger generations is a big problem as there are students who moved far from home to a different city for their tertiary education and some had a lot of freedom which created lots of problems, "Some of our students still need parents' support and guidance to set them in the right directions. So when students haven't yet learnt to be independent it created a lot of problems for them" (C₂).

In New Zealand, the Tongan ways of looking after everyone in the extended family seem to be waning so there is no particular purpose for them to work hard to get more money to cater for the needs of their wider

family network. One of the participants said that “That’s why some students worked hard because of their families that are very poor but for me at home I don’t really care about money because my family have money” (A₁₂). Some of the current participants reasoned that they did not want to miss out on being young because they are only young once so they would like to enjoy their youth by partying and going to pictures and being with their friends, which took students away from their studies.

However, nineteen participants in this study believed that wider family and community networks also created problems for them in their studies.

7. Wider Family and Community Networks

Although living in a wider family and community network can benefit Tongan students’ academic achievement there are constraints too. This study found that those families who prioritised the needs of their wider family and community networks face problems such as frequent interruptions and visits by their wider family and community networks which disrupted their study. These students also faced the problem of having a smaller share of the family resources to help with their education as these were shared amongst many people. One of the participants said: “More family means more *fatongia* and more spending which drains our resources” (A₅). Their parents were frequently absent from home due to commitments to the wider family, community and church networks both in New Zealand and abroad. This can weaken family connectedness. Sometimes these students were left to look after family affairs during the absence of their parents and this impacted on their study time. Unrealistic cultural demands from the *fāmili*, *siasi* and *fonua* can distract the students. One of the student participants said: “I cannot keep up with all the family demands and it is a big hassle, it is very frustrating” (A₄). Sometimes these students needed their parents’ assistance in terms of time and resources in

fulfilling their cultural obligations to enable them to study. When students' families were unavailable to support them on cultural occasions, this put considerable pressure on students both in terms of time and money: "I am here on my own and when family occasions happened I have to show up to represent my family which cost me time and money" (A7).

The family was a site of both support and constraint for the students. Most of the students could not have succeeded without the emotional, academic, spiritual and financial support their families gave them. However, sometimes unrealistic family expectations and family circumstances such as poverty also acted as a constraining factor. Another group that had a lot of impact on Tongan students' academic achievement is the church.

IV. STUDENTS' TĀ-VĀ RELATIONSHIPS WITH SIASI

Christianity and the church are very strong in Tonga and religious beliefs and faith had a strong impact on students' academic achievement. All the participants in this study are Christians and they discussed the relationships between the students and *siasi* as their *vā* with both God and the people in the church. These relationships are mostly spiritual, with a strong belief and hope that God would answer their prayers and would help their studies if they showed their love of God by obeying the church rules. They also often asked their families to pray to God to help them pass their exams. Most of the students said that they were successful academically because of their prayers and the prayers of their families. Since Tongan people have a strong Christian faith, all the students in this study have both cultural and economic support from the many different church groups within the Tongan communities. The student participants

in this study said that the support that they received from the church was mostly spiritual, but sometimes there was some financial support.

The Christian doctrines are a spiritual support for most Tongan students as all of the participants in this study pointed out strongly. Therefore, some students were nourished emotionally and spiritually from attending church services and activities. Seven of the participants in this study commented on the power of prayer and how their families pray for their education. They believed that the power of God had enabled them to get through their studies, especially during the difficult times. They spoke about their families and their Christian beliefs and how God helped them and their families just through prayer. God and education is based on the Bible verse: "*Ko e 'apasia ki he 'Otua ko e 'uluaki me'a ia 'i he 'ilo*" (Fear of God is the beginning of wisdom) Proverbs: 1:7. "I believe that having a strong faith in the Lord enlightened one's mind and I know that the Lord helped me. I know it, because I prayed hard all the time for my exams and I did pass them" (A₉). One academic educator, who is a daughter of a church minister, said her father's prayers engendered a sense of confidence in her that she could succeed:

I trusted that I would be fine with my studies because my father prayed for me. Every exam I rang home or wrote saying that these are the dates and times of my exams so please pray for me. My success in life is also dedicated to God and looking at my current situation, the success of my business was a blessing from God. Now, I come to realise that anything that I need is actually provided by God, like the work and knowledge that he blessed me with. (B₂)

Similarly, another academic educator, who is a Catholic, stated that she always asked her mother to pray for all her exams from secondary school through to tertiary. She said: "I had never failed any exam and I am sure that it was because of my mother's prayers" (D₂).

The church not only offers spiritual support for Tongan students but, they also gave economic support. Some of the students said that they have financial support and were learning some life principles that were very useful life skills. The financial support the students received from the church was in the form of scholarships and donations to help families in times of need as well as educational programmes which helped with emotional healing and positive relationships with their physical and social environments. The most successful fundraising activities for education in Tonga, as well as in New Zealand, were through church groups. Three of the participants (A₈, B₂, and D₅) spoke about the financial help that the churches gave to education. One of the participants, (D₅) who spoke in her capacity as a church minister, talked about one family in their congregation, who came from Tonga on a government scholarship, but whose finance arrived very late. They would have been in financial difficulty had it not been for the assistance of their church. Another academic educator, who was also a church minister, also expressed her gratitude for the financial help that people in New Zealand gave by sending money through the church to help with education in Tonga. She proudly said that:

If the church did not do that there will be no new schools in Tonga and they cannot conduct the educational programmes that are important for our people. We helped the development of education in our country in that way. (D₆)

Some people, who worked hard in the church, like church ministers and their families, benefited as well. One of the participants, whose father is a church minister, talked about how the church financially supported their education. The church funded scholarships for her father, who is a doctoral student, which enabled them to come with him and also raised funds to pay for her education. Working in the church benefited their family in many ways. She said: "If you really want this you have to believe

and trust in the Lord and he will provide for us. Now one year has gone by and everything was paid for. (A₈) So, most of the participants (17) in this study attributed their success to the spiritual and financial support that they had from the church.

Church-sponsored students did not want to fail because their families had so much confidence in them, expecting them to pass, so they did not want to humiliate their families by not graduating in due course. This view was illustrated by the comment of one academic educator, who spoke in her capacity as a church minister and a parent: “Students on church scholarships are expected to make good use of that money. They should not forget that they have benefitted from the generosity of the people in the church” (D₅).

Although participants talked about all the support they received from the church they also commented on the tremendous efforts that their families put into meeting church obligations throughout the year which negatively impacted on the students’ studies. Eighteen of the participants mentioned how church obligations and commitments caused financial problems for some Tongan students. Eleven of these participants said that some parents had prioritised their *kavenga fakalotu* (church obligations), and as a result neglected their children’s’ educational needs, such as not providing stationery, lunches, uniforms, school and fieldtrip fees. Most of the participants said that Tongan people gave too much, or overdid their church *fatongia* such as donations through their *misinale* and *katoanga’ofa*. Some of the participants in this study believed that money given to the churches should be used to improve family conditions rather than being spent on other unnecessary projects, as illustrated by this comment:

One of our research showed that Tongan children in some schools were the most likely group not to have any stationery, lunches and

uniforms other research shows that Tongan youths are the most violent, committing the most crimes in New Zealand. (D₅)

Many of the participants also commented on students attending church activities and programmes, leaving them with not enough time to study, as illustrated by the following comment:

Some students at tertiary education are involved in a lot of religious programmes. Many of them were absent from their classes at certain days of the week because they had to attend church activities. Sometimes these programmes were in other cities. Therefore, these students were absent from their classes for couple of days. (D₁)

The church, as the embodiment of God, had a large impact on the lives of the Tongan students in this study. There is also the teaching of the principle of *lotu* (worship or pray) *mo* (and) *ngāue* (work) that students focussed in their *fetokoni'aki* with their *siasi*. Despite the spiritual and economic support that the church gave Tongan students, it also constrained them in terms of finance and time for study. The next section presents the findings in terms of the Tongan students' *tā-vā* time-space relationship with their *fonua*.

V. STUDENTS' TĀ-VĀ RELATIONSHIPS WITH FONUA

All the participants in this research talked about the support and constraints from their *fonua*, as the physical and social environment.

1. *Fonua* as the Physical Environment

Although there are aspects of the physical environment that supported Tongan students' academic achievement, the participants in this study only commented on the constraints. The physical environment constrained Tongan students' achievement in terms of the cold weather, the huge sizes of cities and the buildings, time at a faster pace in New Zealand than in Tonga, technological advancements, global influences in communication and information technology and the bright lights in the urban cities where the major TEIs are located. These physical environmental features,

particularly the night life, iPods, mobile phones and other modern technological equipment were cited as major distractions by the Tongan tertiary students in this study.

The participants in this study, who were born, raised and had their secondary education in Tonga commented on their shock at the changes they faced environmentally when they first arrived. Some of the comments made were: “Imagine coming from Tonga and going straight to Wellington; the cold that I experienced was shocking” (D₈). “Well the cold when I first came sometimes made it hard for me to attend my morning classes” (A₁₃).

The huge sizes of the cities, shopping malls, houses, universities, population, classes were other environmental factors that shocked some student. Everything was big in comparison to Tonga. Some of the students got lost in their first few days at the university. One of the academic educators recounted what happened to her:

When I went to university the major problems that I had to overcome was basically the university environment as it was so different; the size of the university, the buildings, the many students in class [about 300], and all that. That was why I got lost on my first lecture it was not knowing where to go. And I sat down and wrote to my mum in Tonga saying that ‘I actually got lost at this moment’ [laughs]. (B₂)

A slightly different perspective of *lost* is described by one of the parent participants who was at the university in 1983:

It took me a long time to adapt to my new environment. I lived in Tonga in a different environment and all of a sudden I was put in a totally different environment. I lived with a brother and his wife and two kids but I did not know my brother very well because my brother left home when he was young and I was even younger then. I was totally lost here because in Tonga everything was done for me by my parents and when I came here I had to do everything myself and that was another big shock for me. (C₁)

The pace of life is faster in New Zealand when compared to Tonga and this required huge adjustments from students coming from Tonga: “Coming from Tonga, it was slow, Hey? But here everything is fast and you have to keep up with the time” (A₈). “Yes, if you don’t keep up with the time, you will get nowhere” (A₃).

Advanced technology was a huge distraction for some of the Tongan students. They had access to televisions, mobile phones, internet, electronic games, digital cameras, video, and iPods and although students knew what they were supposed to do to achieve, the distractions were too much and impacted on their studies. Sixteen of the participants mentioned this and the following comment illustrates their views:

The New Zealand born students who have easier lifestyles here do not worry too much about where to get money so they are not motivated to study harder. Students here are also exposed to more temptations and distractions such as TV, mobile phones and other technology. The *night life* yes, students like to party and this is one major downfall. (A₁₁)

As well as the physical environment, Tongan students’ academic achievement is also hampered by their social environment.

2. *Fonua* as the Social Environment

The *fonua* as people (social environment) refers to other extended family (*kāinga*) and other people in the wider group, excluding students’ nuclear family and those who live together with the students in their *'api* which have been considered earlier in the thesis as their *fāmili*. Therefore, the Tongan students’ social environment refers to their relationships with their community, peers and other people in Tonga, New Zealand and other countries that are related to the students. Tongan students experienced both support and constraints from their social environment.

Eighteen participants in this study commented on the value of community support, both psychological and economic, and how it increased students' confidence when there were expectations and encouragement from the community. They, especially the international students, spoke about how the provision of food and money from people in the community helped them in their study. This support from the community also encouraged them to work harder to be successful because they did not want to be embarrassed by not putting the help of the community to good use if they failed their courses. One of the academic educators reflected on the reason for her success, which began when she was at primary school, on seeing the joy of her family and the community (village), when she was awarded with prizes for being top of her classes:

The joy that I bring to my family and seeing my Dad... but in terms of expectations the whole family at a very young age had an expectation of me. Even people in the village who asked my mother 'oh where is your *ta'ahine poto*' [smart girl] you know, and that kind of comments I think unconsciously reinforcing that I can do it which was very motivating. (B₂)

Their support encouraged her to complete all her degrees including a doctorate. Community expectations of students' education motivated some students to study harder. Six participants, who came from Tonga on scholarships to study in New Zealand, talked about the expectations from their villages and their sponsors, and for some, the government of Tonga. They had to pass their exams and continue to study otherwise their scholarships would be terminated and it would be a big shame for their families. One of them said: "We were also well supported by all these people so we had the responsibility to do well in our studies to meet their expectations. We carried all these and it is kind of motivating for me all along" (D₃). The community is known for raising funds for educational programmes, building new schools, supporting educational initiatives and

paying fees for those who cannot afford them. One of the academic educators said:

The communities sometimes raised funds to pay for the education of some of the students who are not permanent residents in New Zealand and do not have scholarships. We do it because of our Tongan extended family way of life and we always want to help with education. (D₅)

There is very little academic support offered by the community for tertiary students in New Zealand. Only a few students, whose parents paid for private tutoring in specific areas, had additional academic support. Some participants felt that there was a need for academic support, as illustrated by one of the student participants:

Some Tongan students could be helped by other Tongans if they have a place to go for academic support. These students could be better helped with English because for some of them they can speak well but they cannot express themselves in academic writing. There is a need for a Tongan mentor or tutor to help these students. (A₈)

As well as the support that students received from the community, they also had support from their peers. All 13 student participants in this study stated that their peers supported them in their studies by giving them moral, financial and academic support. Some participants said they turned to their peers for support when they were frustrated by their parents. One student participant, (A₃) who was staying with her father's relatives and was sometimes very homesick, said she turned to her friends for comfort and most of the time they understood her more than her father's family.

Ten of the student participants detailed the financial assistance that they had from their friends. This is illustrated by one of the student participants who said: "My friends helped me with accommodation and paid for my car when I lost my job. When I got my new job I paid them back but they did not want me to" (A₁₂). Academic support by the students' peers was valued:

Tongan students should realise that as Tongan people we are communal people and we achieved many things through group work and that was what I did at university. I initiated group discussions with my peers in every course and it really worked for me. It also allowed us to have a lot of friends from all different ethnicities, not just the Tongans. (A₁₀)

One academic educator, (D₃), who is also a parent, talked about how her daughter, who was raised in New Zealand from the age of three, helped the new Tongan students at the university by showing them how to use the library and also the other support services that were available for them. Not only had she showed them where the library was, but also show them how to look for books to get the information that they needed. She always interpreted for them, especially in finding their way around the university because of their language problems. This voluntary service had helped many students in this study as they knew where to get information for their assignments.

However, as well as support that the students received from the *fonua* (social environments), it also constrained them in terms of too many community obligations that drained the family's resources, including the student's time. Students' *fatongia* to the *fonua* (people) by way of community fundraisings, compounded financial hardships, because they felt obligated to contribute. There are different kinds of fundraising activities in New Zealand. Most of these activities originated in Tonga and were for the purpose of helping community development projects in Tonga, especially in the fields of education and religion. There are also individual fundraisers to help returning family visitors. Students often gave a lot of money to the fundraising activities, especially if the fundraising groups came from their villages in Tonga or they were related to the fundraisers themselves. Some comments from participants indicated a sense of resentment and questioning about the pressures that

fundraising had on their lives. However, cultural obligation clearly outraged some participants, as noted by seven of the participants and illustrated by one of the academic participants. She said:

Fundraisings from Tonga are far too many. I wondered whether people in Tonga ever considered the number of fundraisings that they do in New Zealand especially when all of these are coming to the same people all the time. I don't think that they ever thought about the impact of these fundraisings on our people here, on all aspects of our lives. Many families are financially hard up which leads to many youth crimes. Many of these crimes are related to financial problems. (D₂)

Escaping from these community functions is often not an option because of the small Tongan community, and students always had to pull their weight in doing their *fatongia* – “that is the Tongan way of reciprocity” (A₁₃). Without parental oversight and the freedom to spend money any way they wished, some students did not budget or use their money wisely, resulting in financial problems.

The Tongan students' *tā-vā* relationships with their fonua, both physical and social, could both support or constrain Tongan students' academic achievement. The students' communities and their peers gave students moral, financial and academic support but sometimes the physical environment was a constraint as they found it too cold, distracting and sometimes they could not cope with the fast pace of time in New Zealand. Commitment to community fundraisings also constrained Tongan students' academic achievement in this study.

VI. TONGAN CORE VALUES AND TĀ-VĀ RELATIONSHIPS WITH TONGAN TERTIARY STUDENTS

All the participants in this study stated that the Tongan people's key values of sharing, co-operation and consensus, communicate the priority given to the collectivity or the group over the individual, “We put others first before our own needs and our collective responsibilities is priority to

our individual responsibilities” (D₄). All the participants in this study thought that it was great to be rooted in their own culture because it reminded them of who they are and they felt confident in what they were doing. This is best illustrated by one of the student participants: “When I displayed Tongan values it showed who I am and I am always proud to be a Tongan” (A₁₃). The core values of *fetokoni'aki*, *'ofa*, *faka'apa'apa*, *fatongia*, *fakatōkilalo*, *fakamā* and *fakafalala* discussed in Chapter 2 could impact either positively or negatively on Tongan students' academic achievement. Some of the participants said that these Tongan values were very helpful, while others said that they were very misleading and not helpful.

1. *Fetokoni'aki*

Fetokoni'aki support students' achievement was alluded to by all the participants in this research. They said that through *fetokoni'aki* with their families, friends and members of the communities, they were supported in their studies. The following comments illustrate this: “That is how we live as Tongan and there is no doubt that it helped us in many ways” (A₁₁); “*Fetokoni'aki* is our means of survival and of course it supports us in our studies” (D₈).

On the other hand *fetokoni'aki* could be a constraint to many students if they were committed to too many *fatongia* as it drained them of their resources in terms of money, time and space for their studies. Most of the participants in this study (17) talked about the negative impact of *fetokoni'aki* on their studies, as illustrated by two of the participants:

We spent most of our time helping other people on all aspects of their lives, like sending money to families in Tonga or just helping out needy Tongans here. If we don't, we are considered *ta'e 'ofa* [not having love] by our families and the communities. Sometimes we overlooked the consequences, especially if it can cause us to fail our courses. (A₉)

Often we went into extra miles like allowing fellow Tongans stay with us in our houses for a long time while they try to sort themselves out. This drained all our resources in terms of time, money and space which had lots of impact on our studies. This is a lot of sacrifices for many of us and it had impacted on our education. (C₂)

The next core value that some of the participants commented on is *'ofa*, *fe'ofa'aki* or *fe'ofa'ofani*.

2. *'Ofa*

As discussed in Chapter 2, Tongan students are brought up in tightly knit *kāinga* society where they feel the love and warmth of their families towards them. All 25 participants relate *'ofa* to students' academic achievement and said that in many ways it motivated them to study harder. The parents who *'ofa* would spend quality time with their children as well as offering other support that students need. All the participants spoke of *'ofa* for their families, for example:

It is very interesting, because for us our parents paid for our school fees and we do love [*'ofa*] them for doing it. So we should work very hard to show them our gratitude as they made sacrifices for us. (D₈)

This study found that *'ofa* is the key to success. As one participant said: "I had so much love for my foster parents for they made lots of sacrifices to get some money to put me to school... that's why I am successful in my studies" (A₁₁). Another commented how she studied hard to be successful to reciprocate her brothers' love. This is part of her story:

In terms of my brothers, their roles towards their sister in the Tongan sense, was a responsibility that they took seriously... In terms of my cultural obligations, those were the love of a brother that was a key motivating factor. I just could not do things to shame my brothers after all they had done for me. (B₂)

'Ofa to one's family, church and country enhanced academic achievement.

One of the academic participants said:

I love my family, church and country and I always thought about them first. This motivated me to work hard to get my qualifications to help my family, church and country, especially my village. Every step

I took I looked back at my family, church and my village and that in itself is more important than anything else for me. (D₇)

Seven of the participants believed that if students had the love of their parents and knew that their parents loved them and did their *fatongia*, then they will be successful as a way of reciprocating their parents' love. One participant said "If you share much love with your children they will forever love you no matter wherever in the world they may be" (C₂).

In terms of *māfana*, meaning love, warmth, heartfelt, friendly and cordiality, one of the participants said: "Ko hotau 'ulungaanga faka-Tonga ia ka māfana pē loto ia pea 'oku sai 'aupito ia 'o lava lelei pē ngaahi me'a lahi ia pea 'e 'ikai ke to e mahu'iga ha me'a ia" (We can do a lot of things if we are enthusiastic, warm or have the love so we commit ourselves) (A₈). Manu'atu (2000a) alluded to this view of *māfana* where she believed that the transformational aspects of *māfana* brought forth the creativity within people. Therefore, if there is no *māfana* (love) for what they are doing, they will not do a good job. This could apply to Tongan students' studies; success comes with *māfana*, that is the love that they have for their *fāmili*, *siasi*, and *fonua*.

However, *'ofa* can be troublesome and unmanageable if people are not careful, so it can also be a constraint on Tongan students' academic achievement. Some of the participants' believed that some parents sometimes *'ofa vale* (to be over-fond of; to love extravagantly, to love overmuch) their children. They *'ofa vale* to a stage where they were so protective that they did not give their children chances to explore the world and to learn things for themselves. One of the participants said: "We *'ofa vale* on our children that we stop them from going to camps, school balls and so on, just because we are too scared that anything bad might happen to them" (D₃). Another participant commented: "Because

we *'ofa vale* on our children we believed whatever they told us regardless whether they were telling us the truth or not" (D₈). For example, when students told lies about their courses and parents believed them, which often jeopardized their academic achievement. Six of the academic educators' participants commented that sometimes parents were too lenient, and *fakaoleole'i* (too soft) their children which caused discipline problems. One of them said: "Parents let their children do whatever they want like watching TV and not do their homework or they can stay home and not go to school just because they are lazy" (D₁).

Feeling lonely and homesick due to family separation is also related to the value of *'ofa* and most of the participants, (19), believed that having too much *'ofa* can be a constraint on Tongan students' academic achievement. One of the participants (A₂) said that when she migrated to New Zealand she did not want to go to university because she was so homesick and missed her friends and family back in Tonga. This affected her study to a stage where she dropped out. Another (A₇) said that she missed her mother and sometimes she stayed in her flat and cried.

Too much *'ofa* can also lead to overspending, which impacts on Tongan student's academic achievement. One of the students said: "Some Tongan people donated much money out of *'ofa* for the church or for other people, but I wondered whether it was done for the right spirit" (A₇). Another participant said: "Some people said that their donations are out of *'ofa* but sometimes it is competition or not wanting ridicule from other people" (C₂). The value of *faka'apa'apa*, also impacted on Tongan students' academic achievement in this study.

3. *Faka'apa'apa*

As discussed in detail in Chapter 2, *faka'apa'apa* means respect. It also means meeting cultural and familial obligations and was seen by some students in this study as crucial for academic achievement. The demonstration of *faka'apa'apa* as keeping certain gender values and taboos, such as the expectations for women to *anganofa*⁸⁰ and *anga-maau*⁸¹, was seen to have helped women to be successful in education. *Anganofa* and *angamaau* means that women's place is in the home and they should not leave the house at night without a chaperon, or go to parties or nightclubs. *Anganofa* also forbids sexual relationships outside of marriage that could distract students from their studies. "Many Tongan women with PhDs are those, who are *anga-nofa* and *angamaau* in the real Tongan way and they had lots of time to commit to their studies and not be distracted" (B₁). Some students said that out of *faka'apa'apa* they earned the respect and help of their supporters.

Another *faka'apa'apa*, is the keeping of certain taboos between members of the family, such as the type of language used especially *e ngaahi lea ki he veitapui* (taboo language for different genders), this shows respect between brothers and sisters. One of the participants did not want to put shame on her brothers by not behaving like a Tongan woman. She is also a church minister's daughter and there are other expectations of her. She said:

To ensure that my *fanga tuonga'ane* [brothers] are not ashamed of the things that I do was a motivating factor for me; to keep clean as a young Tongan woman. I did not want to shame anybody who meant a lot to me. In terms of my parents' role in the church, there were expectations of how the church minister's daughters should behave. I thought that just to make things easier for everybody in the family I just kept to my role as a student, and do well. (B₂)

⁸⁰ Submissive, dutiful, not inclined to rebel.

⁸¹ Tidy and methodical, or habitually behaving as one ought to behave; prim and proper.

Faka'apa'apa as a taboo that sometimes distances family members from each other was a different aspect of this concept:

My nana and her brothers they are not as close as my mum and her brothers. This is because it is strictly forbidden to swear in front of my nana and her brothers but my mum she can say some light swear words when her brothers are around and she is so *longoa'a* [loud] around the house and they are still close. We Tongan kids were taught not to disrespect other people but that [light swear words] it brings my uncle and his kids closer to my mum and us than my nana's brothers and their families... And our two families were never close as we should be. (A₆)

Another six female participants said that they achieved well because they avoided partying while studying. These students felt good about themselves and are confident in themselves. One of them said:

It was not easy to stay home while your friends went out to parties but at the end of the year when I passed my courses and not my partying friends is something that I am very proud of. I am happy to value *anga nofo* and *angamaau* and being so *faka'apa'apa* to my family because it did help me when I was a student. (B₁)

Other comments made by two of the participants are: "*Kapau te tau faka'apa'apa'i e ngaahi 'ofa hotau ngaahi fāmili kiate kিতautolu ke fua 'etau ako pea te ne faka'ai'ai kিতautolu ketau feinga mālohi he ako*" [If we respect the love of our families to educate us then it could motivate us to work harder in our education] (A₁₀); "*Ko e faka'ap'apa ko e me'a mahu'inga he kapau te tau faka'ap'apa'i e ngaahi naunau mo e ngaahi faingamālie fakaako kotoa pē 'oku tau ma'u pea 'e ma'u e ola lelei he'etau feinga*" [Respect is very important if we respect every educational opportunity that we have then we will have good results in what we aspire to] (D₁). These findings underscore the importance of respect in achieving academic success.

The majority of the participants (20) pointed out that there was a problem with the '*ulungaanga faka'apa'apa* (respect or good behaviour) of Tongan students especially those who were born in New Zealand. For some of the students, having little or no *faka'apa'apa* meant they were not *talangofua* to

what their parents and teachers told them to do and they often found themselves in trouble. One of the participants said: “Children when they *talangofua* to their parents enabled them to do what they were supposed to do, and that is to be successful in their studies but for some they don't and this is when problems arise” (D7). Some participants believed that keeping the *faka'apa'apa* in the Tongan sense to mean *fa'a fakamolemole/fakaoleole'i* and *anga-fakama'uma'u* could sometimes constrain students' achievement.

The use of *kapekape* (swearing) in the classrooms shocked some students as it shows disrespect. Some students found it very uncomfortable in the classrooms when *kapekape* was involved. These are some of the comments made by some of the students: “I was shocked and really embarrassed one day when we had class discussions and some of the *Pālangi* students in class used *kapekape* in our discussions” (A1). “In the class, *kapekape* was no big deal as long as that example (*kapekape*) illustrates the point than it is OK, nobody cares but I felt very uncomfortable” (A8).

Another perspective regarding *faka'apa'apa*, was when Tongan students' respect for their lecturers prevented them seeking help: “When Tongan students respect their lecturers they put them up there [points upwards] so sometimes they found it hard to knock on lecturers' doors for help” (B2) and “One of the reasons why our Tongan students do not seek for teachers' help was that they felt diminutive in the learning situations and out of respect they feel uncomfortable to seek help from their lecturers” (D8).

Referring to *faka'ap'apa* as *fakama'uma'u*, one participant said that this Tongan value of *'oua 'e taungutu* (not answering back and not reasoning with their parents) when they reprimanded them, did not help them with their studies. He said:

Every time I was scolded by my parents I just sat there almost exploded with a whole lot of things that I wanted to talk to them about, but our Tongan culture forbade us from doing that. Answering back to ones' parents is *anga ta'e faka'apa'apa* [impolite] so I kept quiet all the time. And worse, because I just did not have any other time to talk to my parents about it. Many times I felt so sick about this *faka'apa'apa* values because it affected my studies big time. I think there is a need to create a conversational atmosphere to quickly solve the problems and to give you a peace of mind, hey? (A₁₂)

So, as with *fetokoni'aki* and *'ofa*, this study found that *faka'apa'apa* could both support or constrain academic achievement.

4. *Fatongia*

Fatongia is the obligation that Tongans should have to keep their good relationships with their *fāmili*, *siasi* and *fonua*, as discussed in Chapter 2. The findings of this study show that *fatongia* either supported or constrained Tongan students' academic achievement.

Some participants (nine) stated that *fatongia* supports their academic achievements because they know that having a good education will enable them to have a good job and therefore get good money for their *fatongia*. When they know that it is their *fatongia* to the family to go to school and be educated for a better future, it encourages and motivates them to study harder to complete their qualifications: "For the majority of our students, what encouraged them to work harder to pass their courses was the thought of their *fatongia* to help their needy families" (A₁₀).

Fatongia also enriches students' relationships with those involved in their education, such as their families, peers, lecturers and fellow classmates. When students *tauhi vā* and *fai fatongia* it enriched their academic journeys because when they know how to *tauhi* their *vā* to their lecturers, their fellow students and everyone who is with them in their academic journey

then they do well in their studies. This is best illustrated by one of the parent participants who said:

If students do their *fatongia* and *tauhi* their *vā* to their lecturers then they will pay attention in class and do whatever is necessary to be successful. Because if they are successful then it is seen as fulfilling their *fatongia* to their lecturers and this applies to their parents and whoever wants them to be successful. (C₂)

Fatongia also evokes honesty and accountability on behalf of students and encourages Tongan students to be successful. Students feel better when they can justify the useful disposal of the funds used in their education and they are happy to let everyone know that they did their *fatongia* to their families and supporters by passing their exams and completing their qualifications. Some participants mentioned *fatongia* in terms of both honesty and accountability. As one student explains:

Honesty is very important and if students are honest with themselves by committing to whatever is required for their studies, like allowing enough time to study, and being responsible for the money that was used to educate them, then I believe that education will take priority and students will be successful. (D₆)

However, while *fatongia* supports Tongan students' in their studies it also constrains them. Eighteen participants believed that *faifatongia* can be a big problem for the students because when they get involved in cultural activities they did not have enough time to study. The consequence of not having enough time to study is a common problem amongst Tongan students. Many parents want their family to attend extended family occasions and usually these occasions were very long and time consuming, so students were inundated with Tongan cultural obligations. One of the students said:

My father was the *'ulumotu'a* in our family and he always told me not to go to school whenever there is a family funeral, wedding, birthdays or any other Tongan cultural functions in my family. My father told me that I can still catch up with my schoolwork but I could never bring back any of the family events that happened especially when someone died. (A₄)

Fatongia to the *fāmili* becomes a problem when Tongan students have too many commitments due to their immediate and extended family obligations and expectations.

Almost all of the participants, 23 out of 25, said that the most important reason for trying to get better qualification is to have money to help their families. They were expected to gain well-paid jobs with their qualifications so that they could help their families financially. However, because some families are financially hard up and desperately needed the money, some of the students had to work, while studying, often at low pay rates:

I had to work part time and go to university at daytime to help my family. It was very hard working and studying. I sometimes fell asleep in class. Assignments were late and I barely passed some of them. I wish that I did not have to work so that I could concentrate on my studies. (A₁)

The obligation to financially help their families back in Tonga also created pressure for students and some dropped out of university:

I felt responsible to send money to my family back in Tonga even if my family did not ask me for money. My family did not expect money from me but I knew that they need some money so I started looking for jobs to send them money. Despite of my free will to send money to my family I always found it a major issue because I also struggled to complete my degree. (C₁)

The Tongan financial hardships impacted on Tongan students' education severely mainly because of *fua kavenga fakavalevale*, (unrealistic financial commitments). One of the participants said:

Some Tongan families do not prioritise their financial spending carefully and sometimes they spent their money unrealistically. Some families sent money to families in Tonga, to church donations and other family obligations which deprive them from giving priority to their childrens' education. I also questioned how families in Tonga disposed of the money that was sent them. They should have seen how we struggled here making sacrifices to help them. (C₂)

Sometimes Tongan people are busy in *fakangalingali lelei* so that they *fua fatongia* and their families suffered financially. This cycle of poverty never leaves the families. This is illustrated by this comment:

The *Pālangi* people bought their own homes and new stuff such as furniture, vehicles and important things so that they have all is needed for their own development. They live in luxury while, as for us, we gathered second hand stuff from garage sales and we cannot afford to buy houses because we are busy donating our money to other people. I think this is why we felt so subservient to *Pālangi* people because materialistically we have lower quality lifestyle than them and we look at ourselves as second class and always the second best. I think we put ourselves in this situation unconsciously but we can change this if we try to understand how they do things. (A₁₃)

Disputes and disagreements arose with matters related to *fatongia* distance students from their families, church and community. Seven of the participants talked about this, as illustrated by one of the academic educators: “I don’t like taking our Tongan *koloa* to our funerals because when we did we often expect to receive something back and if that family cannot match up with what we gave them we gossip and cause lots of trouble” (D₁).

5. *Fakatōkilalo*

Fakatōkilalo, *lototō*, *mamahi’ime’a* and *talangofua* (as explained in Chapter 2) also both supported and constrained Tongan students’ academic achievement.

Some of the student participants said that *anga fakatōkilalo* helped to develop their self confidence because knowing one’s place and *fakatōkilalo* could develop self confidence. Feeling good about themselves enhanced positive attitudes towards their education which often resulted in a good outcome for their studies. Thirteen student participants said that it gave them great confidence when they were praised for being *anga fakatōkilalo*

and known to be *akonaki'i*⁸² by their parents and this helped in their studies. When they were known to be respectable in the Tongan way, they gained *mana* and were more confident so were able to relate and communicate more with their superiors without feeling *fakamā* about the relationships.

The self esteem of some Tongan students in this study was boosted when they *anga fakatōkilalo* and did not boast about themselves and the good things they could or could not do. They said that it was always a good feeling when other people talked about a person's good quality rather than when the person talked about themselves. This is also considered *anga fakatōkilalo* and Tongan people respect those who display this quality. One of the student participants said: "Sometimes I refrain from being too noisy and showing off because I can become unpopular in class if I do that. I would rather be quiet than making others feel that I am a high headed person" (A₈). Keeping quiet makes some Tongan students feel better about themselves. However, in a western academic context this may work against them. When students *anga fakatōkilalo* they *talangofua* and also *mamahi'ime'a* which in turn support their studies.

However, *fakatōkilalo* can also constrain Tongan students' learning because when it is taken to mean subservient, the Tongan students face the problem of developing low self esteem and losing confidence which does not help their learning. Exercising too much *anga fakatōkilalo* (like in suppressing people's powers) can sometimes make students quiet and disinterested in class. *Fakatōkilalo* can discourage students from active participation and critical thinking in class. When students try to translate

⁸² To instruct or teach someone especially in morality, good behaviour or religion (Churchward, 1959, p. 4).

what they were taught at home about *fakatōkilalo* to the classroom situation it becomes a problem:

Yes, nana told us to be humble, you know, and if she sees me talk like this [talking while standing] she will tell me to be quiet and sit down. When I look at it, it's true. Respect, yes you need to respect in the Tongan way. And how you treat others you need to be humble but there should be some guidelines on when to do otherwise. Because in the classroom you have to do what the others are doing to gain some marks. (A₆)

Six participants in this study stated that some Tongan people interpreted *taliangi*⁸³ and *fakatōkilalo* incorrectly:

When we want students to *taliangi* we are spoon feeding them. Doing things without question does not develop critical thinking. When parents talked to their children they are expected to listen without question but when they come to study they are required to be critical and to ask questions. Man! If you do this at home you will get a good hiding and will be told to keep quiet and listen [giggles]. (B₁)

Eight participants said that Tongan parents often put down their children when they tell them to *fakatōkilalo*, which is sometimes was not very helpful for the Tongan students' academic development and achievement because students were not confident and active in class. Some students said they were confused about whether to be critical and ask questions and labelled as *kaaimumu'a* (boasting) or to *fakatōkilalo* and felt out of place in the class, as the following comment illustrates:

Sometimes my head told me to speak up and participate in class discussions but my heart told me not to. I knew that it was the best way to learn in classroom situations but my heart kept on telling me that it was better to be quiet and listen as I could learn things that way. Yes, it can be *fakatōkilalo* and I felt better learning that way. (A₁₀)

Other participants thought that *fakatōkilalo* is a sign of inferiority whenever Tongans are in the presence of white people or *Pālangi* people. This is because since the mid-1800s, the successful *Pālangi* people were in Tonga, especially the *Pālangi* teachers and people felt *mo'ulaloa* (subservient) to

⁸³ To accept the leadership of, to look up to and follow as one's leader, to be responsive.

them. The Tongans looked up to them, especially as they spoke better English than the Tongans. Some Tongan people still feel that way towards the *Pālangi* people. This subservient feeling could encourage *fakatōkilalo* which does not help with students' studies. We sometimes feel *mo'ulaloa* to *Pālangi* people. One participant said:

When I grew up in Tonga I always look up at *Pālangi* people because they were the superiors in everything. It was the *Pālangi* in Tonga at that time that held high positions in the government and owned the big stores and businesses. Now, in New Zealand, there are very poor and uneducated *Pālangi*, so not all *Pālangi* people are rich and smart like those that were in Tonga when I grew up which is eye opening too, but I still have that mentality you know? (D₈)

Nineteen participants in this study linked *fakatōkilalo* with *fakamā*.

6. *Fakamā*

Fakamā, meaning shame (discussed in Chapter 2) can either support or constrain Tongan students' academic achievement.

Fakamā supports Tongan students in their education when they avoid the shame of failing their courses. *Fakamā* motivated them to try harder so as not to disgrace their families and those that support them in their education. Some of the Tongan students said they achieved better with this as a motivation. Eight of the student participants believed that if it were not for their attempt to avoid being *fakamā* then they would not be successful, as illustrated by one of the participants:

Gosh! It is a shame for the family not to complete my qualification! I am here to have a degree and that's what they want me to have so it will be a big shame for the family if I do not graduate. I have to do it no matter what. . . (A₁₁)

Therefore, avoiding being a disgrace to ones' family is a good motivation for Tongan students in their studies.

Although *fakamā* supports Tongan students to be successful, it can also constrain them. Interviewees spoke about being too shy to ask questions

or to ask for help. Some did not want others to know that they needed help. One of the participants said: “I usually do not participate in class discussions because I am ashamed if I make mistakes and students’ might laugh at me” (A₃). They were too shy to ask questions in case they were seen as *vale*⁸⁴ and being *vale* would bring shame on their family as “Tongan people are identified by their families” (D₈). Since the family is at stake, some students refrain from actively participating in class in case they bring shame to their families.

Sometimes, sacrifices are made to avoid being *fakamā* which can affect students’ education. This is one of the participants’ views:

Concealing our shortcomings like poverty, ignorance, ugly, bad things and so on is part of our culture so in trying to avoid people knowing our shortcomings is a big sacrifice and sometimes education of our children are the first ones to suffer. This is because we do not want to be *fakamā* for not being able to carry or take on our responsibilities and obligations to the best of our abilities. (C₂)

There are also the views about the relationship of *fakamā* to gossip and people worry about what other people say about them. In a society where everybody knows about everybody, Tongan people are vigilant and secretive about what they do and students sometimes did not want to go and seek help because of the fear of gossip. The students said they were afraid that when they sought help, people would gossip about them being *vale*. One of the participants said that “Gossip is emotionally harmful as people do not ask questions lest other people would gossip about them which is a very discouraging effort” (A₈).

Furthermore, some of the participants in this study felt *fakamā* to ask too many questions about their studies because it could be seen as getting other people to do their studies for them and people would gossip about

⁸⁴ foolish, silly, ignorant, unskilled, incapable, incompetent.

that. Therefore, students tended to refrain from asking for help. Sometimes students were too shy to reveal the truth about what help they needed.

Families and friends turning up unannounced was a problem for some students as it is *fakamā* to turn them away and as a result they wasted their time talking or doing other things instead of their schoolwork:

There are times when family visited when an assignment is due but we cannot just tell them to leave as it is *anga fakatu'a* [impolite acting like a commoner]. We had to sacrifice ours' and served them... It would take up a long time and at the end of the day I don't know how to address that as you can't turn them away. In reality, our education is usually the first to go. Things that are related to our personal achievement come last, as we have to make others comfortable and attend to them first, then we struggled to catch up. (D7)

Sometimes being *fakamā*, made some of the students' dependent (*fakafalala*) upon others.

7. *Fakafalala*

Fakafalala is being dependent on other people (as discussed in Chapter 2). All of the comments made by the participants in this study referred to how being *fakafalala* was a constraint on academic achievement. Most of the participants (16) said that some Tongan students find it hard to be independent because they *fakafalala* to their parents or older people all the time and this can be an impediment to their academic achievement. One of the parent participants said that Tongan students continue to listen to and obey their parents until they get married or move out of home. Even when they have moved out of home they still obey and listen to their parents. She thought that this fostered *fakafalala*:

I see that happen at tertiary education where *Pālangi* people are more tuned to say what they think. They are more vocal in what they know while as for us we sometimes tend to listen and depend on other peoples' opinions or have the consensus of others when we make decisions on something. (D7)

Overprotection of children because of the fear that they might get hurt or get into trouble reinforced *fakafalala* in children. This is one of the reasons why some of the Tongan students do not attend school functions such as camping, fieldtrips or school balls thus limiting their life experiences by not having the chance to interact with other people. Although non-attendance is often because of financial hardship, in many cases it is because parents are overprotective. One of the participants, (D₃) said the *Pālangi* kids are brought up to discover, explore and develop critical thinking but Tongan parents sometimes considered taking their children to the parks a waste of time and they treated their children protectively which fostered *fakafalala* in Tongan children.

Ten of the participants stated that the *Pālangi* people are more independent and critical as they challenge their parents for their rights while Tongans do not. Children are stopped from wanting to know and asking questions and taught not to *kauitalanoa*⁸⁵ when older people are talking, as illustrated by one of the student participants:

At home, I do not have to participate in conversations, especially when my parents talked with visitors, even if I know what they were talking about. If I tried to participate my parents would tell me off in front of the visitors which was a shame. And! When visitors left I would be given my growl which was very off-putting. (A₃)

For some, as their parents had always made all their decisions, when they entered tertiary education they were at a loss when decisions needed to be made and had no one to turn to for help. One of the participants believed that if Tongan students were still *fakafalala* to their parents and when parents keep on covering up for them in doing their *fatongia*, then they did not work hard to finish their education:

⁸⁵ Join in a conversation when not asked or wanted and to speak or talk about something that was not meant to be discussed.

If students stop being *fakafalala* they will try as fast as they can to finish their qualifications so that they can run their own lives. But since they are still *fakafalala* they will not be serious to finish their education as they did not experience any problems). (C₂)

For some students “when they enter university undecided, they sometimes clown around there because they are not sure about what they are going to do there and they cannot organise themselves” (D₈).

It is noted that participants in this study did not have direct comments on the value of *mamahi'ime'a* but as participants commented on *fetokoni'aki*, *'ofa*, *faka'apa'apa*, *faifatongia*, *fakatōkilalo* and *fakamā* the elements of *mamahi'ime'a* were also implicitly included.

However, according to the participants in this study, the important Tongan core values of *fetokoni'aki*, *'ofa*, *faka'apa'apa*, *faifatongia*, *anga fakatōkilalo*, *mamahi'ime'a*, *fakamā* and *fakafalala* both supported and constrained Tongan students' academic achievement. Although Tongan values can support Tongan students they also impede their academic achievement. This creates difficulties, challenges and tensions for the students in their journey to academic achievement.

VII. BECOMING BICULTURAL

Living in two different cultures, the Tongan people in New Zealand find it especially challenging to be successful in tertiary education. The students interviewed in this research indicated that choosing to study is an individual choice. When students are passionate about their studies, they are motivated to find ways to enable them to complete their studies successfully. The findings showed that students needed to make a commitment towards their studies. To do so, students had to negotiate the cultural interface between the Tongan and the *Pālangi* worlds to suit their academic needs and thus become bicultural.

1. Different Cultural Values

Although the individual student could make a personal choice, culture also constructs students' academic achievement. This is a key aspect for a student who is struggling to identify and develop opportunities to be academically successful. Ten of the participants believed that living in a bicultural world seems to be a way forward to improve their academic achievement. This means doing things outside of the norm in order to be successful. As one of the academic educators (B₂) said:

In terms of western culture I came to New Zealand seeking for western knowledge and basically I did that. Everything I did at the university, there was hardly anything Tongan about the institution. Therefore, I had to learn the ways of interacting with other students in my class as well as my lecturers. Socially, like going out for dinner and developing my social skills that I required to learn to deal with that situation. The other thing is like talking in class, like class discussions I had to participate, study skills such as time management, computer skills and so on. These were not Tongan, and I think I need to acquire the skills necessary to survive in a tertiary institution (B₂).

According to this participant, to be successful is more like saying, "When in Rome do as the Romans do" (Titelman, 1996).

Nevertheless, *anga faka-Tonga* was believed to be a bonus on the Tongan students' journey towards academic achievement because Tongans are a communal society and the achievement of each individual is for the family, village, church and the country. It is the pressure from the society that motivated Tongan students to study harder. Therefore, this study found that the Tongan culture is not a constraint or an excuse for students' failures, rather it is a support. One of the participants looked at Tongan culture as a bonus:

My achievement is something for the family, church, village and the country. I think that this is the kind of value that we should look at as foundations to support us in our education. The subjects that we learn challenged us which strengthen who we are and our values because it is unique and very different from everyone else. That

point of difference should enable us to write and think through and present our assignments having a comparative advantage because we have something different to offer to mainstream in New Zealand. It is rightfully our responsibility to speak on behalf of our people and we should do the research and find information about our society because we know better about our own Tongan society than what the literature is providing. We should not look at our Tongan culture as an excuse for our shortcomings but as strengths to help us. We grew up in a place *'oku fe'amokaki mo faingata'a 'a e mo'ui* [where life is hard]. These should mould and encourage us to do even better for our families, church and the community. (D7)

The Tongan students in this study implied that they had multiple positionings available to them within their Tongan and academic communities and therefore experienced multiple realities. The boundaries between these realities are very complex and contestable. One academic educator explains:

Students just lose touch; they don't even have reasons for going to uni. And sometimes they have understand that it is their *fatongia* but I mean is it really their calling to be at uni? Sometimes they mechanically go to uni and sometimes they mechanically get out of the whole thing and they just float around in the whole system. And I mean some finished and *hei'ilo pē 'oku nau fu'u sai'ia kinautolu he ō ki he 'univesiti pē 'ikai* [I wonder whether they like going to university or not]. Because I think when you go to uni you have to at least have a little bit of liking the environment. I don't think it's good for them to be there 'cos they don't really enjoy being at uni. Like, they don't make any connection with the rest of the people out there. (D8)

One of the participants, in her capacity as a church minister, tried to convince Tongan parents that their New Zealand-born children are brown in skin but they are white in their thinking (Mulitalo, 2001). According to her, these students are very different because of their exposure to New Zealand western culture and dilution of their Tongan culture so their Tonganness is very limited. As a result, some of the students' perspectives and ideas are not because of their Tongan culture but reflect who they are in the New Zealand context in which they grew up:

Children live a different life to those of their parents and their culture. It is very disheartening watching family arguments because

parents do not know what is happening to their children and what they learn in school. Some of our values are so different so clashes are bound to happen at home. (D₅)

However, despite these multiple realities many Tongans still believed that their ways of being were determined by their own culture. As one of the participants who had lived in New Zealand for more than thirty years said, “Tongans think like Tongans; they do not think like *Pālangi* and that we will never ever change that” (D₁). She realised that she had lived in New Zealand more years than she lived in Tonga but that did not make her a *Pālangi*:

I will never ever be a *Pālangi* although I lived round here for a long time and I married a *Pālangi* person and I have half *Pālangi* children. I still think like a Tongan despite of all the things that I had gone through living in this country. (D₁)

The Tongan culture also differs in the way they develop relationships with visitors to their communities. Some students were surprised when they found it hard to relate to new people at the university. One academic educator said:

In Tonga you develop good relationships with people very quickly but when I came here I was shocked when I felt like no one wanted to know me. For us, once we meet somebody we establish the relationship, then we know, who that person is and then a deeper kind of relationship develops. People here, they just go to university to learn and then go home. That was a shock for me when I first came, feeling no closeness with people like we had in Tonga. (D₈)

The lack of sharing as a way of keeping good relationships surprised five of the participants when they realised that their perceptions were so different to those of the *Pālangi* people:

When I first came in 80s and went to university I remembered one time when I befriended some students and I shared everything. Every time we went to the shops whatever I bought like ice-creams I bought some for them. However, I realised that they never shared what they had as they bought things for themselves only and they did not give me anything which surprised me. You know sharing is a normal thing to us and it is a shame if we do not share what we have,

especially food. It was different with my *Pālangi* friends. That was a great learning for me at the time. (D₂)

There are big cultural changes when students move to New Zealand and find it difficult to adapt to the New Zealand lifestyle. Some of the students ran into trouble because they did not know the limit of their certain worlds. As one of the academic educators, who was also a church minister stated:

I believe that our children cannot handle all their social, cultural, emotional and spiritual problems at once which impact on their studies. And I see it many times when kids are capable and they are on top of the world and then it changed entirely, and it was not good for them. I think they need to minimise the conflicts between these different worlds. (D₅)

An academic educator stated that when she conducted research on what Tongan students do in the evenings. She found that the Tongan students did everything but study!

Even in the early mornings some of the students said that they went to church which is unbelievable! They went to church in the morning and in the evening; they talked to their friends on the phone, text, watched TV, roam around, did some household chores, cooked, did the laundry and they did not study at all apart from what they did in school. That was really shocking, eh!! (D₃)

Child rearing practices are different in New Zealand and Tonga. New Zealand laws give children rights to leave home at a certain age. This acted as a constraint on parents pushing their children too hard to be successful in their studies for fear that they would leave home as soon as the law allowed them to. A parent's comment illustrates this point:

Our parents here are totally lost. They cannot discipline their children; sometimes because of language barriers and sometimes because of children's rights. They just do not know what to do anymore because they cannot do what they used to do in the islands in terms of discipline. They are helpless. (D₇)

The types of discipline that Tongan parents are able to use in New Zealand are quite different and many are not aware of what alternative forms of discipline to use:

If we are too hard our children they will leave us. If we are too soft they will play up and never committed to their studies. The way that we live in this country makes it difficult for some of us to discipline our children. I think it is very important for our parents to have a sense of balance and be sensitive on what to do to discipline our children so that they can commit to their studies. (D₁)

Ten participants in this study said that Tongans sometimes found it is hard to accept and admit that they made mistakes because it is *fakamā*, therefore some people are reluctant to change.

Sixteen of the participants said that some of the students do not have dreams or goals for the future of their study where they only study for the sake of studying. They have no goals, they have no focus, *Nau ako ta'e taumu'a*⁸⁶, so they just float around wasting time trying to finish their degrees. One of the participants said:

Sometimes Tongan students appeared to walk around the university but when asked what courses they are doing, some said, that they are doing law and for some they don't know the reason for doing law or what were they going to do with their law degrees, which was a pity. Some of them don't know that they need to practice law after they have their qualifications before they could earn something from it. Some of them just like to be known that they are at the university and seven years later you can still see them around the university trying to finish their degrees. It is like an illusion for some of them. (D₈)

Some students whose parents were not in New Zealand experienced difficulties staying with their relatives. Sometimes there was no mutual understanding between the students and their host families. The mature students who came from Tonga are more conservative in the ways they do things. They still have stronger Tongan cultural beliefs than those born and living in New Zealand so there were a few cultural clashes between

⁸⁶ They have no goals for their education.

these students and their host families as they have different moral values and rules:

I was surprised how very loose taboo protocols are followed in our house. I was allowed to swear in front of my female cousins. We can party together and I can even dance with them. My parents would never allow me to do that. That is just an example but there were other things that I was not happy with so it affected my study. (A₉)

However, one of the student participants found it amusing when freedom is seen as a mixture of *anga faka-Tonga* and *anga faka-Pālangi* for example, when parents allowed their girls to go out at night, but to come back within a strict time frame. She said: “Oh you can wear a skirt but not a mini skirt and you can wear trousers but not shorts. I found this very amusing and I cannot see the difference” (A₈). This participant was very confused as she did not know the best way to follow.

Some of the Tongan parents in New Zealand had changed their perceptions and attitudes about the value of education. These participants said that while they still valued education, it was not to the extent that their parents did. This was a shift from an obsession with academic success to just supporting whatever their children were good at and wanted to do. One of the academic educator participants said:

My family wanted me to be a medical doctor when I was at the university which put a lot of pressure on me. I had a Bachelor of Science degree but it was not what my parents wanted. Now I learnt from that and I am very flexible with my children and support them on what they wanted to do. There are more career options for my children now and I do not want to interfere with my children's choices and what they want to do for a living. (D₂)

There are participants who theorised that priorities shifted from good education to other things. As one of the participants said “some of the parents' priorities are the *fatongia* to do to the *me'a fakafāмили*, *fakasiasi*, and *fakafonua*, and education is not as important” (D₈). Another participant's, comment was related to living here in a welfare state where there is a shift

in priorities, saying: “What is the point, to waste our time trying to get qualifications while we can easily get jobs here?” (C₂). One academic educator (D₁) stated that some parents took their children to the farms or factories to get quick money to help their families both in New Zealand and in Tonga.

The values of *'ofa*, *fatongia*, *faka'apa'apa*, *fakatōkilalo*, *fakamā* and *fakafalala* can have negative impacts on Tongan students' education because Tongan customary and traditional occasions are sometimes very lengthy so students do not have enough time to do their school work. *Anga faka-Tonga* of *mo'ui fakatokolahi* means that the community is the controller of activities so they often take longer than expected. Often communal *me'a fakasiasi*, *fakafāmili* and *fakafonua* took up students' time so they could not complete their school work. One of the participants said:

We have very unrealistic demands on students' time! Parents want education as well as expecting their children to go to church and other cultural functions. Sometimes Tongan parents like their children to go to church programmes and also to be successful in their studies which sometimes very unrealistic. (C₂)

Furthermore, some of the participants believed that the Tongan value of *faka'apa'apa* of not answering back, do as you are told, saying yes all the time and not arguing about anything, slows down students' learning. This is “because it did not allow students to think for themselves as in critical thinking which is important in western tertiary education” (A₇). One of the participants (D₂) said that the Tongan students are too obedient as they often do whatever they were told and there was too much *faka'apa'apa*, *fakaongoongo*⁸⁷ and *talitu'utu'uni*⁸⁸ which did not encourage independent thinking. Three other student participants agreed that Tongan students are

⁸⁷ To be subject or submissive to; to accept the authority; to wait for instruction.

⁸⁸ To habitually accept and follow the directions or instructions.

passive learners because they are very used to *fakaongoongo* and *tali tu'utu'uni* and “they need to adapt to *Pālangi* lifestyles in order to be successful” (A₁₁).

All of the participants said that funerals are something that are not only emotionally disturbing but time consuming too. One of the students (A₃) said that she went to Tonga for her grandfather's funeral and when she came back it took a long time for her to catch up with her assignments. The lengthy traditions and customs prolong people's feelings of sadness and excitement from emotional and cultural events therefore it took a longer time for people to recover from these occasions. These days, the pace of time is faster but the Tongan ways of conducting some of the traditions and customs, are very lengthy which clashes with western traditions and customs, especially their education.

One of the participants (D₆) said that at times Tongan people do not worry about hurrying things as they wanted to get to places on time. They took their time and they moved slowly. Clearly, all the participants believed that not doing things at the right time can have adverse effects on students' education. One of the participants said:

Tongan traditions and customs are time consuming and when students attended these occasions and cannot complete their assignments on time it becomes a burden which can be very stressful. Some students who could not cope in this situation dropped out of university. (D₃)

Some of the participants believed that students should be responsible for their studies. They stated that it was very important to keep to the *anga faka-Tonga* but students should be able to manage their time properly and not to blame the church and *anga faka-Tonga* for their incapability because everyone is free to do whatever they want. As one participant said:

It is important to set aside time to study as we are responsible for our studies. Keeping good relationships is a beautiful thing in our

Tongan culture but the students should manage their own time to be successful and not to blame the church and the Tongan customs, because everyone is free to do whatever they want. (D₆)

Tongan children who are born and raised in New Zealand found it very hard to understand and follow *anga faka-Tonga*. Their lives have been influenced by the *Pālangi* worlds and sometimes this creates family tensions, societal pressures and cultural controversies that affects the emerging sense of self, resulting in identity conflicts (Ward & Lin, 2005). The struggles the Tongan students face in their education resonate in their attempts to integrate their culture and also to adapt to the changes within their environments. However, the participants in this study believed that some of the Tongan students' problems were because of their mixed cultural inheritance and identity issues.

2. Identity Issues

The Tongan students had their own dreams and desires for their own future. However, no one could make students study and be successful if they did not want to, as one of the participants stated: "You can take a horse to the river but you cannot make him drink" (C₂). Although culture is the major determinant factor that shapes a person's identity, individual choice is also very important. It all depends on the choices made by the individuals as to whether or not s/he conforms to his or her culture. As one of the participant commented: "Some Tongan students these days do not connect with the Tongan community and they should not blame any cultural distractions that affect their studies" (D₂).

However, one of the cultural constraints for Tongan students' academic achievement is related to their identity as Tongan. There were those students of mixed parentage who did not know their Tongan culture. These students had cultural dislocation, were confused about their own culture and thus, not confident in themselves as Tongans. This weakened

their ties with their Tongan relatives. Participants said they were proud to be Tongan and felt that they were 'real' Tongan people living in New Zealand. However, Tongans who belong to two or more ethnic groups, (referred to as half Tongans in Chapter 2) may have identity issues. Not knowing one's identity affected some Tongan students' learning. This study found that multiple ethnic Tongans sometimes had issues with their *anga faka-Tonga* as some of them do not know how to speak in Tongan and their knowledge about Tongan customs, traditions and values is very limited.

Most of the participants, (17) believed that it was very important to know one's identity. Six of these participants stated that some of the children of mixed parentage were confused about their identity and they did not know whether they are Tongans or *muli* (foreigner or non-Tongan), they are like *tō 'i vaha'a* (falling in between; neither a Tongan nor any other ethnicity). Participants in this study believed that it was important to know and understand one's own culture first, and from there they could learn about how to cope with their environments. Children who know their identities have got something to be proud of, but those who do not know their identities drift between cultures. As one academic educator said: "Some of our children do not do well in our own Tongan culture, they are floating around. And if they do not do well with that one, they tend to float back or to another group" (D₁).

Most of the participants (18) commented that building confidence was very important for students who were confused about their identity:

It is sad to see those students who are half-caste when they did not know our Tongan culture, worst when some did not know the other culture too. They were not confident to speak about either of their cultural heritages. I think this also impacted on their learning. (D₂)

All the participants in this study thought that it was great to be confident in one's own culture because it reminded them of who they were and they felt confident in what they were doing. This is best illustrated by one of the student participants:

I felt good when I displayed all our values of *'ofa, faka'apa'apa, fatongia, fetokoni'aki* and all that. This is because they make who the person I am. That is why if anything happens to my family, friends and relatives it is my responsibility to go and see them and I am proud to do that to show that I care for them. I know that they will do the same for me if anything happens to me. (A₁₃)

The New Zealand-born Tongan students who are of mixed heritage, their ties with their own Tongan family were very weak. Therefore, this study found that when students are confused about their culture and are not confident, this impacts on their ability to be academically successful.

One of the participants (D₄) who is very positive about Tongan students' achievement, said that some Tongan students finishing their qualifications later in life does not mean that they are *'atamai kovi* (not intelligent) but it is because they have more responsibilities to fit in a limited time span. They finished later because they either start off their qualification late or because they squeeze in their education amongst other responsibilities. Tongan students from a different culture do things differently in New Zealand. Sometimes, they managed to finish their qualifications although later in life. It took them longer time to finish because they carry a lot of baggage at one time which means that they organised time differently to *Pālangi* people who could organise their time effectively in a western academic arena. Becoming bicultural means they have had to widen their scope of cultural understanding from knowing just one culture to knowing two or more. This is a big challenge for the Tongan students who are trying to be successful in western education.

VIII. SUMMARY

Tongan students in New Zealand tertiary institutions face a variety of constraints on and support for academic success. Some of them are very confused in New Zealand because they are caught between two different worlds; their Tongan world and that of the dominant *Pālangi* culture. Tongan tertiary students experienced both support and constraints through their relationships with the bureaucracy, their *fāmili*, *siasi*, and *fonua*. Hence, Tongan students through constraints they '*auhia ka e kisu atu pē* but '*oku tu'u ē lā mo e pou pou* because '*Ko e ako ko e pikipiki hama ka e vae vae manava*' (education is a shared responsibility) (Tongati'o, 2006a). The journey is not easy but it is possible to be academically successful if students are well informed. Therefore, it is suggested in this study that knowing the support and constraints that Tongan students have experienced in their studies will inform all educational stakeholders about how to enhance Tongan students' academic achievement in New Zealand tertiary education. The final stage of the journey of this thesis, *Taufonua: Arrival of the Journey* is reached in two chapters; 6 and 7. It starts with *Tālanga: Discussions* in the next chapter; analysing, theorising and commenting on the research findings.

STAGE 3

TAUFONUUA:

ARRIVAL OF THE JOURNEY

CHAPTER 6

TĀLANGA: DISCUSSION

Fofola e fala ka e alea e kāinga
(Rolling out the mat for the kin to talk)
-Tongan Proverb

I. INTRODUCTION

The key findings, reported in Chapter 5, described the Tongan tertiary students', families' and teachers' views on the support for and constraints on successful learning by Tongan students. The support and constraints experienced by the Tongan participants in this study are now theorised with respect to the Tongan students' *tā-vā kāinga* (time-space relationships) with bureaucracy, their families, church and the wider group. In Chapter 3, I theorised that Tongan students' learning is influenced by their *tā-vā* time- space relationships within the socio-cultural practice of their social environments in this postmodern age. The theorising mainly focuses on group culture, although universal and personal cultures are also addressed. This foregrounding of the group culture reflects Tongan culture (refer to Chapter 2). Hence, *kāinga* (relationships) are the overarching theme that emerged from the findings of this research. This is similar to earlier research on Pasifika and Tongan academic achievement by researchers such as Anae et al. (2002), Fletcher et al. (2009) and Wolfgramm-Foliaki (2006). Emerging from the relationship themes are the eight major findings unique to this study. These are the state of flux; the importance and impact of relationships; tensions and confusions; attributing success to others; understanding the culture of the academy; negotiating the cultural interface; redevelopment of identities; and the metaphors of *fakatoukatea*, *mo'ui fetokoni'aki* and *mo'ui fakapotopoto*. Finally, is a revisit to the central argument of this thesis.

II. STATE OF FLUX

The influence of New Zealand society on the lives of the Tongan students is large because of cultural differences (Māhina, 2008; Taufe'ulungaki, 2003; Vaioleti, 2001). The acculturation of the Tongan people to New Zealand society impacts on their academic achievement (Kalavite & Hoogland, 2005). Being Tongan in New Zealand tertiary education is difficult and students need to adapt and adopt some aspects of the New Zealand lifestyle to become academically successful.

The differences between Tongan and New Zealand culture occur at the macro, meso and micro levels. The differences at the macro/universal level are the conflicts at the interface of the Tongan and New Zealand cultures. These conflicts stem from the differences between the *tā-vā kāinga* time-space relationships of the two cultures. The differences at the meso/group level are those between the Tongan students and the members of their communities; the bureaucracy, their families, churches and wider group. At the micro/personal level, the differences are primarily with the attitudes and personal choices of each individual student.

At the macro level, I theorise that some of the Tongan customs and traditions, such as cultural obligations, take priority because they contribute to the benefit of the collective (Tongan) rather than the individual (New Zealand). People try to *tauhi vā mo fai honau ngaahi fatongia 'i he ngaahi katoanga faka-Tonga* (fulfil their reciprocal roles and responsibilities in these cultural traditions and customs), even at the expense of education. This is because it is *fakamā* if people cannot *fakahoko lelei e ngaahi fatongia 'oku totonu ke fai ki honau kāinga*. (superlatively conduct all the responsibilities that should be done to their extended family) (Ka'ili, 2008; Ledyard, 1999; Luke, 1954; Manoa, 2006; Small, 1997). In this

postmodern age there is rapid world change both to the terrestrial and social space (Lockwood, 2004; Monahan, 2005). The Tongan population has grown rapidly and there have been huge advances in technology (Morton Lee, 2003, 2007). Despite the benefits that this brings to some Tongan people, there has been an aggrandizement of cultural obligations as technological accessibility has allowed international involvement of the wider family and the Tongan community which means more pressure to spend and give more time.

Although the Tongan culture is evolving, the basic core values described in this thesis are the same as they have been for centuries (Blamires, 1939; Cummins, 1977; Fanua & Webster, 1996; Martin, 1991; Parsonage, 1942). This means that the Tongan students experienced confusion and tension when there was a mismatch between their core values and those in the New Zealand context because of generation gap. A finding unique to this study is that some Tongan students struggled in their education because of their *tā-vā kāinaga* time-space relationships with their extended family *kāinga* in this fast changing world of technological advancement and globalisation.

At the meso level, Tongans, with their collective and communal values, are firstly committed to their *tā-vā kāinga* time-space relationships with other members of the group and place these above their personal needs. Tonganness includes Tongan traditions, valued contexts of thinking, and basic Tongan educational ideas (Manu'atu, 2000a). However, when these ideas are associated with education and become incorporated into the western ways of living and educational ideas it often results in a combination of both the western and Tongan ways of thinking, understanding and life processes (Thaman, 1988). Although the Tongan students in this study were learning new knowledge in their tertiary

education, they had to combine it with their existing knowledge and use it within their existing relational practices.

Sometimes the *Pālangi* people do not understand the Tongan students' collective lifestyles including giving to others in cultural celebrations such as fundraisings. When students donated a lot in these events they struggled financially (Manu'atu, 2005). The majority of successful fundraising projects are usually for education and the churches, and are driven by the expression: '*Ko e lotu mo e ako ka e mālohi ha fonua*' (Christianity and education is the strength of a nation) (Howard, 2004). Tongan people are committed to the development of the *fonua*, both physical and social (*ko e langa fonua*). Therefore, every Tongan feels obligated to contribute regardless of whether they are closely connected to the fundraisers as a family, church or from the same village. They have to contribute because if they do not they will be considered as *ta'e 'ofa 'o kalo holo he kavenga* (not having love and dodging obligations) so they are (*ta'e'aonga*) no use to the family, church and the country. The issue here for Tongan students is the impact this has on their education.

One of the important findings in this research is that economic challenges for the Tongan students emanate from their attempts within their own families to *tauhi* their *vā* to their *fāmili*, *siasi* and *fonua* (Evans, 2007). This raises questions such as: Why do Tongans want to put a monetary value on relationships? Why don't Tongans make do and be satisfied with what they have and express their '*ofa*, *faka'ap'apa*, *fetokoni'aki*, *faifatongia* and *mamahi'ime'a* within the limit of what they can offer? Nevertheless, the reality is, Tongan people tend to spend more money on other people in their *fāmili*, *siasi* and *fonua* rather than on themselves. I theorise that the Tongan people's confusion between their own culture and that of the west, and a tension at the interface between the two cultures aggravates

financial problems. Therefore, there is a need to raise awareness of both students and their Tongan supporters so that they better understand how to enhance their academic achievement and how financial obligations can negatively impact on their success.

At the micro level, the Tongan students in this study perceived, reflected upon, experienced and interacted with their academic culture and surroundings (Yao, 2005). At this level, the Tongan students were in control of how they approached their study, including whether they worked hard or not. I theorise that this is a key to academic achievement and students need to be intrinsically motivated and create a balance in their lives between their obligation to their studies and their obligation to their cultural commitments. It is achieving this balance that the students in this study struggled with. Some students found it easier than others, depending on their circumstances, as sometimes they had few or no choices. Raising awareness, as suggested above, would also need to include the importance of creating that balance and how that would contribute to academic success. The relationships between the students and their supporters to achieve this balance are discussed in the following section.

III. IMPORTANCE AND IMPACTS OF RELATIONSHIPS

Relationship when translated into Tongan means *kāinga*, *fetu'utaki*, *fetu'utaki'anga*, *kaunga*, *kaungā*, *vā*, or *vaha'a*, *fekau'aki*, *felāve'i*, *fekāinga'aki* or *toto* as in *relative* (Churchward, 1959, p. 753). Since this is research with Tongan students by a Tongan, it is essential to theorise in Tongan cultural patterns of thinking so the word *kāinga* meaning relationship is fitting in this discussion, especially when Tongan society and civilization is based on Tongan relationships within their *kāinga* (refer to Chapter 2) (Bain, 1967, 1993; Blamires, 1939). This research found that *kainga*, relationships

were important because people's lives are interwoven within their social and physical environments. In particular, for Tongan society, relationships have a very high level of importance, particularly when people are living in a communal extended lifestyle (Blamires, 1939; Bott, 1982b; Campbell, 1992; Campbell, 2001; Crane, 1978). The importance and impact of relationships in this research on Tongan students' academic achievement in New Zealand tertiary education resonates with the literature on Pasifika and Tongan students in New Zealand by such researchers as Anae et al. (2002), Coxon et al. (2002), Bishop and Berryman (2006), Fletcher et al. (2009) Fusitu'a and Coxon (1998), Kalavite and Hoogland (2005), and Manu'atu (2000b).

Tongan students, like any other Pasifika students, live in a number of different worlds. They live in the world of their family, the world of their culture, (for many) the world of their church, the world of school, (as they get older) the world of part-time paid employment, and (for most of their entire life) the world of their peers, and in a very different cultural context, the *Pālangi* world. All these worlds are a reality for them and, as such, are important (Hill & Hawk, 1998). This is analogous to the findings of this research indicating that Tongan students in New Zealand have multiple relationships. The Tongan students' relationships manifest themselves in different positionings determined by their *fatongia* to the bureaucracy, their *fāmili*, *siasi*, and *fonua* (the wider group).

Kāinga as a Tongan construct of relationship is based on a communal extended lifestyle and, is uniquely different from the western construct of relationship (Māhina, 2008). The normal life of the Tongans is their cultural reciprocal roles in keeping good relationships amongst themselves through *fatongia* as discussed in Chapter 2 (Farmer, 1976; Gailey, 1987; Gifford, 1985). But they are also living and being educated in

a western culture. It is difficult for them to achieve educationally because there is a mismatch between the ways they keep Tongan relationships and how they are required to keep relationships in the western education system. *Fatongia* is also a significant part of their relationships with the bureaucracy, their families, church and the wider group. It is the students' *fatongia* to *tauhi* their *vā* to these groups by doing their best and being successful in their education. It is notable that the Tongan students' relationships within these four contexts could both support and constrain their education. Hence, it is not a matter of simply adding or subtracting relationships, but of managing them in more appropriate ways. Undoubtedly, keeping good relationships in the Tongan cultural ways is important for the Tongans but it has its advantages and disadvantages, and students need to be aware of that so they can maximise their learning.

There were relationship problems between the Tongan students and their supporters. The main problem for some of the Tongan tertiary students and their supporters was not realising the students' specific needs. Some of these crucial needs are time, space, finance and other resources to enable them to complete the requirements of their studies. Therefore, for the Tongan tertiary students to achieve their purpose in acquiring western qualifications the students and their supporters need to understand the roles each party play in the relationship. That is, the students need to work hard, and while it is necessary for the students to practise their Tongan cultural relationships, they have to practise them at a level where it does not jeopardise their learning. The reality is, if the students are to succeed, then education needs be their top priority; other affairs such as their *fai fatongaia* and *fua kavenga* have to take a lower priority. So it is not a matter of ignoring or avoiding *faifatongia* or *fua kavenga* to focus on educational achievement, but of managing them differently.

To maximise learning, the students and their supporters have to understand what the students need. A practical way of informing students, their supporters and lecturers about the students' needs would be to design a specific Tongan induction programme. A Tongan-specific parenting programme for Tongan parents to help them support their children's education in New Zealand might also be helpful.

I argue in this research that students are academically successful when the different contexts of *tā-vā kāinga* time-space relationships intersect or interact harmoniously within and between each other. Therefore, I posit that the *kāinga* relationship is a concept that is fundamental to understanding Tongan students' academic achievement. The Tongan students' and their supporters' understanding of the relationships *fekainga'aki* between the Tongan students within the contexts of the bureaucracy, their families, church and the wider group in certain *tā* time and *vā* space could assist them to succeed academically. This is the rationale for the extension of the *ta-vā* time-space theory of reality to what I call *tā-vā kāinga* time-space relationship theory of reality that is unique to this study.

Similarly to Mara (1996) and Hart (2003) this research identified that the key *kāinga* relationship amongst these four contexts is the Tongan students' families. Families are the most powerful and fundamental institution not only in nurturing students' lives but also in deciding which cultural obligations are required and which are not. The Tongan students' *tā-vā kāinga* time-space relationships with their *fāmili* determine their *tā-vā kāinga* time-space relationships with other relationships. This means that when students have minimal problems at home and are well supported by their *fāmili* in their relationships with bureaucracy, church and the wider community then they are more likely to achieve. It was argued by

Tongati'o (1994, 2006a) that the students' parents and immediate family need to take their *fatongia* in supporting their tertiary students more seriously and in a practical way. Indeed, it is her comment that became the theme of the New Zealand Ministry of Education national Pasifika *fonos* (meeting) in 2006; "*Ko e ako ko e pikipikihama ka e vaevae manava*" (Education is a shared responsibility) (Tongati'o, 2006a, 2006b). However, Tongan students' *kāinga* relationships are influenced by the changing New Zealand context. This often creates tensions and confusions that Tongan students endure in their quest for academic success which are discussed in the following section.

IV. TENSIONS AND CONFUSIONS

This study showed there were two levels of cultural conflict that created tensions and confusions for the Tongan students and their supporters. Firstly, was the conflict between the Tongan and the *Pālangi* cultures and secondly, the conflicts between the students as individuals and their Tongan culture.

I theorised in Chapters 2 and 3 that Tongan culture is different from western culture and this is supported by both the literature and the findings of this research (Hunt, 2005; Koloto, 2003a; Manu'atu, 2000a; Thaman, 1988; Wolfgramm-Foliaki, 2006). Moreover, the major differences rest on the relationships between the students and bureaucracy, their *fāмили*, *siasi* and *fonua*, as discussed in Chapter 5. For the Tongan students, their relationships with these four main groups could either support or constrain them in their studies. These support and constraints had the potential to strengthen and/or weaken the relationships between the students and their supporters. Whether they were a support or a constraint depended upon the confidence and self esteem of both the students and their supporters.

I also theorised in Chapter 3 that this is a postmodern age and that Tongan people in New Zealand are trying to cope within a sociocultural environment that is adapting to global change (Lockwood, 2004). As a result, they have to modify their Tongan culture within the New Zealand environment. Although there are changes in the protocols of Tongan culture in New Zealand, what is distinctive and important in this research is the magnitude of these changes. The Tongan extended and collective culture sometimes promotes large and elaborate cultural events, for example, weddings and funerals. These lengthy traditional procedures sometimes prolong the emotional stress or excitement of those concerned and it takes them a long time to recover and move on with their lives. These procedures also place a financial burden on families. In this study, the cultural presentations of people's *fatongia* were prolonged, making them either stressful or jubilant and students did not have enough time to study. Coupled with that, was the lack of resources available for education due to expensive spending during the elaborate cultural events. The aggrandizement of the Tongan cultural events and the associated perceived impact on Tongan tertiary students' academic achievement is new knowledge, unique to this study. There were tensions between the collective lifestyles of the Tongans within their Tongan communities and the individualistic lifestyles of the *Pālangi* people in their academic world. Some Tongan students could not draw the line on where and when to commit to the individual lifestyle of the west and where and when to commit to the collective lifestyle of their Tongan heritage to support them in their education.

Also unique to this study were the confusions that arose from the aspects of the Tongan culture that both supported and constrained Tongan students' academic achievement. The confusion created tensions when students found it hard to find a balance. The findings in this research

suggest that, while on the one hand, Tongan tertiary students know that there is extensive support from their families, church and the wider group which is absolutely essential to them in their studies, on the other hand, it makes them feel they must fulfil their cultural obligations. This creates tension and confusion for them.

The Tongan core values and behaviours of *fetokoni'aki*, *'ofa*, *faka'apa'apa*, *fakatōkilalo*, *fakamā* and *fakafalala* were also confusing for the Tongan students in this study, because these values can be both a support and a constraint, a finding which is not evident in the literature. When Tongan students have too much or too little commitment to these core values, then this constrains their studies. *'Ofa* is an example. When Tongan students had too much *'ofa* they either felt lonely, homesick and missed their families, so they could not study or they felt motivated to study harder; alternatively, when they had too little or no *'ofa* they did not commit to their studies. Therefore, the Tongan students had to find the balance in exercising these core values. If they were unable to find a balance between their cultural and academic obligations, it was seen to impact negatively on their academic achievement.

The findings indicated that it is crucial for the students to stay within the limit of what they can do so that the practice of *tauhi vā* does not jeopardise and constrain their academic achievement. The Tongan students had to change the time-space aspects of their relationships with bureaucracy, their family, church and wider community to do their studies. They had to spend less time with their *fatongia* to *fāmili*, *siasi* and *fonua* and to dedicate more to their study. To achieve academic success, Tongan students had to temporarily put more distance between themselves and their relationships with their family, church and wider community. This supports Manu'atu (2000a) and Manu'atu and Kepa

(2001) who note that the Tongan culture does not need to be a barrier to students' study and can be used to their own advantage. Tongan students need to be helped so that their culture is used to their advantage, for example when they attribute success to others, this motivates them to work hard and be successful in their studies.

V. ATTRIBUTING SUCCESS TO OTHERS

This research found that the Tongan students attributed their success to their families, church and other people and not to their personal capabilities and hard work. The majority of the students said that they were successful academically because of the support of their families, church and the wider group through prayers and provision of proper resources. Their success was extrinsic to them, that is externally identified which means that knowledge and achievement was regarded as a collective asset belonging to the whole group and not to the individual (Taufe'ulungaki, 2003). This is why Tongan students felt *fakamā* and humble, and did not boast about their achievement and educational success. Tongans are a collective people, so it is not surprising that their success is attributed to their families, church and the wider group. They often waited for other people to commend and honour their achievement in life which sometimes did not happen as self promotion is more acceptable in a western context. There is a common saying: "*Tamasi'i ko ho'o fai ē ngāue lelei 'oku ke fakafiefia'i ē fāmili, siasi mo e fonua ka ko ho'o fai ē ngāue kovi 'oku ke fakamaa'i ai ē fāmili, siasi mo e fonua*" (literally, every good or bad deed one does displays his or her *fāmili*, *siasi* and *fonua*). In my experience, Tongan people are proud and identify most with their successful family members and not with those that shame the family. This is an ownership gesture which means that when Tongan students and their families, church and the wider group are in ownership of their

education then there are possibilities for the students to be academically successful.

The combined effort through *tauhi vā* between students and their families, church and the wider group enhanced the students' academic outcomes. Some Tongan students in this study were successful in this way. Therefore, I theorise that Tongan students' educational success rests on their collective and communal relationships amongst their families, church and the wider group when everyone takes ownership of the student's education. When there is a minimum of tension and confusion for the students in their relationships, they indicate they were more able to stay focused on their studies. As families are the major influence on and at the centre of the students' daily activities they should be at the forefront in monitoring these relationships. But I also theorise that when Tongan students only attribute their success to others, then they may not see the necessity for good study skills, especially time management and good planning. This is because the other people's needs are seen as more important than theirs and students think they have to meet the needs of the others first before their own. Hence, there is a need for Tongan students and their Tongan supporters to understand the culture of the academy.

VI. UNDERSTANDING THE CULTURE OF THE ACADEMY

The students' *tā-vā kainga* time-space relationships with the bureaucracy are significantly important because this relationship is where Tongan students experience what it means to be a Tongan student in a western educational context. The findings of this study signalled that those who understood the culture of the academy in terms of the organisation, administration, and curriculum appeared to do well in their studies. Those who did not understand the culture of the academy had difficulty as their

scholarly, intellectual and theoretical capabilities were impacted negatively. This study supports the literature that states that understanding the culture of the academy is important for students' success (Adams et al., 2005; Yao, 2005). What it means to be a teacher of Tongan tertiary students is also as important to understand. Therefore, this study suggests that the Tongan students in tertiary education need to understand the role that government agencies play in their education; the organisation and the support services that are available in TEIs that they are attending; the role of the lecturers; and some of the skills that they needed to master to help them with their education. In this research, language issues, time management and planning skills were significant aspects that need consideration.

I theorised in Chapter 3 that learning takes place in cultural contexts and is mediated by language and other symbol systems (Vygotsky, 1978). Language is very important because it is through linguistic symbols we establish goals, negotiate the means to reach other people, and reconceptualise those goals we set (Guthrie & Hall, 1981). Previous research has shown that many Tongan students who are studying in English as their second language find it very difficult to cope academically (Anae et al., 2001). This study supports this earlier research, as the poor English reading proficiency and essay writing skills that impact on Tongan students' achievement in tertiary education was mainly because most Tongan people "are continually engaged in the translation of foreign educational and other ideas into their own language" (Thaman, 2002, p. 22). Therefore, it takes more time for them to learn and this could contribute to Tongan students' time management problems and late assignment submission. This signals the importance of incorporating the Tongan language in tertiary education curriculum in New Zealand.

I also theorised in Chapter 3 that time and space is arranged differently within and across cultures (Ka'ili, 2008; Māhina, 2008). This is one of the explanations as to why Tongan students fail in their education because they organise time and space differently from that required by the western education system. The Tongan people's traditions are derived from a subsistence way of life where they live in the moment. This can affect their studies because of their "simple attitude of breezing through life, of being concerned only with the 'now' and not with issues affecting the future" (Maka, 2006, p. 25). Therefore, some of the Tongan students seemed to have limited skills in developing long term plans, and procrastinating, so things happened at the last minute. Planning is an important skill that Tongan students need to master to complete given tasks in their education, for example, assignments. Foreman (2006) proposed that good planning is good stewardship and that without proper planning failure is almost inevitable. It is suggested that Tongan students and their supporters in New Zealand need to consider developing their time management and planning skills for academic success in New Zealand tertiary education.

In summary, the Tongan students and their supporters in the family, church and the wider group need to understand the culture of the academy. As well, the non-Tongan lecturers must also understand what it means to teach Tongan students who speak a different language, value relationships, organise time and space differently, and who need assistance in time management and planning skills. Such support is needed to assist Tongan students' learning. It is clear that Tongan students who are academically successful are those who are able to negotiate the Tongan and New Zealand cultural interface.

VII. NEGOTIATING THE CULTURAL INTERFACE

Participants in this study spoke about the difficulty of trying to adapt to the New Zealand way of life and many of them believed that to survive in their learning environments they had to adopt the New Zealand culture. However, the Tongan students in this study were either bicultural or multicultural as they lived in two or more cultural realities; their own Tongan as well as within multicultural New Zealand. They reported that they went through an acculturation process of adapting and/or adopting a different culture in order to study at the tertiary level. Some of the students were totally immersed in their own culture, others less so and denied or did not emphasize their cultural roots but embraced the mainstream culture (Dunn & Griggs, 1995).

The Tongan tertiary students face four acculturation orientations. These are “integration (both cultural maintenance and change are important), assimilation (only adoption of a New Zealand identity is important), separation (only cultural maintenance is important) and marginalisation (neither is important)” (Ward & Lin, 2005, p. 158). All the participants believed that integration orientation of both cultural maintenance and change was important. The findings in this research suggest that cultural integration confused some of the participants in this study and created tensions as they did not know how to handle cultural situations effectively to enhance their academic achievement.

Some of the Tongan students in this study faced cultural dilemmas about education as they were trying to experience western education through a Tongan world view. Like many other Tongans establishing global relationships, they aspired to a new way of life which challenged cultural norms. These cultural transformations sometimes confused the students and impacted on their ability to achieve academically. Many Tongan

families in New Zealand face monetisation, social dislocation and family disintegration (Finau & Finau, 2007). Hence, some of the Tongan tertiary students are now westernised as they are exposed to western influences through advanced information technology, travel and now western tertiary education.

The students indicated that they had two ways of coping with the cultural interface. One was that the students assimilated the western lifestyles by letting go of some of their Tongan cultural ways. The second was that they knew how to manage their Tongan cultural obligations, so they could concentrate on their studies. Rich (1968, p. 157) cited in Thaman (1988, p. 231) commented “[e]ach person is born, lives and dies within a cultural matrix of competing values. The attitudes he takes and the decisions he makes in reference to these values will determine the quality of his life.” As the theoretical foci of this research are the socio-cultural and postmodern within the Tongan *tā-vā kāinga* time-space relationships theories of reality, the findings in this research indicate that the Tongan tertiary students in New Zealand need to socially construct their own worlds differently as well as choosing where they wanted to position themselves within the Tongan and New Zealand cultural contexts. Therefore, I theorise that Tongan students’ academic achievement was influenced by how well they negotiated the interface between these two cultures at the macro, meso and micro levels.

Some Tongans in this study had to work hard at negotiating the cultural interface so they could position themselves within the tertiary education culture in New Zealand. The fluidity and hybridity of an individual’s decision in negotiating the cultural interface is the basis of postmodernist understandings of culture and cultural change (Yao, 2005). This postmodernist stance is related to the redevelopment of Tongan students’

identities so that they succeed in western/New Zealand education, while maintaining their Tongan identity.

VIII. REDEVELOPMENT OF IDENTITIES

Tongan students' identities in New Zealand have been moulded by their environments and their exposure to their group and universal cultures (Bell & Matthewman, 2004). New Zealand is a multicultural society, and Tongan tertiary students have multiple identities and live within multiple realities. This means that Tongan students' positions are determined by how they cope with the global, physical, social, economic and political changes that influence their lives in New Zealand (Buckland, 1997).

This research found that the Tongan students' identity influenced their study which is similar to the findings of other Pasifika and Tongan research in New Zealand (Anae et al., 2002; Bishop, 2007; Cleverley, 1996; Fusitu'a, 1992; Manu'atu, 2000b). The Tongan values of *tauhi vā* though *'ofa*, *faka'apa'apa*, *fetokoni'aki*, *fatongia*, *fakatōkilalo*, and the behaviour of *fakamā*, and *fakafalala*, have both positive and negative impacts on Tongan students' academic achievement. These Tongan students were constantly reshaping their identities to fit into the New Zealand national, and, in particular, the tertiary education academic culture.

According to Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory, the Tongan students shaped their identities through a process of construction and co-construction. In doing so, they were constantly interacting with their socio-cultural groups and responding to rapid change and globalisation. In this process they developed multiple identities within socially constructed multiple realities (Caws, 1994; Dunn & Griggs, 1995). For example, some Tongan parents in this study stated that although they held offices in the church such as secretary or treasurer, they excused their

children from some church activities so they could dedicate time to their study. These Tongan parents positioned themselves as responsible Tongan parents towards their children's education although they still held to their Christian belief and responsibilities to the church. This illustrates their multiple realities of trying to hold on to both worlds; the demand of their Tongan Christian culture and beliefs, as well as trying to keep up with the academic needs of their children in New Zealand.

The findings in this research indicate that Tongan students in New Zealand are caught up in the world where:

Human inventiveness, sensitivity and flexibility are in conflict with technology's predictability, lack of imagination and resistance to change. Or to put it another way, human beings, who are forgetful, illogical, disorganized and emotional, are trying to co-exist with technical devices that have excellent memories and are precise, logical, highly organized and reliable, but not adaptable. (Jonsson, 1999, p. 12)

Sensitivity and flexibility are very valuable personal attributes for Tongan students in New Zealand as they position themselves in a postmodern world, with its multiple realities and identities. It is this sensitivity and flexibility that enables Tongan students to construct their cultural identity and traditions within both the Tongan and western cultures, in a way to manage tension and confusion to impact positively on their education. However, which identity fits with and works well within which reality is difficult to clarify. Hence, surviving and translating these realities is a daily struggle and a major concern for anyone involved with Tongan people's education in New Zealand.

I theorise that living in and understanding both the Tongan and western notions of knowing enhances Tongan tertiary students' academic achievement in New Zealand. I also theorise that the focus for the Tongan students is to move from the collective understandings to individual

interpretations of knowing that could allow them to create their own unique identity as distinct from others and thereby promote diversity within the culture. However, as Runarsdottir (2003) comments, the “two cannot be separated as individual identities are connected to wider collective identities that are formed around shared values and beliefs” (p. 36). This can be another site of tension and confusion because although there are some common Tongan values and practices that Tongan students adhere to (the collective), how each (the individual) is able to enact those in a New Zealand academic context will differ. This contributes to the changes of *anga faka-Tonga* in New Zealand that affects Tongan people’s ability to be academically successful.

The notion of multiple identities is very important in this research; especially for non-Tongan lecturers. If they understand how Tongan students have to negotiate between the Tongan and New Zealand cultures, and how they have to mediate or change their relationships with their family, church and wider community then they may be better able to support the students in their academic journeys.

The findings in this research indicate that, currently many non-Tongan academics do not understand and appreciate the extent to which Tongan students must renegotiate their relationships to be academically successful. I theorise that the degree of confusion and tension that Tongan students face during their studies is due to how effectively they renegotiate their relationships with their families, church and the wider community. Therefore, Tongan students have a double task; to be successful academically in New Zealand, they must negotiate relationships in a new culture – the academic culture. But, they must also renegotiate their relationships within their Tongan culture. The redevelopment of their Tongan relationships and identities in order to

operate in the New Zealand education system was the biggest challenge. It was also very difficult for Tongan students to instigate changes to their relationships in their own culture. The assistance provided by the Tongan tertiary students' supporters is significant as they help students to move efficiently between the two cultures. It is, therefore, vital that each support network is not only maintained but also expanded. In this context, the three Tongan metaphors of *fakatoukatea*, *mo'ui fetokoni'aki* and *mo'ui fakapotopoto* are of significance.

IX. METAPHORS OF FAKATOUKATEA, MO'UI FETOKONI'AKI AND MO'UI FAKAPOTOPOTO

The findings of this study show the importance of indigenous systems for the wellbeing and development of Tongan people's education in the context of globalisation. The findings also give support to the position that a Tongan worldview, similar to other Pasifika epistemologies, provides a relevant pathway for understanding Tongan students' academic achievement in New Zealand tertiary education (Mafile'o, 2005). However, the key points of the findings of this research are expressed in the three Tongan relationship metaphors of *fakatoukatea*, *mo'ui fetokoni'aki* and *mo'ui fakapotopoto*.

1. Metaphor of *Fakatoukatea*

Fakatoukatea in the context of this research refers to Tongan students who are skilful in both cultures; the Tongan and the western, that is, have become bicultural. *Fakatoukatea* also means "when two people or things are compatible in every way" (Māhina, 2004b, p. 57). Mafile'o (2005) also referred to *fakatoukatea* as the diversity of skills and knowledge across the Tongan and the *Pālangi* contexts. Diversities stimulate, challenge, and increase the range of possibilities and responses to enhance the intellectual enterprises (Stiehm, 1994). While previous research has strongly proposed

that Tongan students' need to retain their Tongan cultural knowledge (group) for academic success, what emerged strongly in the findings that is unique to this research is that there is a need for Tongan students to understand the New Zealand academic culture and other cultures (universal) to become bicultural so as to enhance their learning. Those who are *fakatoukatea* are harmoniously positioned within the interface of the Tongan and New Zealand culture where they "*Tā ki liku tā ki fanaga*"⁸⁹ as they move fluidly within the interface of the two cultures using the best of both worlds for academic achievement. The Tongan students who appeared to be able to move fluidly between the two cultures said they found it easier to commit to their studies and be successful. Hence, the different arrangements of *tā* time and *vā* space in *kāinga* relationships, when compared to the dominant New Zealand culture, created tensions for Tongan tertiary students. A proposed way forward is for the Tongan students to be versatile, flexible and do things efficiently.

2. Metaphor of *Mo'ui Fetokoni'aki*

Mo'ui Fetokoni'aki supportive livelihood has been discussed in more detail earlier in the thesis (Chapters 2, 4 and 5). It is through *mo'ui fetokoni'aki* that Tongan students are taking their *fāmili*, *siasi* and *fonua* with them during their academic journey. *Mo'ui fetokoni'aki* is the strength and core of the Tongan culture; it should be the basic asset to enhance Tongan students' academic achievement. *Fetokoni'aki* amongst the students' *fāmili* can help them to achieve if the *fāmili* work as a team (*toungāue*), even to the extent of sharing students' academic work such as typing up assignments to allow them time to complete their work (Koloto, 2003a).

⁸⁹ A Tongan proverb: '*Oku 'uhinga ki ha taha 'oku 'ikai hama ha me'a*, - meaning when someone is proficient in many ways.

The students' *fetokoni'aki* with their *fāmili*, *siasi*, bureaucracy and the wider group, especially in tertiary education institutions, are essential in developing a more nurturing, reflective and people-oriented learning environment. This is where the church community understands the Tongan students' tasks in negotiating their relationships within the tertiary education culture and their Tongan culture. These supporters have a goal of "providing them with opportunities to be able to regard *ako* (teaching and learning) as lifelong activities aimed at developing and enhancing their cope-capabilities" (Thaman, 1988, p. 258). It is recommended that the non-Tongan supporters such as lecturers in tertiary education institutions need to be versatile and flexible in the way that they connect with Tongan students. They also need to be either bicultural or understand and appreciate what the Tongan students are experiencing in their attempts for academic achievement. There is also a need for more representation of Tongan staff in the tertiary sector not only as role models but as supporters for Tongan students.

3. Metaphor of *Mo'ui Fakapotopoto*

Mo'ui fakapotopto is sustainable livelihood:

[It] is a life that is worthwhile and is able to use existing and limited resources wisely. [It] encompasses spiritual, emotional, physical and intellectual capabilities [where] people are multi-talented with a range of skills, wide understanding of their environment and strong belief in maintaining relationships and fulfilling cultural obligations. (Johansson-Fua et al., 2007, p. 12)

Therefore, *mo'ui fakapotopoto* also signalled that Tongan students and their supporters should have boundaries or *tā-vā* time-space limits on the relationships within their physical and social environments. This enables the Tongan students to have better resources in terms of physical, social, spiritual and mental skills so that they can be healthy in *sino*, *laumālie* and *'atamai* to study effectively.

Mo'ui fakapotopoto is similar to the concept of 'topono' which means to feel satisfied and contented with whatever one has and whatever one can give. Therefore, it is recommended that Tongan students and their families need to feel at peace with what they can give in terms of money and other material wealth to their *fāmili*, *siasi* and *fonua*. They should neither be embarrassed with what they can give nor compete with each other because it can exhaust their resources and get them into financial trouble.

It is also advisable for Tongan students and their supporters to recognise the trends of globalisation and improved information communication technology so they are able to decide the limits of their involvement with the wider *kavenga fakafāmili* (family obligations), *kavenga fakasiasi* (church obligations) and *kavenga fakafonua* (country obligations) to enable them to have time, space and resources for their education. There is also a need for Tongan parent education about how to best support their students, not only in New Zealand but in a postmodern world, as there is evidence of a wide generation gap between the children and their parents (Morton Lee, 2003, 2007). It should be made known that education is top priority and that Tongan students should not feel guilty about not being able to fulfil their cultural obligations to their *fāmili*, *siasi* and *fonua*. It is imperative for the Tongan tertiary students, as well as their supporters, to be *fakatoukatea* and *fetokoni'aki fakapotopoto* in their *tā-vā kāinga* time-space relationships amongst themselves for academic achievement in New Zealand tertiary education. This leads to the central argument of this thesis.

X. CENTRAL ARGUMENT

The main thesis arising from this research as stated in Chapter 3, is that Tongan students and their supporters should make decisions on the extent of the students' *tā-vā kāinga* time-space relationships within the bureaucracy, their *fāmili*, *siasi* and *fonua* for the best interests of the

students. Therefore, the central argument of this research is that to facilitate the academic success of Tongan students in New Zealand tertiary education, the Tongan students and their supporters need a deep and mutual understanding of, respect for, and practice in both the Tongan and New Zealand social and academic cultures. New Zealanders who are involved with the Tongan students' education need a deep and mutual understanding of, respect for, and practice of the Tongan social and academic relationships so as to be helping Tongan students to study effectively and better understand the culture of the academy. Furthermore, flexibility within the two cultural relationships in terms of time *tā* and space *vā* should be considered by all parties to release social tensions, lessen students' confusions and enhance academic achievement. This two-way process could allow Tongan students to move more fluidly within and between the cultures especially by understanding how *tā* time and *vā* space are manifested in *kāinga* relationships within their learning environments and within their *fāмили*, *siasi* and *fonua*. Specifically, this could be achieved through *mo'ui fetokoni'aki*, *fakapototpo* and *fakatoukatea* in both New Zealand and Tongan cultures where they could wear suits but not forgetting their *ta'ovala*.

XI. SUMMARY

The overarching focus of this research was the journey of some Tongan students towards academic achievement in New Zealand tertiary education. The differences between the Tongan and the New Zealand cultures that the students encountered have been acknowledged. This study found that, as Māhina (2008) argued, Tongan students' academic achievement is vested in their capability to cope harmoniously at the interface of the Tongan and New Zealand cultures. What is unique to this study and that adds to our knowledge is that to cope harmoniously at the

interface of these two cultures, relationships are very important. This is where the students' judicious practice of *tā-vā kāinga* time-space relationships within the bureaucracy, their *fāmili*, *siasi* and *fonua* enhanced academic achievement. Although the Tongan students' state of flux in New Zealand caused cultural confusion and tension and they often attributed their success to others, it is believed that their understanding of the culture of the academy could intrinsically motivate them to believe in their own capabilities and intelligence to enhance academic achievement. The Tongan students, through constant renegotiating of the cultural interface, where they constantly redevelop their identities could help them to succeed in New Zealand tertiary education. This is an implication that when Tongan students and their supporters are at the same *tā-vā kāinga* time-space relationships then there is a mutual understanding amongst the group that could help students' education. Therefore, within the Tongan epistemological paradigm it is practically noted in this research that Tongan students' academic achievement are developed through *mo'ui fetokoni'aki*, *mo'ui fakapotopoto* and *fakatoukatea* in both the Tongan and New Zealand cultures. The next, and final chapter, contains the conclusions and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 7

AOFANGATUKU MO E TĀTĀ TULI VAKA: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Lūsia ki taulanga

(Though weather-worn, the boat sails right into the harbour)

'o (and)

Pata 'i lā kuo tu'u (Rejoice in a full-blown sail)

-Tongan Proverbs

I. INTRODUCTION

This final chapter signifies the arrival of the journey of this thesis, 'aofangatuku mo e tātā tuli vaka – conclusions and recommendations. It highlights the significance and limitations of the research. It also proposes further research to explore Tongan students' academic achievement in New Zealand. The chapter concludes with the researchers' final word and the epilogue.

II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

This research has explored the socio-cultural aspects that were perceived to impact on some Tongan students' academic achievement in New Zealand tertiary education. This was conducted through exploring the students' cultures, universal, group and personal, and the manifestation of *tā-vā kāinga* time-space relationships between the students and their supporters as they navigated the multiple realities of their own bicultural worldviews, cultural identities, attitudes and learning practices so that they could arrive successfully at the destination of their academic journey.

This research is important to the development of an educational understanding of *tā* time and *vā* space in *kāinga* relationships that is, the *tā-vā kāinga* time-space relationships that enhance academic achievement. It adds to our knowledge and understanding of what socio-cultural factors

are perceived to contribute to Tongan students' academic achievement. Some people understand that Tongan culture impacts on education but fewer people understand that relationships are the focal point of Tongan and Pasifika culture that impact on academic achievement. The important question that remained unanswered was, what is the *nature* of the impact of relationships on academic achievement? Throughout this research, I have related Māhina's (2008) and Ka'ili's (2008) existing *tā-vā* time-space theory of reality to Tongan tertiary students' academic achievement in New Zealand in a more practical way by exploring the relationships between the Tongan students and their Tongan and non-Tongan supporters. This research has enriched this theory because it has teased out some of the contextual realities, especially *tā-vā* time-space, within the *kāinga* relationships between the Tongan students and the bureaucracy, their *fāмили*, *siasi* and *fonua* such as managing cultural obligations and finding the balance within the practice of the Tongan core values to enhance academic achievement. This is an expansion of Māhina's (2008) and Ka'ili's (2008) *tā-vā* time-space to a new theory of *tā-vā kāinga* time-space relationship theory of reality unique to this study has thus emerged.

I have also introduced a new co-operative research methodology, *toungāue*. This is not only useful as a research method in education but also as a strategy to use as a way forward for Tongan students academic achievement in New Zealand tertiary education. Much Pasifika and Tongan research has discussed the collective and cooperative strengths of Pasifika and Tongan students and how these have helped them succeed (Anae et al., 2002; Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Cleverley, 1996; Cowley et al., 2000; Manu'atu, 2000b; Wolfgramm-Foliaki, 2006). However, none have stressed the importance of working within certain cultural limits of practising cooperation to maximise academic success that this research has found. There is a certain *tā-vā* time-space within the *kāinga* relationships

that those involved need to be aware of. The most effective ways are those within the interface of the Tongan and New Zealand cultures.

III. LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

This qualitative research has provided some significant insights into some Tongan students' academic achievement in New Zealand tertiary education, in particular, their *tā-vā kāinga* time-space relationships with their *fāmili*, *siasi* and *fonua*. However, the research has a few limitations.

These limitations relate to the generalizability of the findings. Although qualitative research does not aim to focus on breadth, but on depth, I see this as a limitation of this study. There are five aspects related to generalizability. Firstly, the 25 participants were a relatively small number. Secondly, these participants are from Auckland in the North Island down to Dunedin in the South Island so the small number of participants covers a wide geographical area and participants have differences in their physical and social environments. Thirdly, all the participants were born and raised in Tonga up to high school age before they migrated to New Zealand and all speak fluent Tongan. Therefore, none was born and raised in New Zealand; none were of mixed parentage; nor did they have identity issues. Fourthly, all the participants were successful tertiary students and so the views of unsuccessful students were not captured in this research. Fifthly, there was a tendency to homogenise the *Pālangi* too throughout the *talanoa*. We refer to any white person as a *Pālangi* and there are distinct sub-cultures within the *Pālangi* culture.

IV. FURTHER RESEARCH

This research has pointed to a number of areas where further research would help broaden our understanding of how to help Tongan students succeed academically. The recommendations made for future

development and research are very important although they have a wide scope.

Firstly, further research is needed on specific groups such as Tongan students who are born and raised in New Zealand or on those who are of mixed heritage. This research found that Tongans in New Zealand have different depths to their knowledge and understanding of the Tongan culture. There are different cultural understandings, which range from being a conservative Tongan to being a liberal Tongan. Research on those who are born and raised in New Zealand might provide further insights on Tongan students' academic achievement. These differences in Tongan peoples' worldviews may impact on their academic achievement. Therefore, such research could inform more specific ways of helping this specific group of Tongans. Specific research on Tongans with mixed heritage is also recommended for similar reasons. Both qualitative and quantitative research is recommended both at the national and local levels.

Secondly, in-depth research is needed on Tongan tertiary students' relationships with the academy, *fāmili* and *siasi* and how each of these sectors impact on their education in New Zealand. To date there is no specific research in these areas. It is important to know the details of the extent and nature of how students' relationships with specific sectors impact on their academic achievement. This would involve both qualitative and quantitative research at national and local levels.

Thirdly, research is recommended on Tongan Student Associations and how *fetokoni'aki* within these associations support Tongan students' academic achievement. This is because Tongan student associations at the local and national level are good meeting grounds for both the Tongan students and Tongan staff in tertiary education. This is where Tongan staff

could update students about current bureaucratic issues, learn the needs of the Tongan students and be their voice to the organisation. Cooperation between the Tongan staff and students can develop strategies to improve Tongan students' academic achievement. A good starting point would be a study of the NZTTSA, as this is the national Tongan Student Association which has been operating for almost twenty years.

Fourthly, since education is an accumulative asset, there is a need for longitudinal research on Tongan students from primary and secondary education through to tertiary education. Evidence in this research shows that part of the students' problem is related to their situation at home as they grow up, beginning in their primary school years. Therefore, longitudinal research is recommended. Young researchers should be encouraged to conduct the research to guarantee good research outcomes by following the life of their chosen participants as well as not having a wide generation gap between the researcher and the participants. This is where they could follow Tongan students' talents, dreams and goals and also check whether these goals were recognised, supported and nurtured at an early age to promote academic achievement. A good starting point could be a qualitative study at a local level.

Fifthly, research on gender and academic achievement for Tongan students in tertiary education is required because *fetokoni'aki* and *faiifatongia* to keep good relationships in the Tongan society is a gender-related matter as women's *fatongia* is different from men's *fatongia*. A person's *fatongia* depends on whether he or she is on the patrilineal or matrilineal side of the family (see Chapter 2). Both quantitative and qualitative research at national and local levels is recommended.

Sixthly, research would be helpful in an in-depth study on how *mo'ui fakapotopoto* can intrinsically motivate Tongan tertiary students to be academically successful. Evidence from this research showed that there are tensions and confusions amongst the Tongan students about their Tongan cultural obligations but it is unclear how their cultural obligations are influenced by globalisation. Generational research could be conducted on those who were born in this postmodern age, beginning from those who were born in the last 10 years. These students have been born in the internet era and there has been no time in their lives that they have not used the internet. This could give an insight on the education of students at this age of improved technology and globalisation. The research outcome could keep the Tongan and Pasifika people up to speed with the rest of the world on how to improve their academic achievement and not to be behind in the academic game. Qualitative research at the local level would be useful.

Lastly, this research shows that Tongan students are extrinsically motivated to study therefore, a research study on intrinsic motivation is recommended to explore ways of how to encourage them to be intrinsically motivated for academic success. A qualitative study at a local level could be a good starting point.

IV. FINAL WORD

A key conclusion of this research is that the problems of underachievement amongst Tongan tertiary students were perceived to be situated in their capability, or incapability, to function within the interface of the Tongan and the New Zealand culture in this postmodern age. This is an implication of high level *tā-vā kāinga* time-space relationships where *fetokoni'aki*, *fakapotopoto* and *fakatoukatea* in both

Tongan and New Zealand cultures are vital for academic achievement. I hold a similar belief to Egan (2002) who argues that:

[If] students in primary, secondary, and tertiary educational settings all learn what the world is really like. They learn about different countries and cultures; they learn the basics of world economics and about what brings people together, what keeps them apart, and what keeps them at one another's throats. They are exposed to multicultural richness where they learn both to appreciate their own culture more fully and to understand and challenge their shortcomings. They prize and learn from differences rather than look down upon or *tolerate* them where they develop a sense of empathy for the world and their place in it. They do not abdicate their own deepest beliefs and values. They learn that there are many ways of living life and come to realize that one way is not necessarily *better* than another. They learn that both good and evil abound in the world and that rooting out evil should start with themselves and their society. Then finally, if what they learned in school is supported at home, at church, at work, and in other social settings then there is a belief that it would be good for the students, for the countries, and for the world. (p. 1)

Hence, this global view explicitly portrays the importance of *tā-vā kāinga* time-space relationships and the need for high level support for maximum positive outcome not only for the individual but for the group and the world at large. There is a call for *fetokoni'aki fakapotopoto* and *fakatoukatea* for a better world amongst everyone from the grassroots level through to top level management. This is vital as the world is getting smaller because of improved information and communication technology (Monahan, 2005).

The analogy of the *journey* is my living soul as it was moulded in my life, directed this thesis and it never leaves me. My understanding is that everything is a journey and as I reflect on my roots (ancestors), my life in my *fāmili*, *siasi* and *fonua* in the past and look towards the future I can see that they are all journeys in themselves. Everyone has his or her own unique life journey but what is common in these journeys, towards academic achievement related to this thesis, is that as the Tongan

Fakahalafononga journey on (*Fononga 'a Fakahalafononga*), their undertakings are supported and guided by their *kāinga* (relationships). Already there are many successful Tongans in academia who are *Fakahalafononga* to their own families. What is encouraging is that given the right relationships, Tongan students can, and will be academically successful. Their Tongan culture can have a positive impact on their academic work. It is confirmed in this research that *mo'ui fetokoni'aki*, *fakapotopoto* and *fakatoukatea* in both the Tongan and New Zealand cultures can help them to move comfortably between the two cultures and succeed academically. The Tongan students' non-Tongan supporters' understanding and willingness to help is also a way forward for academic success. There needs to be a partnership between the Tongan students and their support networks and relationships at home, in church, in the community and the academy. This will enable Tongan students to be *Fakahalafononga* for the benefit of their *fāmili*, *siasi* and *fonua* as they journey in New Zealand tertiary education.

EPILOGUE

MY MULTIPLE REALITIES

My Tongan worldview is that God created everything and we are to choose the right time and space for our relationships (*ta-va kainga* time-space relationships) within our physical and social environment to be successful in life. We do not get everything, but we can make the best of everything that we have to support us. Being Tongan in New Zealand, I have had to redevelop my identities through renegotiating the cultural interface between the Tongan and New Zealand cultures to be successful in western education. My quest for success in the course of this research instigated major changes in my relationships with bureaucracy, my *fāmili, siasi* and *fonua*. My reflections on these changes were both conscious and unconscious and some happened as I tried to complete tasks on time. Here are a few highlights to share my relationships with bureaucracy, my *fāmili, siasi* and *fonua* (wider group) during the course of this research.

Relationships with Bureaucracy

Being an immigrant, I was unfamiliar with life in New Zealand. I had to learn many things not only for basic survival needs but how to succeed in tertiary education. I believe that the fastest way to learn is to get involved in community affairs as much as possible. It took me to a stage where, on top of my work and study, I became involved with other government organisations, tertiary education institution committees, Tongan and Pasifika community groups, and student associations, both at the local and national and international levels. This is where I learnt about life in New Zealand, especially about the support systems for my education. However, I realised that keeping up with the work for these organisations left me with little time to study. I decided to withdraw from some of the

organisations so I could dedicate my time to this research. My experience proved that one can only do so much in a given time and that having enough time is one of the key aspects to completing.

Relationships with My *Fāmili*

I am the eldest in a large family and have a family of my own, a husband and two adult sons. My husband is from a large family too. These are those that I considered as my close family but there are many more kinsmen in the outer circles of my kinship circles. Being Tongan entails my having multiple roles and many responsibilities towards my extended family as the expectations are high, probably driven by the Bible Verse: “From everyone to whom much is given much will be required; and from one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded” Luke 12: 48. This is basically because of my status in the family of being the eldest of a large family, as well as my educational and financial capability to help.

There were constraints that I was unconscious of at the beginning of this study. These are related to my *fatongia* towards my extended family which drained me of time and resources for this research. However, my relationships took me to a place where urgent renegotiation of roles is highly desirable for academic success. Therefore, in the final year of this research I had no choice but to delegate my responsibilities amongst family members. Starting from home, my husband had to quit his job to do the shopping, cooking, looking after the house and all other family affairs that I could not attend to. Hence, his comment that he would also be graduated with a degree in accounting and budgeting as it was the first time in his life to do the grocery shopping. My sons had to represent us in overseas responsibilities, enjoying the trips and being amazed at meeting with many people in the wider *kāinga* networks that they heard of but

never met. My two sisters in New Zealand had to look after our extended family affairs, appreciating the experience but never wanting to be in my shoes while I am still living. Back in Tonga, I had to ask my mother, brothers and sisters to take on my responsibilities, although they kept on requesting my presence at crucial circumstances. The major constraint throughout this study was the passing away of family members and friends. There were ten immediate family members and more than fifty *kāinga*, colleagues and friends that passed on during the course of this study. This was financially and emotionally draining as it claimed a lot of my time in travel and recovery. However, my family's invaluable support in their understanding of my need for academic success allowed me time, space and resources to fully dedicate to this study.

On a daily basis, my husband is my best mate and greatest support, making sure that everything at home functions well to allow me maximum time to dedicate to this study. He has accompanied me in my research room every time I worked overnight. Answering phone calls from our sons and my sisters, he always said: "*Ko 'eku lea atu eni mei he fungavaka taha faa*" (I am speaking from the fourteenth floor) meaning that he was speaking from under the table where he was lying on a mattress on the floor, reading a newspaper, talking to me or sleeping. This became a joke amongst our family, and reflects the invaluable support my family offered towards this study. The aspects of relationships that I took for granted are now valued and taken much more seriously. It is also apparent that I have become stronger as a person through the negative experiences I have encountered on this journey. It becomes very clear that my family is my greatest support as I work to succeed in western education. Therefore, I attribute my success in formal education to my family. All my educational achievement is not mine alone, but a family asset as far as I am concerned. This philosophy unravels my lifelong

strong tie to my family, and the reason for my perpetual *faifatongia* to them.

Relationships with My *Siasi*

My family is one of the pioneer families who started the Tongan Catholic church in Hamilton, New Zealand in 1998. As new migrants we struggled with many things in the Tongan Catholic church. It took my family to a stage where we could not cope with the demands of church commitments and obligations. Therefore, we decided to withdraw from the Tongan church until I finished my study. We attended the local Catholic Church as it made things easier for my family during this study.

Relationships with My *Fonua*

Similar to relationships with the Tongan church were my relationships with the Tongan community. I was a very active member of the Tongan community, but in the final year of this study I was rarely involved with Tongan community affairs to save time, resources and energy to enable me to complete this research. It is hoped that I will resume duty at the community when I have time in the future. I am much more conscious about some of my *fatongia* to the *fonua* (wider community); readapting priorities and making future plans for self improvement to help my *fāmili*, *siasi* and *fonua*.

What I Learnt

The findings of this research explain what I learnt about the perceived sociocultural aspects that impacted on my academic achievement in New Zealand tertiary education. “*Mou ō ‘o ako kemou ‘aonga ki he fāmili, siasi mo e fonua*” reminded me of my reciprocal roles to *tauhi* my *vā* for the support that my *fāmili*, *siasis* and *fonua* bestowed upon me to enable my success. Nevertheless, in the context of my life in New Zealand, the extent of *tā-vā kāinga* time-space relationships within different contexts and levels is an

important consideration for academic achievement. This study provides an understanding to matters that puzzled me for years in formal education. It gave me answers to many of the questions that I struggle with everyday as a Tongan parent, a Tongan student, and a Pasifika learning advisor in New Zealand tertiary education. I know that my struggles were not uniquely mine, but those that were shared by Tongan students as Pasifika in New Zealand. I hope the findings of this research will contribute to better understandings and practices, and make life a little easier for Tongan students' journey to academic achievement in New Zealand tertiary education. However, as the journey of this thesis, *Fononga 'a Fakahalafononga*, is drawing to a close, *lūsia ki taulanga 'o pata 'i lā kuo tu'u*, the last four lines of Konai Thaman's (1974, 1987) poem *Reality* reminds me of a universal truth about life:

"What do I do now?
An old man close-by whispers,
'Come fishing with me today
For you have a lot to learn yet'.
(p. 17; p. 15)

As a devout Christian I place this concern in God's mighty hands as 'The Journey' continues. . .

GLOSSARY

Aa

ako: formal, informal or non-formal education; to study

anga: *anga*, *nānunga*, *tō'onga*: nature, character (of a person)

anga fakamā'ulalo: to make low or lower, to act humbly.

anga fakatōkilalo: to act humbly or with humility also means *lototō*, *anga-vaivai*

anga faka-Pālangi: western culture; western way; the way of the foreigners, this term is sometimes used to explain improper behaviour, especially those of foreigners or returned migrants and is opposed to *anga faka-Tonga*. Otherwise, it denotes the way young people dress, in jeans and t-shirts, and the types of music they listen to on the radio (Runarsdottir, 2003).

anga faka-Tonga: the ways of the Tongans such as habit, custom, nature, quality, character, characteristic; way, form, style, manner, method; behaviour, conduct, demeanour, way(s) of acting, similar to *angafai*, *'ulungāanga*, *tō'onga*, *nānunga*, *lōlenga*, *ākenga*, *founga*, *'alunga*, *maheni-ai*, *fāliunga*, *tu'u-ki-anga*, *anga'aki* (Churchward, 1959, p. 7)

anga fakatu'a: impolite acting like a commoner.

angalelei: good behaviour

anganofa: submissive, dutiful, and not inclined to rebel.

angamaau: tidy and methodical, or habitually behaving as one ought to behave; prim and proper.

anga fakalāpulu: to say complimentary things to a person's face or in his presence but speak against him behind his back.

akonaki'i: admonish; exhort

aofangatuku: conclusions or one's final act or effort, the last thing that one does (Churchward, 1959, p. 13).

'a: of (preposition) (Churchward, 1953, p. 16)

'aho koka'anga: day it was to make *tapa* cloth.

'Aho'eitu: the first Tu'i Tonga

'aonga: useful, of practical value: helpful, beneficial, effective, profitable, or worthwhile; requisite, needful, necessary (Churchward, 1959, p. 550).

'api: household; a householder's allotment; home; estate; property

'apikolo: village allotment

'api'uta: bush allotment

'apō: wake, all night watch kept beside a corpse (Churchward, 1959).

'atamai: mind, intellect

'atamai kovi: not intelligent

anga ta'e faka'apa'apa: impolite

Ee

efiafi: afternoon, evening

'eiki: chief; a person of chiefly rank (plural *hou'eiki*) (Hixon, 2000).

Ff

fa'a fakamolemole: forgiving

Fa'afaletui: Samoan research methodology. It is the critical process of weaving (*tui*) together all the different levels of knowledge frames from within the *houses* of collective representation, in order that the Samoan world view is substantially enhanced, and added to (Tamasese, 2008).

fa'ahinga: extended family

faē: mother or mother's sisters or her female cousins.

fa'ēhuki: the *fa'ehuki* is usually the maternal relatives usually one of mother's brother who accompany and serve the bride, groom, the birthday person during the wedding or birthday ceremony or to carry the deceased to his or her grave during a funeral ceremony. They are lower in rank to the married couples, the birthday person or the deceased, and they

are meant to serve those concerned during the ceremonies. *Fa'ēhuki* literally means that the grooms, brides and birthday people sit on their laps during the ceremony. Some people put their feet on the *fa'ēhuki's* laps to symbolize the idea of them being lower in rank to the bride, groom or the birthday person.

fā'ētangata: (male mother) maternal uncle - mother's brother or male cousin.

fahu: the father's sister; A kinsman especially chosen at funerals, weddings, and first birthdays, to receive the best *koloa* (mats and bark-cloth) and highest ranking cuts of meat; the *fahu* may also be given the right to decide on the distribution of presents and food. The *fahu* may be the *mehekitanga* father's sister, the *tama 'a mehekitanga* 'children of the father's sister, or *'ilamutu*, sister's child, real or classified. There is some disagreement among Tongans over which kinsman is the appropriate choice for which occasion. The term *fahu* is often used loosely by both Tongans and anthropologists as if it were a kinship term rather than a particular ceremonial status. In this case, the kinship term meant is usually *'ilamutu* (sister's child, man speaking) (Bott, 1982a): the relationship of superiority between a person and his mother's brother or the children of his other brothers (Rutherford, 1977): *i*) the systematic kinship superiority of the so oral descent line over the fraternal descent line; *ii*). Within such a system, that person who is superior to another (Rutherford, 1996); man's sister's child or father's sister or her children, who have superiority over the male's family (including the right to take belongings); of ritual importance, especially at funerals and involves mutual obligations (Hixon, 2000).

fai'aho: birthday

faifekau: church minister

faikava: customary means of social gathering, talking and drinking round the kava bowl; social kava drinking

faiva: task requiring skill; an entertainment performance; Tongan performing arts; dance effectively or symmetrically unified in harmony

fai fatongia: commitments to duties and obligations

fakaafe or *feilaulau*: church feast.

faka'aki'akimui: to make low or lower, to act humbly.

faka'alینگalelei: to act as if everything were all right when it is not really so: especially in reference to persons who are not on speaking terms with each other.

faka'apa'apa or *fefaka'apa'apa'aki*: mutual respect; respectfulness

fakafalala: dependent or relying on other people

fakafeta'i: thanksgiving church service; a formal chant of *matāpule* of thanks for offerings.

fakafonua: for the community/country

fakafotu: brother's child, woman speaking. Reciprocal of *mehekitanga*.

Fakahalafononga: this is Tongan name for the planet Venus which is one of the brightest objects in the sky. Venus is always near the sun so it sets and rises with the sun. The one that rises with the sun is the 'Morning Star' and the one which sets is the 'Evening Star' (Windows to the Universe, 2000). The name *Fakahalafononga* given by the Tongans to Venus literally means 'providing a way for the journey' = *faka* (providing), *hala* (a way), *fononga* (journey). This is because *Fakahalafononga* is one of the guiding stars for the Tongan people's journeys since ancient time. It tells them the time of the day where a new day is coming, as shown by the Morning Star, and another day is gone, as shown by the Evening Star. *Fakahalafononga* separates the night time from day time. Metaphorically, it is the interface of light and darkness. The appearance of the Morning Star always cheers travellers with the promise of an approaching day (Collocott, 1922).

Fakahekeheka: to see someone off; to say good-bye to people who are travelling by boat, plane or motor vehicle.

fakalēlea: visit of the bridegroom's relatives to the bride's house on the eve of the wedding

fakamā: causing shame, shameful, disgraceful, ignominy (Churchward, 1959, p. 65).

fakamatamata lelei: to put on a pleasant or friendly look which is not genuine.

fakama'uma'u: restraint.

fakamolemole: forgiveness or reconciliation.

fakangalingali: causing to seem good, or to be done in such a way as to look or seem good.

fakaoleole'i: too soft

fakaongo: dependent or obedient

fakaongoongo: to be subject or submissive to; to accept the authority; to wait for instruction

faka'ofa: pity

faka-Papālangi: the European way; the European manner

fakasiasi: for the church

fakatāutaha: individual

fakataha: meeting, *fono* or *hui* (in Māori)

fakatōkilalo: submissiveness; humility and generosity

faka-Tonga; according to the Tongan way; the Tongan manner.

fakavaivai: to make low or lower, to act humbly.

fala: mat

falala: to lean against or on something.

fale: house; building; structure; shelter

fale'i: advice; advise; counsel; guidance

fāmili: extended family; family, relatives. Taken over from English

fānau: children. If used in connection with titles and *ha'a*, it means all the descendants of present and past holders of a title through men and through women.

fanga tuonga'ane: brothers

fatongia, *faifatongia*, *fua fatongia*, or *fua kavenga*: responsibilities and commitments to fulfilment of mutual prescribed obligations.

fatu: begin/start making the *fala*.

fatungamotu'a: custom

feitu'ui: To visit a bereaved person with a present of food and *koloa* (Churchward, 1959)

fekapokapoaki: help without being asked to do so

fekumi: research

felāve'aki: concern or affect each other

fengāue'aki: work for each other; working together

fe'ofa'ofani: to be friendly with one another; express love to others through helpfulness and sharing.

fe'ofa'aki: caring; love one another

feta'aki: piece of *tapa* cloth before it is stained or made into a *ngatu*.

fetokoni'aki: cooperation; helping one another

fetu'akoi'aki: to be neighbourly to one another

fe'utungaki: to help one another by mutual sharing

fevehi'aki: eager to do things for each other

feveitokai'aki or *toka'i*: maintenance of good relationships; to respect or honour one another (Churchward, 1959).

fie-Pālnagi: acting like a *Pālangi* or European.

fono: compulsory meeting; food served with *kava* (Rutherford, 1977); public meeting (Hixon, 2000); town or village meeting.

fononga: to travel or journey, move onward, in time (Churchward, 1959).

fonua: Community, people of the land or country, territory, place (Churchward, 1959, p. 196). *fonua* is referred to both people and the physical environment.

fua kavenga: to bear the weight or burden of; like carrying or lifting something on the shoulder or the arm without a stick (Churchward, 1959, p. 198).

fuatanga: A one whole piece of *ngātu*; a *fuatanga* can be specifically made in a one, 4 or 5 or 6 or 8 or 10 *langanga*.

fua kavenga fakavalevale: unrealistic financial commitments.

Founga: form; way in which a a thing is done; method, procedure, plan or rule (Churchward, 1959, p. 197).

fuo: content

Hh

ha'a: clan; lineage; a group of related *kāinga*

haka: dance.

hala: road; way

Heilala: (*Garcinia sessilis*) *Heilala* is the most sacred of Tongan plants (*Garcinia sessilis*), the unusual bright red flowers of which are used in special garlands (Thaman, 1993, p. 91)

heliaki: literally means saying one thing and meaning another, is specific only to *ta'anga* (poetry) and *tufungalea* (speech-designing) and *faivalea* speech-giving (Māhina, 2004b).

hengihengi: daybreak

hila: to glance; turn the eyes for commoners.

hohoko: talking geneology to connect family relationships

hou'eiki: aristocratic morality/ chiefs; plural of *'eiki*

Ii

'ilo: knowledge

'ita: anger.

Kk

kaaimumu'a: assertiveness; boasting

kāinga: tribe or village; large social unit based on kinship and headed by a chief.

kafa: plaited coconut fibre (sinnet); a belt of coconut fibre sinnet wrapped round the *ta'ovala*.

kahoa: necklaces / leis; garland, usually of fresh flowers, but sometimes of paper, shells, etc., hung about the neck of the person being greeted.

Kakala: sweet-smelling flowers, or trees or plants bearing sweet-smelling flowers, of any kind (Churchward, 1959); "*Kakala* also refers to a collection of fragrant flowers, woven together as garlands for special occasions or used to scent Tongan oils" (Thaman, 2005, p. 33). Also refers to a Tongan research methodology where Thaman's (2002) metaphor of *kakala* symbolically refers to *tolu* when the researchers select and gather the relevant information needed for the research topic; *tui* when the information is written up in the report, and *luva* when the information is given out to the public to be used for the benefit of everyone. *kalapu kava Tonga*: Tongan kava clubs; kava drinking club.

kapekape: swear

kātoanga: feast, celebrations

kātoanga'ofa: Catholic church donation

kauitalanoa: join in a conversation when not asked or wanted and to speak or talk about something that was not meant to be discussed.

kautaha: group or cooperative work

kautaha toungeāue: men or women working together.

kautaha lauhoua: they work by the hour

kava: the social and ceremonial drink of the South Pacific. It is a solution of the pulp of the root of the *kava* (piper methysticum) plant mixed and strained in cold water. Drunk from half coconut shells, it has a cleansing after-effect on the palate and is pleasantly thirst-quenching on a hot day. The Fijian word is *yagona*. (Bain, 1967, p. 205): Polynesian word for ceremonial drink made from powdered root of the *Macro piper methysticum* (one of the pepper plants), mixed with water (Luke, 1954).

kavenga: carrying the burden; in other words fulfilment of their responsibilities and obligations

kavenga fakalotu: church obligations

kavenga fakafonua: community obligations

kie: special kind of pandanus, highly valued and prized usually used for making very fine mats

ko e langa fonua: development of the *fonua*, both physical and social

koka'anga: the making of *tapa* cloth (*ngatu*). It is the staining and making of *ngatu*.

koloa: valuables, wealth of the society such as *tapa* and mats.

kupesi: pattern stencils for *tapa* making

Ll

lahi: great

lali: hollow tree trunk used as a ceremonial drum. Smaller *lali* are also common. Nowadays, the Tongans often used a forty-pound biscuit tin for the more boisterous dances. Not much of it remains at the end of the performance: drum or gong made from a hollowed log and beaten with a wooden billet (Rutherford, 1977)

langanga: distance or space between two consecutive transverse stripes on a piece of *tapa* cloth: usually 18 inches or more. A length of from 4 to 7 or these is called a *fola'osi*; from 8 to 10, a *fatuuu*; 50, a *launima*; 100, a *lautefuhi*; a *fuatanga* can be specifically made in a one, 4 or 5 or 6 or 8 or 10 *langanga* (whole/complete piece of *tapa*).

laumālie: spirit

launima: a *ngatu* with fifty *langanga* where one *langanga* is the distance or space between two consecutive transverse stripes on a piece of *tapa* cloth which is usually 18 inches or more (Churchward, 1959, p. 282).

lavalava: Polynesian kilt or *tupenu* in Tongan.

Lea Faka-Tonga: Tongan language

liongi: the *liongi* is usually the maternal relatives of the deceased. They are usually the mother's families. They are lower in rank and are meant to serve anyone during the funerals. They wear the biggest, raggiest and ugliest *ta'ovala* to show their lowest rank. Their usual place is the cooking areas where they cook to cater for the people attending the funerals.

longoa'a: making noises

loto: (inside, the interior, imagination) mind, heart, stomach.

loto-māfana: warm - heartedness, excited

loto-māfana 'aupito: feeling very warm-hearted

lototō: generosity

lotu: religion

lou'akau: dried pandanus leaves or flexes for weaving mats

luva: to give away something to someone

Mm

māfana: (a) of the mind: fervent, enthusiastic; (b) of love: warm, heartfelt, friendly, cordial

mahalo pē: maybe, or perhaps, maybe yes, maybe no, or I don't really know, but I'm certainly not going to admit it.

mamahi'ime'a: loyalty and commitment

mana: power, force or energy; spiritual power (Rutherford, 1977). Supernatural power or influence or attendant circumstances (Churchward 1959, p. 330)

mali: wedding

mali fakanounou: shortened wedding

mali katoanga: elaborated wedding celebration/festival

mālie: the aesthetically pleasing state

māfana: warmth (Māhina, 2008, p. 72).

mālie-māfana: aesthetically pleasing state and the emotional feeling of warmth; a Tongan research methodology (Manu'atu, 2000b).

matāpule: talking chief: Chiefly attendants and speakers; spokesperson of a chief; a lesser chief.

matakali: tribe

mateaki: loyalty

Mate ma'a Tonga: diehard for Tonga.

mehikitanga: paternal aunt - father's sister or father's female cousin

misinale: Methodist church donations

mo e: and

Mohokoi: ylanglang or perfume flower tree (*Canangaodorata*) the unusual spider-like fragrant yellow flowers of which are used in garlands and to scent coconut oil (Thaman, 1993, p. 93).

mokomoko: cool, unfriendly

mo'oni: truth

mo'ui: livelihood

mo'ui fakatokolahi: living together in a cooperative lifestyle; communal lifestyles

mo'ui faka-Tonga: to live, to be living or alive, life, etc., or way of life, habitual conduct (Churchward, 1959, p. 369)

mo'ui fetokoni'aki: supportive livelihood

mo'ui fakapotopoto: sustainable livelihood

mo'ulaloo: to make low or lower, to act humbly; subservient

me'a fakafāmili: family affairs

muli: foreigner or non Tongan

Nn

nānunga: characteristic way or ways of acting or thinking; usual rites of; ritual or observances (Churchward, 1959, p. 375).

nifo hau: Two canine teeth of the *puaka toho*

nofo'aki putu: when a number of people come and stay with people who recently bereaved (ostensibly for the purpose of condoning with them)

nōpele: nobles

NG ng

ngaahi tukufakaholo: customs and traditions

ngāue fakataha (working together or cooperation)

ngatu: the common Tongan word for *tapa* cloth.

Oo

'o: and

'o e: of

'ofa: love; kindness; affection

'ofa *māfana*: (a) of the mind: fervent, enthusiastic; (b) of love: warm, heartfelt, friendly, cordial.

'ofa *vale*: to be over-fond of; to love extravagantly, to love overmuch

ola: result or outcome

ono'aho: age-of-light

onopō: age-of-darkness

ongo: feelings, emotion

'Otua: God or heathen god (Rutherford, 1977)

Pp

Pālangi or *Papālangi*: European; white man; the homeland of Europeans that is the *Pākehā* or people of European descent in New Zealand.

Pākehā: Māori name for Caucasians

pāongo: a different species of pandanus tree

Pasifika: The terms *Pasifika*, *Pasifiki* or *Pasefika* refer to Pacific Islanders or Pacific Island people. The New Zealand Ministry of Education use of the term “does not refer to a single ethnicity, nationality or culture but is a term of convenience to encompass the diverse range of peoples from the South Pacific in New Zealand” (Fletcher et al., 2009, p. 25). These are people from the island nations of Samoa, Cook Island, Tonga, Niue, Fiji, Tokelau, Tuvalu Kiribati, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea, that is, the Pacific people from the three different racial groups of Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia.

pola: a table of food for a feast: woven coconut leaves *pola*

poto: wise, skilful

puaka toho: biggest pig considered by the Tongans

puke faka'āvanga: was seen as sickness caused or believed to be caused by a supernatural being or believed to be bewitched by a *tēvolo* (supernatural being).

pulua or *feipulua*: a special cooking and distribution of food after a death and burial of someone (Churchward, 1959).

putu: funeral

Ss

sekelitali: secretary; often applied to the holder of the post of Government Secretary.

siasi: church

sino: physical body

Tt

ta'ahine poto: smart girl.

ta'e'ofa: no love

ta'e'aonga: not useful; of no practical value; not helpful; not worthwhile.

ta'ehounga: not to be appreciated; not to be a cause of gratitude.

ta'efietokoni: not wanting to help

tā: taimi

tā nafa: beating drum

tā sipinga: setting examples

tafulu: growling or scolding.

Takavaha: to be at sea, on the way (when voyaging) (Churchward, 1959, p. 442).

talanoa: to talk (in both formal and informal ways), to tell stories or relate experiences etc. (Churchward, 1959). *Talanoa*: as a Tongan research methodology

Tālanga – discussion

talangofua: obedience; submissive or habitually obedient (Churchward, 1959, p. 448).

talateu: introduction

taimi: time

taimi faka-Tonga: Tongan time

Taimi 'o Tonga: Tongan Times; a private newspaper in Tonga.

taliangi: to accept the leadership of, to look up to and follow as one's leader, to be responsive.

talitu'utu'uni: to habitually accept and follow the directions or instructions.

tamai: father

tangaki: to glance or turn the eyes for the King.

tā-vā kāinga: time-space relationships

ta'ovala: a dress mat that is part of the traditional costume of Tongan men and women; a woven mat worn round the waist expressing humility in the presence of a person of higher rank; mat worn about the waist over the *vala*, especially on ceremonial occasions (Rutherford, 1977). There are different kinds of *ta'ovala*, one is a waist mat tied around with coconut sennit beautifully embroidered with colourful beads called *sisi kafa*. Women's *ta'ovala* is also called a *kiekie* which is a grass skirt-like waist dress, worn around the waist as part of the traditional respectful costume of Tongan women. They are made from pandanus, *kaka* fibre, or other similar materials. Without this a Tongan is not considered properly dressed.

tapa: the beaten bark "cloth" of the *hiapo* tree used for clothing, bedding, decoration and other ceremonial and domestic purposes. Designs are imprinted or stencilled by hand with earth dyes and dyes prepared from the sap of the *koka* and candlenut trees. Fabric made of the bark of the paper-mulberry tree. Bark cloth also known as *ngatu*. (Rutherford, 1977).

tapu: sacred; sacred or forbidden. It virtually combines both meanings; set apart; hence forbidden.

tatafi: the sweeping and tidying up of the graveyard on the first morning after the burial of a deceased person.

tatau, potupotutatau and mālie: "symmetry, harmony and beauty" (Mahina, 2005, p. 170).

tau'ataina: independent

taufonua: the arrival of a journey

tauhi vā: keep good relationships

te'ia or *puke faka'āvanga*: feeling of depression; bewitched by spirits

tefito: context

Te Vaka Atafanga: Tokelau boat or canoe also called *te paopao* (*pōpao* in Tongan). A Tokelauan research methodology (Kupa, 2009).

tivaevae: Cook Island patch-quilt: a Cook Island research methodology (Ma-Ua Hodges, 2000)

tofi'a: hereditary lands of a chief: inheritance, the lands of a chief; estate; a reservation.

toka'i: consensus

tō'onga faka-Tonga: Tongan custom, habit, conduct, behaviour, character, characteristic, rite, practice, ceremony: similar to *anga faka-Tonga* (Churchward, 1959, p. 503)

toungāue: working together: a Tongan research methodology

toulālanga: Tongan women working together to make a Tongan mat

toulanganga: Tongan women working together to make *tapa* cloth or *ngatu*

tu'a: commoner or slave

tukutala: tradition (*anga faka Tonga* – the Tongan way)

tui: belief

tui fakalotu: religious belief

tui fakaholo: to plait flowers

tu'i: king

Tu'i Ha'atakalaua: a line of temporal kings. The holder of the title "Tungi" is the sovereign head of this royal line. One of the three great chiefly titles of Tonga (Rutherford, 1996).

Tu'i Kanokupolu: a line of temporal kings which emerged as paramount with the establishment of the Tupou dynasty. Queen Salote was therefore also *Tu'i Kanokupolu*. One of the three great chiefly titles of Tonga (Rutherford, 1996).

Tu'i Tonga: the king of Tonga; the first dynasty to rule Tonga from about 950 AD – literally means 'The Kings of Tonga'. They were spiritual as well as temporal rulers and as they represented the gods, they were regarded as sacred. The last *Tu'i Tonga* became a Roman Catholic before he died in 1865, the only one of a long line to be a Christian (Bain, 1967). The paramount chiefly title of Tonga (Rutherford, 1996).

tūkufua: to steer for; *'ai taumu'a*, *tūkunga* (Churchward, 1959, p. 508).

tūkunga: what is steered for or *kaveinga* (Churchward, 1959, p. 509).

tulou: excuse me

tuonga'ane: brother

tuofefine: sister

tupenu: a wrap around one piece of material sometimes known with other Polynesian languages as *lavalava*.

Uu

uhi: bush bearing tiny white flowers. (*Evodia hortensis*). Its leaves are used in treating persons believed to be under the spell of a *fa'ahikehe* (devil) (Churchward, 1959, p. 524)

uho: content

'ulu: the head of a household (Rutherford, 1996).

'ulumotu'a or *'ulu'i fāmili*: head of a *fa'ahinga*: the head of an extended family (Rutherford, 1996).

'ulungaanga faka-Tonga: main/real Tongan way

'ulungaanga mahu'inga: core values

'ulungaanga faka'apa'apa: good and respectable behaviour

'umu: underground oven; earth oven (Rutherford, 1977). Also refer to a big portion of raw meat given during the *pulua*.

'umu puaka: A big cooked or half cooked pig usually in the exchanged of gifts during cultural celebrations

Vv

vaha'a: space in between

vala: refer to gift of *ngatu* and *fihu* etc... during a celebration: the ankle-length under-skirt wrapped round the waist and legs; length of cloth wound about the waist and worn as a kilt.

vale: foolish, silly, ignorant, unskilled, incapable, incompetent.

vā lelei: harmonious and beautiful social space between people (Ka'ili, 2008). It is good relationships

Vanua: Fijian term for land: a Fijian research methodology

vā tamaki: signifies a disharmonious social space between people (Ka'ili, 2008). Bad or unpleasant relationships

Ww

whānau: Māori word for family, *fānau* in Tongan.

Wānanga: Māori word for university, wise informant, lore, place of learning.

TONGAN PROVERBS
'Auhia ka e kisu atu pē

Though carried off by the current, one pushed on. 'Oku 'uhinga ki ha taha 'oku tofanga 'i ha faingata'a ka ne kātekina pē. (When someone endures although they have been placed under great pressure) (Māhina, 2004b, p. 65).

Fakatokatea

(Double hulled or both katea) Ko e katea ko e sino 'o e popao pea na'e fa'a meimei tatau pe 'a e katea mo e hama 'i he ngaahi popao pe tongiaki 'a e kakai Tonga. (Katea is the hull of the canoe and some of the Tongan canoes or tongiaki the hull is almost the same size as the hama or outrigger). Ko ha ongo me'a kuo na mali pea na fakatou tatau 'i he meimei me'a kotoa hange ko e poto, talavou mo e 'ulungaanga pē ko ha me'a 'e ua kuo na tatau ai. 'Oku 'uhinga ki ha ongo me'a 'e ua 'oku na tu'otu'a tatu 'i he anga pea mo e mo'ui. (This means that two people or things are compatible in every way (Māhina, 2004b, p. 57).

Fofola e fala ka e alea e kāinga

Rolling out the mat for the kin to talk 'Oku 'uhinga ki ha fakataha mai 'a ha kakai ke nau alēlea ki ha me'a ke ma'u ai ha'anau lelei fakalukufua. (When a group of people come together to sort out their differences for the collective good) (Māhina, 2004b, p. 74).

Hangē ha fanā fotu

Like a mast shown from afar. 'Oku 'uhinga ki ha kaveinga 'oku taumama'o ka 'oku mahino mai 'ene 'asi. Things of great worth have long-lasting value. (Māhina, 2004b, p. 116).

Kataki e mama mo e hopohopokia

Bailing out water from a leak with seas coming on board as well. Ko e hoko fakataha mai ha mama 'a ha vaka 'o hake mai 'a e tahi ki he loto vaka 'o 'ikai ke taha pē 'a e faingata'aa ka kuo ua (It is a dual misfortune when a boat leaks and water floods in; leaking and flooding are two different problems). 'UHINGA IA ki ha taha kuo taulofu'u ki ai ha ngaahi faingata'a. (It means that someone has encountered too many problems at the same time). (Unpublished, secondary school notes – Kolisi ko Tupou, Tongatapu)

Lūsia ki taulanga

Though weather-worn, the boat sails right into the harbour. 'Oku 'uhinga ki ha taha kuo fepaki mo ha ngaahi faingata'a ka ne tutui mālohi pē ki he ngata'anga. (Meaning when someone endures to the end, despite the hardship involved) (Māhina, 2004b, p. 86).

Pata 'i lā kuo tu'u

Rejoice in a full-blown sail. 'Oku 'uhinga ki he tumutumu 'o ha fiefia 'i ha ngāue lahi kuo lava. (Meaning when jubilation is at its peak because a great deed has been achieved) (Māhina, 2004b, p. 129).

Tākanga 'enau fohe

Their oars move in unison. 'Oku 'uhinga ki hā kakai 'oku nau uouongataha mo fetokoni'aki 'o ngāue fakataha. (When people work together, helping each other). (Māhina, 2004b, p. 197)

Tā ki liku tā ki fanga

Beating the windward side, beating the leeward side. 'Oku 'uhinga ki ha taha 'oku 'ikai hama ha me'a. When someone is proficient in many areas (Māhina, 2004b, p. 207).

Tātā tulivaka

Beat the drum and raise the boat. 'Oku 'uhinga ki hano faka'ai'ai ha ngāue ke mafai'ai kae'oua ke toki lava lelei. When a group of workers are persuaded to persevere until the work is successfully completed. Na'e ma'u 'a e lea ni mei he lova vaka, 'a ia na'e fa'a tā ma'u pē lali ko e faka'ai'ai ki he kau 'a'alo pē kau ngāue vaka ke nau toe 'a'alo pē ngāue mālohi ange. The saying was derived from boat-racing, when the drummers beat the drums, encouraging the rowers or racers to give it their all. (Māhina, 2004b, pp. 129-130)

Tu'u e lā mo e pou pou

The sail standing with support: Ko e lā 'o ha kalia na'e pau ke 'ai ma'u pē hano pou pou koe'uhi ko hā fakatamaki 'e hoko pea pēhē foki ki ha fanā na'e pou pou'i ma'u pē. (The sails and fanā of the Tongan ships - kalia were always supported in preparation for disasters). Ko ha me'a kuo tokateu'i kei mama'o ke fakapapau'i ke hao 'o ka hoko ha fakatamaki (The enduring preparation of something to ensure its safety before a disaster strikes or when a given task is performed to a standard that is over and above what is required) (Māhina, 2004, p. 184)

TONGAN EXPRESSIONS AND PHRASES

Aofangatuku mo e Tātātulivaka: Conclusions and Recommendations

'Aua! Ka 'oku tolonga pē 'a Tui, 'a 'Amanaki, 'a 'Ofa; 'a e tolu ni pē: pea ko honau tu'ukimu'a ko 'OFA: There are three things that last: faith, hope and love, and the greatest of these is LOVE. (1 Corinthians 13: 13)

efiafi lotu fakafamili: family prayer evenings (fellowship).

e ngaahi lea ki he veitapui: taboo language for different genders

fakahoko lelei e ngaahi fatongia 'oku totonu ke fai ki honau kāinga: superlatively conduct all the responsibilities to their extended family

fakaongoongo ai pē he taimi kotoa: listening or relying or depending on them all the time; Constantly, depending or listening to people; being obedient.

fakatu'utu'unga 'o e sosaieti Tonga: Tongan social hierarchy.

fetokoni'aki, toka'i, and feveitokai'aki: cooperation, consensus and maintenance of good relationships.

Founga Fekumi – The Research Design

'Fononga 'a Fakahalafononga: The journey of *Fakahalafononga*. (Refer to translation of *Fakahalafononga* on page 275).

fua e ngaahi fatongia : carry all the obligations

hei'ilo pē 'oku nau fu'u sai'ia kinautolu he ō ki he 'univesiti pē 'ikai: I wonder whether they like going to university or not.

Kae hangē ko e lau: mālō pe si'i lea, he ko e fiefia ia 'oku 'ikai toe lau ha me'a ko e 'aho ni pē ke ongo'i langilangi mo fiefia pea 'alu e talanoa na'e 'ikai hano ua e kātōanga 'ene lahi!: Like the saying, 'thanks but no thanks', because nothing is as important as the joy and honour that we have today and we want this occasion to be reported as the biggest ever happened!

Kapau te tau faka'apa'apa'i e ngaahi 'ofa hotau ngaahi fāmili kiate kitautolu ke fua 'etau ako pea te ne faka'ai'ai kitautolu ketau feinga mālohi he ako: If we respect the love of our families to educate us then it could motivate us to work harder in our education.

Ko au pē 'a e vaine, ko kimoutolu 'a e ngaahi va'a: I am the vine and you are the branches (John 15:5).

Ko e ako ko e pikipiki hama ka e vaevae manava: Education is a shared responsibility (Tongati'o, 2006a).

Ko e 'apasia ki he 'Otua ko e 'uluaki me'a ia 'i he 'ilo: Fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. (Proverbs: 1:7)

Ko e hā hono 'aonga e ō ki he ako?: what is the use of going to school?

Ko e 'ofa ko e me'a mahu'inga: Love is very important

Ko e faka'ap'apa ko e me'a mahu'inga he kapau te tau faka'ap'apa'i e ngaahi naunau mo e ngaahi faingamālie fakaako kotoa pē 'oku tau ma'u pea 'e ma'u e ola lelei he'etau feinga: Respect is very important, if we respect every educational opportunity that we have then we will have good results.

Ko hotau 'ulungaanga faka-Tonga ia ka māfana pē loto ia pea 'oku sai 'aupito ia 'o lava lelei pē ngaahi me'a lahi ia pea 'e 'ikai ke to e mahu'iga ha me'a ia: We can do a lot of things if we are enthusiastic, warm or have the love so we commit ourselves.

Ko 'enau taimi tatau pē pea 'oku 'i ai ē femahino'aki 'o tokoni lahi ki he ako 'a e fānau: When they are at the same *tā-vā kāinga* time-space relationships, then there is a mutual understanding amongst the group that could help students' education.

Ko 'eku lea atu eni mei he fungavaka taha faa: I am speaking from the fourteenth floor.

ko e koloa pē lava 'a e fatongia, ka 'i ai ha toki me'a ke fakalelei'i pea toki vakai ia kimui: Our responsibility is the most important, lets worry about that now and leave the rest until later.

Ko e lotu mo e ako ka e mālohi ha fonua: Christianity and education is the strength of a nation (Howard, 2004).

koloa or koloa faka-Tonga: Tongan goods, wealth, riches, possessions such as fine mats and *ngatu* that Tongans have and value.

Manatu ki he tupu'anga: Remembrance of one's roots.

Meimei ko e kovi kotoa pē 'oku tukuaki'i ia ki he vale mo e ta'e ako pea ko e kape mamahi ia e pēhē vale ta'e ako: This literally means that most of the dreadful things are said to be the consequences of ignorance and uneducated. This is the worst insult to say that you are an uneducated person.

Mo u ō 'o ako kemou 'aonga ki he fāmili, siasi mo e fonua: Go forth be educated to be useful to the family, church and country.

Nau ako ta'e taumu'a: They have no goals for their education.

Nofo 'a kāinga: kinship ties or structure

ngaahi 'ulungaanga mahu'inga: core values

ngaahi 'ulungaanga mahu'inga faka-Tonga: Tongan core values

'o e tokotaha 'oku 'o'ona 'a e 'aho ngāue: Of the person whose turn it is for the group work that day.

'ofa, fe'ofa'ofani or fe'ofa'aki: To love, to be fond of, or to be kind to one another (Churchward, 1959); mutual love, caring and generosity.

Ola 'o e Fekumi – The Research Findings

'Oku 'auha hoku kakai ko e masiva 'ilo: My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge Hosea, 4:6.

'oku fe'amokaki mo faingata'a 'a e mo'ui: where life is hard.

'Oku ou feinga ke u tā e 'uluafi: I am trying to be the very first one in the family (to do it – to have a university degree).

'Oku ou tomu'a tuku hā fakafeta'i ki he 'Otua Māfima'fi 'i he'ene tauhi hao, foaki ivi mo e poto ki he finemotu'a mā'olalo, masiva mo ta'e'iloa ni ke lava ai 'o taufonua 'a e fononga 'i he fekumi fekau'aki pea mo e ako 'a e fānau Tonga 'i he ngaahi ako'anga mā'olunga 'o Nu'usila. 'Ko e koloa 'a Tonga ko e fakamālō' ko ia ai 'oku 'oatu 'a e fakamālō loto hounga mo'oni ki a kimoutolu kotoa pē na'a mou lave mai ki he feinga ako ni. 'Oku te fakatauange pē 'e taumalingi atu 'a e ngaahi tāpuaki 'a e Ta'ehāmai ki homou ngaahi fāmili 'i he tapa kotoa pē ho'omou mo'ui lolotonga 'etau faai fononga 'i he maama ta'e'iloa ni.

First of all I would like to praise and thank God Almighty for his love, guidance, strength and enlightenment of this unworthy servant during this research on Tongan students' journey to academic achievement in New Zealand tertiary education. Secondly, to those who walk with me during the journey of this thesis, words cannot express my utmost gratitude to you all. Your kind assistance and tireless effort throughout, helped me to reach the destination of this thesis. Thank you very much for everything. May God bless you and your families during your journey in this world.

'oua 'e taungutu: Not answering back and not reasoning with people of higher authority such as their parents.

sai pē, he ko e faka'osi ē 'oku 'ikai ha me'a ia 'e mahu'inga ko e koloa pē 'etau kei ma'u e manava mo'ui!: That's fine as this is the last and final time of doing it so it is of great importance; so long as we are still breathing!

seakale 'o e nofo 'a kāinga: kinship circle.

ta'e 'ofa 'o kalo holo he kavenga: not having love; or dodging obligations

tauhi vā mo fai honau ngaahi fatongia 'i he ngaahi kātōanga faka-Tonga: Fulfil their reciprocal roles and responsibilities in these cultural traditions and customs.

Tamasi'i ko ho'o fai ē ngāue lelei 'oku ke fakafiefia'i ē fāmili, siasi mo e fonua ka ko ho'o fai ē ngāue kovi 'oku ke fakamaa'i ai ē fāmili, siasi mo e fonua: Eevery good or bad deed one does displays his or her fāmili, siasi and fonua.

Te ke 'ofa ki ho 'Otua 'aki ho loto, laumālie mo ho 'atamai kotoa: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.

Te ke 'ofa ki ho kāinga 'o hangē ko ho'o 'ofa kiate koe: You shall love your neighbour as you love yourself.

tō'onga faka-Tonga, anga faka-Tonga or mo'ui faka-Tonga: Tongan Culture (Churchward, 1959, pp. 503, 507, 369).

tō 'i vaha'a: They are like falling in between, not one thing or the other.

tuku ai pē 'apongipongi ki he 'apongipongi, 'e 'ai e teu ke lahi na'a lau'i kitautolu 'o tala kuo tau kaipō!: Forget about tomorrow lets prepare as much as we can lest people gossip about us being slier on food.

Tu'i mo hono fale: King and the royal family

tukufakaholo 'o e mo'ui 'a e tangata: The customs and traditions of human existence.

Tūkufua ki he Fekumi – Theoretical Framework

tukutala, talatukufakaholo, tala or ngaahi me'a tu'ufonua: customs and traditions.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A – Kinship Ties

Kinship ties or how people are related or tied to other people as a *fāmili* or *kāinga* in the Tongan society is through the Tongan Social Hierarchy (*Fakatu’utu’unga ‘o e Sosaieti Tonga*) and the Kinship Circle (*Seakale ‘o e Nofo ‘a Kāinga*) explained in the following sections.

1. Tongan Social Hierarchy

Figure 1 in Chapter 2 shows the Tongan Social Hierarchy which is divided in four layers. In the top layer sits the current, King George Tupou V, and the royal family. King George Tupou V is the head of the government, the head of the chiefs, and the head of the people. He is believed to be a descendant of a line of kings and queens dating back to the tenth century AD⁹⁰. The king and the royal family have always attended many public ceremonies and the Tongans have always given them the highest forms of respect and honour. The Tongan people use a special language (language of difference) to address the king and his family.

In the second layer of the social hierarchy sits the 33 *nōpele* of the realm. These wealthy nobles have hereditary *tofi’a* (estate) and they hold powerful and privileged positions in Tonga. The commoners show a great deal of respect to these nobles and they also use a special language when addressing them which is also different from the special language used for royalty. Of almost equal rank to the nobles are the *hou’eiki* (chiefs) who are not as powerful or wealthy as the nobles but who hold an important position in the society, “Every village has its own chief, and the villagers regard him as their head, while he looks upon them as his people” (Crane, 1978, p. 33). The chiefs are given the highest place during *kava* ceremonies,

⁹⁰ Anno Domini = After the birth of Christ; In the year of our Lord

in churches and other village celebrations. In Tonga, people should only accept positions of privilege and power if they accept also the duty of helping the less privileged people who support them. The king and his royal family, nobles and chiefs do this to retain the respect and loyalty of the people. If they did not, they would create resentment and opposition from the people (Crane, 1978).

The third layer consists of the elite who are professionals. These people have made many social advances in their lives so they become grouped in layers of varying status. These commoners with the highest status are the men of wealth, educated elite, Ministers of the Crown, heads of government departments, principals of institutions, and church leaders. These professionals have earned the respect of the people within the Tongan society because of what they can offer to their communities.

The last and the biggest layer, which is the base where the social hierarchy stands, are the *tu'a* (commoners) people. These people of the lowest status are those who “try to lead lives of fulfilment and contentment according to their differing abilities” (Crane, 1978, p. 33).

2. Kinship Circles

Figure 2 in Chapter 2 is the other significant feature of the Tongan society: is the *Seakale 'o e Nofo 'a Kāinga* or kinship ties. In the Kinship Circle, the *tamai* has authority over his wife and children and he is responsible for producing food and it is his duty to see that work for the benefit of the family is well conducted. It is *tapu* (forbidden or taboo) for sons and daughters to touch their father's head, use his clothes, bed, comb, or eat any food he did not finish eating (Crane, 1978). All the relatives in the *fāmili* are on the father's side. While the *fa'ē* (mother) is a member of the *fāmili*, because of her marriage, all her relatives belong to a different

family. The *fāmili* is a very important unit for both economic and social reasons. Its members act together on tasks that need a lot of labour, such as bush-felling and house-building and on such occasions as weddings, funerals, birthdays, religious festivals or any social gatherings. The head of the *fāmili* is the 'ulumotu'a or 'ulu'i *fāmili*. He is usually an old man on the father's side of the *fāmili*. He has little authority over family affairs, but his main function is to advise, consult and direct the family during cultural occasions and celebrations. He is always looked upon as having wisdom about traditional and cultural affairs (Crane, 1978).

The outer circle of distant relations is the *kāinga* or *matakali* (tribe or village). A noble has no legal power over members of his *kāinga*, but it is their custom to obey him. When a *nōpele* needs help, such as food for ceremonial occasions, or labour for community or personal work, the *kāinga* help him. In return, when the *kāinga* need aid, the *nōpele* has the duty to assist them as far as he is able (Crane, 1978).

Appendix B - Tongan Customs and Traditions

The Tongan's as Polynesians' customs and traditions of human existence (*tukufakaholo 'o e mo'ui 'a e tangata*) "is basically bound up in the three fundamental elements of human existence - birth, marriage and death" (Bain, 1967, p. 21). The Tongans celebrate these events through a *fai'aho*, *mali* and *putu*. There are certain customs and traditions for how these rituals are conducted in Tonga. *Koloa* or *koloa faka-Tonga* is also important in the lives of the Tongans because they use these *koloa* to *fua e ngaahi fatongia pē kavenga* to other members of the *kāinga* during birthdays, weddings, and funerals. Everyone within the family and the community who is related to the key players of the ceremonies should know their relationships and their status in order to perform or conduct their duties and obligations during the occasions. However, as the world changes, there are now a mixture of Tongan and western ways of doing things in Tonga as discussed below.

1. Birthdays (*Fai'aho*)

The first and the twenty-first birthdays are those that are usually celebrated by the Tongans although there are other birthdays that could be celebrated as well. There are complicated reasons why Tongans put on big celebrations for birthday parties. Amongst these reasons are firstly, the family want to show their love for the birthday person, that they have survived these years in their life. Secondly, since birthdays seem to be like a norm within the society, the family wants to show everybody that they can afford to have such ceremonies. Thirdly, especially with the twenty first birthdays, it is to encourage other youngsters to model the life of the birthday person by acknowledging her obedience, successes and achievements. There are other reasons too, that could be considered by individual families, such as a person who is reaching a very old age.

Birthdays usually began with a church service where the birthday person is blessed in the church. Then they proceed on to the feasting part of the celebration. A very formal programme is set up where a Master of Ceremony (MC) leads the programme of the day. The birthday person with his/her *fa'ēhuki* and his/her *fahu* sits at the top table or *pola* (table of cooked food) facing the other *pola* where the rest of the people are seated. At the top table too are the special guests who could be the *faifekau*, *nōpele*, *'eiki* and other people of higher ranks who are present at the celebration. The number of people seated at the top table will depend on the spaces available. The church minister will bless the occasion then the feasting proceeds. During the celebration there will be dances, speeches and presentations of gifts. The keynote speaker of the day is the birthday person where s/he thanks all the families and those present for everything that they do for him/her. If it is a twenty first birthday then an essential part of the ceremony is *the presentation of a key* by the father to the birthday person included in the programme. This is not a very long ritual but it is very important where the father gives the birthday person his/her independence and freedom from his/her parental authority so that s/he can do whatever s/he wants to do independently. At the end of the ceremony, before the guests leave, the church minister blesses the congregation with a closing prayer.

2. Weddings (*Mali*)

Getting married means that most will throw a decent feast, but some opt to elope to avoid the cost of a wedding. There are four separate phases during a wedding ceremony. The first is a *fakalēlea*⁹¹ the night before the service at the Registry, then the registry service, and from there to the

⁹¹ Going of the bridegroom's relatives to the bride's house on the night before the wedding (The original purpose of this was to see that the bride did not run away) (Churchward, 1959).

church service and the process is then completed when the couple appears together in church on the first Sunday of their marriage and it is only then that they are able to consummate the union. A feast usually follows each phase of the process. People generally distinguish between two types of weddings. One is longer and more elaborate affair called *mali katoanga*⁹², the other is shorter and simpler called *mali fakanounou*⁹³. As more financial pressure is being put on the family, the shorter version is becoming more common.

When a couple decides to get married the groom lets his family know about his intentions. Then his relatives will go to the bride's house the night before the day of the wedding for a *fakalēlea*. At the *fakalēlea* there is singing and dancing and exchange of gifts. This ceremony marks the beginning of the celebration and it is usually a very delightful occasion for both families. During the morning of the wedding day, the groom's family busily prepares the food for the feast. The more resources available to them, the more elaborate the feast will be. His family also prepares the *ta'ovala*⁹⁴ that he is to wear for the wedding. The bride's family gathers at her parent's house and enjoys their time together while preparing her outfit. The groom then arrives at her house to pick her up. First, the couple go to the Registry to obtain their marriage license and on to the church (this is usually on the same day, although sometimes not). This is where the exchange of vows will take place, although rings are not always exchanged. After the service, everyone gathers at the groom's house for the feast, provided by his family. The bride's family has priority to eat the

⁹² Elaborated wedding celebration or festival.

⁹³ Shortened wedding.

⁹⁴ Waist mat tied around with coconut sennit beautifully embroidered with colourful beads called *sisi kafa*.

food, if there are not enough *pola*, the groom's family might have to wait for the second sitting. Both bride and groom each have their *fa'ēhuki*. During the feast they each take a seat on the *fa'ēhuki's* lap, usually the *fa'ētangata*, seated on a piece of *ngatu* and *fa'ēhuki* have *ngatu* around their waist. They receive some of the *koloa* that has been offered by both sides of the family for the occasion. The *fahu* presides over the event and is in a position of higher status and she is entitled to the first and best *koloa* that is offered for the wedding.

Once the feast is over, the bride's family returns and prepares the bride's *mohenga*⁹⁵ provided by her *fāmili*, to take to her new home with her husband. The bed is made up with white satin sheets and lace frills, and often contains some of the *koloa* that has been given to the bride by her family. Whenever the bridal party drives from one place to another they will do so in cars and/or trucks that have been decorated with *ngatu*⁹⁶. They sound the horn, shout and sing. The groom's family also prepares some bedding for the newlyweds in the groom's house before the bride's family arrives. When the bride and her family arrive and make the bed and arrange other item/furniture in his house, his family prepares a '*umu puaka*⁹⁷, but only partially cooks it. After the speeches from both sides, the food is presented to the bride's family as a token of gratitude for providing the newlyweds with furniture. The bride's family then leave while she stays with her husband and his family under the close eyes of some of her female relatives who were commended to stay with her until

⁹⁵ The bed items and other *koloa* provided by the brides' and grooms' family during the wedding.

⁹⁶ Painted tapa cloth.

⁹⁷ A big cooked or half cooked pig usually for exchange of gifts in cultural celebrations.

their wedding night which is usually on Sunday night after the celebration.

The final element of the wedding celebration takes place on the following Sunday where both families prepare the *ta'ovala* for the bride and groom to wear to church. They then attend church as a married couple. The families return to the groom's house for a feast afterwards. For this occasion, her family also provides at least one *pola* for the feast, whereas the groom has to provide the remainder of the *pola* (again the more wealth the more elaborate).

It is not until all these events are completed that the wedding night can take place. Traditionally, the couple sleep in the bed provided by the bride's family and her female relatives will listen in the whole night. On Monday, the sheets are then inspected to make sure that the girl was a virgin. If this turns out to be the case, the groom's family then present gifts to the bride's family to thank them for looking after her so well.

Weddings are a formal way of joining two families together and the exchange of gifts and food seals this new relationship. It gives the participants an opportunity to show their generosity and status. Although there can be a certain degree of flexibility depending on the means of the families involved, there are prescribed rules as to who provides what in this context and how it is then redistributed. The bride's family provides the bed and other furniture for the new couple's house. They also provide at least one *pola* for the first Sunday. In return, they receive another *pola* to take back to their family. The groom has to provide the remainder of the food and gifts for her family. The gifts presented by the guests (mostly traditional wealth or cloth) will then be taken charge of by the *fahu* and redistributed (in principle, by not always in practice).

Elopement is a way to avoid the potentially excessive costs of a wedding and a way to get around disapproval of the couple's families. If the couple is of age, they can apply for a license and get married without the permission or knowledge of their families. This can, however, create an awkward position for the families concerned, as the relationship between them has not been established through the exchange of gifts. Marriage practices have changed somewhat throughout the years, as *anga faka-Tonga* has become intertwined with western and Christian values.

3. Funerals (*Putu*)

When a person passes away his/her funeral is planned by the *fāмили* and *kāinga*. The body could be kept at the hospital morgue or just in the home while preparations are made for the funeral. The meeting and all the work in preparation for the funeral is directed by the *'ulumotu'a*. When everything is ready, then funeral messages will go out to all the people and the body of the deceased is prepared for the *'apō*⁹⁸. During the *'apō*, relatives and church groups will stay awake all night to pray and sing hymns. The immediate family members led by the *liongi* group, cook food and feed everyone attending until morning. Those visiting the deceased will bring gifts of *koloa*, money and food to help the family. There is also exchange of *koloa* during the *'apō* led by the *fahu* and her helpers (usually the immediate family of the deceased). Both men and women wear the larger *ta'ovala* over black clothing for this occasion, and close relatives of the deceased wear them for one year after the death as a symbol of their mourning. The choice of colour, size and condition of the mat depends on the relationship to the deceased. Female relatives of the deceased will also present *ngatu*, *fala* or other cloth to the grieving family during the wake, some of which will be redistributed at the same event by the *fahu*.

⁹⁸ Wake, all-night watch kept beside a corpse (Churchward, 1959).

The following morning, the body of the deceased will be wrapped up in *ngatu* for the burial, although this custom is being replaced in certain areas by the use of coffins. The deceased then is taken to church for the church service before it is taken to the graveyard to be buried. While the procession starts moving from the house to the church, the church bell will ring slowly until the procession reached the church and again after the service in the church; during the procession to the cemetery before it stops. There, another service at the graveyard before the burial and after the burial then the *'ulumotu'a* will deliver a speech thanking all the people for attending the funeral as well as relaying information about what will happen after the burial. Usually if there is a *pulua* or *feipulua*⁹⁹ then he would say that *ko e 'osi eni pea te tau lava atu ki 'api 'o fai e ki'i tu'otaha pea tau toki mātuku* (meaning that after the burial then we will go back and have another *kava*¹⁰⁰ ceremony, that is another feast before we retreat to our own homes). If there is no *pulua* then the *'ulumotu'a* will inform the people about it so that people will go straight home from the cemetery.

During the *pulua* there are *feitu'ui*¹⁰¹ from relatives and friends of the deceased and his/her family. These *feitu'ui* will also be reciprocated by the deceased family with gifts of *koloa* and a big pig. A special *kava* ceremony for male elders or *matāpule* (talking chief) is another ritual during the *pulua*. The main part of the *pulua* is when food is distributed to those attending the funeral. Special servings of the best food are given to the *fahu* and to those attending the special *kava* ceremony. Then, raw meat of

⁹⁹ A special cooking and distribution of food after a death and burial of someone (Churchward, 1959).

¹⁰⁰ Fermented beverage from the *kava* plant (*Piper methysticum*) consumed in gathering and the order of drinking is reflecting peoples rank in the society.

¹⁰¹ To visit a bereaved person with a present of food and *koloa* (Churchward, 1959).

beef, horse, pig, mutton and chicken packed in plastic bags are distributed to every person attending the funeral. After the distribution of the plastic bags of meat, each *kāinga* will also be given one 'umu¹⁰² each so that they can go back to their own home and distribute it amongst their own *fāмили*. At the end of the *feipulua*, everyone will retreat to their own homes. In the evening prayers are conducted at the house where the deceased was laid. Then, in the following morning is the *tatafi*¹⁰³. After the *tatafi* the family will provide tea for those who went for the *tatafi* and then they can go home. Usually the immediate family will continue on staying together at the home of the deceased to give comfort to the close relatives for about three to ten nights before they return to their own homes. The length of stay will be decided by the close family because usually this is another costly event of trying to feed those who are staying behind.

There are certain ways that people should behave and dress during these ceremonies and often one can tell kinship relationships during these ceremonies. People often said 'ko e me'a faka'ilo kāinga ko 'etau ō holo 'i he'etau ngaahi me'a pēhē ni' which literally means that going around these cultural occasions were where people come to know their relationships with everyone in their *kāinga*. People's relationships to one another are identified by the ways they dress as well as the *fatongia* that they play.

The most important and expensive artefacts during ceremonies are the *koloa* and *pola*. The *koloa* are basically in the form of different varieties of *fala* and *ngatu* and with the *pola*, the different types of foods which includes different types of meat, sea food, vegetables and root crops. Pigs, live or dead, are also highly valued and are a major part of the gift giving

¹⁰² A big portion of raw meat given during the *pulua*.

¹⁰³ It is the sweeping and tidying up of the graveyard on the first morning after the burial of a deceased person.

process. Pigs in Tonga are very expensive, for example a *puaka toho*¹⁰⁴ ranges in costs between five hundred and a thousand dollars (T\$500 to T\$1000) each. The prices depend on the size and age of the pig often identified by the pig's *nifo hau*¹⁰⁵. The cost of *koloa* depends on the size and type of material used for the making of *fala* and *ngatu*. For example, a *ngatu launima*, which is one of the biggest *ngatu*, that is all made of the real *tapa* cloth might cost between one thousand and two thousand dollars (T\$1000 - T\$2000) while a similar *ngatu launima* that is partly made of foreign cloth material might cost much less. A big *fala* made of *kie*¹⁰⁶ would be more expensive than a smaller one, or one made of *kie* leaves would be more expensive than one made of *paongo*¹⁰⁷ leaves and so on. Therefore, different prices for the *koloa faka-Tonga* would all depend on size and the quality of materials that are used in the making of that *fala* or *ngatu*.

The *koloa* now has a more commercial value. A number of factors have contributed to the rise in the prices of these *koloa*. One, because there is less and less production of these things, more and more women are finding employment so fewer and fewer women are making them, and, as the demand is rising, so is the price of these *koloa*. Another factor is the growing population creating higher demands on these things as the frequency of birthdays, weddings and funerals increases. Another factor is the increased demand from Tongans living abroad because they have lots of money, they can buy anything, at any cost, so this also raises the prices of these *koloa*.

¹⁰⁴ Biggest pig considered by the Tongans.

¹⁰⁵ Two canine teeth of the *puaka toho*.

¹⁰⁶ Special kind of pandanus, highly valued and prized usually used for making very fine mats.

¹⁰⁷ A different species of pandanus tree.

Appendix C - General Information about the Research

1. Researcher

The researcher, Telesia Kalavite, is a Tongan educator. She has worked for the Ministry of Education in Tonga teaching primary, secondary and tertiary students for many years before she migrated to New Zealand. She is working part time as the Pasifika learning advisor at Waikato Institute of Technology, and is now a PhD candidate at the University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand.

2. Title of the Study

The working title of her study is: Tongan Students' Journey to Academic Achievement in New Zealand Tertiary Education.

3. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the perceived socio-cultural aspects that impact on Tonga students' academic achievement in New Zealand tertiary education.

4. Participants

Data generation will be from interviews of approximately 25 to 30 Tongan tertiary students, Tongan educators and Tongan parents in New Zealand.

5. Selection of Participants

Convenience, purposive and snowball sampling will be used by the researcher where the participants will be recruited from Tongan:

- (i) Undergraduate students ranging from certificate to final year degree level from universities and polytechnics around New Zealand;
- (ii) Postgraduate students ranging from Honours to PhD level from universities and polytechnics around New Zealand;
- (iii) Staff/educators in tertiary institutions around New Zealand;
- (iv) And parents and community members around New Zealand.

6. Roles of Participants

Each individual will be invited verbally then formally through a letter to participate in the project. They would be requested to sign a consent form then the researcher would start contacting the participants to arrange a time for the interview. Each participant will have one hour interview as arranged. They could refrain from answering any specific questions if they wish.

7. Rights of Participants

The rights of the participants are that:

- (i) Their participation is voluntary and all information given will be confidential;
- (ii) They have the right to remain anonymous and withdraw their co-operation at any time up to the confirmation of transcripts;
- (iii) They can decline to answer any question during the research process and seek further clarification on any issue;
- (iv) The names of institutions will be kept anonymous and all other personal information quoted including the identity of the individuals will also remain anonymous other than to the researcher and her supervisors;
- (v) The confidentiality of the participants will be protected through the removal of all personal identifiers such as names and addresses from both physical and computer-held records and their replacement with a code. The key that links the codes to the identifying information will be kept separate and secure. All the data used for published research will be archived indefinitely after the submission of her thesis while all other information will be destroyed 5 years after the submission of her thesis.

8. Roles of the Researcher

The role of the researcher is to respect the decisions of the participants and to follow all the relevant ethical issues concerning the research project according to the ethics application approved by the School of Education Human Research Ethics Committee, The University of Waikato.

9. Dissemination of Data

The data analysed will be used firstly for the completion of the doctoral thesis, which is the major requirement for the successful completion of the PhD programme. Subsequent papers may emanate from the analysis. These may be published or presented at seminars, conferences, journals or chapters of books.

10. Contacting the Researcher

The researcher can be contacted at this address:

Doctoral Student
School of Education
The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton

11. Other Concerns

Concerns may also be addressed to the Chief Supervisor of this research at this address:

Dr. Jane Strachan
Department of Professional Studies in Education
School of Education
University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton

Appendix D – Invitation Letter to Participants

Telesia Kalavite
Doctoral Student
School of Education
The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton

Monday 2 May 2005

Dear _____

Re: Participation in a Research Project

I wish to ask for your support on a research project that I am undertaking in the School of Education at The University of Waikato. This research is for a degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) that I am pursuing. I realise that you are very busy but I hope that you would kindly consider supporting this project.

The topic of this research is *Tongan Students Journey to Academic Achievement in New Zealand Tertiary Education* and my research question is *What are the perceived socio-cultural factors that impact on Tongan Students' academic achievement in New Zealand Tertiary Education?*

This project would involve you in a face-to-face one hour audio-taped interview. This is for you to tell your stories on your experiences as a Tongan parent, Tongan student or as a Tongan staff member in New Zealand tertiary education. The interview will be transcribed and the transcripts will be returned to you so that you can add or delete anything that you may want.

Your responses will be treated as confidential to this project and none of the information you supply will be reported in any way where any individual or institution would be identified. Participation is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw at any point up to the confirmation of

the transcript, or refrain from answering particular questions, if you feel uncomfortable about any aspect of the project.

Attached is an information sheet about the research and a consent form. Please **fill** in the attached consent form if you agree to support my research and **post** it to me on the prepaid envelope given within one week of the receipt of this letter. I will contact you by letter or phone for arrangements of possible times for the interview.

If you have any queries, feel free to contact me or my principal supervisor Dr. Jane Strachan at The University of Waikato to discuss any aspect of this project.

I would be grateful if you could assist me in this research project not only for the completion of my programme of study but it is anticipated that the findings from this project will benefit our future Tongan students in tertiary education in this country.

Your kind assistance would deeply be appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Telesia Kalavite

Appendix E - Participants' Consent Form

Dear Telesia

I have read the covering letter and agree to participate in your research project on *Tongan Students Journey to Academic Achievement in New Zealand Tertiary Education*. I do understand that the information I will give will be completely confidential and it will be used only for the purpose of the research and that my identity will be kept confidential. I also understand that I can withdraw from this project anytime up to the time of the confirmation of the transcript.

I am giving permission to be interviewed, for the interview to be recorded, to confirm the transcript, and for the transcript to be used in your research project.

Name (Please Print): _____

Contact details: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix F - Thank You Letter to Participants

Telesia Kalavite
Doctoral Student
School of Education
The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton

Monday 21 November 2005.

Re: Thank you for your participation in my research project

Dear _____

I sincerely express my gratitude for your participation in my research project on *Tonga Students Journey to Academic Achievement in New Zealand Tertiary Education*. I deeply appreciate your time and involvement in this research project.

I hope that your help would allow me to pursue much further in my academic endeavours. You are welcome to inform me if you are interested in knowing the results of this project. I would be pleased to let you know or send you a one page summary of the documented results of this research.

Yours sincerely

Telesia Kalavite

Appendix G - Participants' Personal Details

(Filled in by the researcher at the beginning of the interview)

Name: _____

Date of Birth / Age: _____

Gender: _____

Home address/ city of residence: _____

Church Denomination: _____

Occupation (full time or part time): _____

Qualification(s): _____

Current tertiary institution attended: _____

Current program of study: _____

Stage at the tertiary education (year 1, 2, 3, etc): _____

Country where you born (Tonga or New Zealand): _____

Country where you undertook your secondary education _____

Language of communication: _____

Date of interview: _____

Age first started tertiary education: _____

Additional information _____

Appendix H – Interview Guiding Questions: Tongan Students

1. When did you start tertiary education here in New Zealand?
Naé kamata fakakū hoó ako 'i he 'univesiti/politekiniki 'i Nu'usila ni?
2. Were you looking forward to going to university/polytechnic or tertiary institution here in New Zealand? Why?
Na'a ke loto lahi mo faka'amu ke fai mo ke hū ki he 'univesiti/politekiniki 'i Nu'usila ni? Ko e hā hono 'uhinga?
3. How did you find it at the university/polytechnic here in New Zealand? Are there any problems?
Na'e fēfē ho'o ako 'i he 'univesiti/politekiniki 'i Nu'usila ni? 'Oku/Naé 'i ai ha ngaahi palopalema?
4. What are these problems?
Ko e hā e ngaahi palopalema/faingataá?
5. What do you think is the main cause of these problems?
Ko e hā nai ē ngaahi 'uhinga tefito ne hoko ai ē ngaahi palopalema ko eni kiate koe?
6. What do you think are the customs, values and beliefs that impact on your study?
Ko e hā ē ngaahi 'ulungaanga (faka-Tonga) pē faka-fonua 'oku ne paotoloaki pē fakafē'atungia'i 'a ho'o feinga ako?
7. Why do you think these socio-cultural factors impacted on your study?
Ko e hā nai hono 'uhinga 'oku uesia ai 'e he ngaahi 'ulungaanga fakafonua pē fakasosiale ko eni 'a ho'o feinga ako?
8. How can we stop or minimise the effects of these socio-cultural factors on your study?
'E anga fēfē ha'atau ta'ofi pē fakasi'isi'i ē ngaahi nunu'a 'o e ngaahi 'ulungaanga fakasōsiale ko eni mei he'ene uesia 'a ho'o feinga ako?
9. What motivates you to study hard and to get a good education?
Ko e hā ē ngaahi me'a 'oku ne faka'ai'ai koe ke ke ngāue mālohi ke ola lelei ho'o ako?
10. What do you think are the cultural differences between you and your other *Pakehā* classmates that might enhance or hinder the advancement of successful learning? (What is the difference

between you and your *Pakehā* classmates that helps or may not help you to be successful in your study?)

Ko e hā nai 'a ho faikehekehe fakae'ulungaanga fakafonua mo ho ngaahi kaungā ako Papālangi 'oku lava ke ne fakafaingofuai pē paotoloaki 'a ho'o ako 'i Nu'usila ni?

11. How do Tongan and New Zealand cultures influence Tongan students' academic achievement?

'Oku anga fēfē 'a hono uesia 'e he 'ulungaanga faka-Tonga pea mo e 'ulungaanga faka-Pālangi (Nu'usila) 'a ho'o ako? 'Oku 'i ai nai hā fehangahangai 'i he ongo 'ulungaanga ko eni 'oku ne uesia 'a ho'o feinga ako?

12. Are you given enough support during your tertiary education here in New Zealand?

'Oku fe'unga pē 'a e ngaahi tokoni 'oku fai kiate koe 'i ho'o ako 'i Nu'usila ni?

13. What are the kinds of support do you have?

Ko e hā e ngaahi tokoni ko eni 'oku ke ma'u?

14. What are the whole cultural values, obligations and expectations towards your education?

Ko e hā ē ngaahi 'ulungaanga fakafonua mahu'inga mo e ngaahi fatongia mo e 'amanaki 'oku fai mai ki ho'o ako?

15. How does Tongan culture and western culture interface during your studies in New Zealand tertiary education?

'Oku anga fēfē 'a e fengāue'aki vaofi pea mo fehangahangai 'a hotau 'ulungaanga faka-Tonga pea mo e 'ulungaanga faka-Pālangi 'i he lolotongā ko eni 'a ho'o feinga ako 'i he 'univesiti/politekiniki?

16. Do you think that our Tongan students are marginalized in the education sector? How?

'Oku ke pēhē 'oku nai 'oku filifili mānako pē 'ikai ke tokangaekina 'a 'etau fanauako Tonga 'i he ako 'i Nu'usila ni? 'O anga fēfē?

17. Can you give some suggestions of the things that could be done to help you or the Tongan students to gain high academic results?

Ko e hā nai ha tokoni 'e ala fai ke tokoni kiate koe pē ko e fanauako Tonga ke fakalaka pē to e mā'olungaange 'a e ola 'o 'eanu ako?

18. Are there any other things/issues that you would like to comment on?

'Oku 'i ai hā to e me'a 'oku ke fie lave ki ai?

Appendix I – Interview Guiding Questions: Tongan Educators

1. In your experience as a Tongan educator, what do you think are the Tongan students' major problems while studying here in New Zealand? Why are Tongans low achievers?
'I ho'o taukei 'oku ke pēhē ko e hā nai ē ngaahi palopalema 'oku fekuki mo 'etau fanauako Tonga 'oku ako Nu'usila ni? Ko e hā ē 'uhinga 'oku 'ikai ke ola lelei ai e ako 'a 'etau fanauako Tonga 'i Nu'usila ni?
 2. What are the sources of these problems?
Ko e hā e ngaahi me'a 'oku ne fakatupu ē ngaahi palopalema ko eni?
 3. Do you think that Tongan students are/were given enough support? during their tertiary education here in New Zealand? Why?
'Oku ke pēhē 'oku fe'unga nai ē ngaahi tokoni 'oku fai ma'a 'etau fanauako Tonga 'i he taimi 'oku nau ako ai he ngaahi 'univesiti/politekiniki 'i Nu'usila ni? Ko e hā nai ē ngaahi 'uhinga ki heni?
 4. How do the institutions help Tongan students not only to be successful in their studies but to have better grades?
'Oku anga fēfē hono tokoni 'i 'o 'etau fanauako he 'univesiti/politekiniki 'i Nu'usila ni ke lava 'enau feinga ako pea ke maaka lelei foki mo 'enau ngaahi leseni?
 5. Can you make some recommendations for what could be done to help Tongan students to gain higher grades in their courses?
Ko e hā nai ha'o ngaahi fale'i pe fakakaukau ki ha ngaahi me'a 'e ala fai ke tokoni ki he 'etau fanauako Tonga ke nau ma'u ha ngaahi maaka lelei 'i he 'enau ngaahi lēsoni?
 6. Do you think that our Tongan students are marginalized in the education sector? How?
'Oku ke pēhē 'oku filifili manako pē 'ikai ke tokangaekina 'a 'etau fanauako Tonga 'i he tafa'aki fakaako 'i Nu'usila ni? 'O anga fēfē?
 7. What are the whole cultural values, obligations and expectations toward your education?
Ko e hā ē ngaahi 'ulungaanga fakafonua mahu'inga mo e ngaahi fakatu'otu'a mo e 'amanaki 'oku fai mai ki he ako 'a 'etau fanau?
 8. What are some of the customs, values, expectations and cultural obligations that Tongan students face that might affect them and their studies?
Ko e hā ē ngaahi 'ulungaanga fakafonua mahu'inga mo e ngaahi fiema'u mo e
-

'amanaki 'oku fekuki mo 'etau fanau te ne ngali uesia 'a 'enau ako?

9. How do Tongan culture and western culture interface during the Tongan students studies in New Zealand tertiary education?
'Oku anga fēfē 'a e fengāue'aki vaofi pea mo fehangahangai 'a hotau 'ulungaanga faka-Tonga pea mo e 'ulungaanga fakamuli 'i he lolotonga ko eni 'a e ako 'a 'etau fānau 'i he 'univesiti/politekiniki?
10. Why is it that Tongans embraced whole heartedly formalised education as we know it in the western context?
Ko e hā nai ē 'uhinga 'oku tau tali lelei ai pea mo e loto hangamālie mo'oni 'a e ako, pea mo e founga ako faka-Pālangi (Uesite) 'i Tonga?
11. What are the underlying beliefs that lead people to leave home to go overseas to study? What does that do in terms of cultural impact? Why is it then, that they sometimes struggled at their studies at the international context?
Ko e hā ē mo'oni'i me'a 'oku ne faka'ai'ai ē kakai Tonga kenau ō mai ki muli ni 'o ako ai. Ko e hā 'ene uesia 'a 'enau mo'ui fakasōsiale faka-Tonga? Pea ko e hā nai 'oku nau fu'u faingata'a'ia pēhē ai 'i he'enau feinga ako 'i muli ni?
12. What is the impact of New Zealand Government policy on Tongan students' academic achievement?
Ko e hā nai ha me'a 'i he ngaahi lao 'a e Pule'anga Nu'usila 'oku ne uesia 'a e ako lelei 'a 'etau fānauako Tonga?
13. What is better education? Is it getting western knowledge? Or to get the knowledge to get a job in the western world? We can get secondary educations in Tonga, then why do come here (New Zealand) for education?
Ko e hā nai ē ako lelei? Ko e ngaahi 'ilo faka-Uesite pē ko e ako ke ma'u ē ngāue 'i he Uesite? Ko e hā leva ē me'a 'oku tau to e ō mai ai ki Nu'usila ni ko e feingaako kapau 'oku lava pē ketau ako lelei 'i Tonga?
14. What do you think are the cultural differences between the Tongans and the Pakehā that might enhance or hinder the advancement to successful learning?
Ko e hā nai ē faikahekehe 'o e 'ulungaanga faka-Tonga mo e 'ulungaanga faka-Pālangi 'oku lava ke ne paotoloaki pē fakafe'atungia'i 'a e ako 'etau fānau?
15. Are there any other things/issues that you would like to comment on, regarding Tongan students' academic achievement?
'Oku to e 'i ai hā me'a 'oku ke fie tānaki mai?

Appendix J - Interview Guiding Questions: Tongan Parents

1. What are your expectations of your children's education?
Ko e hā 'a ho'o faka'amu ki he ako 'a ho'o fānau?
 2. What are some of the things that you think that support your children to complete their studies?
Ko e hā e ngaahi me'a 'oku ke pēhē te ne tokoni'i 'a e ako 'a ho'o fānau ke lava lelei?
 3. What are your opinions about tertiary education and Tongan students here in New Zealand?
Ko e hā 'a ho'o fakakaukau ki he ako 'a 'etau fānau Tonga 'i he ngaahi 'univesiti/politekiniki 'i Nu'usila ni?
 4. Do your children find it hard to cope with their education here in New Zealand? What did they find hard?
'Oku faingata'a'ia nai 'a ho'o fānau 'i he'enau ako? Ko e hā e me'a 'oku nau faingata'a'ia ai?
 5. Why are Tongan tertiary students in New Zealand low achievers?
Ko e hā ē 'uhinga 'oku 'ikai ke ola lelei ai e ako 'a 'etau fānauako Tonga 'i Nu'usila ni?
 6. What could be some effective ways of supporting your children who are now studying in tertiary institutions?
'Oku ke pēhē ko e hā nai hā founa lelei taha ke tokoni'i 'aki 'a ho'o fānau?
 7. What do you think about the Tongan culture and its role in your students' studies in tertiary education?
Ko e hā nai ho'o fakakaukau ki hotau ngaahi 'ulungaanga faka-Tonga pea mo e ako lelei 'etau fanau 'i he fonua ni?
 8. How do the Tongan culture and New Zealand culture influence Tongan students' achievement?
'Oku anga fēfē 'a e fengaue'aki vaofi pea mo fehangaangai 'a hotau 'ulungaanga faka-Tonga pea mo e 'ulungaanga faka-muli 'i he lolotonga ko eni 'a 'enau feinga ako 'i he 'univesiti/politekiniki?
 9. What are the expectations of students who come here from Tonga to study? What does the country want from them? What are the family expectations? What are the community expectations?
Ko e hā ē fiema'u mo e 'amanaki 'oku fai ki he'etau fānau Tonga 'oku ō mai ki heni 'o ako ai? Ko e hā ē 'amanaki mai 'a e fāmili, siasi pea mo e fonua kiate kinautolu?
-

-
10. How does Tongan culture and western culture interface during the students' studies in New Zealand tertiary education?
'Oku anga fēfē 'a e fengāue'aki vaofi pea mo fehangahangai 'a hotau 'ulungaanga faka-Tonga pea mo e 'ulungaanga fakamuli 'i he lolotonga ko eni 'a e feinga ako 'eatu fānau 'i he ngaahi 'univesiti/politekiniki?
11. Why is it that Tongans embraced so whole heartedly formalised education as we know it in the western context? *Ko e hā nai ē 'uhinga 'oku tau tali lelei ai pea mo e loto hangamālie mo'oni 'a e ako, pea mo e founga ako faka-Pālangi (Uesite)'i Tonga pea mo 'etau mo'ui faka-Tonga foki?*
12. What are the underlying beliefs that lead people to leaving home to go overseas to study? What does that do in terms of cultural impact? Why is it then that sometimes they really struggle at their studies at an international context? *Ko e hā ē mo'oni'i me'a 'oku ne faka'ai'ai ē kakai Tonga kenau ō mai ki muli ni 'o ako ai. Ko e hā 'ene uesia 'a 'enau mo'ui fakasōsiale faka-Tonga? Pea ko e hā nai 'oku nau fu'u faingata'a'ia pēhē ai 'i he'enau feinga ako 'i muli ni?*
13. What is the impact of New Zealand Government policy on Tongan students' academic achievement? *Ko e hā nai hā me'a 'i he ngaahi lao 'a e Pule'anga Nu'usila 'oku ne uesia 'a e ako lelei 'a 'etau fānauako Tonga?*
14. What is better education? Is it getting western knowledge? Or, to get the knowledge to get a job in the western world? We can get secondary education in Tonga then why come here (NZ) for education? *Ko e hā nai ē ako lelei? Ko e ngaahi 'ilo faka-Uesite pē ko e ako ke ma'u ē ngāue 'i he Uesite? Ko e hā leva e me'a 'oku tau to e ō mai ai ki Nu'usila ni ko e feinga ako kapau 'oku lava pe ketau ako lelei 'i Tonga?*
15. What do you think are the cultural differences between the Tongans and the *Pakehā* that might enhance hinder the advancement to successful learning? *Ko e hā nai ē faikehekehe 'o e 'ulungaanga faka-Tonga mo e 'ulungaanga faka-Pālangi ōku lava ke ne paotoloaki pē fakafe'atungia'i 'a e ako 'etau fānau?*
16. Are there any other things/issues that you would like to comment on regarding the Tongan students' academic achievement? *'Oku 'i ai hā me'a 'oku ke to e fie tānaki mai?*
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Appendix K – Accompany Letter for Interview Transcripts

Doctoral Student
School of Education
The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton

Monday 17 July 2006.

Re: Interview transcript

Dear _____

Thank you very much for your time in allowing me to have a very useful interview with you. Attached is the transcript of the interview. Please feel free to change any information that you want and then send the transcript to me in the prepaid envelope enclosed, as soon as you can.

I am looking forward for your constructive comments. Your feedback would deeply be appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Telesia Kalavite

Appendix L - Coding System for Participants

A = Students (Students in higher education).

B = Academics (Academics who are not parents).

C = Parents (Parents who are not academics).

D = Parents & Academics (Parents who are also academics).

A₁ = Student number 1

A₂ = Student number 2

A₃ = Student number 3

A₄ = Student number 4

A₅ = Student number 5

A₆ = Student number 6

A₇ = Student number 7

A₈ = Student number 8

A₉ = Student number 9

A₁₀ = Student number 10

A₁₁ = Student number 11

A₁₂ = Student number 12

A₁₃ = Student number 13

B₁ = Academic number 1

B₂ = Academic number 2

C₁ = Parent number 1

C₂ = Parent number 2

D₁ = Parent & Academic number 1

D₂ = Parent & Academic number 2

D₃ = Parent & Academic number 3

D₄ = Parent & Academic number 4

D₅ = Parent & Academic number 5

D₆ = Parent & Academic number 6

D₇ = Parent & Academic number 7

D₈ = Parent & Academic number 8

Appendix M - Participants' Profiles

No.	Code	Age	Gender	Qualification	City	Date
1	A1	Late 20s	F	undergrad	Auckland	18/08/05
2	A2	Early 20s	F	undergrad	Auckland	18/08/05
3	A3	Early 20s	F	undergrad	Auckland	18/08/05
4	A4	Early 20s	F	undergrad	Auckland	18/08/05
5	A5	Late 30s	F	undergrad	Auckland	26/08/05
6	A6	Early 20s	F	undergrad	Auckland	26/08/05
7	A7	Early 20s	F	undergrad	Auckland	26/08/05
8	A8	Early 20s	F	undergrad	Auckland	26/08/05
9	A9	Early 20s	M	undergrad	Auckland	26/08/05
10	A10	Late 20s	F	postgrad	Hamilton	14/11/05
11	A11	Early 20s	M	undergrad	Hamilton	24/11/05
12	A12	Early 20s	M	undergrad	Hamilton	18/02/06
13	A13	Late 20s	M	undergrad	Hamilton	06/03/06
14	B1	Early 20s	F	MA	Auckland	25/11/05
15	B2	Early 40s	F	PhD	Auckland	25/11/05
16	C1	Early 40s	M	No degree	Dunedin	16/07/05
17	C2	Early 50s	M	No degree	Hamilton	06/02/06
18	D1	Early 40s	F	Undergrad	Gisborne	14/07/05
19	D2	Late 30s	F	BSc	Dunedin	16/07/05
20	D3	Early 50s	F	MA/MEd	Wellington	20/07/05 & 02/08/05
21	D4	Early 50s	M	PhD	Auckland	19/08/05
22	D5	Early 40s	F	MA	Auckland	20/08/05
23	D6	Late 40s	F	PhD	Auckland	14/11/05
24	D7	Early 40s	F	MA	Hamilton	23/11/05
25	D8	Early 50s	F	BA	Wellington	29/11/05