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Tongan Women and Leadership in New Zealand

A thesis

presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
of the degree of Master in Business Studies at Massey University

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Dedications

I dedicate this work to three special women that have shown great influence in my journey through framing my worldview in life.

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To God be the glory.

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Glossary

Tongan Terms	English translations
<i>'ilo'i kita</i>	Knowing oneself / knowing one's responsibilities towards others / knowing one's place in a kainga circle
<i>'ulumotu'a</i>	The head of the kainga (clan)
<i>Ako</i>	To be educated
<i>Fahu</i>	Father's sister's privilege over her brother's children
<i>Faka'apa'apa</i>	Respect
<i>Fakatokilalo</i>	humility
<i>Fale</i>	house
<i>Fale lalava</i>	House that is lashed with kafa (sinnet) to connect the poles and posts. Sometimes patterns are created.
<i>Famili</i>	Familial relationships
<i>Fatu</i>	Start the weaving of a new fala
<i>Fe'unu</i>	Weft / strands
<i>Fi</i>	braid
<i>Fi kafa</i>	Braiding of sinnets
<i>Fononga'anga</i>	journey
<i>Fua fatongia</i>	Fulfilling obligations
<i>Kafa</i>	sinnet
<i>Kainga</i>	Extended families
<i>Kavenga</i>	obligations
<i>Lalanga</i>	weave
<i>Lalanga</i>	Weaving
<i>Lalava</i>	lashing
<i>Lo'ihoosi</i>	Horse meat in coconut cream
<i>Loto'i Tonga</i>	Heart of a Tongan
<i>Mateaki</i>	To die for/ hardworking / perservering
<i>Mehikitanga</i>	Father's sister
<i>Mo'ui fakapotopoto</i>	Being wise
<i>Mo'ui lotu</i>	Christian belief
<i>Ngaue fakataha</i>	Work together/collaboration
<i>Ngaue mateaki</i>	Hard working

<i>Nofo</i>	To stay / to live / to reside
<i>Nofo 'a kainga</i>	Extended families living
<i>Potalanoa</i>	Making conversations
<i>Talanoa</i>	To talk, to converse
<i>Tauhi – va</i>	Maintaining / nurturing relationships
<i>Tou-lalanga</i>	Group of weavers coming together to weave mats
<i>Va</i>	Space between two things

Abstract

This study aims to explore how Tongan women practice leadership in New Zealand organizations. To understand the Tongan women's leadership practice involves understanding the factors that underpin the philosophy behind their practice of leadership in their given contexts.

The development of this exploration study was completed using a qualitative research framework with a focus on interpretative study interlaced with the *Kakala* model to produce a feminist interpretive qualitative study. I employed the *talanoa* method in my data collection to assist the research framework to gather valid and indepth reflections by the participants. I used the thematic analysis to analyse the data.

The findings indicated how Tongan women in New Zealand organizations practice leadership based on frames that they observed and experienced during their upbringing and life journey. Numerous factors or strands emerged from the findings that weave together to produce the participants' understanding and sensemaking of leadership. During the participants' practice of leadership in their given contexts, they reframed some of the pre-concieved frames that enhance their leadership understanding and leadership practices. I used the metaphorical process of *lalanga fala* to frame the participants' ontological narratives on their sensemaking and practice of leadership.

This study highlights the value of understanding the frames that shaped the understanding of Tongan women in New Zealand on leadership. How they practice leadership in their given contexts relates to the frames that they see through. The use of framing helped to motivate participants to contribute in leadership acts no matter what position they hold in an organization.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis seeks to explore the leadership practices of Tongan women in New Zealand and the influence of the framing perspective on how they do leadership in their given contexts. It will further explore the factors that inform how Tongan women in New Zealand frame their understanding of leadership and their leadership practice. The exploration in this study includes reflections, observations and leadership practice experiences of 18 Tongan women in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. The study initially was set to explore the leadership wisdom of Tongan women and their contributions to the effectiveness of organisations in New Zealand. However, during the course of this study the findings strongly revealed the art of framing in the participants' reflections.

1.1 Research Question and objectives

The main research question in this study is; *Exploring the leadership practice of Tongan women in New Zealand*. To understand the contexts of the leadership practice of Tongan women in New Zealand, the research widened the study to understand the factors that inform the leadership practice of Tongan women in New Zealand. The table below portray the breakdown of the research questions for this study.

Research Questions
Main Research To explore the leadership practice of Tongan women in New Zealand.
Supplementary Research Questions <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Explore how Tongan women in New Zealand use the perspectives of framing and sensemaking to practice leadership in their given contexts.2. What informs the leadership framing and sensemaking of Tongan women in New Zealand?

1.2 Research Context

My interest in this topic is driven by experiences working with Tongan women in various contexts and valuing their contribution to influencing not only their families but also people around them to make a difference in their lives. While growing up in Tonga, I witnessed how women make things happen around the home, in the churches, in the community as well as in the workplace. I witnessed women having *loto mafana* (warm hearted) and determined to work on projects and to achieve the end goals of those projects.

In many occasions I hear of people within the Tongan context say “*ko ‘ene vela mafana pe ‘a fafine ko ‘ene lava ia ‘a e ngaue koia*” which translates as, “whenever women are warm-hearted to do something, the work will be done”. I then come to wonder growing up in a gendered society in which men are presumed by many to be the leaders, how women are presumed to be instrumental in ensuring the work is done and goals are achieved. This prompted me to go on this quest to explore how Tonga women do leadership in their given context that got people (especially men) to say the above phrase. The questions that lingered in my mind is that if the success of the work as assumed is dependent on women’s eagerness to work then are they then seen as leaders or just servants.

There is also the perception in the Tongan spheres that *‘ko e ‘api ‘a fafine’* which translate as ‘the home belongs to women’. The framing of this phrase pictures that the women’s place in society is the home. This framing influences many to believe that women should only stay and tend their children and manage the home. However, at the same I reframe this phrase, as women are the leaders of the most important sector of the society, which is the home. Witnessing numerous women succeed outside of the home spheres motivate me to explore how they contribute to the leadership practice in their given contexts.

Migrating to New Zealand, I do view how Tongan people can be very strong in their cultural practice; however, I can see how the culture of this new place that they call home can influence the way they perceive and do things. I then decided to conduct this study on Tongan women in New Zealand and explore how they make sense and understand leadership in a New Zealand context.

1.3 Tongan Women in New Zealand

Culturally, there is a great respect for Tongan women. In the Tongan culture, women are perceived as of higher rank than men. In the *fahu* system in Tonga, Tongan women as the eldest sister or the *mehikitanga* (father's sister) hold a high rank in the family. They have authority over their brothers and their descendants. Families value females in their circle and raise them with care to ensure of their safety and security. To families, young Tongan maidens are to get married as virgins as that is the right way for a Tongan *fefine* to live. Families see them as a *mata'ikoloa* (most prized possession) that they are proud to give away to their husband's family with pride. Young girls are always chaperoned when they go places especially at night. Their father, uncles or their brothers may accompany them to places and especially at night to ensure of their safety.

In the 2013 census, 1.5 percent of the New Zealand population were of Tongan ethnic group, which comprised of 60,336 people (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). This was a 19.5 percent increase from the 2006 census as reported in the New Zealand Statistics (2013). Majority of the Tongan population in New Zealand concentrate in the main urban areas with 77.8 percent or 46,971 people residing in the Auckland area. Fifty percent of the Tongan population in New Zealand as shown in the 2013 census are women. Table 1.3 below shows that majority of the Tongan population in New Zealand are under the age of 30 and that the median age has increased from 18.6 in 2006 to 19.4 in 2013. This indicates to the New

Zealand government and organisations that the number of Tongans both male and female entering the workforce is high and will continue to be.

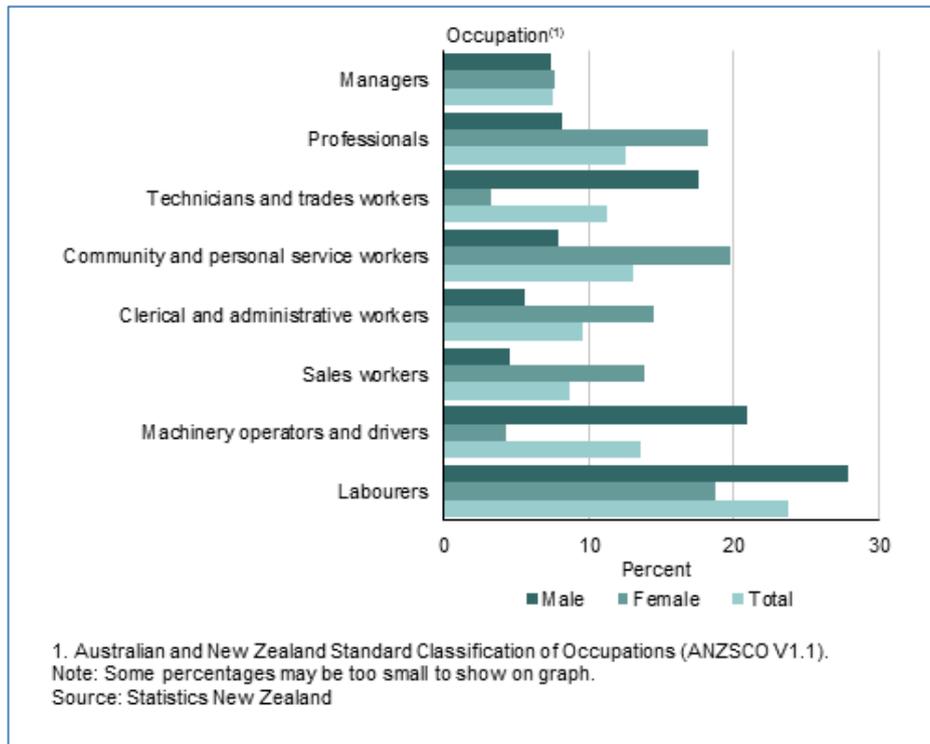
Table 1.3a: Age group and median age of Tongan population in New Zealand

	2006	2013
Age group (years)		
Under 15	42.2	40.8
15-29	24.2	24.7
30-64	29.8	30.2
65 and over	3.7	4.3
Meridian age (years)		
Male	18	18.8
Female	19.2	20
Total	18.6	19.4

Source: Statistics New Zealand (2013)

There are a high number of Tongan women involved within the New Zealand workforce and Community Organisations.

**Table 2.3b: Occupation for employed Tongan ethnic group aged 15 years and over
by sex**



The above table summarises the occupation of Tongan people employed in New Zealand in the 2013 census. Excitingly, there are slightly more women in managerial positions than men and more than 50 percent of Tongans in professional occupations are Tongan women. This statistics attributes that more and more Tongan women are escalating to managerial and of course leadership roles. One interesting fact is that 75.5 percent of Tongans born in New Zealand were employed full time, compared with 82.2 percent of those born overseas (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). Despite having English as the main language of communication in the workplace, the high percentage of full time employed workers that were born overseas indicate their determination and confident to strive. It is signalling to the government and organisations that the New Zealand workforce is multi-cultural and there is a need to understand how to embrace not only their diversity but also their inclusiveness.

1.4 Significance of Study

As many Tongan women entering the New Zealand workforce and ascending to leadership and managerial roles, it is imperative for organisations to embrace what exceptional stimulus Tongan women bring to the organisation. By doing this, New Zealand organisations would know how to gain the best from their Tongan women employees to contribute to their success. It is also significant for New Zealand organisations to comprehend the influential factors that guide Tongan women in framing their understanding on leadership. With the growing multi-cultural population in New Zealand and the growing number of Tongan women in management roles, this study will bring meaning to organisations looking to involve more women in leadership practice. The study will bring connotation on how to better understand Tongan women leadership practices and how to better support Tongan women within the organisations.

Eventhough practioners may view leadership from the traditional notions of the leader but the literatures have identified the move to a more discursive approach to leadership in contemporary organisations. Literally what this shift mean is that organisational success and effectivity is not the sole charge of those in managerial position that we call leaders but weaves together the contribution of all members involved. With this in mind, New Zealand organisations need to understand this concept better. By involving more in decision-making and practicing leadership, it will develop a better working environment for all employees, more successful organisation which will reflect on the overall success of the New Zealand economy.

1.5 Thesis Structure

The thesis consists of six main chapters including this introductory chapter. Chapter 2 comprised of a review of the literature related to this research. Here, I articulate a theoretical framework that involves leadership theories, women in leadership and leadership in the

Tongan contexts. Chapter 3 provides a guide on the research design, data collection methods and approach used to analyse the findings. Specifically, I adopted a qualitative research using an interpretive approach intertwined with the kakala model to produce a feminist interpretive approach. This approach enabled the researcher to gain more insights on the topic through indepth *talanoa* (conversation/talking) with the participants. The *talanoa* method is more than making a conversation. It involves full expressions of what the participants hold dear in their hearts regarding the topic of *talanoa*. *Talanoa* data collection method was used during the *toli* stage of the kakala framework to gather the data used for this study.

Chapter 4 presents the findings and main themes that emerged from the *talanoa* sessions, including the main themes of *lalanga mo'ui* 'a *fafine* Tonga and Tongan women in leadership in New Zealand. Following chapter 4 is the discussion chapter in which presents a discussion of the main themes that emerged from the thematic analysis and how the themes links to the theories and studies reviewed in the literature. The core argument I make here is that Tongan women's use of framing and sensemaking perspectives influences their leadership practice in their given contexts.

Chapter 6 then concludes the thesis by providing an overall review of the research questions and aims of this researcher. Limitations of the study are presented here plus the implications and suggestions for future studies and actions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Scholars have claimed that good leadership is crucial to organisation success and efficiency. However, it is then vital that we understand the concepts of leadership and provide understanding to how leadership has evolved over time in organisations. This chapter will review the literature on leadership from the theoretical perspective. It will unveil the relationship between leadership and the concept of power and the changing of leadership from focusing on the leaders' notions to a discursive approach to leadership. Arguments on women in leadership will present discursing on women in leadership. The chapter will also present the traditional leadership in the Tongan context. This aims to draw a holistic picture on Tongan women in leadership in the New Zealand contexts.

2.2 Leadership

2.2.1 Leadership theories

Since the beginning of organised society, leadership has been a critical issue for humanity (Cotterell, Lowe, & Shaw, 2006). The search for a one-size-fits-all definition for leadership has not been easy. Many claim that numbers of definitions of leadership are as many as the number of people that attempted to define it (Stogdill, 1974). These dynamic natures of leadership open up opportunities for scholars to further research and develop its context. New ideas and theories on leadership have developed over time, focusing on three dimensions; “the general disposition of leaders”, “actions of the leaders and the different roles they adopted”, and lastly, the notion that “leadership is specific to its context” (Crainer & Dearlove, p. 4). The vigour of leadership is that it exists among all people (Smith & Krueger as cited in Bass & Bass, 2008). Traditional view on leadership “tend to concentrate on the leader as a person, on the behaviour of the leaders, on the effects of the leader, and on

the interaction process between the leader and the led” (Bass, 2008, p. 15). Leadership can also be viewed as a specialised role or as a process (Yukl, Leadership in organizations, 2013).

Leadership scholars have searched to understand more and more of the dynamic context of leadership. Bryman (1996) have summarised the leadership research in the 20th century in four broad movements; the trait theory (dominated research until late 1940s), the style approach (late 1940s – late 1960s), the contingency theory (late 1960s – 1980s) and the last movement revolved around understanding leadership through the notion of management of meaning rather than “in terms of an influence process” (Bryman, 1996, p. 280). These transitions of leadership movements has mainly focused on male characteristics, command and control style of leadership that evolve around men (Sinclair, 2009; Eagly, 2013). Researchers have over time view leadership through a psychological lens, focusing on the person (leader). However, Ancona, Malone , Orlikowski, and Senge (2007) argue that it’s time to put an end to this long time myth.

Many scholars have attempted to define leadership. However, it is noted that there are basic similarities in these definitions. Some scholars view leadership as “the ability to inspire confidence in and support among the people who are needed to achieve organisational goals” (Dubrin & Dalglish, 2003, p. 3). Social scientists in the 1994 Globe Project concluded that leadership is the “ability to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute to the effectiveness and success of the organisations of which they are members” (House, Javidan, Hanges, & Dorfman, 2002, p. 5). Other researchers such as Robbins (2003) sees the achievement of goals as the target of leadership through influencing a group of people.

What I see common in these definitions of leadership is that they focus on; the ability to influence others and contributing to the organisation’s goals and success. What is obvious is that the focus is still on the leader’s ability to influence others which redirect the focus back

to traditional leadership concepts. Robinson (2001) defines leadership from another angle saying that “Leadership is exercised when ideas expressed in talk or action are recognised by others as capable of progressing tasks or problems which are important to them” (p. 93). What is palpable in Robinson’s definition is the possibility for anyone involved in the ‘talk and action’ to influence others. Fairhurst and Sarr (1996) add that leadership associates with managing meaning through social construction. They continue to claim that “indeed we become leaders, through our ability to decipher and communicate meaning out of complex and confusing situations” (p. 2). Through communication, leadership is achieved in which talk is the resources used to positively influence others to act and be able to move an organisation forward (Fairhurst & Sarr, 1996; Gronn, 1983). Communication through talk and action is here seen as having the power to influence.

Leadership and leader are sometimes used interchangeably. At times it is difficult to talk about leadership in reference to leader and vis-à-vis. However, in this research I will talk about leadership as the process of influencing others to act and participate towards the success of a task or goal while referring to the leader as the person in charge of the team/organisation, decides the direction of the group and motivate the group to achieve their target, goal or outcome (Solomon, Costea, & Nita, 2016). I will also refer to the team members as leadership actors.

2.2.2 Leadership in the study of management and organizations

Leadership and management are sometimes believed to refer to the same context; however, in reality the two concepts are different in many aspects (Solomon, Costea, & Nita, 2016). Organizations divide their staff into teams and departments for efficient management in hope for better success and efficiency. Each team or department have certain goals, tasks or target to achieve which contributes to the overall success of the organisation. Research has argued that leadership is not the same as management but a part of management (Raducan & Raducan, 2014). However, the

management activities of planning, organization and taking decisions are “inactive germs” (Raducan & Raducan , 2014, p. 809) when leadership is absent from management.

The workforce population in New Zealand are more multi-cultural in nature which introduces a diverse feel to many organizations. Organizations faces various changes and challenges such as technological change, rise in international competitions and demographic changes in the workforce only to name a few. With these dynamic nature of organizations, good leadership is required to ensure organizations adapt successfully both in the short run and the long run (Raducan & Raducan , 2014). With more women entering the workforce in New Zealand and around the world, it is vital to explore how they practice leadership.

2.2.3 Power

The concept of leadership closely associates with power. According to Gabel (2012), the two are linked whereby leadership involves ways that can influence others in which power is used as a strategy of influence. Burns (1978) advises that power and leadership must be seen as relationships and not as things. He continues to say that understanding the principle of power helps to understand leadership (Burns , 1978). Leaders are seen to be holding power. However, such power can either positively or negatively impact on the leader’s organisation or subordinates. Traditional views on power have made central assumptions that: “power is possessed, power typically flows from a centralized source in a linear direction from top down; and power is primarily prohibitive or pressive” (Sawicki as cited in Allan, Gordon & Iversson, 2006, p. 44). Hogan, Curphy and Hogan (1994) add that leadership is persuasion and not domination. They elaborate their claim by stating that leadership encompasses the power to influence others “to pursue a common goal that is important for the responsibilities and welfare of a group” (Hogan, Curphy, & Hogan, 1994, p. 493). Therefore, Foucault (as cited in Allan, Gordan, & Iverson, 2006) “reconceptualises power as a productive force, rather than a primarily prohibitive or repressive one” (p. 44).

Over time, leadership scholars are now moving away from the traditional understanding of leadership as an individual effort into introducing a more discursive approach and collective effort into achieving leadership within organisations. Cowan (2008) and Fairhurst (2009) suggest that it is time that we view leadership using a different lens such as socially constructed and discursive approach. One frailty in the traditional views on leadership as focusing on the leader is that power can be used “to control others rather than organize, they repress followers rather than empower, and they set limits on change rather than support evolution” (Allan, Gordan, & Iverson, 2006, p. 44). Potter (2003) then claims that the focus should be on the social construction of leadership views with decentred subjects. Fairhurst and Barge (2008) propose that we shift from focusing on what leaders do (person, situation or both) and focus on leadership through communication as a lived experienced (p. 228). It is claimed that leadership research has been largely on behavioural strategies, which identify good leaders, with limited focus on “the discursive strategies used to perform leadership” (p. 1780).

2.2.4 Discursive Leadership

Barge and Fairhurst (2008) conceptualise leadership based on Robinson’s (2001) idea “as a co-created, performative, attributional, and contextual process where the ideas articulated in talk or action are recognised by others as progressing tasks that are important to them” (p. 227). A discursive approach to leadership contemplates leadership as a language game whereby meaning is socially constructed and managed (Clifton, 2012, p. 149). Fairhurst emphasises the significance of discourse concepts in creating new understandings “of the social and communicative aspects of leadership” (2008, p. 511). One of the reasons that Fairhurst puts forward for agreeing with Robinson’s (2001) idea is that she argues that leadership need not to be performed by an appointed person to the role of leader, but is distributed among the leadership actors (both leaders and followers) (Fairhurst, 2008). Some

scholars claim that through actors' ordinary work, leadership is achieved (Larsson & Lundholm, 2010).

Fairhurst (2007) claims that discursive approach to leadership focuses on how leadership is achieved in discourse. Ellis (1992), claims that discourse is "language that is used for some communicative purpose" (p. 84). When organisational actors communicate through discourse, meaning is managed and leadership is achieved (Barge & Fairhurst, 2008). Discourse according to Foucault (as cited in Whisnant, 2012) operate in four basic ways which are "discourse; creates a world, generates knowledge and truths, says something about the people who speak it and by being intimately involved with socially embedded networks of power" (p. 7). Discourse is a powerful way of studying human minds, organization, events and social processes (Potter, 2003). Through leadership discourse meaning is managed not only by the leader but as a collective task which involves the followers too. It is argued that discourse is the "vital medium for action" (Potter, 2003, p. 791).

Discursive approach to understanding leadership guides us to see leadership from a lens different from the traditional approach of focusing on the leader as the beholder of power and main contributor to leadership. The next section will unveil strategies that leadership actors can use to socially construct and manage meaning in order to influence others to practice and achieve leadership in given contexts.

2.2.5 Art of Framing in leadership

Leadership discourse is viewed as a power resource to influence others to act and contribute to the success of a task. Literatures have addressed two perspectives; framing and sensemaking perspectives, that enable meanings to be constructed and negotiated through discourse and aid leadership actors to understand the meanings being constructed and which actions are genuine and fitting in achieving the task. Framing as introduced by Goffman

(1974) does not only refer to frames that have been strategically and wilfully built in order to achieve specific communicative aim but generally inclusive of social processes. In order to define the meaning of something or a subject, one needs to make sense of it. This enables leadership actors to “highlight some of aspect of our subject over others” by making them “more noticeable, more meaningful, and more memorable to others” (Fairhurst & Sarr, 1996, p. 4).

Fairhurst and Sarr (1996) recognised framing to be a leadership capability. It is also regarded as a meaning-making tool through activity sharing (Mai & Akerson, 2003). Meaning making in this respect denotes the ability of leadership actors to capture and obtain understanding out of a particular situation. Mai and Akerson (2003) argue the importance of meaning-making in leadership by saying that “leaders who help people recognize the value and meaning of their work are able to tighten the alignment between personal and organizational goals and enjoy higher levels of commitment, perseverance, and dedication as well” (p. 36). This verifies Foucault’s (as cited in Fairhurst, 2011) claim that people usually know what they say and why they say them but what they rarely understand is the influence of what people say on others.

Framing enables leadership actors to socially construct reality which lead others to action. The art of framing enable leadership actors to guide the interpretations of reality (Fiss & Hirsch, 2005). Frames as “schemata of interpretation” creates understanding, guide actions (Snow , Rochford, Worden , & Benford, 1986, p. 464) and provide logic to ideas (Benford, 1993). Fairhurst and Sarr (1996) argue that framing is a powerful tool that can be used by anyone at any circumstances to achieve specific goals. Fairhurst and Sarr (1996) assert that mental models as the “deeply held images of how the world works” (p. 24) facilitate the

formulation of communication goals because they guide what we deem as worthy to attend to and what to disregard .

Nevertheless, others argue that framing may fail to connect to the essential framework in which meaning-making occurs (Benford, 1993; Fiss & Hirsch, 2005). In leadership, it is not just about influencing others but doing so in order to initiate actions towards the success of given tasks. Due to this limitation in the concept of framing, I agree with Fiss and Hirsch (2005) that the framing perspectives can be more successful if incorporated with some insights from the sensemaking perspectives.

Sensemaking according to Weick (1995) simply refers to “the making of sense” (p. 4). It is also seen as a response to events in which people try to make sense of what they face and what actions should they take (Weick, 1999). Sensemaking, “involves turning circumstances into a situation that is comprehended explicitly in words and that serves as a springboard into action” (Weick, Sutcliffe and Obstfeld, 2005, p. 409). Leader sensemaking is critical in analysing leadership contexts (Barge, 2003; Barge & Little, 2002). Movement through time-space enables actors to; “(a) experience a situation, (b) faces gaps and, after moving on, (c) evaluates any information used” (Linderman, Pesut, & Disch, 2015, p. 294). In this way, sensemaking through discourse and actions conceive understanding of the leadership context. Weick (1993) suggests that core to sensemaking; reality is achieved through leadership actors collective make sense of what is going on in their given contexts.

Framing and sensemaking are much similar concepts in that some of the key works in framing involves some characteristics of sensemaking. However, Fiss and Hirsch (2005) claim that while framing focuses on identifying whose meaning it is that wins during a discourse, sensemaking on the other hand focuses on why the discourse takes place and how it is connected to “hard structural changes” (p. 31). The literatures unfold how framing and

sensemaking when used in communication enable leadership actors to co-create reality and manage meaning to influence one another to agree in action.

2.3 Women in Leadership

Numerous scholars focus their leadership research on the person (leader). With the growing research on women in leadership, many based their arguments on comparing leadership styles of men and women and deciding on which of them are better leaders (Billing & Alvesson , 2000; Adler, 2005; Chin , 2004; Greenberg & Sweeney, 2005). In this research, I try to do away from this claim and focus on exploring the leadership practice as influenced by the concepts of framing and sensemaking of leadership actors who happen to be women.

Researching women in leadership has been a recent move in the notion that women have unique leadership style such that of nurturing, inclusive and collaboration approaches however, women are still compared to male leaders (Adler, 2005; Chin, 2004; Greenberg & Sweeney, 2005). The issue with this move is that scholars still revert back to the notion of leadership as the sole charge of the leader. This continue to create tension in organizations on who is a better leader, taking the focus away from the value of socially construction of meaning in leadership.

Some studies found that women use more transformational styles of leadership (Burke & Collins, 2001; Trinidad & Normore, 2005). Women are also found to be more motivated to help others (Greenberg & Sweeney, 2005). Lamsa and Sintonen (2001) claim that there is evidence from previous research by Osland et al. (1998) and Tucker et al. (1999) that have shown women leaders as more people-oriented, democratic and consultative with interpersonal-oriented behaviour towards others. Research have also shown women to have skills (networking and social skills and ability to motivate others) that are sought after by

contemporary organisations, stressing the idea that more women should be in leadership (Lamsa & Sintonen, 2001).

With the emerging discursive approach to leadership, a study by Fine (2000) intended to find new directions in defining and theorizing leadership through women's discursive construction of leadership (p. 182). The narratives from Fine's (2000) study exposed a moral discourse of leadership which proposes a "framework for developing a model of ethical leadership based on a feminist ethic of care" (p.183). Recently, discursive approach on doing leadership has been adopted in research on leadership, gender and language (Mullany, 2007). Politeness, humour and authoritative language are discursive strategies that are sometimes used by leaders when they speak to negotiate the accomplishment of leadership goals (Clifton, 2012).

Gender bias in leadership is one strong factor that act as a resistance to women's recognition in leadership positions. Women are perceived that they do not ask (Babcock & Laschever, 2003) and that they do not negotiate in organisations. However, some scholars claim that women do ask and negotiate only what matters to them (Bohneit & Greig, 2007). They even negotiate to benefit others who may be disadvantaged and unfairly treated (Bowles, Bear & Thomason, 2010). More and more organisations and communities striving for diversity and encouraging more women participation and representations, however, I vote not just for diversity but more inclusiveness. Professor Groysberg (as cited in Patel & Buiting, 2013) differentiated diversity and inclusiveness by saying that diversity is about counting numbers whereas inclusiveness is about making sure the numbers count. He continued to claim that "whether it is about individuals or companies or countries, the conversation has to shift from talking about whether diversity affects performance to talking about the conditions under which you'd expect diversity to have a positive effect on

performance” (Patel & Buiting, 2013, p. 2). I believe that women should be empowered to contribute in the practice of leadership in their given contexts through a discursive approach to leadership.

An overarching theme in gender studies is popular in that most of these research are done in comparing women to men in leadership. The interest of this study aims not to add to the current trend of comparison but to explore the leadership practices of leadership actors who happen to be women. Women numbers entering the workforce is rising as well as those in managerial positions. With this in mind, I choose to explore women as a particular group of in the workforce and interestingly, they can be seen as the newcomer to leadership.

The literatures revealed how how leadership researcher has not only often assumed a male leader, but often a white/caucasian and western(ized) leader. However, it is vital to embrace the diversity and inclusiveness of not just gender but also considering other factors such ethnicity, geography, class only to name a few. This study aims to explore the Tongan women’s leadership practice therefore the next section will unveil literatures on leadership in the Tongan context.

2.4 Leadership in the Tongan context

2.4.1 Leadership in the Pacific

Published research on leadership in the Pacific is scant. Leadership stereotypes made by research on Pacific leadership assert that; Polynesian leadership is mainly based on hereditary rank and Melanesian leadership is based on achieved status (Douglas, 1979). Zetlin (2014) claims that the reasons for the low representation of Pacific women in Pacific Parliaments are that the “culture in the Pacific still privilege men more than women in public spaces, the economic disadvantages of women in the Pacific and lastly is the Institutional obstacles that women face in electoral systems” (p. 253).

There are two basic understandings of leadership that are common in the Pacific which are; leadership is a sub-set of communal purpose and it is contextual and cultural and occurs within social settings (Saga, 2005). It is common in the Pacific that people belong to communities and to their *kainga*. These communities are build on values (Saga, 2005) such as reciprocity, respect and loyalty (Johansson-Fua S. F., 2001) . Saga (2005) continues to claim that communities have communal purposes and when these communal purposes are strong then the communities are vibrant

2.4.2 Leadership in Tonga

Tongan people are proud to admit that Tonga is one of a few Pacific islands that were not colonized during the emprial rule. However, missionaries' influence in Tonga is evident (Johansson-Fua, (2007). In the Tongan culture, leadership has been associated with chiefs and kings. Johansson-Fua (2007) states that Kings and chiefs in Tonga “has come to define not only Tonga but also what it means to be a Tongan” (p. 105). Political leader's qualification in the Tongan context are: blood rank, age, number of supporters that one has (family from father and mother's side to support in times of war) and the supporters ability to provide for the leader (Ellem, 1987). The other qualification is the eldest sister and eldest brother of the *kainga* (Ellem, 1987). The leadership and political authority in ancient Tonga was entrusted to the King and his nobles (Ellem, 1987). The Tu'i Tonga was the “embodiment of the sacred and the secular in aboriginal Tonga and the nominal leader of all Tongans” (Urbanowicz, 1979). In the Tongan society, the chiefs were supported by their *kainga* (circle of extended families or citizens of the chief's villages) in which the chief was seen as their leader and the King (monarchy) is the overall leader to all islands in Tonga.

In Tongan history and tradition, the King is a representative of the Gods on earth. The Tongan monarchy's origin is traced back to the Tu'i Tonga, 'Aho'eitu, a son of the god

Tangaloa 'Eitumatupu'a and an earthly woman (Kaepler, 1999). It is believed that 'Aho'eitu's mother's brothers would have considered themselves inferior to their sister and her demi-god son who was their King and 'Aho'eitu "pleased himself with his mother's brothers and their descendants to whom 'Aho'eitu was "above the law" (Kaepler, 1999, p. 171). It is possible that this principle led to the emergent of the concept of *fahu* in the Tongan *nofo 'a kainga*.

In contemporary Tonga, other factors are being added to the qualification of Tongans to be in leadership apart from the traditional criteria. These additional criteria are achievements and educational qualifications (Johansson-Fua, 2009; James, 1997).

Johansson-Fua (2009) states that the leaders within the *kainga* (clan/tribe) are the 'ulumotu'a (head of the clan) and the *mehikitanga* (father's sister) but only to some extent. The eldest sister is of higher rank and 'eiki over her brother and his descendants (Rogers, 1977; Ellem, 1987). However, if a woman does not have any brothers then she would not have this privilege. The 'eldest brother' and the 'eldest sister' from the same father and mother "claim the leadership of the *kainga* of their father, and command the loyalty of their mother, and all looked to the others for support" (Ellem, 1987, p. 211). They have different roles in which the brother was "responsible for everything that required physical strength, such as the production and cooking of food, warfare, building and sailing of canoes" whereas the "sister was responsible for the production and distribution of *koloa* (wealth)" (Ellem, 1987, p. 211). The brother and sister worked hand in hand to ensure the welfare of the *kainga* is built and maintained.

Helu-Thaman (as cited in Johansson-Fua, 2009) adds that leadership is "maintained through negotiations of power relations and cultural recognition of the leader by followers. The cultural recognition of leadership is revealed through the interlacing of values

such as *'ofa* (love/compassion), *mateaki* (loyalty) and *faka'apa'apa* (respect) (Wood-Ellem, 1999; Latukefu, 1975).

2.4.3 Tongan women an leadership

In the *fahu* system, the father's sister(s) are deemed as higher in rank than their brothers. Although, the brothers are seen as the *'ulumotu'a* of the family or the head of the *'api*, they still liaise with their sisters on making decisions for the kainga. The two roles socially construct decision that would be beneficial for the kainga as a whole.

Queen Salote's (1918 – 1965) leadership over Tonga is still idolized by Tongan people to today. Her ascending to the throne at the young age of 18 with limited Western education and as a woman triggered doubt in the heart of some, mainly her father's political enemies. The political issue with Salote's reign was the question of whether she and her consort would rule over Tonga or they would hand over Tonga to a foreign state (Ellem, 1983). According to a study by Ryan and Haslam (2005), women are sometimes put in leadership roles during the organisation's difficult times and are criticised and scrutinised more than men. When Salote became queen, the country was in a state of disunity (Ellem, 1983). The government was in an economic difficult situation. There was religious quarrels between the two main churches. The religious affiliation of 1924 reflected the political affiliation in the country (Ellem, 1983).

Salote's qualification to become the queen of Tonga at the time was not as strong, even though she was the eldest daughter of her father (King Tupou 2). Queen Salote's then young age when ascending the throne, her low blood rank from her mother's side and not so strong supporters from her family put her in a doubtful state as a leader for Tonga. However, she assimilated great supporters through the exercise of her political skills and exercising her 'eldest sister' authority. Because she was the eldest daughter, in the Tongan culture, the

eldest sister outrank the brother and all his descendants (Ellem, 1987). The chiefs of Tonga and so as the people of Tonga see Queen Salote as their eldest sister, so she used this authority and power to build her pool of supporters and bring unity to the people of Tonga.

Queen Salote was an outstanding poet and composer. She has a legacy of peace, stability, and prestige during her reign (Campbell, 1992). Queen Salote's compositions framed her messages to the people of Tonga through the use of metaphors. Salote had many influential people in her life. Through communicating with them she acquired great wealth of knowledge in genealogy, Tongan culture and Tongan songs and poetry. The first few years of her reign she refused to attend the Parliament's opening and closing ceremonies. Instead she wrote her speech and sent her consort instead (Ellem, 1983). However, these speeches were quite powerful and influencing in persuading her enemies to side with her. Queen Salote's reign is a motivation to Tongan women that though she is a leader by right but other women can be inspired to use their gifts of speaking and knowledge that they have to contribute to leadership in their given contexts.

The number of women in managerial roles is slowly increasing. In the New Zealand context, there are a number of Tongan women in managerial and leadership roles in various organisations. Some of these women, grew up in Tonga and completed their high school education in Tonga. Though they have moved to New Zealand, vital cultural values which have been embedded in their lives are vibrant and evident in their leadership practices.

Although there are still factors that resist women in taking on more leadership and managerial roles, this research is not aiming to analyse leadership as a person but how leadership as a process of influence is achieved discursively through the aid of framing and sensemaking perspectives. This research is looking to explore how the perspectives of

framing and sensemaking when used in supporting of one another, enable Tongan women within their given contexts to contribute to how leadership is achieved.

2.5 Conclusion and Research Gap

The literature reviewed has guided my understanding on leadership from a discursive approach. Through this approach, I come to understand the value of managing meaning, which involves all team members despite their positions. The art of framing and sensemaking have enabled leadership actors to manage meaning by creating socially constructed reality that influences others to act to achieve the given task.

There are numerous researches on women in leadership; however, most of the studies focus on gender issues in leadership. In this research, I opt not to focus on the gender issues but discursively approach this study from a point where women are leadership actors that happen to be women. Very limited studies have been conducted on the art of framing, sensemaking and discursive leadership of women specifically.

There is very limited research on Tongan leadership. Most of the studies are on educational leadership by Johansson-Fua, Helu-Thaman and a few others. What is problematic in the current research not only on women in leadership but also Tongan leadership in general is that although a lot of attention is now given to women's leadership, scholars continue to overlook the non-western(ized) leadership particularly from smaller countries like Tonga. The problem with this view is that there are many more Tongan women entering the workforce and ascending to managerial roles and if we keep overlooking the concepts of ethnicity and geography in our research on women and leadership, we are developing faulty theories. Hence, the quest to explore the leadership practices of Tongan women in New Zealand to widen the research on leadership to include Tongan women. This study aims to further explore how Tongan women use the perspectives of framing and sensemaking in their practice of leadership in their given contexts.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter unveils the research design and framework that I adopted to assist and guide this study. This research was designed to explore how Tongan women in New Zealand use framing and sensemaking perspectives to enhance their leadership practices in their given contexts. This exploration was made possible through studying their reflections and experiences during their upbringing and life journey. Due to the inductive nature of this research, I chose the qualitative-interpretive research design interlaced with the *kakala* research model as the overarching framework to guide the study.

Since this research is based on Tongan women, I used the *Kakala* Framework for its feminist ideology as women conduct *tui kakala* (process of making *kakala*) in the Tongan context. *Kakala* are garlands made from fragrant flowers. They are made to be worn around the neck or around the waist for special occasions such as weddings, birthdays, graduation celebrations or a Tongan *faiva* (*traditional dances*). *Kakala* originally were only made for Royals and the chiefs in the Tongan contexts, which shows its value and importance. Making *kakala* as compared to conducting a research has main stages that can be applied to the qualitative stages of research process.

I chose the *talanoa* method as the data collection method for this study. *Talanoa* as Vaioleti (2006) claims “is natural for Pacific people” as it is the way they communicate both formally and informally. It is through *talanoa* that information is shared and understanding and sensemaking can develop when ideas shared are woven together. *Talanoa* according to Gilligan (1982), is “the way people talk about their lives of significance, that the language they use and the connections they make, reveal the world they see and in which they act” (p. 2). Since the research was intending to capture the lived-experiences of Tongan women and

talanoa is a communication tool used in not only the Tongan communities but so as other Pacific Islands.

3.1 Research Design

3.1.1 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research design was chosen as the most appropriate and suitable in my quest to explore the participants' life-experiences and sensemaking of leadership. For research on experiences and making sense of human actions, qualitative method of research is a powerful tool to use as it relies on linguistic data and employ meaning-based data analysis. Braun and Clarke (2013) applaud qualitative research for its richness and in-depth context; it is exciting and challenging and yet "captures the complexity, mess and contradiction that characterises the real world" and "allows us to make sense of patterns of meaning" (p. 8). Qualitative research is crucial for finding 'deeper processes' and how they unfold over time (Bluhm, Harman, Lee, & Mitchell, 2010). It is a vital approach in attaining what an individual experience and their interpretation of their experiences (Bluhm et al., 2010).

I have also taken an interpretive approach to qualitative research in this study as it allowed me to capture the participants' socially constructed reality and understand that their social experiences are created through real life experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). I believed that this approach would lead me to focus on the complexity of the participants' framing and sensemaking of leadership which would reflect on how they do leadership in their given contexts. I also assumed that the participants may share and experience similar objective reality in different ways and may have their various reasons. Positivist approach to qualitative research was not considered for I did not see the participants as little puppets that would react to external social forces without deep considerations of their actions. However, I

agree with the interpretive principle that the researcher would understand the need to see through the eyes of the participants to make meaning of the world. Myers (2010) claims that in order to draw on peoples' culturally embedded views and knowledge, using of qualitative research methods is recommended. I also entwine the interpretive approach to qualitative approach with a Tongan feminist approach of *Kakala* model by Helu-Thaman which I discuss next.

3.1.2 *Kakala* Research Framework

The nature of this study involved embracing various aspects of the participants' upbringing and they shaped their sensemaking of what surrounds them. Konai Helu-Thaman's *Kakala* model (garland of fragrant flowers) and the revised version from Taufe'ulungaki and Johansson-Fua (2005) were considered appropriate for this research for a number of reasons. First, the researcher and participants as female, I believe that the *Kakala* model resonates well with both the researcher and the participants for the process of making *Kakala* is one that involves only females. Second, the idea of *kakala* in the Tongan context involves gathering of fragrant flowers and weave them together to make a garland to be worn for a special occasion. Metaphorically, the *kakala* making represents how much I value the reflections and contributions of the participants. I take pride in weaving the contributions together to make a beautiful garland to be presented to organisations and scholars so they can better understand the leadership practice of Tongan women. Finally, the *Kakala* model interlacing with qualitative research can provide fragrant, rich and deep reflected discourse, which would be of great value to this research.

One may argue that *kakala* flowers are similar to that of European archetypical flora such as roses. However, Futa Helu (as cited in Wood, 1998) argues that *kakala* is not just sweet smelling flowers but they have originated from *Pulotu* where the spirits of the dead and the

Polynesian gods reside. Thaman (2003) claims that “*kakala* embodies physical, social and spiritual elements and reflects the integrated nature of indigenous epistemologies and knowledge systems” (p. 15). “*Kakala* are a weaving together of a variety of disparate elements which partake in a celebration of life, culture and aesthetic pleasure” (Thaman, 2003, p. 15). *Kakala* is woven using various flowers such as *heilala*, *mohokoi*, *pipitongi* and many others as well as leaves and are tied together using *fau* (dried bark of hibiscus plants). When gathering flowers and leaves to make a *kakala*, the weaver need to differentiate the *kakala hingoa* (more royal flowers) from the *kakala vale* (the common flowers). The value of the *kakala* is based on the selected flowers used to make them. This concept helped me to stay focused on the aim of the research during the data collection and analysis phases. I had to ensure that the data that I collected and themes that were identified were more of royal flowers.



A Tongan Kakala

Thaman’s *Kakala* model has three main stages; *toli*, *tui* and *luva*. Thaman (2003) explains the stages as:

Toli is the collection and selection of flowers and other plant material that are required for making a *kakala*; this would depend not only on the occasion but also on the person(s) for whom a *kakala* is being made. It will also depend on the availability of the materials themselves. *Tui* is the making or weaving of a *kakala*. The time taken to do this would also depend on the complexity and intricacies of the flowers and the

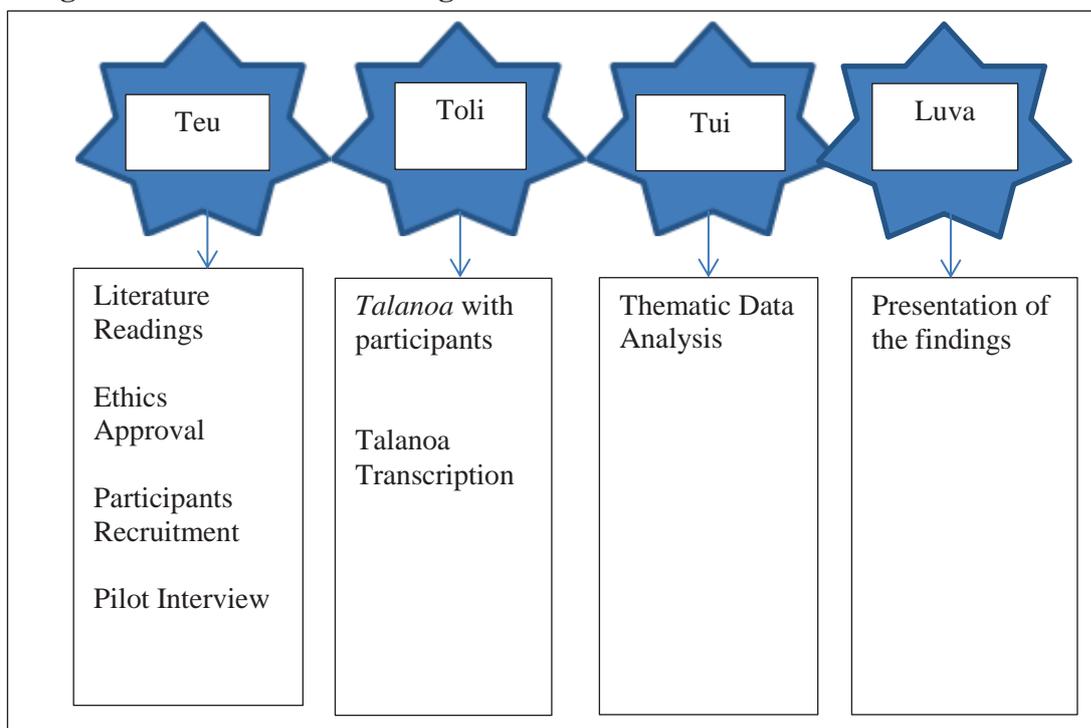
type of kakala being made. In Tonga, flowers are ranked according to their cultural importance with the heilala having pride of place because of the mythology associated with it. *Luva* is the final process and is about giving the kakala away to someone else as a sign of peace, love and respect.

Taufe’ulungaki and Johansson-Fua (2005) modified the *kakala* framework and added one stage to Thaman’s initial framework, which is the stage of *Teu*. During the *teu* (preparation stage), the *kakala* maker identifies the purpose of the *kakala* and to what occasion will be *kakala* be used for.

The qualitative research in collaboration with the *kakala* model not only enabled the researcher to collect in depth discourse but provide the researcher with holistic and discursive lenses to better understand the participants’ discourses.

The Kakala making stages of *Teu*, *Toli*, *Tui* and *Luva* were the stages used in this research from beginning to the final stage. The four stages as shown on figure 3.1 with the contents for each stage. Each stage is discussed below.

Figure 3.1: Kakala Model Stages



3.2.1 Teu – Research Preparation

At this stage, I discussed my ideas with my Supervisors, preparing and refining the plan for the research. During this time, I started researching the literature, which helped to guide the formulation of the research questions as well as the interview questions.

I was very excited during this stage. Although a clear picture of the finished product of this research was still blurred but I was adamant with the assistance from my Supervisors, the School of Management and other support services available, that the final product will eventually come to form.

3.2.1a Sample

My research sample consisted of 18 Tongan women between the age group of 30–67 from three main regions of Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. The big age gap allowed for variations in the participants' experiences and reflections to enable the researcher to gather rich data that would enhance the depth of the leadership sense making among the Tongan women. I understood that there are numerous Tongan women in leadership and managerial roles in New Zealand; however, due to the boundaries of the research, I only recruited 18 women to participate.

Snowball approach was used to recruit the participants in which the first identified participants for each region nominated other prospective participants that would fit the criteria, conditions and characteristics of the research. The criteria for participants recruiting were; they were to be of Tongan descents and are currently working in a New Zealand organization. Whether they were in leadership or managerial or not was not the focus as I wanted to gather the leadership practice of both those in leadership/managerial positions and those in followers' positions. I believe that all Snowball approach as described by Descombe (2010) is an efficient approach to recruiting participants for a small-scale research.

The first few initial participants that I approached were that I trusted to assist with nominating and connecting me with prospective participants. The initial participants forwarded the contact details of the prospective participants to me. I then I sent an initial email invitation together with the Information Sheet. Upon receiving the responses from the invitations to participate in the research, we then continue to dialogue on when and where would be *talanoa* was going to be held.

3.3.1b Participants

Name	Place of Birth	Childhood home	Primary and secondary school	Tertiary school	Current Residence
Falahola	Tonga	Tonga	Tonga / NZ	NZ	Auckland
Hea	Tonga	Niue	Niue/Tonga	Fiji/NZ	Wellington
Hehea	NZ	NZ	NZ	NZ	Auckland
Heilala	Tonga	Tonga	Tonga	NZ	Auckland
Hingano	Tonga	Tonga	Tonga	None	Christchurch
Huni	Tonga	Tonga	Tonga	NZ	Christchurch
Kukuvalu	Tonga	Tonga	Tonga	NZ	Auckland
Langakali	NZ	NZ	NZ	None	Auckland
Loumaile	Tonga	Tonga	Tonga/NZ	NZ	Auckland
Mapa	Tonga	Tonga	Tonga/NZ	NZ	Wellington
Mo'onia	NZ	NZ/Tonga	NZ/Tonga	NZ	Auckland
Mohokoi	Tonga	Tonga	Tonga	Fiji/NZ	Christchurch
Motelolo	Tonga	Tonga	Tonga	NZ	Wellington
Nukonuka	Tonga	Tonga	Tonga	NZ	Wellington
Pipitongi	Tonga	Tonga	Tonga /NZ	NZ	Christchurch
Puatonga	NZ	Tonga	Tonga/NZ	NZ	Christchurch
Sialetafa	Tonga	Tonga	Tonga	NZ	Auckland
Vunga	NZ	NZ	NZ	NZ	Christchurch

Table 3.2: The Participants' summary: Source: Fieldwork (2016)

Table 1 shows the variations in the participants' backgrounds and upbringing. Some were born and raised in Tonga, some were born and raised in NZ and some were born in New Zealand but raised in Tonga. It also shows that some of the participants, who were born in Tonga, did some of their secondary school education here in New Zealand as well as their

tertiary education. The table also shows that two of the participants do not have a tertiary qualification but both are employed and are in leadership roles within their given contexts.

For the sake of the research, each participant is identified using a pseudonym of a Tongan flower that is regarded as *kakala*. I as the researcher, regard the participants as valued *kakala* what with their richness aroma of their great in-depth knowledge, they contribute to ensuring the quality of this research.

3.2.2 Toli – Data Collection

3.2.2a Talanoa

The *toli* stage is the time where Tongan women or *kakala* makers collect flowers to make the *kakala*. This is a critical time, as they need to know where to collect the flowers from and to seek permission from the flower owners for them to pick the flowers. The *kakala* makers also need to know the nature of the flowers that they are going to gather and also the best time to collect the flowers as well as how to store them. For this research, I chose the *talanoa* as the *toli* method to use.

Due to the nature of the investigation and the importance for participants to dialogue freely and openly about their ideas, perceptions and experiences, *talanoa* was seen as the most appropriate approach as opposed to other approaches such as structured interviews and focus groups. Halapua (2008) argues that *talanoa* involves “frank expression without concealment in face-to-face dialogue” (p. 1). Vaioleti (2006) adds that *talanoa* is “a personal encounter where people story their issues, their realities and aspirations and allows more *mo’oni* (pure, real, authentic) information to be available” (p. 21). For these reasons, I chose to do face to face *talanoa* as opposed to video call or telephone call.

The *talanoa* method was used for a number of reasons. First, in the *anga fakatonga* (Tongan ways of life), *talanoa* is the appropriate medium of co-construction of *mahino* (understanding) whereby sharing and gathering of information through “a conversation, a talk and an exchange of ideas or thinking whether formal or informal” (Vaiotei, 2006, p. 23) reveal the social construction of people’s realities (Walsham, 2006).

Second, although *talanoa* is the sum of *tala* (to inform, tell, relate and command) and *noa* (nothing in particular, purely imaginary or void) (Halapua, 2008; Vaiotei, 2006), *talanoa* enables power sharing as suggested by Mo’ungatonga (as cited in Vaiotei, 2006). Through *talanoa*, the participants have the power to express what lies deep within their hearts, minds and soul. It also lifted the barriers between the researcher and participants and brought them in closer relations than before. During the *talanoa* sessions with the participants, I allowed the participants to talk without having to interrupt when they got carried away during their reflections. After their reflections, I then used the semi-structured questions to guide them back to focus on the aim of the study. However, listening to their small and extended stories I also picked up additional information that helped me to frame their understanding and experiences. By doing this, I believe that participants may not feel intimidated but feel appreciated. At the end of the *talanoa* session, I felt that it seems like we have known each other for long. I felt special warmth in my heart towards the participants with more respect than when we first started.

The *talanoa* as a data collection method is used not only among the Tongans but it is also used in a similar manner in other Pacific island countries such as Samoa and Fiji (Morrison, Vaiotei, & Vermeulen, 2002). Vaiotei (2006) argues that *Talanoa* is “natural for most Pacific people” (p. 25).

Before conducting the *talanoa* process, I approached my supervisors with my semi-structured questions that were designed to initiate the *talanoa* with the participants. I used semi-structured interview questions with sets of open-ended question to guide the *talanoa* and I was open to emerging questions from the interviewee and myself during the *talanoa*.

A meeting date, time and venue where agreed upon both by me and the participants and I wanted to ensure that the participants are comfortable and at ease during the *talanoa*. I gave the participants the choice of deciding the *talanoa* place and time so that they choose to meet where they are more comfortable to *talanoa*. We used both Tongan and English language during the *talanoa* session to ensure the participants can freely express their contribution in the meaningful context. Even though I included a brief introduction of myself in the Information Sheet, I still took the time to introduce myself again at the start of the *talanoa* for this is the right thing to do in the Tongan context. Not only was it culturally appropriate but also I could position myself in a way that the participants could easily relate to. I tried to find a point of connection with the participants so we can both be at ease before starting the *talanoa*. The points of connection ranges from; where we both come from, where we went to school, family members and colleagues that we may both know as well as events that we both can relate to. The introductions of both myself, as a researcher and the participant acted as an icebreaker to the *talanoa*.

The *talanoa* sessions were audio recorded with the participants' permission and I transcribed them myself which gave me a sense of intimacy with the data (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). Transcribing of the *talanoa* recordings, were time consuming yet rewarding. I felt closer to not only the *talanoa* data but also a feeling of being closely connected to the participants. I also feel more appreciative of Tongan women and their achievements and contributions in their given contexts.

Due to the vitality of face-to-face *talanoa*, I travelled to Wellington and Christchurch to meet with the participants. I wanted to meet the participants where they are most comfortable in hoping for the *talanoa* to be more effective. Most of the *talanoa* occurred in the participants' office of either work or home. Three of the participants were happy to *talanoa* at a public venue; however, they were at most comfortable to *talanoa* despite the noisy background.

3.2.2b Talanoa Questions

I used semi-structured questions for this study which were categorised into three parts; participant identity, making sense of leadership, and leadership practice in given contexts (please refer to Appendix 3 for the list of *talanoa* questions). The semi-structured questions were used to not only guide the *talanoa* but also allow adequate flexibility to explore relevant tangents. During the *talanoa* I was looking for clarity and purpose therefore, probing questions were asked during the *talanoa*. I tried to avoid having to conduct the *talanoa* as some interview sessions; therefore, I invited the participants to a more of a *talanoa* with more emphasis on their reflections. At times, the *talanoa* got a bit carried away from the focus of the study, however the *talanoa* questions were used refocus the *talanoa* to this research.

I took much care of the transcripts for safety and confidentiality of the participants. Please see Appendix 1 for storage method for the transcripts. However, it was not easy having to transcribing all the recorded *talanoa* but it was rewarding as this process drew me closer to the data.

After my first couple of *talanoa* sessions, I found it difficult to keep a natural *talanoa* feel. I felt that the *talanoa* was more of an interview as opposed to a *talanoa*. According to Vaioleti (2006), *talanoa* “removes the distance between researcher and participant: (p. 25). I felt that as a researcher, I saw the participants as of higher status and rank than myself and I

somehow felt that there is still distance between the participants and myself. I then reviewed the *talanoa* questions and started the *talanoa* but inviting the participants to reflect on their current context by giving a bit of information about what they do. This opened up the floor for the participants to connect with their comfort zone by talking about things that they know very well without having to think deeply. I then led them to reflect on their upbringing. These reflections have been emotional for some of the participants, which show how much they value their upbringing and the people that have made a difference in their lives. As the participants reflect on their current work, I realised a sense of ease and relaxing in their voice as well as a tone of joy. I also feel connected and related to their reflection as I connect what they do to what I do in terms of helping others. This was seen as a point of connection between the participants and I as the researcher.

The *talanoa* sessions lasted between one hour to one and a half hours. During this time there were tears shed as well as times of laughter. As participants reflect of their experiences and became emotional I feel emotional as well which may have made them be comfortable to fully express their emotions because I am a female researcher and at the age range where they may see me as a friend. I believe that if the researcher was a male or someone of older age group, this may be different in a way that the participants may find it difficult to fully express their feelings and ideas. For the older women I felt that they somehow saw me as a younger sister or a daughter to them, which also make them at ease to respond to the *talanoa*.

3.2.3 Tui – Data Analysis

3.2.3a Thematic Analysis

The *Tui* Stage of Kakala making is when flowers and leaves that the *kakala* makers collected are sorted, arranged and woven together to produce a finished *kakala*. The *kakala* has two main layers which are the *fungani* (top layer), which consists of the more aromatic

and outstandingly beautiful flower and the second layer is the *lalani* (bottom layer). The *lalani* is made up of the not so aromatic and beautiful flowers yet strong and bring good support to the *kakala*. The two layers combined enhance the beauty and strength of the *kakala*.

The *talanoa* sessions during the *toli* stage enabled the researcher to gather rich and in-depth reflections, knowledge and experiences from participants, which framed my understanding on how the participants made sense of leadership, which reflects on how they practice leadership in their given contexts.

The gathered data were analysed using thematic data analysis in which themes were recorded as they emerged from the *talanoa*. Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that thematic analysis though “poorly demarcated, rarely-acknowledged, yet widely-used” however, it “offers an accessible and theoretically-flexible approach to analysing qualitative data” (p. 77). I re-read the *talanoa* transcripts many times in trying to position myself in a way that I could better understand the participants’ reflections in relation to the research question.

Through re-reading the *talanoa* transcripts, I looked for similarities and differences in the participants’ reflections. I then colour-coded these and categorise them into themes. The themes were further categorised into main themes and subthemes. I found that the themes were interrelated which draw me to conceptualise the themes as a *fala* (Tongan mat) that is being woven.

The participants reflected on their upbringing and their life journey, therefore reflecting on a longer time gap of time so I had to position myself in various time and roles such as; a daughter under the care of parents, a wife, a sister to brothers, a *fahu*, a leader, a manager and a staff member. I found the participants’ reflections as valuable and rich in meaning.

3.2.4 Luva – Presenting of findings

In the next chapter, the findings are presented in a manner that is aligns with the purpose of this research. I believe that the findings are valuable and should be treated with respect and dignity.

3.2.4a Ethics

I discussed the research questions with my Supervisors and since the research involved studying about identities, reflections and lived-experiences, I was advised to seek ethics approval from the Massey University Human Ethics Committee. A low-risk ethics approval was obtained (please see Appendix 2) from the Massey University Human Ethics Committee. Throughout the duration of the research, I had to make sure that I follow the requirements and expectations set out in the research agreement with Massey University Human Ethics Committee.

3.2.5 Researcher Reflections

3.2.5a My role as a researcher

Throughout this research, I decided to refer to myself as the researcher using the first person. Using of the first person will differentiate my personal input into the research and those of the participants and be more transparent when discussing and analysing the data.

While conducting the *talanoa* sessions, I came to appreciate more the rich knowledge and ideas that Tongan women possess. I was excited to learn of the commonalities and differences in how the participants' view leadership and practice leadership in their given contexts. This research helped me to appreciate women's' contribution in any given contexts.

During the *talanoa* sessions, some of the participants were emotional during their reflections, which showed how much they appreciated that their ideas are valued. Many showed emotions when they reflected on their parents, grandparents and others that made an impact in their lives. Some of the participants at times got carried away during their reflections, however I learned to listen as they are valuable information to them which I should also learn to appreciate. This built a closer connection with the participants that they might feel that someone is willing to listen to their voices. I gave the participants my full attention to indicate how much I value their time and contribution to this study.

I found that the participants were very eager to *talanoa* and reflect on what they do and especially on the topic of leadership. Many of the participants reflected on leadership interchangeably with leaders, however, during the data analysis, I had to make sure to differentiate the two by identifying leaders as referring to the person and leadership as the process. Using of probing questions and the *talanoa* questions were very useful in redirecting the *talanoa* to focus on the topic of study.

Throughout the research, I have gained more skills in conducting research, which I find as a great contribution to my journey as a Tongan woman researcher.

Chapter 4: Results

4.1 Introduction

The thematic analysis results highlighted two categories of themes that are fundamental to this study. The first theme is “*lalanga mo’ui ‘a fefine Tonga*” (weaving the life of a Tongan women) and it addresses the sub research question of exploring the factors (strands) that inform Tongan women’s framing and sensemaking of leadership. The second major theme is the participants’ using of framing and sensemaking in their leadership practices. This attempts to address the main research question of how Tongan women in New Zealand use the perspectives of framing and sensemaking to enhance their leadership practice.

The findings are illustrated by quotes from the participants. Some of the quotes are in Tongan but then translated to English.

4.2 Lalanga Mo’ui ‘a fefine Tonga

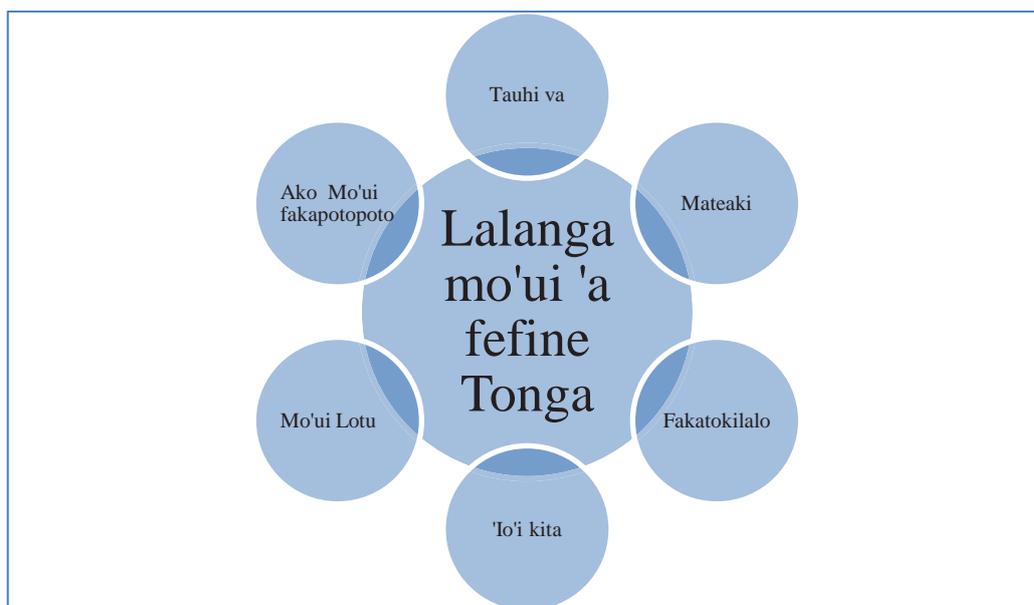
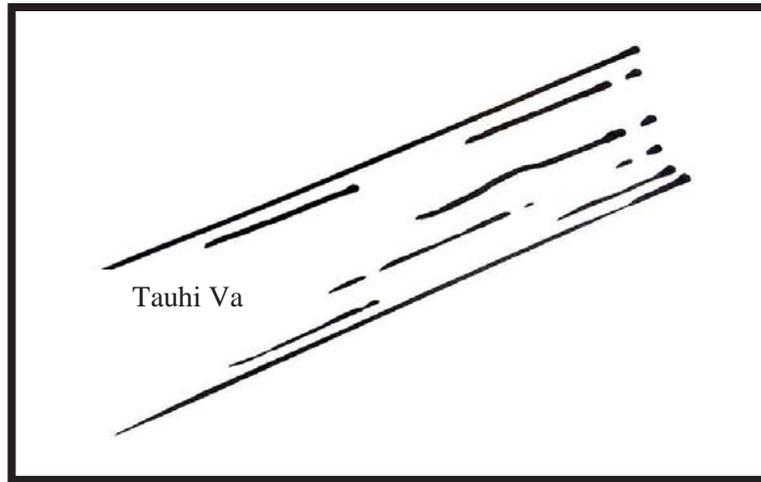


Figure 4.2: Main Themes from the Data

This section discusses the first main theme of ‘*lalanga mo’ui* ‘*a fafine Tonga*’ (weaving the life of Tongan women). I use the metaphorical framework of *lalanga fala* in discussing the main themes of this study as I see the connection of *lalanga fala* process and utilitarian to the concepts of framing, sensemaking and leadership practice. *Fala* is one of the most prized *koloa* (wealth) of a Tongan woman. The weaving of the *fala* epitomizes how Tongan women make sense of leadership. The *fala* as a product has two main uses; being spread on the floor for people to come together and *potalanoa* (make conversation), as well as using for *fua fatongia* (fulfilling obligations). Weaving together of the strands identified in this section articulates the journey of Tongan women to understanding and practice leadership through using the perspectives of framing and sensemaking. One of the *lalanga* (weaving) metaphors applicable to this theme as emphasised by Rogers (1977) is; “‘*Oku hangē ‘a e tangata ha fala ‘oku lālanga*’ (Mankind is like a mat being woven) (p. 157, 180). This articulates the idea that “a person is woven genealogically from multiple and overlapping kinship strands” (Ka’ili, 2005, p. 91).

The findings presented six main strands that the participants shared as influential in weaving their understanding and making sense of leadership. The emerged strands are; *tauhi va* (maintaining relationships), *ngaue mateaki* (hard working / loyalty), *fakatokilalo* (humility), *‘ilo’i kita* (know your place), *mo’ui lotu* (Christian belief) and *ako – mo’ui fakapotopoto* (being educated – being wise). I will discuss the strands individually and presented illustrations of the strands being added together one by one to display how they interlace to make a complete *fala*. Quotes from the participants’ responses during the *talanoa* sessions will be used to bring meaning on the value of each strand.

4.2.1 Strand 1 – Tauhi va



Strand of tauhi va

One common strand that emerged from the participants' reflection is *tauhi va*. In the Tongan context, *va* can mean "space between people and things" or "between two or more points" (Ka'ili , 2005, p. 89) and *tauhi* means to keep, nurture or to care for. Mahina (as cited in Ka'ili, 2005) categorised *va* into four dimensions; physical, social, intellectual, and symbolic but primarily the social dimensions are where *va* is experienced (Mahina , 2002). "Va relates and connects individuals and groups to one another" (Ka'ili , 2005, p. 89) hence the emphasis on *tauhi* (to keep, nurture or to care for) the *va*. In the Tongan *nofo 'a kainga*, "va encompasses the sociospatial ties that are created among *kainga* who are genealogically woven together" (Ka'ili , 2005, p. 89). Ka'ili (2005) continues to say, "The idea of weaving is central not only to genealogy but also to the process of socializing Tongan children (p. 91).

The quality of the *va* determines the strength of the *kainga* relations. *Tauhi va* is underpinned by the concepts of *mo 'ui faka 'apa 'apa* (being respectful), *mo 'ui 'ofa* (being compassionate) and *mamahi 'i me 'a* (loyalty). This is evident when the members of the *kainga* look after one another and provide for one another. *Kainga* members value their relationships with others because they have 'ofa (compassion) towards one another. Their

'*ofa* (compassion) towards one another is reflected in their respect and loyalty towards other *kainga* members. When a *kainga* has a *fatongia* (obligation), the strength of the *va* would determine how much each member or family in the *kainga* contribute to the *fatongia*. In relations to leadership, *tauhi va* enhances how leadership is achieved through nurturing the relationships between and among leadership actors in an organisation.

Throughout the *talanoa*, participants evoked this concept. For instance, Mohokoi shared that *faka'apa'apa* is one of the factors that define her identity. According to Langakali, "I think our culture kind of always teaches us respect and you know you always have to know where your boundary is and we don't always push boundaries". Kukuvalu also reflected that *faka'apa'apa* is related to knowing your boundaries and not pushing them. *Faka'apa'apa* in the Tongan context comes from the Tongan hierarchical system of the *nofo faka-Tonga*.

The nurturing and keeping of the *va* reflects the *mo'ui faka'apa'apa* (respect) among the members of the *kainga* and how much they value one another and their relations. *Tauhi va* develops *mo'ui 'ofa* (compassion) among the members of the *kainga*. If one is not *mo'ui 'ofa* (compassionate) towards their *kainga*, then their *va* is not as strong

Mo'onia shared her understanding of leadership as compared to *tauhi va*.

Mo'onia I think in some ways you know in every interaction that you would have, you know I'm talking of a work context here and all your relationships, like you have a *va* with someone. When you are in leadership you are taking complete responsibility for the quality of that *Va* and you are taking ownership of it and if it's not, even in a meeting if it's going bad and you're not like guiding it, leading it, taking responsibility for the quality of that *Va* then you are not showing leadership.

Mo'onia pointed out the importance of *Va* as the relation with another person. In relation to leadership, there is a *va* between leaders and followers and one follower to another. She believed that those in leadership are responsible and take ownership of the quality of the *va*.

She also pointed out the importance of guiding, leading and taking responsibility of the quality of the *va*. Failure to nurture the quality of the *va*, would mean that there is no leadership. A *va* that is well nurtured leads to the concept of *vaofi* (close relations). The quality of the *va* is the responsibility of leadership actors and not just some.

The nurturing of the *va* can be observed in the home. The participants reflect on how their parents, grandparents and *kainga* nurtured their relations with one another through sharing and providing for one another. Some of the participants reflect that even though they grew up in big households but that did not stop their parents, grandparents and *kainga* from sharing and providing for one another. The sharing reflects their *mo'ui 'ofa* as well as their *faka'apa'apa* towards their *kainga*

Sialetafa reflected on growing up in a big household. She also shared how this has helped her to learn to share and to look after herself:

Sialetafa I have 5 sisters and I have a lot of other adoptive relatives. We have a house almost full of people of about 20 people at the time. I was raised by so many Nannies, and I think having so many siblings do help, because you learn to share, you learn to look after yourself, and you don't actually get to be spoilt. I think if I was spoilt rotten I'll probably won't try any harder than what I've got.

Sialetafa's parents' decision to adopt and provide shelter for some of their *kainga* shows their *tauhi va* to their *kainga*. Even though they had 5 children to look after but the fact that they opened their home for others to take shelter shows how much they value their *va* with their *kainga*. Through her parents' *tauhi va*, Sialetafa learned the value of sharing and how to look after herself. The benefit that she took away from the experience is that without that act of *tauhi va*, she would not try harder than what she's already got.

Nukonuka recalled on her parent's *tauhi va* with their families. She shared how her father's relatives from the outer villages and her mother's families from the outer island of

Ha'apai would visit and stay over at their house and it was normal for them. When relatives visited, they were expected to serve them, give them food, clothes and what they would need. Her mother would give away even their best clothes. Nukonuka reflected on how her family from her father's village would come and sleep over at their home in the main town to do their shopping for their *fakaafe* (feast). Her mother would make steamed puddings and her father would give them money and do their shopping for their *fakaafe* (feast) before they return the following day. Nukonuka concluded that these are acts of *tauhi va* is leadership:

Nukonuka *Na'aku anga au 'i he tauhi va 'a 'emau tangata'eiki he na'e ngaue lelei ia pea ne tauhi kotoa pe 'e ia 'a hono kolo....*

English I was used to our father's nurturing his relations with others for he had a good job and he looked after all from his village....

Nukonuka also reflected how they used to travel to her father's village, she observed how they were warmly welcomed to their *kainga*'s homes and were treated with respect which is a gesture of their appreciation and returning her father's *tauhi va* to them. This enhanced that *tauhi va* is not a one-way relation but it is a communal construction of *va* between and among the members of a *kainga* or organisation.

Motelolo on the other hand grew up in an average sized Tongan family of 5 children but her parents both grew up in big households and she reflected on how she observed her father's *tauhi va* to his family. She would always tag along when her father would go to his village to visit his family and to attend to family occasions. Even though she now lives in NZ, she still attends her father's family's funerals, weddings, contribute to the family *kavenga* (obligations) and other social gatherings because that is what she learned from her father.

Motelolo *Mau toko nima, toko tolu tangata lalahi pea toki hoko ai au mo hoku ki'I sister si'isi'i. Ko homau ki'I famili, we are very structured. My parents 'a ia 'oku lahi taha 'eku fa'ee 'i he toko 11 pea lahi 'eku tamai, 'oku fika 4 ka ko e tamasi'i lahi ia. So they were both very responsible koe'uhinga ko e ongo famili 'oku na ha'u mei ai hee. Ko e hau he very strict nautolu ki he 'u me'a*

koi a ko e faka'apa'apa ki he tufefine. Ko 'emau tupu hake, we used to go he every weekend pe ko e ha e me'a 'ave ki he fanga tuofafine 'o e tangata'eiki ko e tamai ko ee 'a (father's name) pea mo e kui koe 'a (father's name) na'e kei mo'ui at the time hee. Pea hange ko e ko 'eku fa'ee 'oku pau pe ke visit 'ene parents every day. So we grew up not being selfish because we share everything. Tatau au pe pe 'oku si'isi'i pe 'oku lahi we always have to share hee. Ko e fua koe 'o e kavenga my parents both had to share he ongo fu'u family tokolahi and pea ko e taha ia e responsibilities. I think ko e faka'ofa'ofa 'o e family tokolahi 'oku 'ikai ke fai ha sio kita kuo pau p eke vahevahe.

English There were five of us, 3 older boys and then me and my younger sister. Our family, we are very structured. My parents; my mother is the eldest of 11 children and my father is number of 4 but he's the eldest son. So they were both very responsible because of the families that they come from. They were very strict in the things like respecting of their sisters. Growing up, we used to go every weekend with what we have and take it to my father's sisters, his father and his grandfather that were still alive at the time. And also my mother, she must visit her parents every day. So we grew up not being selfish because we share everything. Even if it's big or small we always have to share. When we provide for *kavenga*, my parents both had to share for they both had big families and that's one of their responsibilities. I think that's the beauty of big families, there is not selfishness, and everything must be shared.

The sharing from Motelolo shows her observation of her parents' embracing of their responsibilities as eldest sister and eldest brother in their own family. There were no misunderstandings for they both understood their responsibilities to their siblings and their parents and even grandparents. As eldest brother and eldest sister, Motelolo's parents stepped up to their leadership roles within their *kainga*. Their leadership functions were enhanced through their *tauhi va* to their *kainga* which showed their respect for their roles and also their relations to others. The weekly visit by Motelolo's father to his sisters, his father and his grandfather depicted that although he is no longer living with them in the village but he still valued his responsibilities and his *va* to them.

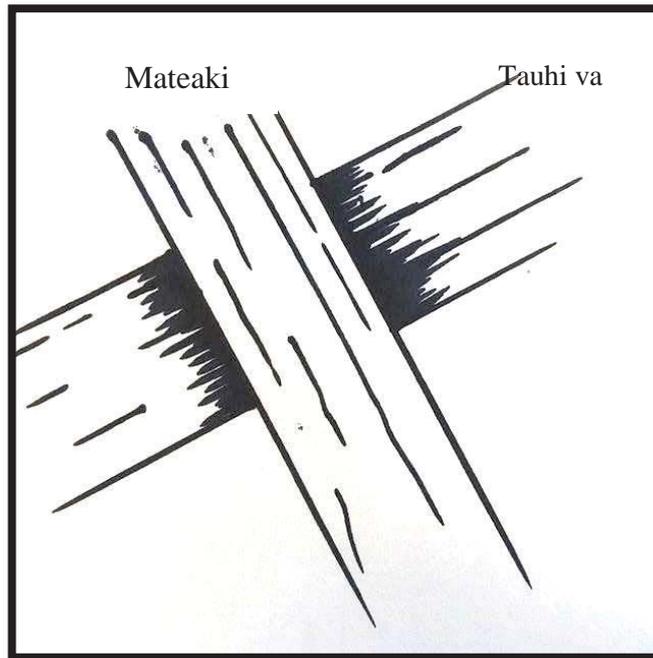
Motelolo *Ko e influence koe 'a e tangata'eiki 'oku 'I ai 'a e 'u me'a ia na'a ne fai I still carry, hange ko e tauhi ki hono famili. Kou kei folau ke 'alu ki he Suate, kou 'alu ki Tonga, koe fe pe feitu'u 'oku fai ai ha 'amau me'a, 'oku ou kei 'alu pe.*

English My father's influence; there are things that I still carry, like nurturing the relationship to his family. I still travel to the South (Island), I go to Tonga, or wherever that we have something (family occasion), I still go there.

Reflecting on Motelolo's observation of her parent's *tauhi va* with their *kainga* reflect Mo'onia's understanding of leadership. Motelolo's parents nurtured their relationship with their *kainga* with the constant visits and giving of gifts, sharing what little they had with them. They also showed their respect to their *kainga* through knowing their responsibilities to them. When there is a *kavenga* (cultural obligations) for the *kainga*, and the *va* is well nurtured then everyone in the family are influenced to contribute to carry the *kavenga*. Motelolo reflected in her statement above, that when there is a family *kavenga* she still goes to offer her support as she had learned from her parents. This reflects Motelolo's leadership ethics of *tauhi va*, *faka'apa'apa*, *fevahevahe'aki* and *'ofa*.

The strand of *tauhi va* reflect valuing of relationships through sharing, respecting and understanding of responsibilities, and working together as a *kainga* as shared by the participants. To achieve leadership, relationships between and among leadership actors in an organisation need to be nurtured so that sharing of ideas is encouraged and actors need to understand how they can better contribute to achieving the common goal of the organisation.

4.2.2 Strand 2 – Mateaki



Strand of tauhi va interlaced with the strand of mateaki

The second strand that is evident from the findings is *mateaki*. *Mateaki* means to die for. *Mateaki* expresses great value over someone's welfare, something or a task. *Mateaki* is enhanced through *talatalaifale* (talanoa within the house) and *ngaue* (action, work). *Talatalaifale* is made up of two words, which are *tala* (to speak, to talk, to tell) and *fale* (house). The notion of *talatala* emphasise that what is being *tala* is not only done once but it's reminded again and again. In the Tongan context, *talatalaifale* is the responsibility of parents. *Talatalaifale* in the Tongan context are usually done inside the family house, which shows the value of the context of the *tala*. In the *anga fakatonga*, important *talanoa* are carried out inside the house. *Talatalaifale* in this research will look at encouragement discourse that participants received from their parents and people that they encountered during their life journey. These *talatalaifale* underpin their *mateaki* and value of the life that they help to weave. This process can both be formal and informal *talanoa*.

Participants shared how *talatalaifale* from their parents, grandparents and *kainga* have stayed with them for a long time. Hehea reflected on how her parents were paramount influence in her life:

Hehea: My father of course instilled in me the positive self-esteem and the confidence to be a woman and not to be concerned about my weight and he was always affirmative in his conversations to my sister and I.

Hehea's sharing shows how much she values her father's conversations with her and her sister by viewing them as affirmative. Through these conversations, the values of self-esteem and confidence were instilled in her. Hehea's father's *talatalaifale* directed her and her siblings away from stigmatisms but built their self-esteem.

Sialetafa's grandmother reminded her to see things from various perspectives. This *talatalaifale* from her grandmother has influenced her work ethics greatly.

Sialetafa: My grandmother was a lawyer so she taught me some really good life lessons like, "If they tell you no, it means you will have to go and find somebody who will support and advocate for you" (Sialetafa's grandmother).

Puatonga similar to Sialetafa spoke of how her grandparents' *talatalaifale* influenced her life choices. They talked to her about the "pros and cons of those choices but not straight saying, no or yes". The framing of *talatalaifale* by Puatonga's grandparents helped to shape Puatonga's understanding of life.

Langakali reflected on her mother's *talatalaifale*, which influenced her way of doing things. She shared how she would complain about having too much *kavenga* and giving money and things to people that she had not seen in a long time, her mother would say that "it's not about seeing people, but always remembering what they did for us". This *talatalaifale* taught her to value her *kainga* both close and distant as well as the value of sharing.

Huni shared how her uncle's (who was a schoolteacher) words stayed with her and had motivated her to succeed in whatever she does. It was her School Certificate Exams and she passed only two subjects. Her uncle's words to her were, "*Me'a lahi 'ena ia. Ka lava e fo'i ua, ko ia ko e fu'u me'a lahi ia*" meaning, "That's a big thing. If you pass two, that's a big thing". Huni reflected that these words empowered her to work harder to succeed.

The participants' sharing of the *talatalaifale* that they received from their *kainga* has somehow influenced the way that they perceive success and do things. The words have woven high self-esteem, give them power to make decisions and be determined to succeed in life. The *talatalaifale* show the *kainga's mateaki* in aiming for the participants to be successful in life.

Evidence of *mateaki* through *ngaue* (actions, work) as shared by the participants show how their parents, grandparents and *kainga* do not just give advice but also work to achieve the best for their family and *kainga*. The Tongan expression, "*Lea mo ngaue*" (talk and work) stresses the importance of not just saying things but put those words into action. Work with determination for a purpose differs from just ordinary work. In the Tongan context this is called, *ngaue mateaki*. The participants have shared how they witnessed their parents strive through times of hardship to ensure they are well provided for and well educated.

Mohokoi recalled how she grew up in a big household (her parents and 9 children). This was not easy but her parents worked hard to provide for them.

Mohokoi I know that my parents really worked hard to educate all of the 9 children and when I grew up I thought that bread and butter and stuff like that was only the people that can afford to have them are the rich people, because we didn't have bread and butter. We have the Tongan food, the home grown vegetables and stuff like that. We didn't have bread and butter. ..We'll wake up in the morning and my dad had already cooked some tabioca (cassava), the *to'okutu* (cassava bread) with coconut milk and we'll have chicken from the bush you know, it was all home-grown and I didn't really realize that we were self-

sufficient. . . . I remember how I used to see her (mother) she'll stay up at night and weave one whole basket so she can go and sell it the next day for whatever one of us might have anything. We might have something at school, they are asking for money. So she was really hard-working to be able to provide for the 9 children so that was my big influential person right there at home.

What are obvious from Mohokoi's reflections are her parents working on their roles; father worked the land to provide for the family while mother made handicrafts to sell. Through specializing, they managed to provide enough for their childrens' education and day-to-day survival. "Monetary wise, I don't think that they saved money in the bank for the future but they did invest in us, thinking about our school and stuff because they know that we will be able to look after ourselves" (Mohokoi, 2016). Mohokoi's parents showed determination for they valued their children and earning a bright future for them through education.

Langakali spoke of her mother as someone that strived through hardship to provide for her family. Langakali's mother was the youngest in their family and living in New Zealand while her parents lived in Tonga and she felt that it was her duty to look after her parents since her older siblings had their own families to look after. Her mother always sent money to Tonga to her parents and being a single mum was not an easy life for her mother.

Langakali Being a single mum especially in those days, it was kind of like you know, looked down, because she wasn't married and you know she has a baby. But my mum no matter what, always try her best. So with whatever we had, I never ever felt a time when I was young that I didn't have what other people had (be)cause she worked really hard for it.

Pipitongi remembered how her parents would go to their plantation and her mother went along to help their father out in the plantation. She would never forget seeing her mother go

to the plantation and do work that women do not usually do because she wanted to provide for her and her siblings and to ensure they have food on the table.

Pipitongi She alu pe ia ki uta ke help my dad ke to e ha, to e ha, to collect the coconuts ke 'ave ki kolo. Ko e taimi ia e ngaahi mataka. I was young hono 'ai koe niu 'o fahi 'o fakamomoa 'o 'ave ia ki Havelu ki he mataka. My mum used to push him to do stuff like, sio ki he fanau he tokolahi e, he cannot mohemohe pe and stuff. You have to alu ngaue pa'anga o ki 'uta so she's always like that.

She would go to the bush to help my dad plant this and that and to collect coconuts to take to town. That was the time of cobra making. I was young at the time; the coconuts were cut open and left to dry and then taken to Havelu to the Copra Factory. My mum used to push him (dad) to do stuff like, “look at the kids there’s many of them and that he cannot just sleep and stuff, you have to go and work for money, go to the bush”, she’s always like that.

Pipitongi’s mother went out of her way to help their father in the plantation. This showed dedication, love and determination. In the Tongan culture, it is not usual for women to work in the plantation for their place is in the home. Pipitongi’s mother showed how much she valued her children by pushing her husband to work and provide for the family. She also showed her support by going out of her way to work in the plantation.

Hea recalled how she observed her father’s *ngaue mateaki* within their community.

Hea I watched how my Dad worked with the Community. There was no big church at Niue at the time but it didn’t stop my Dad from visiting others. He made that his mission.... There weren’t that many members but he created his own mission field so every Monday he was visiting so and so, every Tuesday he was visiting, Wednesdays it was like that, and they were not people from the church, they were the old people of Niue. They became his church, they never come to church but he went to them and I think that has an impact on me too and so in his own quiet way he worked with the people. Later on the church has now grown in Niue and I do believe that do influence me in a lot of way.

Hingano reflected on her relative that influenced her life. She had to leave her parents in the outer island to live with her distant relative in the main island. It was not easy for her but

she recalled the *ngaue mateaki* that she observed and learned from her aunty who influenced her journey and how she does things:

Hingano She (Aunty) always contribute in everything; Church, in the womens' group – their tapa making, she always contributes in giving Tongan koloa when there's a kavenga, she participates in the Church women's group and contribute in everything. In everything, she did her best. She would do baking for church feasts or to the village and those influenced my life as I believe that that's how life should be. She's one of the ladies that were trusted by the elders in the village such as the chief and the church minister. I used to see how in everything they would come and talk with her on what they should do. I also observed that she would work from morning until dusk. She would go to the market to buy good. When families come and ask for something she would always give....she always influence my life..

In Tonga, it is common for relatives from the outer islands would travel to the main island for further education. To be away from their parents for nearly 10 – 11 months can be difficult. Living with their relatives is not easy as they may live in big households and have to learn to survive on less. Hingano reflected on how she had to travel to the main island to attend high school. She went and lived with a relative. She recalls how there were many people that lived with them and they all had tasks to do before and after school.

Hingano You know how we wake up in the morning, we have to fai e haka, tafi e 'api ke ma'a, hiko mo e veve, everything. Fai e haka 'o tuku ai pea toki oo ki he ako. Lunch time, come back home, ko e come back home pe ko ha me'i ma pe ko eha 'o kai, 'osi to e go back to school. Ko e taimi kotoa pe he po'uli na'e tokolahi 'emau kau nofo ako, we have to learn how to bake banana cake, kapau 'ok 'iai ha banana, koe'uhi ke mau ti he pongipongi. We never have butter na'e 'I ai pe fu'u 'avoka. Ko e taimi ko ee 'oku momoho ai e fu'u 'avoka, ko e tufi pe 'avoka 'o fakamomoho, that's it ke vali'aki e ma e.

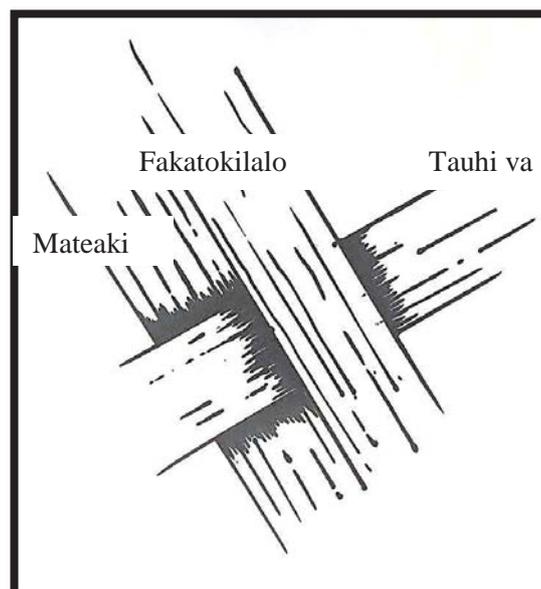
You know how we wake up in the morning, we have to do the cooking, sweep the ground to be clean, everything. We will do the cooking and leave it there before we go to school. At lunch time we will come back home, whatever is there (food), we eat and then go back to school. At night, there were many of us staying there for school; we have to learn how to bake banana cake, if there were banana, for our breakfast the next morning. We never had butter but there was an avocado tree there. When it is time to harvest the avocado, we

will gather them from the ground and leave to ripe, then use it to butter the bread.

From Hingano's reflection, we can see how she observed and practiced how to be responsible and fulfilling those responsibilities. She experienced the importance of working, being creative and surviving with whatever small resources they have. For Hingano, living away from her family was not easy but she realised now how passionate her parents were in envisioning a better future for her as the eldest in the family. Hingano shared her time in the main island was very emotionally how she now looks back in thanks for her parents for the choice they made to send her to the main island for school. At the time, she thought that her relatives that she lived with did not love her but now she appreciates the way she was taught and raised.

Mateaki through *talatalaifale* and *ngaue* contributed to how the participants frame and make sense of how their *famili/kainga* members influenced them to contribute to the tasks and goals of the *famili/kainga* as well as their individual development.

4.2.3 Strand 3 – Fakatokilalo



Interlacing of the strands of tauhi va, mateaki and fakatokilalo

Fakatokilalo is one strand that emerged from the talanoa results. *Fakatokilalao* literally, “is to cause to (*faka*) fall (*tō*) down (*kilalo*)” (Mafile'o, 2005, p. 150). *Fakatokilalo* in the Tongan context means to be humble with a willing heart to value the welfare of others more and think of oneself less. In this research, we will refer to *fakatokilalo* as humility.

Fakatokilalo influence how participants view themselves as leaders. The respect for their fathers as the head of their '*api* that they observed and experienced during their upbringing inform how they relate to male co-workers and how they see themselves in the context of leadership.

Hea shared her perception on leadership, which reflects how it relates to her doing of leadership:

Hea I think leadership for me is a passion rather than something we study for. It's something that you're blessed with like it's a blessing from the Lord. That's why I don't think I go out there and I say I am a leader. I just do my bit for every woman I'm sure the Lord blesses them with so much and you have to work to that much that the Lord blesses you with.

Hea's sharing of her understanding of leadership reflects her *fakatokilalo*, although she is an educated woman and a leader in her workplace, she does not brag about it but just do her part in whatever she is doing. This bring forth the importance of whether one is in leadership position or not but all actors within an organisation can use what they have in what tasks they have to do for the benefit of the organisation.

Hehea described her father as a “very stern, very disciplined in his approach to raising us. He was very humble and gentle so in his words, he was a man of few words but when he spoke we listened”. What Hehea observed in her father is similar to what Kukuvalu observed in her mother. “...mum was a homemaker, the most humble of all women. My mum was seen but not heard” (Kukuvalu). Hehea and Kukuvalu's description of their parents showed their *fakatokilalo* to serve her family with no complain or fuss.

Falahola shared how her father wanted to teach them to be humble by teaching them to experience the struggles that others may be facing.

Falahola I remember he (dad) used to make us run to school on a rainy day so we don't get dropped off. He'll tell us that we are going to figure out how to run from tree to tree to try and get to school dry because that's what some other kids do. That's the reality for some kids and I remember also that he used to do things that I completely didn't understand then but I understand now as a parent. He used to go and buy *lo'ihoo*si (horsemeat in coconut cream) and he said that we have to eat because we have to learn to eat whatever food is available, you can't be picky with your food. So that was my upbringing I think my parents were very keen on making sure that we were humble and even though we grew up not wanting for anything they wanted us to understand that the reality for other people may be different and we need to have an understanding of it and I appreciate that. When I became a parent I can see what my parents were doing.

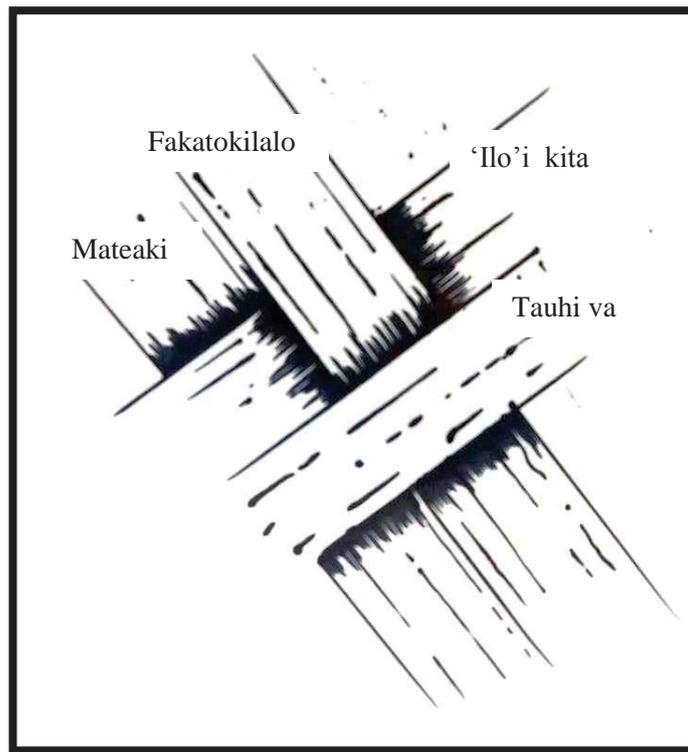
Falahola pointed out that *fakatokilalo* can be achieved through *maheni faingata'a* (used to hardship) as her father tried to teach them. It is understood in the *nofo 'a kainga* (Extended family living) that when one faced hardship and persevere through hardship, the situation helps to create value in them of their *kainga* and the *kainga's* common goals to be achieved.

Mo'onia claimed that in leadership, humility (*fakatokilalo*) is core:

Mo'onia Humility is so core. I would never stand up and say that I'm a leader. I guess for me that was a real Tongan value to be humble and don't elevate yourself. The minute you do, you don't show that you are real Tongan, you know.

In the Tongan context, there is a well-used phrase "*Tu'a e sino, kae 'Eiki e fekau*". What this phrase means is that message or work is more important than the perso delivering the message or work. What Mo'onia shared above reflects the above phrase. It shows how it is vital in the Tongan culture for the messengers or leadership actors not to value themselves more than the leadership actions or message at hand.

4.2.4 Strand 4 – ‘Ilo’i kita – Know your responsibility



Interlacing of tauhi va, mateaki, fakatokilalo, ‘ilo’i kita

‘*Ilo’i kita* is one strand that was evident from the participants’ reflections. ‘*Ilo’i* originates from the word ‘*ilo* (to know) and *kita* means self. ‘*Ilo’i kita* is more than just knowing the basics of one’s name and contact details. Through knowing our responsibilities and roles in the *kainga* circle as well as in the organisations that we belong to, we come to know ourselves. This is a first step to knowing how we can contribute to the welfare of the organisation.

Mapa shared how important it is for her to know her role as a Tongan woman. By knowing her role then she knows her “responsibilities to other people” including her responsibilities to her brothers. Motelolo’s response is comparable to Mapa’s reflections:

Motelolo *Ko e again, koe’uhinga ke u ‘ilo hoku tu’unga mo hoku fatongia ke fai. I carry that with me, he koau ‘oku ou lahi he tamaiki fefine so I always feel responsible. Ko e tokotaha koe ‘oku si’isi’I ‘ia au ‘oku kehe ‘ene fakakaukau ‘a’ana mo ‘ene fakakaukau ki hono responsibility ia ‘a’ana hee.*

English And again, what I mean is that I know my place and my responsibilities to do. I carry that with me, for I am the eldest among the girls (eldest daughter) and so I feel responsible. The one that is younger than me, her thoughts about her responsibilities are different from mine.

Motelolo stressed the value of knowing her place and her responsibilities to her family. She also identified that her role is different from her younger siblings' and so are the thoughts and expectations that go with the roles and responsibilities.

The *nofo 'a kainga* is structured as an organisation with leadership actors. For example, the '*ulumotu'a* (head of the kainga or clan) as the head of the *kainga* and the father is the head of the '*api (home)*. Members of the *kainga* have their various roles and responsibilities to play which contribute to the common goal(s) of the *kainga*. Through the fulfilling of responsibilities and valuing of others in other boundaries, it indicates one's understanding of *mo'ui faka'apa'apa* (respectful living) to others.

Hehea shared that even though she was born and raised in New Zealand; her parents raised her and her siblings in the Tongan way of life.

Hehea They did raise us to know that we are Tongan.... . I had a father who was very much determined in raising his children particularly his daughters as women who were confident in themselves. They did not need to compare themselves to others and had strong self-esteem within themselves who pursue whatever they desire to pursue.

Hehea's sharing, reflect how she values her parents work and how her parents' parenting has contributed to her knowing of who she is.

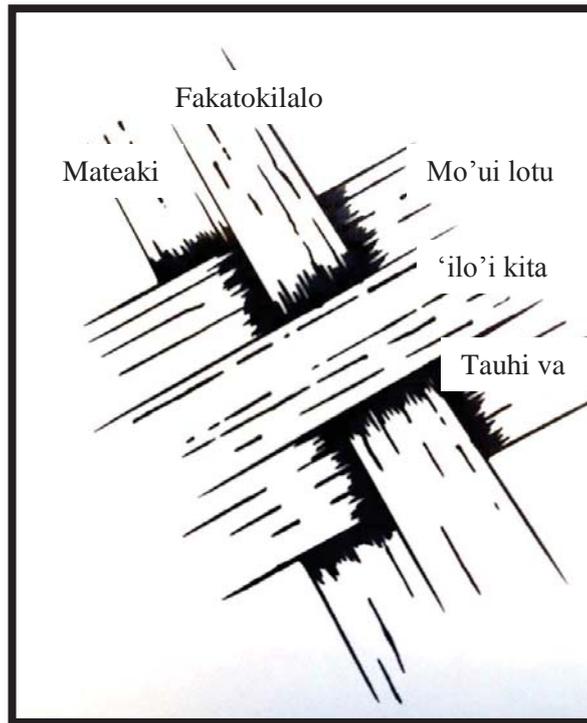
Sialetafa believed that being Tongan gives her a sense of belonging, which is important to her.

Sialetafa ...make you believe you belong to some race and it does, you know the Tongans have (got) a sense of responsibility, they are very respectful people and they do have a lot of good stuff.

Sialetafa's response show her understanding of being Tongan which also comes with a sense responsibility as well as an expectation that being Tongan resonate with being respectful.

Nukonuka shared how valuable it is to know your responsibilities to your family and to others. She shared how numerous people abuse the *fahu* system as a way of accumulation *koloa*. In the Tongan context, when there is a birthday, a wedding celebrations or funeral, the *mehikitanga* (father's sister) receives *koloa* (mats, *tapa*, money and many more) from her brother and their children. In this sense, Nukonuka believes that some want to be the *fahu* only to get *koloa*, but what they do not understand is that the *fahu* system is a two-way relation. The *mehikitanga* does have a responsibility to their brothers and their children. It is not just the brother's and their children serving their *mehikitanga* but the *mehikitanga* returns the love by giving to their brothers and their children. Nukonuka shared how she witnessed her mother as the *fahu* to her brother's children did not just collect *koloa* from them but gave to them in return. When her uncle's children visited them at their home, their mother would give them food, clothes and money to take home which indicates her knowing of her responsibilities and the importance of *tauhi va*.

4.2.5 Strand 5 – Mo’ui Lotu (Christian belief)



Interlacing of the strands of tauhi va, mateaki, fakatokilalo, 'ilo'i kita and mo'ui lotu

Lotu in Tonga is a major part of peoples' life and upbringing. *Mo'ui lotu* in this context refers to a life that is embedded in the values of Christianity. Fourteen of the participants openly shared the influence of their Christian faith and values on their life journey and their leadership work. They claimed that Christianity is part of their identity.

Mapa expressed how her relationship with God influenced everything in her life;

Mapa I committed my life to Jesus, in 1982 and that has influenced everything, from my perspective of my priorities, key priorities in life, I know that God had a purpose and a plan and I know He wants the best and I strive for the Best. It influence how I coach and train my children, telling them that they are not only special to me but special to God and God had a purpose and plan, which means that I can coach them on what God's purpose for them rather than influencing them to a profession that I'm in.

From Mapa's reflection, it shows how she is being inclined to a higher being, which is God. Her belief and relationship with God frame how she sees herself and others, it also influences how she does things and most importantly, the purpose of what she does.

Pipitongi sees herself as a Christian Tongan woman. It shows how she was raised to see herself.

Pipitongi I grew up in things like living a prayerful life, as a Christian. I think that is one of the core values, for me. To me my identity first, I am a Christian woman. So my life, I was nurtured by my parents to know God, so it's more like, life as we grew up was like everything that we do is more to please God. So all the values have to align with what God says in the Bible.

Hehea spoke of how she was raised in the church and was groomed in the church and become confident in public speaking through bible reading in the church.

Hehea We were raised in the church. We were raised Catholics, my parents encouraged us to participate in church, Tongan Sunday school. We attended Tonga Mass once a month; we attended prayer meetings with my parents. We were raised in a Multicultural church in South Auckland where I was encouraged to, my parents encouraged us to pray publicly which we did. They encouraged us to also be Ministers of the Word so we were also Ministers of the Word. I was in particular so I was actually groomed in to it, I mean I realize it now but when I reflect that when I was reading in church to a congregation of 800 particularly in main services like Easter and Christmas I was always asked to, it actually taught me to speak publicly. And speak with an articulate and delivery because when you read from the Word you've got to read and pause and I was taught that.

Hehea showed how her parents' actions and the church activities that they were encouraged to participate in. Her parents with their actions have influenced Hehea's life such as public speaking and working with Christian organisations.

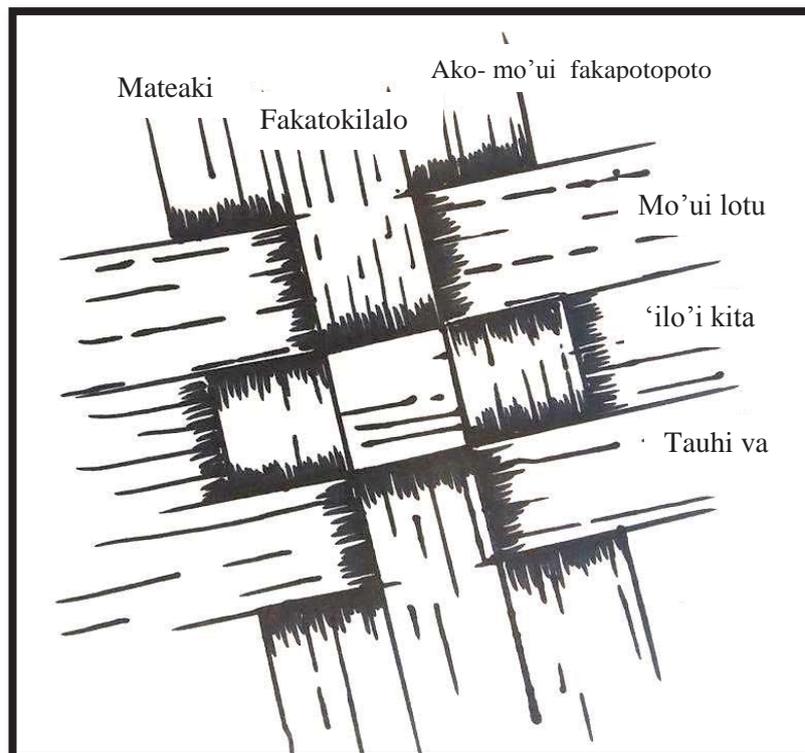
Hea grew up as a daughter of a pastor and she recalled how her father worked in the church. From a young age, she observed how her father as a missionary reached out to those that did not attend church and her mother-baked cakes and give to these families. Hea observed her father's determination in working to grow the church in the island that they were in. Hea shared that she is a strong Tongan Christian woman.

Hea I'm a strong Tongan Christian woman while I'm also an educated woman. I don't put it out there that I'm an educated woman. No, but I quietly work my way through my church and I sort of just in my own way try to help and support.

One of the values that Hea points out from her reflection above is humility. Although she is a strong Christian woman and educated as well, she does not use that as something to speak out in their church but quietly helping. Although she is not much of someone to speak out, she still works to help and support within the church.

The participants reflected on observing and experiencing their parents teaching of living a Christian life. This has influenced how several participants' view of their understanding of leadership.

4.2.6 Strand 6 – Ako – Mo'ui fakapotopoto



Interlacing of all six strands that emerged from the *talanoa*

In the Tongan context of *nofo* 'a *kainga*, children are groomed and educated to do better and as a pathway out of poverty. Even though families may be financially poor, but they do

find a way to pay for their children's education, boys and girls alike. There is an expectation from families that the effort that they put in to the education and upbringing of their children will be well used and will bring happiness to the families and glory to the family name. It was also evident from the participants' sharing how they were taught of not only the importance of being educated but also the concept of *mo'ui fakapotopoto* (being wise, wise living).

Motelolo shared how her family saw education as a vehicle out of poverty. Her parents were both civil servants and they did not only support their own children but the children of their siblings and others in the *kainga*. In Tonga, there is this expectation that when you complete your education and start earning, you are to give back to your family and relatives. This shows one's *'ofa* (compassion) towards members of their *kainga*. Motelolo shared her observation of how her parents fulfilled this family expectation:

Motelolo *I think because my parents grew up poor, na'e pau foki ke feinga ha me'a ke break the poverty cycle, 'a ia ko e ako was very important and that was a vehicle to get out of poverty and both our parents na'e support ki mautilu ke ako pea 'ikia ngata pe 'ia mautilu pee mo e fanau koe he ongo family loua. It was a hard life he na'e 'ikai ke pehee na'e lahi 'ena vahe pe na'a mau tu'umalie hee, we only had enough ke fakaako'I mautilu ka ko e resources koi a ko e pa'anga pe ko e ha na'e toe tokoni pe ia ki he ongo family ke fakaako'I kinautolu.*

English I think because my parents grew up poor, it was a must to find something to break the poverty cycle so education was very important and that was a vehicle to get out of poverty and both our parents supported us to study and not only us but also the children in the extended family from both sides. It was a hard life for their salary were not much and we were not rich, we only had enough to pay for our education and that financial resources helped to educate the others in our famili.

Heilala shared how her parents always wanted her and her siblings to have a better education. She reflected that when their family migrated here to NZ for them to pursue their education, she attended seventh form but later dropped out because she did not feel that she fits in and that the culture of the school that she attended was different from what she was

used to in Tonga. After working for a while, she then realised that she needs to pursue her education as her father had wanted and expected for her.

Heilala I decided that my father was right after all, you know that the main reason why we came to NZ was actually to get a better education and that is the way out of the cycle of poverty, the way into a better, brighter future would be to get educated.

Heilala's father's action showed in migration was his way of framing to Heilala and her siblings how he valued education and for them to have a better life as compared to what they could have had in Tonga.

Falahola talked about how failure was not an option at their home. Both her parents were civil servants and it was expected of them to do well in school.

Falahola My parents were very influential on all of us and I think the biggest influence that they have on us was failure wasn't an option. Actually it didn't even exist. Because we went to school we were going to do well and we will succeed and failing was not spoken about because it wasn't gonna happen. So that's how we grew up. We didn't think that we were going to school and not pass school Certificate or UE you know in Tonga at the time. We just we were all gonna do well. 'Belief in yourself', was something that our parents planted in us and I think that I've taken it through my whole life. That has helped me pick myself up in those difficult moments and if I have to say that someone has influenced me very much, it has to be my parents.

What is obvious from Falahola's reflection is the unspoken expectations of her parents. Though they were not really told of their parents expectations but they knew in their heart that they had to do well in school and be successful. Mo'onia also shared the same experience with her Tongan family and the unspoken expectation that she encountered during her upbringing.

Mo'onia I mean also through my father who is Tongan and my aunty and they were very clear, they had very different expectations of me than my palangi family or anyone else for that matter. I always did very well in school and I was always very encouraged a lot by my aunty (dad's sister) and my dad in

particular; they always wanted me to go on, I guess to be a professional one day. They don't put it like that, right, but I think, you know, they wanted me to get a very good education, and go on and do that so it was a very strong driver. My aunty was one of the first Tongan women at (name) University to get a degree and my Dad paid for that. There was this huge value on education and achieving and I was just expected to follow in those footsteps.

It is obvious from Mo'onia's reflection above, the expectations from the participants' parents and family towards succeeding in education. Mo'onia's father demonstrated his respect and *tauhi va* to his sister by paying her University tuition.

Mo'onia I remember when I decided not to do law my aunty (name) wrote me this long letter and saying that I should just do it. You know I felt that I didn't listen (laughter). My dad can't read or write and so when I was growing up he just say, "If I could read or write, you look outside there will be a swimming pool there and this and that." So and he worked hard every day of his life and so when I saw him doing his painting and wallpapering and his job that he was proud to do, I knew there's no way that that's what he's wanted for us. So it was a lot of was unsaid (expectations) to be honest. I think unsaid but the expectations, boom so unsaid but so strong.

Families expect their children to do well in school and to strive to get a better-paid job. Mo'onia and Falahola share a common idea with the other participants, which are the unsaid expectation of the *famili* and *kainga*. The value of education and the expectation of the family, though unsaid but very clear in the minds of the participants.

Vunga shared her observation of the Tongan ways and expectations. It makes her proud to see Tongans succeed in the Academic field.

Vunga In Tonga, you have to have some sort of Academia or always had that so I have been raised with that and I have been nurtured to a career that I'm very happy with. It saddens me that it is quite a hierarchy in terms of career choices. I know Tongans internationally are driven to achieve academia which makes me proud because my understanding, out of all the Pacific that Tongans are well educated at Masters Level and above which makes me very proud.

With the limited resources and income available in Tonga, education was and still perceived as a vessel for a better future. Families embrace the idea of migration, whether it is

migrating from the outer island to the main island or migrating out of Tonga to NZ, Australia or the USA, to seek better education for their children due to the limited higher and better education system in Tonga.

Twelve of the participants shared that the main reason why they left their hometown was in search of better education. Two were NZ born and migrated to Tonga at some point in their lives to live and study. Nine migrated to NZ first to continue their education and one left their hometown in the outer island to the main island to continue her education. Three of the participants initially migrated to New Zealand for work and two later continued their studies in NZ. This high number of migrating for further studies reflects their parents' *tauhi va* to their children in ensuring they are better educated.

Heilala talked of how her father left his paid job in Tonga and migrated to New Zealand so that she and her siblings could pursue their education.

Heilala My parents had always intended for us the kids to had the opportunity for us in education as you know, one of the main reasons why we move from the islands to go to overseas whether its NZ or Australia or indeed the States or Hawaii it's to have a better future for our children. So we moved here in the mid-80s with the intention of all of us continuing on with our studies

Mo'onia reflected how when she was 13 she was sent to Tonga to go to school there.

Mo'onia My experiences in Tonga, going to school there (Tonga) and work there (Tonga) was really informative. My connections with my palangi extended family and my Tongan extended family were really influential.

The value of education as highlighted in the findings shows how parents were willing to part with their daughters or migrate with them so that they could pursue their education. The findings show how the participants experienced having to live away from home, migrating to a new home and experience the passion that their parents showed for education.

Loumaile spoke of when she migrated from Tonga to New Zealand to pursue her studies, she always looked for a job during her holidays to help her out financially.

Loumaile I had this mindset when I left Tonga, because I did typing and I thought typing was a cool thing back then, and I thought, because I can type, I should be able to work in an office. You know I had that mentality at a young age. .. so the first summer.. I went looking for a job and I was just looking for an office job because I thought that I'm good enough and I can type. And so I did and I did that every school holidays. That gave me the money to look after myself as my family were still in Tonga.

Loumaile, though did not first migrate here with her family, she had courage to look for a job to help her financially. In the Tongan context, this shows her *mo'ui fakapotopoto*.

Sialetafa also shared how she was taught at home to *mo'ui fakapotopoto* by having to make good use of the limited resources they had.

Sialetafa My grandma, you know the flour that we use (as dry batter) for the fish, she would say, after you finish you have to get all the flour and put them on the side and you have to reuse that for the soup thickens. She never wastes anything. I think her upbringing resonate well with me.

Sialetafa's learned at a young age the value of *mo'ui fakapotopoto*. Many participants spoke of how they observed and learned *mo'ui fakapotopoto* from their parents, grandparents and *kainga* during their upbringing.

The participants' observations and experiences of how their parents and *kainga* valued education and the various ways that they went through to achieve education for them has really influenced them. Although the families did not have much in terms of money or resources but they aimed to ensure that, they send their children to education even if it means migrating away from their home or having to live with relatives away from home.

4.2.7 Summary

The strands that the participants voiced reflect how much of leadership that they witnessed while growing up at home and their *kainga*. The strands [*tauhi va, mateaki, fakatokilalo, 'ilo'I kita, mo'ui lotu and ako – mo'ui fakapotopoto*] are woven together in these narratives in ways that surface their sensemaking and practice of leadership. This suggests the next main theme of the participants' leadership practice, which I unpack more in the next chapter.

Figure 1: Interlacing of strands in weaving



Source : Pacific Travel Guides

4.3 Leadership practice

The second theme that emerged from the findings is the participants' practice of leadership in their given contexts. This therefore addresses the research quest to explore how Tongan women in New Zealand use the perspectives of framing and sensemaking to achieve leadership in their given contexts. The observations and experiences that the participants discussed in the first theme have influenced their sense making of leadership and how they relate to others within their organisations and how they do leadership. From the participants' sharing, I will be identifying the strands that emerged to have shaped and influenced their leadership framing and understanding of the concept of leadership in their given contexts.

Specifically, this section unfolds around the following themes: leadership defined, gendered experiences, the concept of *loto 'i Tonga* (heart of a Tongan), *ngaue fakataha* (work in collaboration), interpersonal and non-confrontational as well as service.

4.3.1 Leadership defined

Emerging from the data are key leadership concepts that were identified from the participants' definitions of leadership. When asked about their understanding of leadership, some of the participants explained their understanding of leadership as they observed as the qualities of a leader and some explained it as a process of influence. Table 3 contains some excerpts from the participants' responses that show how they frame their understanding of leadership.

Name	Definition of leadership	Key Leadership Concepts	Strands Emerge
Kukuvalu	I think leadership doesn't belong only at the top of whatever realm it is. I think leadership happens as an opportunity for everybody. ..you show leadership by the way you talk ...by the way you speak to each other, by your looks, your behaviour, your attitudes, and leadership is everything we do	Leadership is an opportunity for all Leadership is achieved through discourse	<i>Tauhi va</i> <i>'Ulungaanga</i> <i>Fakatokilalo</i> <i>'ilo'i kita</i>
Sialetafa	For me leadership is that you are always at the front you are one step ahead of everyone else. You are the driver, you direct others and you kind of like steer the boat to where you want it to go. That's what leadership is. You don't manage them you influence them to steer the right way. But you are doing the steering.	Leader influence others in the right way by doing the steering. Leader positions at the front.	<i>Mateaki</i> <i>Tauhi va</i> <i>'Ulungaanga</i> <i>fakatokilalo</i>
Falahola	I think leadership is defined as you are the person that could provide the most impact; you have the responsibility to make the decision that is going to make the difference to the young people in my care. That is what leadership is about so it is not the status and the position, it is actually the work that you do is going to make a difference.	Make a difference in the lives of others and most impact Leadership as not status Focus on the leader	<i>Tauhi va</i> <i>Ngaue mateaki</i> <i>'ilo'i kita</i>
Vunga	I'm strong in leadership, I think it's a leader who is humble and had humility, has respect from others and also leads from behind. I really appreciate that I don't have to be out in the limelight. I think it's critical that you do your ground work really well to get the support and don't think you can just roll into a position or without the backing of your people.	Humility Respected by others Earn respect and support of others through work.	<i>Fakatokilalo</i> <i>Tauhi Va</i> <i>Ngaue Mateaki</i>
Mo'onua	..[E]very interactions that you would have , ... and all your relationships like you have a va with someone, when you are in leadership you are taking complete responsibility for the quality of that Va. .. and you are taking ownership of it and if it's not and even in a meeting if it's going bad and you're not like guiding it, leading it, taking responsibility for that, the quality of that Va then you are not showing leadership..	Nurturing Relationship (<i>tauhi Va</i>)	<i>Tauhi va</i> <i>'Ulungaanga</i> <i>fakatokilalo</i>
Mapa	...to me leadership is all about not only serving but making sure that we know our direction, we know our purpose and where to do from A to B in that level.. my leadership work at home especially as a wife, mum at home, my husband is too much in to prayer so leadership starts with that and the Word of God and seeking God for direction.	Lead by serving Know the direction and purpose Seeking God's guidance for direction	<i>Mateaki</i> <i>'ilo'i kita</i> <i>Mo'ui Lotu</i>

Table 4.3: Participants' definition of leadership and leadership concepts and emerged

strands

From the above table, a common understanding from the definitions by some of the participants is that leadership is about influencing others in a good and positive way. This influence reflects the work that leadership actors do which models good influence and

direction to the followers and others. The above definitions do mirror the participants' understanding of leadership during their lived-experiences in their given contexts. What is apparent from the participants' framing of leadership is how they position leadership within both the person and what the leader needs to do to influence others. They stress the importance that it is not just what a leader needs to do but also how others perceive that a leader does.

What is common from the participants' definitions of leadership is their perception that leadership emerge from leaders that are; visionary, have positive influence on others, striving to make a difference in the lives of others and being humble. These commonalities in the participants' framing of leadership reflect how they make sense of their parents and kainga leadership during their upbringing. They also informed how they practice leadership in their given contexts. Mapa's sensemaking of leadership as shows in table 3, is reflected when she and her husband's who are the leaders in their congregation, show their influences through coming together at the beginning of every year to pray for God's guidance on their plans for the whole year. Mapa's reflection indicates how she values communication in leadership. She spoke of one incident that she had to undergo a difficult conversation with one of the executive members of their Community group due to her misconduct within the group:

Mapa [O]ne person in our Exec was not following policies and ... I sat down and said to her, "You know we are not going to put this under the carpet because it's not about you and I, it's about the whole [community]. Eventhough we make hard decisions in putting that person out of the Exec because of some of the things that she did, even though it broke our friendship but I think it is coming around now that she started to come and understand that it is not about her and I, it is about the whole [community]... I said to her, "You know integrity goes a long way". So, I feel that that's Communication, integrity as a person. I feel that integrity and honesty of my work, theres times that people hate you for that but that's ok with me, I have that strong conviction in me that as long as I'm with clear conscience with God, that's all I care about .

Mapa shared the importance of communication and standing firm in their faith in God. Her reflections showed how she wanted to communicate to her colleague the importance of integrity and honesty, which are some of the Christian principles that she believes in.

Sialetafa's belief that in leadership, leaders are the main driver of the team, directing others and steering the boat in the right way reflected in an example that she shared.

Sialetafa We moved into a new office, our new office do not have any cabinets so two years before we moved we were given the opportunity to see what we can do with all the papers. I initiated a project called paperless, and we worked with another company to convert all our paperbased to digital. When we put it in, nobody wanted to do it. Our company said it was too expensive to explore so I did a proof of concept with the team, we pilot it and we initiate the project. It took us two years to finish the project but once we finished it we are one of the first company in NZ that we managed to convert all our database files.. So to have that finished you have to need a lot of influence because I had no budget. ... I used one of my budgets for casuals and I get the students from University .. they did the scanning so my give back to them ..[I trained them in one of our systems. And each of them I trained them a system. Because I look after 19 different systems so those girls and guys that work for me that was the pay back and then I also got a .. to get another job within the bank

Sialetafa's reflections on one of the projects that she was working on at her workplace echoed her understanding of leadership and the role of a leader. When presented with a problem, she rose to the challenge and the problem became a task to be achieved. Even though she did not have a budget to carry out the project but she managed to initiate ways and positively influence her team to get the work done and ensure the success of the organisation.

From the above definitions, it unveils the interlacing of *tauhi va*, *fakatokilalo*, *makeaki*, and *'ilo' i kita and mo'ui lotu*. The participants' responses presented the interlacing of the strands in the way they define leadership and their understanding of the roles of a leader as it related to leadership.

4.3.2 Gendered Experiences

The cultural frame that the father is the head of the *'api* (home), is viewed to have an impact on how the participants position themselves as leaders. Langakali shared, "if I have a

colleague and he's male and he's older, I would always kind of feel that he's in a higher position than me. But really we are in the same position, we have the same responsibility". Langakali's experience frames her value of male colleagues. This experience enhances Langakali's framing of men based on what she observed. In the Tongan 'api, the father is seen as the head of the family and he is given respect for the position that he holds. The respect given to an older brother differs from that given to a younger brother. The sister can claim her sister privilege more with her younger brothers than her older brothers because of their age difference and *faka'apa'apa* towards them.

Falahola reflected on her experience when her predecessor approached her to apply for the most senior position at her workplace:

Falahola Actually I didn't see myself as being capable of being a ..(management position) because I'm a Tongan woman, and when we discovered that our (management person) was leaving, he (Falahola predecessor) encouraged me to apply for the job but I didn't originally. [Be]cause I couldn't see that I could do it because of my thinking that a Tongan woman can't be as tough or I'm quite sure of the work but I'm thinking, the thought of being a leader you have to be a tough, and that's not a quality that is equated to being a Tongan woman.

I think it's really hard being a Tongan woman in a leadership role because I don't think in the Tongan culture women are supposed to be leaders, and because I was raised in Tonga I'm always aware of that, you know but as I said before, I had to undo that thinking and it actually gave me great pleasure to be able to make a difference to the young people.

Falahola's framing of a leader associate with being tough. Due to this framing, she was reluctant to apply for the leadership position in her workplace because she did not see herself, a Tongan woman, fit the frame. Growing up in the police barracks may have influenced Falahola's framing of a leader. Falahola continued her framing of what she believes a woman should be:

Falahola You got to be caring and generous and all those things which I couldn't see that I could do if I was the (management position) that I was required to be tough and all that, manly and it didn't sit well with me because I was a Tongan woman so, yes I have been influenced with the fact that I'm a Tongan woman and the expectations that women are expected to do women's work. Mothering, be caring and all those things and that's not going to be good for you if you are going to be a leader of an organization because when you are required to make those tough calls I'm not quite sure that I can do it. So I never actually wanted to be a (management position).

One important idea that Falahola pointed out in the above excerpt is her framing of Tongan women to be mothering, generous and caring. Her framing of leaders are men when observing her father as a leader in their family and in his workplace and are supposed to be tough. Based on Falahola's reflection, I can see that Falahola's response to being asked to apply for the leadership position is based on how she framed herself as a Tongan woman in comparison to her framing of how a leader should be. Her understanding disqualified her as a leader in her eyes even before she applied for the position. Langakali agreed with Falahola that Tongan women are to be graceful in what they do. However, as a Tongan woman, there are expectations that need to be fulfilled which influenced Falahola's decision to apply for the leadership role. At the same time, she had to unpack those thoughts in order to persuade herself to apply for the position.

Making tough calls seem to have associated with great force and strength to be able to endure the risks and hardships that may associate with those tough calls. It is evident that in the Tongan contexts, men are the war heroes and making the calls on the *famili/kainga* safety and security. This idea may stand to influence how the participants' view leadership and power in their gendered experiences.

The findings indicate that even though the participants speak of their great respect for men, which reflects their respects for the men in their *famili/kainga*, however they do not seem to accept if they are being put down for being women. Mapa reflected that she attended

a meeting in which the chairman somehow joked about a motion to have a woman in the organisation's Executive Committee, that it would be good for the female representative to come and make his cuppa tea. Mapa addressed the chairman and voiced her concern about the chairman's claim:

Mapa: We grew up in Tonga, our brothers they treat us as highly, respected woman, why would we tolerate somebody like you ... to tell us, we are only good enough to make your cup of tea. Let me tell you if Helen Clark is good enough to be a Prime Minister of New Zealand I'm telling you a Tongan woman will add value to your discussion in that committee.

Mapa's voicing of her concern reflected on two things that contributed to her framing of leaders; how her father raised her and her siblings in Tonga, and her belief in egalitarian due to her Christian belief that all are equal in the eyes of God. From Mapa's response to the chairman, it reflects her confidence in Tongan women adding value to the success of the committee and the organisation. For Mapa to challenge the chairman enhanced her questioning of his ability to lead and his power to accept women into the Executive Committee. Mapa shared that she believes that women and men are equal and used Helen Clark as an example that women can amount to leadership position.

Hehea's reflection coincides with Mapa's framing. Hehea reflected on her observations of her father's way of raising her and how that framed her understanding of her position as a Tongan woman and built her confidence to be resilient and strategic in a male dominated environment.

Hehea My father of course instilled in me the positive self esteem and the confidence to be a woman.

Being a Pacific woman where I'm working predominantly with men particularly around the governance table.... I'm engaged with Tongan Senior Leaders from Tonga. I believe from a Tongan cultural perspective, a Tongan woman is revered in her family. Which is fine. But once you go on to another sphered influence like the market place and business and all of a sudden you are sitting at the table with you know (Government Ministers) and you know they are males and ... they are Tongan males, raised Tongan. For

them to probably be engaged with a Tongan woman who can't speak Tongan, who's NZ born Tongan therefore not really Tongan, I saw that had to be strategic and realize that I can actually play the card of a palangi but I can also play the card of a Tonga so I got both feet in both worlds.

It is interesting to view Hehea's strategic in seeing herself as a New Zealand born Tongan woman and embracing both worlds in how she framed herself as a leader in her given context. Hehea embraced the Tongan cultural perspectives on Tongan women and she framed how the top leadership men on the table perceive of her. However, she took this as an advantage to reframe herself as not just a Tongan woman but added that she's also a New Zealand born and do not speak Tonga. This reframing mounted to empower Hehea when meeting with Tongan male leaders. She stands from both worlds (Tongan and New Zealander) and can play both cards to benefit the organization.

The participants' reflections bring to light the strands of *tauhi va*, *fakatokilalo* and *'ilo'i kita* and *mo'ui lotu*. This indicates how the participants' reflections on their understanding of leadership echo the strands that have been woven into their lives. Even though they are in New Zealand but their understanding of leadership resonate their *famili/kainga's* respect towards their male counterparts, and *fakatokilalo* in which lead them to know their place and responsibilities to others. Their *mo'ui lotu* took their understanding of leadership and the issue of equality to a higher level, which shapes how they address the gender equality issue in their given contexts, which was shown in Mapa's sharing.

4.3.3 Fakahaa'i e loto'i Tonga 'i he ngaue – The Tongan heart is revealed in Action/Work

Loto'i Tonga (heart of a Tongan) frames the heart of Tongan people as compared to a mountain. The Tongan phrase '*Tonga mo'unga ki he loto*' translates that "the mountain of Tonga is the heart" (Tu'itahi, 2012, p. 5). This metaphor implies that "when the Tongan's heart is motivated and moved, it will demonstrate qualities such as *mafana*/warmth, and that

person is self-driven to achieve goals at high standards (Tu'itahi, 2012, p. 5). Even though there may be limitations but it is perceived that, they would find ways to get the work done especially if it is for a good cause. If the work would mean others would benefit from it then it is a motivation for them to carry out the work no matter what. The *loto 'i Tonga* reflects the intertwining of *tauhi va*, *faka'apa'apa*, *ngaue mateaki* and *fakatokilalo*. These are the main values of the Tongan people.

The participants experienced and observed the *mateaki* of their parents and *kainga* around them which reflects the '*Tonga mo'unga ki he loto*' metaphor. This metaphor has become a common frame that Tongan people experienced and believe in. They learned from their families having to survive during hardship. They shared how this experience of hardship and observing their parents and *kainga* worked hard to be resilient have framed how they do work in their given contexts. Their life experiences have made them strong to do their best to produce the best.

Mohokoi reflected on how her growing up in a big household had taught her not to waste things and that has influenced how she acts and relate to her family at their home.

Mohokoi ... the hardworking families that I grew up with really influenced me and how I make decisions.

Mohokoi's experience of growing up in a hardworking household instilled in her a frame of sharing and not wasting resources. She also shared how she only lasted 6 months at the private practice in New Zealand because it was difficult for her to talk to people about fees of their services that they had to pay in order to receive the services.

Mohokoi It was a real struggle for me to tell and discuss with the patient the cost of what I'm going to charge if this is the treatment that I'm going to charge them and I only lasted for 6 months in the private practice (laughter). I didn't like it. It was a real struggle and many times, I feel that I know that I could provide this (treatment) but they cannot afford it.

Mohokoi's compassion towards people shown in her reflection above led her to leave her job as she found it difficult to deal with the idea that some people cannot afford the service that they provide. This experience could lead to Mohokoi revisiting her upbringing and the struggles that her family went through. Mohokoi also shared how at times she would liaise with her manager to provide service for some of the patients that they could not afford the treatment. Though this is not an easy task to do but Mohokoi's *loto 'I Tonga* is replicated as she stood to fight for those that could not afford the service, which reflects how her framing of making a difference in the lives of others is shaped by her experiences.

Loumaile shared how in the organisation that she works with, she pushes the young ones (workers) to learn new skills and challenge them to be successful. Loumaile sees them as siblings and family even though they are not all Tongans. *Loto 'i Tonga* as defined earlier in this section indicate how a heart is warmed enough to lead an individual to be self-driven to carry out a work. Her treating the young ones in her team as siblings and family reflect on her growing up and being a leader by default in her family after her older sister left to study overseas.

Puatonga shared a similar reflection to that of Loumaile on how at times when the Pacific students in the organisation are being naughty; she feels that she is being naughty too for she feels connected to them. However, even if her workplace calls her outside of her work hours to inform her of any issues relating the Pacific students in the Institution she works for, she will drop everything that she is doing to go in and see what she can do to support them. This indicates Puatonga's care towards others that inspired her to offer support even outside of her work hours. She even shared that while working in a department with limited funds to carry out one of their projects, she was willing to work on the project while she was visiting the

project area for personal reasons. What was important for her was ensuring the work is done to the best even and if it means having to sacrifice her personal and family time to do it.

Similarly, Falahola revealed one of her strengths as a leader in the organisation.

Falahola That's the strengths that I bring is that I genuinely care and I genuinely want to make a difference to their lives and I think that comes out of the fact that I've been raised as a Tongan girl and that is I think is my biggest strength is that I care.

Falahola's strength reflects her upbringing. She was raised through experiencing struggles in life and *tauhi va* with her *kainga* which influenced her life to have compassion and caring for others. Falahola shared that even though she is the leader in the organisation, she does take time during the day to sit in the Staff room and talk to staff when they come for their break. To her this is building her relationship with her staff. Falahola's understanding that a leader should be caring for their followers framed her action of finding time to sit with staff members and share lunchtime. When her staff request for leave due to genuine family related reasons she grants their leave for she understands their situation.

Sialetafa reflected on how she approached her boss at work to increase the mileage rate. My boss said to me, 'Go and change the law and come back and talk to me'. This statement was a motivation to Sialetafa not to back off but literally to find a way to solve this issue. Sialetafa went away and connected with other organisations and had the law changed then she went back to her boss and reported that she had achieved what he told her to do. Therefore, the organisation then increased the mileage rate for all staff including her team.

Loumaile shared how her organization was given a task to translate a document. This was not an easy task, from experience, another group did a similar task, and it took them a long time to complete it. However, she shared that, "if I'm given a task, I'll do a good job".

Loumaile I brought in a few skilled people ... though I didn't get anything from it but I wanted to do a good job so I committed to it and I was willing to do it.

Loumalie's willingness and commitment to this framed difficult task indicated her *loto'i Tonga*.

Commonly, the above participants showed their *loto'i Tonga* by caring enough to work towards making a difference in the lives of others and ensuring the tasks assigned to them are done to high standards. The participants' reflections and sharings enhanced their *loto'i Tonga* and the value of their cultural traditions in their practice reflects the weaving of the strands of *fakatokilalo*, *ngaue mateaki* and *tauhi va*. These strands framed how the participants viewed problems and challenges in their workplaces. Instead of seeing these as problems their *loto'i Tonga* they saw these as opportunities to make a difference in others and the organisation.

4.3.4 Ngaue fakataha – Work in Collaboration

Getting a team to work in collaboration with one another towards achieving a goal is vital yet difficult at times. The *talanoa* data revealed how all of the participants' value *ngaue fakataha* (working together, collaboration) in any tasks given to them. Their framing of *ngaue fakataha* in their given contexts reflect their kainga's *ngaue mateaki* and *tauhi va* with their fellow members. *Ngaue fakataha* involves influencing others to agree and willing to contribute towards the success of a given task or goal. The findings disclose that most of the participants frame their team members as members of a family.

Puatonga reflected on how growing up in a family-focused surrounding framed her understanding of working in any organisation. Langakali also shared how she cared for her team as if they are family. If she knew that one of her team members had any issues that are bothering their productivity in the office, she would send them home to work out the issues

before returning to work. Falahola also shared how she takes her lunch break at different times during the day to ensure she meets all her staff members and take time to talk with them and get to know more about them.

Falahola I had a [staff member] here who moved to another [workplace] to be the head of department for the [workplace] and after his first day there he rang and he said that he wanted to come back (laughing). And I said to him, “no he couldn’t do that”. And then after a week there he rang back and he said he wanted to come back and I said not you couldn’t. And he said that it’s a totally different environment and one of the things that he said to me was “the principal hasn’t spoken to me at all this week.” And he said that he found that difficult because he thought that it was normal to talk with your [manager] everyday and sit and eat your lunch with them.

The interpretation by the staff member about Falahola’s leadership revealed how she values her team and takes time to know them and develop her *va* with them. Even though it can be insignificant to count but the little actions that Falahola took enhance her influence on her team.

Mapa talked about how in their family and their church community, they pray for God’s direction and guidance with their annual planning and programs. However, she admitted that when they are in Community organisations, it is a different ball game.

Mapa In our Community it’s the same thing. We have been established since 2012 and this is going 4 years and you know in that level it’s a different ball game because everyone is coming from different, its not like the church, it’s not like your home that you have much of control but in there, you give and take but also like I’m their Senior Advisor in their Executive and so it’s more knowing, understanding and looking at what we can agree on and what we agree to disagree and I said to them, that’s very much healthy. So to me leadership is all about not only serving but making sure that we know our direction, we know our purpose and where to do from A to B in that level.

Mapa’s reflection portrayed how it is easy to deal with organisations such as the family and church in which you may have more control but that control may not be much applied in bigger organisations that are comprised of people from different backgrounds and beliefs.

Sialetafa talked of a project that she led in her workplace that the company had no budget for. However, she saw the importance of the budget; therefore, she tried to get the buy in of others to work together with her on the project in which the company will very much benefit from.

Sialetafa: So to have that finished you have to need a lot of influence because I had no budget. to finish it (the project) but you know you have to influence people..... In order for me to get them to do it and get my staff to stay after work and do it (because they do not pay for overtime), but I get them to stay after work; we do competitions. I get them pizza you know it is small things, we get baking and everybody else were buddying together I need to do the influencing of these people without a lot of money.

Sialetafa saw the value in teamwork and influencing others to get the buy in to work even though there is no budget. She used small things that were influential to the staff that agreed to work with her on the project. She continued to say how the project was a success, which put the company among the first in the country to have achieved such program.

The participants framed their teams as a family and nurtured their relationship to ensure the teams are influenced and motivated to work in collaboration with one another to ensure the tasks are completed successfully. These reflections on how they framed *ngaue fakataha* as a was to practice leadership in their given contexts reveal the interlacing of the strands of *tauhi va, faka'apa'apa and mo'ui lotu*.

4.3.5 Faka'apa'apa - nonconfrontational?

A core value in Tonga and in the lives of Tongan people is *faka'apa'apa*. Many of the participants shared how their frame of *faka'apa'apa* towards their managers influence them to work and complete a given task or goal without questioning or confronting their superiors within their organisations. Some may see this as a weakness or a sign of fear, however, the participants expressed how their understanding of the frame of *faka'apa'apa* shaped how they relate to their superiors in their given contexts.

Mohokoi shared her frame on being respectful in her workplace towards two of her managers.

Mohokoi When I say more respectful, I think being a little more quiet at times that I should have spoken up (laughter) it is the influence of being Tongan. I have seen some people who are straight and sharp at the same time.

Being respectful according to Mohokoi is keeping quiet even when she should question her superiors. Mohokoi spoke of a situation at work in which her manager made a decision without consulting with her and their team leader. She then quietly consulted with her team leader and during a meeting with her manager, her team leader questioned their manager and somehow their manager realised that what he did was wrong. According to Mohokoi's reflections;

Mohokoi ... because I am Tongan I would not do that (what the team leader did). I would not just jump up and say that (what her team leader did), I would probably be a little bit quiet and later say to my manager "oh are we able to change that or things like that"

Mohokoi's actions above reflected her experience that "when my parents speak I'm not supposed to talk". Not questioning or speaking when her parents speak reflect Mohokoi's frame of *faka'apa'apa* towards others. Huni's understanding of her growing up in Tonga is that she was taught the concept of respect which agrees with Mohokoi's belief.

Huni *Taungutu tapuha ia 'i he 'etau anga fakatonga koe'uhi he 'oku direct kitautolu 'i Tonga. Pea ko 'etau me'a pe 'oku fai ko e yes mo e fai e me'a ko ia, teuteu ki he lotu mo e fai e pu'i mo e ngaahi me'a ko ia koe'uhi ko e anga fakatonga ia.*

English Answering back (to someone older than oneself) is not acceptable in our Tongan culture because we were directed in Tonga. All we do is answer yes and do what we are being told to do because that was the Tongan culture.

Huni brought out an important notion of respect, which is obedience, and following what is being told. Langakali believed that culture teaches her about respect;

Langakali I think our culture somewhat always teaches us respect, you know you always have to know where your boundary is, and we do not always push boundaries.

An important idea that Langakali pointed out in her reflection above is that respect involves knowing boundaries, and how she does not always push the boundaries. She also reflected on her workplace:

Langakali I think as Tongans we always feel we represent our families, our country, our churches, so you don't want to be the one to be causing confrontation and stuff like that.

Langakali's reflection above shows another angle as to what fuels the frame of *faka'apa'apa*, which is the concept of representing. The strands in Theme 1 weaves the identities of the participants which ties together to their strong family ties and representation. With this strong connection to their families, communities and country, Langakali feels that she stands to represent her family, church and country which tempt her to avoid causing confrontations at work. Hehea agrees with Langakali that when she sits at the table with Male Business people she reflects that;

Hehea When I'm at the table, I realize that I'm not being there for myself, No. I'm there representing you know the Tongan community, I'm there representing Pasifika I'm more representing my family.

Motelolo shared how she is mindful when in a discussion how she needs to be respectful.

Motelolo When I enter a discussion or things like that or to make my point across I still have to bear in mind I have to be still respectful. I've always being a strong person when it comes to that (discussion) but in a respectful way.

What Motelolo is saying in her reflection above is that although she is strong as a person to make discussion and to stand for what she believes in but she does it in a respectful way.

What is evident from Motelolo is that, confrontation is doable for her but respect is still present. Hea shared that she does not confront and challenge others for the sake of challenging them but in a staff discussion, if someone says something that its against her cultural belief, and then she will speak out.

Langakali shared an important position in terms of relating to others in her workplace.

The two important ideas that Langakali shared in the statement below are; not wanting to cause confrontation and the idea of males leading.

Langakali I think as Tongans we always feel we represent our families, our country, our churches, so you don't want to be the one to be causing confrontation and stuff like that so I think what always being installed in me is as a woman too it's quite hard because sometimes you have males that report to you and in our culture its really weird, like it's almost as if we are raised to think males will always lead.

Humility as a Tongan value was reflected in the participants' reflections of their frame of *faka'apa'apa*. To be humble and show humility reflects a true Tongan woman. Being humble is to know your place within the *nofo 'a kainga* or any organisation that you belong to.

Obeying the expectations of your place in the kainga circle enhance your frame of *faka'apa'apa*.

What is evident from the participants' reflection is that to be humble reflects respect and this is a core part of being Tongan. The findings also reflect that some of the participants expressed their humility and respect to others and especially their superiors through non-

confrontational. Some believe that keeping quiet when you should be speaking up is a sign of respect as reflected by Mohokoi. Several participants voiced that at times when challenged by others or by the opposite sex, they do stand and to voice their disagreement.

Some of the participants reflected on their understanding of respect, how their parents tried to teach and mould them to be humble. To their understanding, humility is being quiet when an older person speaks and obeying what they say. This is based on the belief that due to the experiences of the older person, he or she knows better.

4.3.6 Service

The *talanoa* findings reveal how the participants frame their leadership practice as serving others. Hehea believes that “a leader is a person that really works hard and a person that is willing to serve”. Hehea’s framing of a leader imply the concept of *tauhi va* in the Tongan context. It is perceived that Tongan people show their respect through serving one another and helping one another through sharing of what little that they have. If one says that they care for others but do not show it in action, it is framed in the Tongan context as ‘*’ofa lau pe*’ translating as love that is only talked about. What is more preferred is service.

Hingano as a pastor’s wife happily shared how she worked to serve the congregation that she is serving as a Pastor’s wife. She believes that through service, relationships are drawn closer between herself and the congregation. She recalled that during their church camps, she does the cooking for the camp by herself, as she wanted the members to attend the programs. In the Tongan culture, people in leadership positions are expected to be served. The response from the congregation is that this is the first time they see a pastor’s wife in the kitchen making food for the congregation. Hingano responded by saying, “I am here to be your servant. I am here to serve you, I am not here to sit at the table and wait for everyone to serve me, No. It is not my style. My style, I’m here to serve you guys and I believe in it”.

Pipitongi believed that “a leader is someone who serve, someone whose mouth goes together with his or her fingers (what they say is what they do)”. Pipitongi reflected on how she serves her clients in her organization. To Mapa, leadership is about serving. Nukonuka reflects on when she returned to Tonga for her mother’s funeral. Although she had spent some times here in New Zealand but she does not forget her responsibilities and the importance of serving her *kainga* who are there for the funeral.

Nukonuka *A’u pe ki he ‘uluaki pongipongi ia koau pe na’au ‘a ‘o ‘ai e, foki mai e kaume’a mei mala’e kuo ‘osi ngaahi ‘eau ‘enau ipu ti pea nau sai’ia foki nautolu ai he ‘oku ou ‘alu atu au mo e me’a ‘o tofi manifi pe ‘e ma ‘o ‘ai e pata pea ‘ai mo e siamu, pea ‘ai’aki e condensed milk, they love it. Peau ‘alu atu au mo e ‘u me’a ‘o tufa kianautolu ko ‘eku kato nau ‘alu atu mo e ‘u me’a kehekehe ‘o a’u ki he kaloni, konga tupenu, sikaleti, all of those thing*

English On the first morning [after the burial], I woke up and prepared breakfast, when the people returned from the cemetery [after cleaning – a tradition in Tonga] I have prepared their cuppa tea and they really love them for I thinly sliced the bread and coat them with butter and jam, and used condensed milk. They loved it. I also took things and distribute to others. My luggage was filled with different things such as perfumes, pieces of materials, cigarettes and all of those things.

Two important concepts that emerged from Nukonuka’s reflections are; service and sharing. She showed her appreciation of her *kainga* attending to her mother’s funeral and attending the *tatafi* on the first morning after the burial. Although she has a profession in New Zealand, but when she returned to Tonga, she knew her responsibility and the importance of serving her *kainga*. When she returned to Tonga, she took with her stuff to share with her *kainga*. She recalled growing up and being nurtured through her observation of her parents’ sharing with their *kainga* so we can say that Nukonuka carries with her the idea of sharing with her *kainga*.

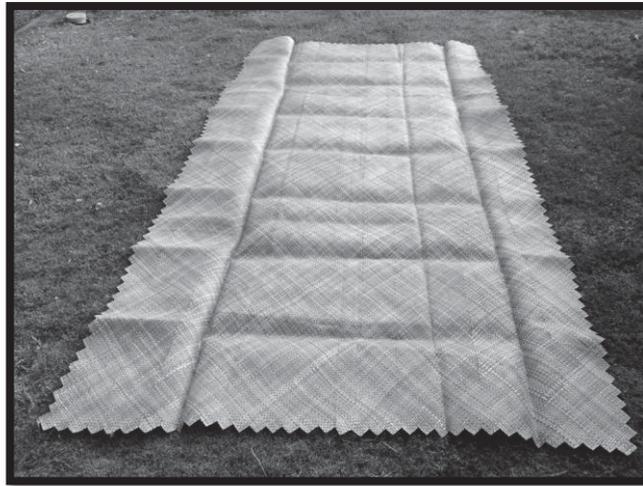
4.4 Summary

The findings informed us of some of the strands that interlaced to weave the leadership sense making of the participants. These strands are *tauhi va*, *mateaki*, *fakatokilalo*, *'ilo'I kita*, *mo'ui lotu* and *ako – mo'ui fakapotopoto*. The weaving of these strands influenced how the participants' framed their understanding and sensemaking of leadership, which reflected in their practice of leadership. It is noted from the participants' reflections how the strands of *tauhi va*, *mateaki*, *'ilo'i kita* and *fakatokilalo* frequently emerged when they reflect on their leadership practice. The findings reflect how the participants' experiences and their observations from people that surrounded them during their upbringing informed how they frame and make sense of leadership within their kainga or family circles. This was enhanced with the interlacing of the obvious strands discussed in theme 1. The second theme reports how the participants use the perspective of frame to share their leadership practice in their given contexts.

In the next chapter, I will discuss further the common themes that emerged from the findings discussion, incorporating these themes with the metaphorical framework of *lalanga fala* (mat weaving) and the uses of *fala* in the Tongan context.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction



A fala paongo (a Tongan mat made of paongo pandanus leaves)

In this chapter, I will discuss the findings from the data collected during this research in relation to the literature reviewed. The discussion will be framed around the research questions;

Research Questions
Main Research To explore the leadership practice of Tongan women in New Zealand.
Supplementary Research Questions <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Explore how Tongan women in New Zealand use the perspectives of framing and sensemaking to enhance their leadership practice.2. What informs the leadership framing and sensemaking of Tongan women in New Zealand?

During the data analysis, I came to view how the participants consciously and unconsciously use the art of framing in their journey to understand and make sense of leadership. The identified framing informs the participants' practice of leadership in their

own contexts. What was evident from the data analysis was that the participants reflected on frames that their *famili/kainga* used to understand leadership in their given contexts in which they observed during their upbringing. However, over time, through the participants' reflections and sharing, I can see how they have reframed these frames to better enhance their leadership sensemaking and practices in the given contexts.

Fala is one of the *koloa* (wealth) in the Tongan context. *Koloa* are products made by women such as mats of various kinds. These *koloa* as described by Kaeppler (1999) are prestigious like women. Kaeppler (1999) differentiates the products produced by men and women by saying that “the work of men regenerates people physically, while the *koloa* of women regenerates people culturally” (p. 170). Framing the process of *lalanga fala* as a guide to understanding how Tongan women make sense and practice leadership in their own contexts have guided me to embrace the valued contribution of Tongan women to leadership in New Zealand contexts.

In this chapter I will use the metaphorical framework of *lalanga fala* as a frame to explore and present the leadership practice of Tongan women in New Zealand. The two main themes that I will discuss are; first, the *tou-lalanga* – a discursive approach to leadership meaning making and second is the utilitarian aspect of a *fala* (as the finished product of *lalanga fala*) in the Tongan context. I will discuss *tou-lalanga* first to give a picture of how a group of women come together to *lalanga fala* (weave mats) in a collaborative way. In this discussion I aim to present how through *tou-lalanga*, weavers contribute to the weaving of a complete mat which generate *koloa* for all members.

Lalanga Fala – a metaphocal framework

In the process of *lalanga fala*, the weaver prepares their weft or strands before weaving them together. This emerged theme connects with the *lalanga mo'ui 'a fafine Tonga* theme

that was discussed in the discussion chapter. The strands that were identified earlier when woven together informs how the participants make sense of leadership in their Tongan contexts. Through the process of *tou-lalanga*, the strands are woven together in the lives of Tongan women, which reflect how leadership is achieved through the contribution of all members involved and not based on the effort of one (leader).

The second theme focuses on the use of *fala* by Tongan women, which are, to spread on the floor for people to sit on and *potalanoa* (making conversations) and to use as (*koloa*) wealth to give away as a gift. This theme aims to picture how Tongan women in their given contexts use their pre-concieved frames of leadership as foundations to their practice of leadership. During the *potalanoa* on the *fala*, the pre-concieved frames can be reframed. The second use of the *fala* for *fua fatongia*, which I will discuss last to reveal how the participants' leadership practice, contributes to the success of the organisation in which I see as a gift to the New Zealand organisations. Even though the participants may regard it as fulfilling their obligations, however at the same time I argue that it is a gift to the organisations.

In the Tongan culture, women take pride in their weaving. *Lalanga* (weaveing) in the Tongan tradition is work done by commoners. Even though chiefly women know of the skills of *lalanga* but the actual doing of the *lalanga* is a task for commoners. I claim that using of the *lalanga* metaphorical framework as a task for commoners may relate to women who may see themselves as not in leadership roles in their given contexts. However, with this study it would encourage them that they can contribute to leadership in their given contexts through socially constructing of meaning.

In *lalanga fala* (mat weaving), women use specific patterns in which such patterns do have stories and meanings behind them. *Fale lalava* is a house where patterns *lalava*

(lashed/lashing) using *kafa* (sennit) to bind and join the poles and posts of the *fale*. Before Tongan women begin the process of weaving a new *fala*, they would go to the *fale lalava* to learn and choose an appropriate pattern(s) to use. A common phrase saying, '*fatufatu fala fai 'I fale lalava*' translates as 'the starting of a new mat is done in the house where the *kafa* are lashed to join the poles and posts of the house'. Metaphorically, the phrase portrays how children growing up in a Tongan '*api* (home) are raised with purpose and taught of the values already laid by their ancestors. In the Tongan culture relative to weaving, child rearing are primarily women's responsibility.

Figure 5.1 : Similar patterns used in the fale lalava are used in fala weaving



Figure 5.1a : Fale lalava
Source: www.lalava.net



Figure 5.1b: Fala design - Pule Taimani (Diamond)

Source:
http://tongan_tattoo.tripod.com/TonganTattoo/

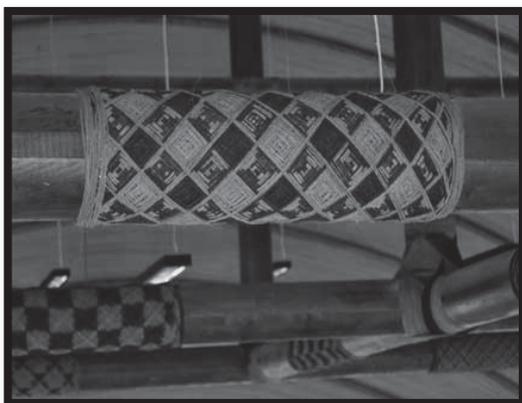


Figure 5.1c: Upclose shot of lalava patterns
Source: www.lalava.net

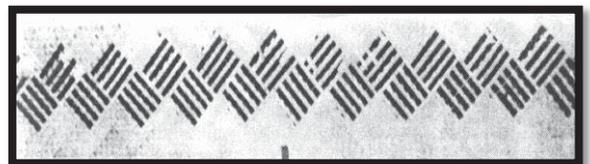


Figure 5.1d: Efu design or dust

Source:
http://tongan_tattoo.tripod.com/TonganTattoo/

There are different types of *fala* that Tongan women weave. The *fala* is unique because it is a double woven mat, which means the strands are double layered when they are woven together. This makes the *fala* stronger and they last long. The finer the strips of strands woven, that *fala* is considered the best (James, 1988).

Women weavers use different patterns to decorate their *fala* as shown in Figure 5.1 above. These patterns as shown in Figure 5.1 above are from a *Tongan fale lalava*. The *fala fihu* and *fala paongo* are high in rank of the *fala* types. They are the *fala* that women gift to chiefs and important people such as the family *fahu*. There are also *fala kukuvalu* and *fala tofua*. The differences in the *fala* vary based on the type of pandanus leaves that they are made from. The *fala fihu* is made from kie (one type of pandanus tree) leaves, which is the most difficult *fala* to make as the *lou'akau* (dried pandanus leaves) that are used to weave these kinds of *fala* takes longer to prepare. The *fala paongo* is made from *paongo* leaves (a type of pandanus) however; the drying of the pandanus leaves takes longer than the others.

Figure 5.2a: Pandanus Trees



Figure 5.2b: Dried Pandanus Leaves



Source: Living Oceans Foundation: <https://www.livingoceansfoundation.org/ancient-art-of-tonga/>

Figure 5.2a shows the pandanus trees in which leaves are cut and processed for weaving *fala*. Figure 5.2b demonstrates the dried pandanus leaves that women use to weave the *fala*. There are requirements to weaving of the *fala*, “the surfaces need to be smooth and even, with flat straight edges, square corners, and weft elements that run straight, parallel and at roughly 45 degrees angle to the edges of the piece” (Leslie, 2007, p. 117). The wefts or strands called *fe ‘unu* in Tongan requires women to slice longitudinal strips from a section of a dried, processed pandanus leaf. Tongan women do take note if a *fala* is *au lalahi* (wider strands) or *au iiki* (thinner strands).

5.2 Findings overview

The findings brought together the concepts of *lalanga fala* as an approach to understand how Tongan women in New Zealand frame their understanding of leadership and its influence on how they do leadership. The concept of *lalanga fala* binds together the strands and weaves them into a finished *fala*. It is evident from the participants’ reflections how the emergent strands of *tauhi vaha ‘a* (maintaining relationships), *mateaki* (hard working / loyalty), *fakatokilalo* (humility), *‘ilo ‘i kita* (know your place), *mo ‘ui lotu* (Christian belief) and *ako – mo ‘ui fakapotopoto* (being educated – being wise) have interlaced to frame their understanding of leadership which is reflected on their leadership practice. The strands also do not operate in isolation but are inter-related.

The findings revealed how the participants observed and learnt the concept of leadership within their *nofo ‘a famili* and *nofo ‘a kainga*. The participants’ familial observations and experiences constructed frames that informed their understanding of leadership. Their parents’ *tauhi va* with their *kainga* and others revealed their management of relationships within the *kainga* and family circles. The *tauhi va* concept may not be meaningful if it lacks the underlying concepts of *‘ofa* (compassion), *faka ‘apa ‘apa* (respect) and *mamahi ‘ime ‘a*

(loyalty) of the *va*. ‘*Ofa* (compassion) is the kind of love that one is willing to give up one’s resources to provide service to another. *Faka’apa’apa* embodies one’s ‘*ofa* towards another which, enhances how one know their place in the context of the *nofo* ‘a *famili/kainga*. Without ‘*ofa* (compassion) within a member and *faka’apa’apa* towards other members of the *kainga*, then members would not value the *va*.

Mateaki is meaningful when the *va* is well nurtured therefore, the *kainga* and *famili* members find it meaningful to work towards achieving a task or a goal. The strand of *mateaki*, through *talatalaiafale* and *ngaue*, reflects the parents and *kainga*’s compassion towards one another and how much they value the *famili/kainga*’s goals and tasks to be achieved. The *talatalaiafale* of children within the home features how members of the *famili/kainga* through discourse help to create frames that influence how they do things. It is through *mateaki* interlacing with *tauhi va* that bring the *famili/kainga* to work in collaboration with one another. The *famili/kainga* members’ *fakatokilalo* led them to not hold on to their status in the *famili/kainga*, their positions in the community and the workplace or their achievements but humble themselves to a stage where they *mateaki* and *tauhi va* with others.

‘*Ilo’i kita* as a strand interlace with *tauhi va*, *mateaki* and *fakatokilalo* enhances why leadership actors (members of the *famili/kainga*) value the targeted tasks and goals of the *famili/kainga*. When leadership actors within the *nofo* ‘a *famili/kainga* know and value their place in the *famili/kainga* circle and understand that the responsibilities and expectations that come with it they then are influenced to contribute. If one does not know their place in the organisation and their responsibilities, then it would be difficult for members to work in collaboration.

Adding the strand of *Mo'ui lotu* to the former strands elevates the leadership sense making to another level of understanding. *Mo'ui lotu* brings with it the *faka'apa'apa* to a higher being. The participants perceived God as the centre and core in the lives of the participants. They were brought up in homes where their lives evolved around the teachings of the bible and God. Although the participants have moved from Tonga to New Zealand, their faith in God deepens their leadership sense making. *Mo'ui lotu* strengthens the participants' credence in egalitarianism and everyone is the same in terms of status. The only being that is higher than us all is God. With this belief, it strengthens the previous strands as they are practiced out of a deep respect for God.

Ako (being educated) and mo'ui fakapotopoto (wisely using of resources/knowledge) enlightens and opens doors of opportunities to be exposed to how leadership is practiced in organisations outside of the *nofo 'a famili/kainga*. It opens doors to migration, to the workforce as well as one goal of the *famili/kainga* achieved. *Ako* in association with *mo'ui fakapotopoto* equips Tongan women to not only acquire knowledge but also know how to use that knowledge wisely. *Ako* and *mo'ui fakapotopoto* also informs the participants of other western(ized) frames of leadership which may somehow influence their view of the frames that they had based on their familial observations and experiences.

The strands woven together provide insights into leadership sense making and the social construction of leadership within the *nofo 'a famili/kainga*. The findings reveal how leadership is better understood through a lived experience during the participants' upbringing and life journey. The strands identified in the findings were apparent when the participants shared how they practiced leadership within their families, communities and their workplaces.

With the woven understanding of leadership (*fala*), the findings disclose how the *fala* is laid out as a foundation to discursively construct leadership through discourse and action. Their understanding of leadership through pre-concieved frames from their familial observations and experiences are laid as the base of their leadership practice within their given contexts. The frames of leadership are not something that one would lock up and through away the keys, however they can be passed on through other people observing them through how one practice leadership. When leadership practices produces success results, organizations benefit from them, hence why I claim it to be a gift.

5.3 Tou-lalanga – A discursive Approach to leadership sense making

Tou-lalanga is a collective approach to weaving *fala*. *Tou* means together, collective or co-operating while *lalanga* means to weave. *Tou-lalanga* is when a group of women come together to weave *fala*. How it works is that “the women sit together on the same piece, each weaving a portion or *hala*, which is connected to those of the women beside them as they progress” (Leslie, 2007, p. 119). During the course of a weaving cycle, each women are given a day in which they bring an item for the group to weave. At the end of a cycle, the women have each completed or close to completion their own *fala*, which contributes to their stack of *koloa* (wealth).

During the *tou-lalanga*, members *talanoa* and share stories. Through sharing their stories, they appreciate one another and relationships are nurtured. During this time, they keep one another encouraged to keep on weaving. They sing songs and tell folk stories, which keep the *mafana* (warmth) of the task. Knowledge are shared which help to construct a bigger picture of their goals and ideas.



Tou-lalanga group

Source: <http://coconutcodes.tumblr.com/>

In this approach, the *fala* is woven through the contribution of the group and not individual effort. Through the *tou-lalanga*, relationships are built and strengthened as well as goals of making *fala* that contribute to a woman's *koloa* (wealth) is achieved. Tongan women are the keepers of Tongan *koloa* while men work the land and ensure of the security of the *kainga*. Therefore, women through *tou-lalanga* generate *koloa* for their *kainga's fatongia* and most importantly to *faliki* their homes with when there is a *kainga* meeting.

In the process of *tou-lalanga*, even though there is a leader for the group however, the completion and the success of the work is through a collective approach. Leadership seems to be achieved through the contribution and relationship building of each member towards one another. When members' relationships are nurtured and strengthened, they are willing to contribute and through the *tou-lalanga* more *fala* are woven, which contributes to the wealth of the *famili/kainga*.

The concept of *tou-lalanga* frames how the *famili/kainga* contributes to constructing frames that enhanced their leadership practice. This section will discuss how these pre-frames influenced the participants understanding and sensemaking of leadership.

5.3.1 Leadership - making a difference

It is evident from the findings that the participants observed the leadership frame of making a difference through their familial discourses and actions. When the participants spoke of the *talatalaifale* of their *famili/kainga*, they stressed how these words of wisdom motivated them to be successful. As Robinson (2001) defined leadership, he claims that, “leadership is exercised when ideas expressed in talk or actions are recognised by others as capable of progressing tasks or problems which are important to them” (p. 93). This merges with the participants’ valuing the discourse and work done by their *famili/kainga*. Even though some of the works that they observed from their *famili/kainga* were to serve and benefit others, but these observations framed their understanding of the importance of making a difference in the lives of others. Commonly the participants shared their observations of their parents providing not only for them but also for their relatives.

Through the process of *tou-lalanga*, each member contributes to making a difference in the lives of others by helping to weave each other’s *fala* to generate *koloa* (wealth). The findings show how the frames of *tauhi-va* and ‘*ilo’i kita* empowers the participants to value their relationships with others within their given contexts. Making a difference in the lives of others involve nurturing the relationships with team members. Using of small but genuine acts of ‘*ofa* and informal conversations with their team members build their trusts for one another that are positively reflected in team working together to achieve given team and/or organisational tasks and goals. *Tauhi va* to fellow members is enhanced more when actors know, appreciate and fulfil their responsibilities towards one another.

5.3.2 Leadership – Serving

One of the frames that the participants shared in common that they observed during their upbringing and life journeys is service. All participants reflected on how their *famili/kainga* took pride in serving others (the organisations that they work for, their *famili/kainga*) and

aiming for a greater good. The service was out of ‘*ofa* (love, compassion) through *mateaki* (hardworking and determination) in action and *talatalaifale*. The findings showed how the participants’ *famili/kainga* welcomed other members of their *kainga* to live with them in their homes to be close to school and to share the burden of paying for education and childcare. They also experienced the hardship of growing up in big households and how they parents worked to support and provide for them.

Serving as claimed by Fine and Buzzanell’s (2000) depicts a hierarchical relationship between a master and a servant. In the Tongan context, serving is a task for commoners and people with lower rank, serving people of higher status or rank such chiefs and the Royals for they are the high leaders in Tonga. The concept of *tou-lalanga* enhances that members serve one another of similar ranks through the frames of *fetokoni’aki* (helping one another) and *ngaue fakataha* (working together). In the *famili/kainga* contexts, the brother and his children serve his sister(s) as the *fahu* of his children. At the same time, the sister has responsibilities towards her brothers and their children. Therefore, I can conclude that serving one another, is a communal act and not as a one-way action.

Greenleaf (1970) claims that serving others involves leaders focusing least on their own personal needs but more on fulfilling the followers needs. The findings revealed how the participants observed the fathers (as ‘*ulumotu’a*) and mothers (as *fahu*) served their family despite their rank and positions in the *kainga*. Eventhough they did not have much themselves but they wanted to make a difference through serving their *kainga*. The idea of *fetokoni’aki* (helping one another) is evident here. Nurturing the *va* between and among *kainga* members, involves serving from both members and not just one serving the other.

It is evident from the findings that the participants with strong Christian belief acted on their belief that leaders are servants. They have the best interest of their colleagues and team

members at heart. They believe that as leaders they need to model serving others. By serving others, it shows how their colleagues, leaders and organisations appreciate their ideas and work. Through this appreciation, leadership actors work in collaboration to serve the organization to achieve the task, target or organisation goal. In return, organizations do serve their leadership actors in various ways such as through promotions.

5.3.3 Leadership – Humility

Humility as believed by the participants is core to leadership. The findings conveyed how the frame of humility was commonly identified by most of the participants during their upbringing. The frame of humility links to service. Owens and Hekman (2012) believe that through leadership actors' humility in serving the needs of others, it encourages a strong relationship with one another, which developed their willingness to engage in a given task. It would be difficult to meaningfully and wholeheartedly serve others if one is not humble. The participants understood leadership and leaders to be humble in their ways and how they present themselves to others. They believed that if a leader is not humble then it would be difficult for that leader to influence others. Sialetafa had no budget allocated for her project but she humbly seek the buy in of her team, bought them food and created fun activities to influence and motivate them to participant in the project. She did not dictate them but used through discourse and communication, her team agreed to join in the project.

There was a common agreement by the participants that bragging about their achievements is not something that they willingly do. They believe that if one brags about their achievements then they are not showing humility. When one brags about their achievements, they are putting themselves and their needs above others. It is obvious that this bragging leads others to feel inferior and reluctant to contribute to the success of a given task.

Humility as the participants observed and experienced during their life journey, frame their view of what leadership actors should possess. Through leadership actors' humility, they can view the task important and enter a communication or discourse as of equal rank with one another.

5.3.4 Leadership – Tauhi va

Tauhi va is a frame that all participants shared that they observed and experienced during their upbringing and life journey. They reflected on how their parents and grandparents maintained and nurtured their relationships with others through their love for others which enhance their '*ofa*, *mamahi'i me'a* (loyalty) and *faka'apa'apa*. Some of the participants observed their parents welcomed their *kainga* to their homes, feed and clothed them. Some shared that they witnessed how their shared the little resources and *koloa* that they had with other members. Some took in their *kainga* members from the outer islands so that they can attend high school in the main island. This showed their *tauhi va*, their parents and *kainga* valued their relationships with others through sharing and respecting others.

These acts of *tauhi va* framed the participants sensemaking of the importance of building and nurturing relationship within a team. To complete a task successfully, all leadership actors within a team are influenced to work together. Yukl (1999) view leadership as a collective group of people that influence one another into action. What is obvious from Yukl's (1999) view is that leadership to be effective needs the collective effort of all involved. Hence why it is vitally important to create a good relationship among all leadership actors/

The participants reflected on how they observed and learned of their *kainga's tauhi va* framed their value and understanding of the importance of working together on a task.

5.3.5 Leaders – Egalitarian

The findings display how the participants framed male and female genders as having equal opportunities in contributing to leadership in their own contexts. The *tou-lalanga*

unveils that all members contribute equally to the weaving of the *fala*. The egalitarian frame by the participants shared the vital idea of inclusiveness. Participants believe that all are the same in the eyes of God. Due to this belief, they have the courage to stand up against discrimination discourse and actions made by male counterparts. It takes a lot of courage in the Tongan context for a female to challenge their male counterparts for it is like challenging your own father or elder brother. I believe that the participants grow more confident through being educated, their Christian belief and experiences working in a non-Tongan context.

Participants do not disagree with the Tongan culture in terms of valuing their elders and their male counterparts, however, they believe that all should be treated equally and be given the same opportunity to exercise leadership. One participant said that she respects her male counterparts but she does not accept it if they treat her with no respect to elevate their rank or status. The participants agree that at situations like this, they are not afraid to stand up for one another.

On this note, I challenge Bass's (2008) claim that female managers need to behave like men in order to succeed in their roles. The findings show that the participants understand that they have differentiated characters, experiences and upbringing as their male counterparts; however, they do not believe that they should be treated as a doormat as one participant put it. In the Tongan context, the eldest sister and eldest brother are both the natural leaders of the *kainga*. They both have their responsibilities to contribute to the welfare and generating wealth for the *kainga*. Even though their responsibilities may differ however, they are both leaders in their own contexts and both contributing to the success of the *kainga*. This framing egalitarianism enable the participants to challenge the traditional view that leadership is the work for men.

5.3.6 Summary

The concept of *tou-lalanga* enhances that leadership is not a task of one person but a collaboration of all involved in the task given. Constructing the *fala* together not only embraces and appreciates the contribution of all. By doing so, all weavers benefit in co-constructing the *fala* which symbolises the participants' understanding of leadership through frames already laid by their *family/kainga*. Participants identified their understanding of leadership as; making a difference in the lives of others, serving, humility, *tauhi va* and an opportunity for both males and females.

5.4 Fala Utilitarian

5.4.1 Fala – Framing leadership



Massey Pasifika Staff and students' potalanoa on a spread fala during the Tongan Language Week 2016

Source: Researcher

The second theme that I will discuss in this section is the use of the *fala* (1. To spread on the floor for people to sit on and *potalanoa* (make conversations) and 2. It is used to give away as a gift or *fua fatongia* [fulfil obligations]). When the weaving process is completed, the owner takes home a *fala* to add to her *koloa* (wealth).

A Tongan house is incomplete without the spreading of the *fala* on the floor for the occupants and visitors to sit or lie on. Spreading of the *fala* on the floor signals to the guests of the house that they are welcomed into the home. It also brings together the members of the group or the *kainga* to be included in whatever *talanoa* that takes place. The members of the

kainga or the group when sitting on the *fala* feel welcomed and included in the *potalanoa* (make a conversation). One of the common purposes of the *potalanoa* on the *fala* is to raise the welfare of the *kainga*. Whether it be discussing a member's wedding plans, funeral plans or supporting a member through paying for an education, the *kainga's* discourse is the medium to influencing others or all to act on the task or goal being set. At times, it would be *potalanoa* with *kainga* members from other villages or islands. However, this *potalanoa* on the *fala* again help to bring the *kainga* closer in their *tauhi va*, *faka'apa'apa*, *'ofa* and other vital Tongan values that emerges during the *potalanoa*. It is on the *fala* that ideas, visions, initiatives and tasks are discussed through discourse and communication.

The *fala*, woven through the interlacing of the strands of *tauhi vaha'a* (maintaining relationships), *mateaki* (hard working / loyalty), *fakatokilalo* (humility), *'ilo'i kita* (know your place), *mo'ui lotu* (Christian belief) and *ako – mo'ui fakapotopoto* (being educated – being wise), symbolises the participants' understanding and sensemaking of leadership which have been woven during their upbringing and life journey. The *fala* serves as a frame or foundation that the participants use to enhance their leadership practice in their given contexts as shown in the participants' ontological narratives.

Interestingly, the findings revealed how the participants in their given contexts somehow adopt or reframe the woven frames due to the influence of various factors including; the nature of New Zealand organizations and the diversity of the teams. In this section, I will discuss the common revised frames that emerged from the findings and how they enhanced the participants' leadership practice in their given contexts. The subthemes for this section are; reframing of talk in leadership practice, power and authority, *'ulungaanga fakatokilalo*, growth through hardship, *tauhi va* – a collaboration approach and family oriented Discourse in leadership practice. *Tauhi Va* – a reframe

Tauhi va in a team or organisation is perceived in the findings as vitally important. Leadership research view relationships as preferred to superiority or dominance (Drath, 2001). Nurturing of relationships among leadership actors bring them closer to one another and builds their confidence and trust in one another. When team relationships are healthy and strong, they are “powerful protective factors for collective and individual wellbeing through which help and healing can come too” (Quick, Wright, Adkins, Nelson, & Quick, 2013, p. 131).

The findings indicate how *tauhi va* was observed by participants as core in the *nofo 'a kainga*. This is reflected in their value of team members in their given contexts. The findings suggest ways that participants used to frame how they nurture their relationships with their team members including communication, sharing and non-confrontational. Through using of these frames in nurturing relationships, it is obvious how participants have altered the frames that they have observed during their upbringing to suit their given contexts.

Communication as one aspect of *tauhi va* that emerged from the findings helped to nurture the relationships among leadership actors. Participants used various forms of communication when building and nurturing their relationships with their colleagues. The most common form of communication that emerged from the findings is informal discourse. These are discourse with colleagues and team members during their breaks or along the corridors led them to talk about small but valuable parts of their lives. In a discursive approach to leadership, leaders interact and communicate with workplace team members to provide an opportunity to view how leadership varied in terms how they are performed and achieved (Holmes, Schnurr, & Marra, 2007). Communication via informal discourse empowers close relationships among team members, which reflects their team performance.

Leadership actors, as agents of change through their communication with one another via text or talk, are able to “co-create the contexts to which they and others must respond”

(Fairhurst, 2009, p. 1608). Participants shared how team members appreciated these small talks, which allowed them to embrace and understand one another. Cunliffe and Eriksen (2011) stress the importance of caring for one another's world and unity of team members. It is through these communications that meaning is managed and sensemaking is achieved. Without the sharing of knowledge through discourse, team members may not be able to socially construct knowledge and meaning. Socially constructing of meaning through leadership actors' communication detaches the focus from the actors to the power of language in weaving the actors' sensemaking of leadership.

Sharing is another of the frames that emerged from the findings that inspire closer relationships among leadership actors. Participants reflected on how they value the virtue of sharing through experiencing their *kainga's* sharing with others during their upbringing. The findings revealed that the participants adopted this frame in their given contexts. One participant reflected on attending a new job where she was the only Pacific Islander in the team, she then started to do some baking and left them in the staff kitchen for all to share. Not long from then, other staff members started to bring in little things to share during their break. The team spirit just blossomed from there. Some participants shared similar examples of little acts of sharing that they practice within their given contexts help to build and nurture relationships among the team members, which builds the team confidence and trust of one another.

One aspect that enhanced the *tauhi va* as revealed in the findings is *faka'apa'apa* (respect). The findings revealed that participants understood *faka'apa'apa* as knowing their place in the *nofo 'a kainga* (kainga circle) or organization and quietly following orders without questioning their parents or elders. The hierarchical structure of the *nofo 'a kainga* position members according to their rank within the *kainga* circle. Each position has their

own responsibility to fulfil. Those in higher ranks are respected by those in lower ranks, which showed their *tauhi va*. This aligns with the Confucian philosophy that “views interpersonal relationships as asymmetrical and reciprocally obligatory in which people always feel indebted to others” (Guo-Ming & Jensen, 1993, p. 7).

The findings conveyed how participants value their familial relationships within their *famili/kainga*. In these relationships, they were taught to keep quiet when their parents and *kainga* speak or counsel them whether their parents are right or wrong. In this frame, the focus is on the leaders, which in this context are parents and elder *kainga* members. The findings suggest a reframe of this perspective to embrace the collective effort of the team in constructing and managing meaning.

The understanding of how *kainga* operates informed the participants’ sensemaking of how they relate to their superiors within their given contexts. Some participants reflected that they showed their respect to their superiors at work by not confronting them or speaking up when they should be. One participant shared that because of the way she was taught, not confront or challenge her superiors during a meeting but quietly shared her ideas to her team leader after the meeting. Participants’ practice of *tauhi va* enhances their *faka’apa’apa* and how they relate to their superiors. The question that lingers in my mind is whether this act of *tauhi va* through *faka’apa’apa* is applicable in a non-Tongan context?

In a discursive approach to leadership all leadership actors contribute in socially constructing of meaning which influences one another to act in a given context. The concept of *tauhi va* through *faka’apa’apa* and non-confrontational nature may see some Tongan women as reluctant to participate in leadership discourse due to their understanding of leadership under this cultural frame. Some may argue that this is a sign of weakness and that this concept would lead to women being suppressed and seen as not suitable to be leaders.

However, the Tongan proverb of '*lea pe 'a e ngaue*' which translate as 'action speaks louder' can explain how some women continue to practice this frame of *tauhi va* even in a non-Tongan context.

However, some participants challenge this frame and calls for a reframe of this aspect of *tauhi va*. It is evident from the findings that some of the participants do voice their ideas when it comes to a workplace discourse. They reframe the non-frontational out of *faka'apa'apa* to their superiors based on their view that all leadership actors are equal in the eyes of God and how they were exposed at a young age to the frame of being involved in family discussion and decision-making. This reframe, energizes many participants to participate actively in leadership discourse in their given contexts.

Value of talk in leadership practice

The research findings revealed the vital frame of discourse and how the participants responded to *talatalaifale* of their parents and people that they encountered with during their life journey. Numerous participants reflect on how this frame was instrumental in guiding and influencing them to focus and act on given tasks.

Discourse through text and talk according to Fairhurst (2007) "embodies cultural meanings; it is a medium for social interaction where the details of language in use and interaction process are central concerns for analysts" (p. 6). From the findings, the participants' reflections displayed how words having said to them while growing up motivated and encouraged them in their journey and quest to making sense of leadership. Huni's reflection of her uncle's words of encouragement to her when she failed her School Certificate examination has motivated her in all that she does. Although she passed only two subjects out of five, her uncle's words to her were, "that's really good". To Huni, these few words framed that it is ok to make mistake and that is not the end. It gave her a positive

perspective to continue with her studies and persevere to be better. Vunga also shared similar *talatalaifale* by her parents. It framed her parents' belief in her that even though she did not do well at high school but through their words of encouragement, they energized her to strive and be successful.

Communication and leadership do go hand in hand. Zurawski (2004) claims that “talk is a primary means of communication at work and a powerful tool” (p. 22). The findings revealed that many of the participants value the frame of informal talk to nurture a close relationship with their team. Nurturing a close relationship with team members involves building of trust. Many participants believe that knowing something personal about a colleague and what they value in life leads one to understand how and why a colleague acts in a certain way. It develops understanding and appreciation of one another, which energises leadership actors to work harder and value more the organisation.

The findings reveal how participants value involving their team members in small conversations. The use of various forms of communication such as lunchtime conversation, small talks in the hallway, sending teams video updates or taking them for coffee frame the participants' value of their team members. One participant shared that when she dialogues with a team member, she gives her full attention because she values them and their contribution to the organisation. Being attentive when dialoguing with team members motivate them to open up and share their ideas for they feel at ease to do so.

What is evident from the findings is that participants understand the dynamic of their teams and frame their communication with them in various ways that would influence them to contribute effectively to given tasks. This is a reframe of the traditional belief that leaders are supposed to give commands that followers are expected to follow. What numerous participants in this study invigorated in their team environment is the idea of co-constructing

of meaning through discourse. Making conversations on the *fala*, all actors despite their positions in the *kainga*, do have an opportunity to contribute to the conversations.

Reframing Power and Authority

The findings talk of power and authority of leaders as closely associated with physically powerful. Eventhough in the Tongan culture, the eldest brothers and eldest sisters are the natural leaders of their *kainga* and women are the *fahu* over their brothers' children, there was a strong perspective that leaders associate with men and physically powerful. In the Tongan culture according to Johansson-Fua (2009), "power usually rests on the person's rank as being '*eiki* (noble, higher ranked) while the basis of authority rests more on titles, positions and access to resources" (p. 110). Noble titles in Tonga are passed on through the male family lineage which position them as leaders of villages. The '*ulumotu*'*a* is the head of the *kainga* and the father as the head of the nuclear family. This frame of male defining their power through their rank and title influences how participants viewed leaders in their upbringing.

However, it is evident from the findings that some of the participants challenged this frame. Though the findings revealed the participants' respect towards their male superiors however, when challenged or put down by their male counterparts, participants use their authority of sisters and being educated to challenge this frame. Mapa's challenging of the male leader for comparing women to tea women showed her belief that men and women can both be leaders and both can contribute to leadership practice.

A number of participants revealed how their Christian belief influenced them to believe that God is their leader and that all others are equal in God's eyes. This reframing of authority by placing God as a higher leader and all others are equal under God; empower the participants to challenge the traditional frame of leaders. Even though numerous participants

would not elevate themselves or call themselves leaders, they still use their authority to practice leadership in their given contexts.

Falahola struggled to reframe that those in leadership positions are supposed to be males. However, she did apply and got the leadership position in her organization despite doubting whether she is fit for the role. Numerous participants faced the same struggle but when they reframed power and authority as something that both male and female can acquire, it motivated them to challenge the previous frame and step up with confidence to contribute to leadership in their given contexts.

The strand of *ako* (being educated) opens the opportunity for women who are not an eldest sister to achieve acquired status. Johansson-Fua (2009) claims that leadership roles acquired through education focus more on authority and their ability to lead. The findings show how the participants in their given context, enhanced their authority and ability to lead in their practice. It is apparent from the findings that participants despite their gender, ethnicity or position in the organization, find courage to contribute in leadership discourse, sharing their knowledge, and putting those knowledge into actions. These influenced others in the team to effectively contribute in given tasks.

Reframing of power and authority as not to be cemented on the traditional view of being associated with physically powerful but perceived as an opportunity for all who can positively influence others to act on a given task, I view this as an an opportunity for participants to contribute to leadership in their given contexts. It gave them the courage to apply and take on managerial positions in their given contexts, work with any gender and ethnicity, strive through hardship and contribute to achieving the given goal or tasks. Participants' contribution to leadership, influenced their team members to act in their given

contexts. They encourage a discursive view of power that it is not possessed by the person in charge of the team but it is shared among all actors involved.

The Power of ‘Ulungaanga fakatokilalo (Humility)

As reported ‘*ulungaanga fakatokilalo* (humility) by leadership actors is core in leadership. Despite the participants’ positions and achievements, ‘*ulungaanga fakatokilalo* is augmented through their relations to others within their given contexts via discourse and actions. The experiences that they observed and learned during their upbringing and life journey such as; their *kainga’s tauhi va* to others how *kainga* members know their place in the *kainga* circle constructed the frame of ‘*ulungaanga fakatokilalo*.

‘*Ulungaanga* in Tongan refers to behaviour (both actions and discourse with others). ‘*Ulungaanga fakatokilalo* is translated as humble behaviours or humility in actions and expressions. The word humility comes from the Latin *humilitatem* which means ‘lowness or insignificant’ and in Church Latin, humility means meekness (Online Etymology Dictionary). Participants spoke of being humble as not elevating oneself, not bragging about your achievements and not speaking highly of oneself. It is not thinking less about oneself but thinking about oneself less (Alefaio, Hunt-Ioane, & Vaaga, 2004). Davis et al. (2011) claim that people practice humility to serve others, but not to attain profits or prestiges.

Many participants do not view themselves as leaders despite their holding of leadership positions as reported in the findings. Kukuvalu who is the CEO in the organisation, in her response when asked whether she sees herself as a leader,

Kukuvalu I would hesitate because being a Tonga, you do not skite, you do not brag, you do not call yourself something; it needs to be told by somebody else.

Kukuvalu’s response reflected the frame of ‘*ulungaanga fakatokilalo*. Many of the participants share similar response as Kukuvalu. This behaviour of not elevating oneself

through calling oneself a position but rather do the work attached to the position is an act of *'ulungaanga fakatokilalo*.

Falahola shared that families of students that attended the school who have graduated from University usually invite her to their graduation receptions but she at most times refuse to attend. When she attends these functions, she is treated with respect as a leader by being seated at the front table, being addressed as a leader in speeches and is given *koloa*.

Falahola's refusal to attend indicates her not wanting to draw attention to herself and elevate herself as a leader. In the Tongan context, when leaders are invited to a celebration they do attend out of respect to the families. Falahola's act of *'ulungaanga fakatokilalo* indicates her reframing of this pre-concieved frame. One of the reasons why Falahola was reluctant to attend the celebration is because she felt for the families having to give *koloa* and food feed their children. This shows her compassion towards the families.

Falahola's reframing of *'ulungaanga fakatokilalo* is similar to many participants' view of the *fahu* system. Many participants shared how they do not take advantage of their *fahu* priviledges. When attending their brothers' children's weddings or celebrations, they do the cooking and the cleaning in the kitchen. One participant shared that her brother was very emotional when he saw her and her sisters in the kitchen doing the cooking and the cleaning for his son's wedding. This indicates a reframe of the participants' value of their roles as *fahu*. I take that participants value being the *fahu* but with their *'ofa* (compassion) towards their families they chose to show their *'ofa* through service. In the participants given workplaces, they shared how they value their responsibilities towards their team/organization that they work for which enhances their *'ofa* and loyalty.

Argandona (2015) believes that humility "lost its luster in the modern era, probably because it was confused with a disposition considered not worthy of the individual's worth

and self-reliance” (p. 64). Humility is not weakness or lack of confidence (Hayes & Comer, 2011). However, Alyn (2011) claims that “humility is not the presence of weakness; it’s the absence of arrogance” (p. 34). Hea’s reflected on a group task that she and women in their community did a display at the local museum of Tongan tapa making. Eventhough Hea was the leader, she did not use that to take over the narrations of the group tasks, however, she allowed her team the opportunity to narrate and take pride in their work. Many participants shared similar beliefs to that of Hea. This reframes the notion that the leader is the main actor in leadership to a discursive approach of a social construction which involves the whole team.

Participants shared how they were taught the value of humility through their parents’ *tauhi va* within their *kainga* such as Motelolo’s father’s frequent visits to his parents, his grandpa and his sisters in the village. Even though Motelolo’s father held a high position as a civil servant and was the eldest son but he did not hold that as something to elevate himself but brought himself down to serve his family and fulfil his *fatongia* (obligations) to them. Motelolo’s sensemaking of how her father framed leadership is reflected in how many participants practice leadership as serving others and fulfilling their duties to their teams and organization despite their positions and roles in the organization.

‘*Ulungaanga fakatokilalo* empowers participants to value their team tasks and to ensure those tasks are completed to the best. They value the task more than their personal advancement for that is a frame that they observed from their *famili/kainga* according to the Tongan phrase; “‘*Oku tu’a e sino ka ‘oku ‘eiki e fekau*” (The task at hand is more valuable than one’s body), this enhances the participants’ ‘*ulungaanga fakatokilalo* through elevating the value and importance of the tasks given rather than the person carrying out the tasks. ‘*Ulungaanga fakatokilalo* may be viewed by others as weakness, however, the findings showed otherwise.

Growth through Hardship Resilience

Hardship resilience is another theme that emerged from the findings. Windle (2010) defines resilience as:

.. the process of effectively negotiating, adapting to, or managing significant sources of stress or trauma. Assets and resources within the individual, their life and environment facilitate this capacity for adaptation and ‘bouncing back’ in the face of adversity. Across the life course, the experience of resilience will vary (Windle, 2010, p. 163).

Participants spoke of how they grew up experiencing hardship. Some reflected on growing up in big households and having to survive on little. Some had to move and live with relatives in other islands to be closer to school, which also have to live in big households. Majority grew up with parents who did not have paid employment but worked in the plantation and weave mats and handicrafts for survival. They observed how their parents and guardians took them through these hardships. They reflected on their parents’ and *kainga* showed their resilience through hard working, sharing, working together and focusing on the end goal of securing a better future for their children. Motelolo shared that according to her parents, education was their vessel out of poverty.

Queen Salote became the Tongan monarchy during a time of hardship in both State and Church. However, Queen Salote through discourse and the strength of her collaboration with her consort, they managed to influence others to work with them on the goal of building a sound and safe country both economically and politically. Her legacy is still talk about to today and she is perceived by many as a role model for all Tongan women.

Living in hardship is not a new experience to Tongan families. Families in Tonga faced various hardships in which financial hardship was a common one. These hardships drew them

closer together to support one another and to achieve their *kainga* or group goals. As reported in the findings, families support other *kainga* members by providing shelter and education for their children. That was their contribution to their *kainga*'s welfare.

Hardship as emerged in the findings is framed as opportunities. Persevering during times of hardship leads to creativity and good use of resources. Mohokoi shared how their family was self-sufficient and how her father made them breakfast of baked cassava. What she learned from that experience is not wasting things. Because there were many of them living together, they had to make use of whatever little they had. This idea of making good use of what they had is evident in Mohokoi's work at home and at the workplace. Sialetafa shared that the school that she attended in Tonga did not have much resources however; she saw this as an opportunity to be creative and make the best use of the limited resources.

Facing hardship provides an opportunity to grow in strength and wisdom. The findings show that participants having experienced hardship in Tonga and while growing up reframed hardship as an opportunity and not a problem. Almost all participants reflected that when they faced times of hardship within their organisations, they perceived this as opportunities to navigate other alternatives of doing things. They had positive attitudes towards facing times of difficulties. Staying positive during a stressful time does have a positive influence on the team. The findings show that it is vital for leaders to be resilient and stay strong during difficult times. The findings mirror Windle's (2010) definition of resilience. Though participants shared different types of hardships that they faced in their given contexts, but the assets and wisdom that they have acquired from their *kainga* do motivate them to be resilient.

Framing of hardship, as opportunities for growth were evident on how participants responded to difficulties within their given contexts. Hea when asked by her manager whether a target is achievable, she responded that half of the target would be achieved by a

certain date. Though her manager thought of the task as unachievable, Hea framed it as an opportunity. When asked by her manager of what she did, she responded by saying;

Hea I just make the [organization] feel that it's their money that we will recover. Because if this is our money, and they have to pay it back, they would not care.

Hea's framing of her communication with the target organizations shows how reframing the money as belonging to the organization would make the organizations feel that they are going to lose their money therefore, they had to do whatever it takes to keep the funds. The reframing of this discourse by Hea led her to achieve a target that her manager framed as difficult. It is interesting to view the commonality in the participants' leadership practice when they framed difficulties and hardships as opportunities for growth.

Sialetafa in some of the projects that she worked on with her team either did not have a budget or had very little. However, the financial limitation was not seen as a barrier but was framed as an opportunity. Sialetafa used this as an opportunity to seek the buy in of others and her team. She had to be creative in terms of recruiting volunteers to work on the projects as well as influencing her team to work overtime. Many participants shared similar reflections to Sialetafa how they viewed the challenges and hardships as opportunities for team growth.

The reframing of hardship and difficult situations as opportunities for growth enhances the participants' experiences of having emerged successfully out of hardship during their life journey. It also acknowledges the participants need to work together with their team as working with their *famili/kainga*. During times of hardships, many participants practice the strands of *mateaki* through their *loto'i Tonga* to endure.

Family – oriented teams

The findings show that participants treat their organisational teams as a family. Belonging to a family is more than just being a member of the family. A family culture implicates valuing family goals, tasks as well as family members. Casey (1999) claim that “the family metaphor actively evokes pre-industrial romantic images of kinship bonding and shared struggles against adversity (162). By viewing teams as a family enhances the participants familial love, respect and loyalty towards their teams/organization. In a family, they strive to achieve family outcomes and goals in which they value greatly even if it means having to face hardship. Some participants shared how they had to achieve a task with limited or no budget, due to treating their teams as a family, the work was done with the collaborations of the team.

It is apparent from the findings that participants value the contributions of all members and they treat their team members as a family through; valuing what is important to them, which includes their families, share food, recognize and award their contributions to the team, caring for one another and going the extra mile together.

Framing of teams as families does influence the team dynamics and trusts. This is enhanced in the findings when participants engaged with their team members not only in formal meetings but also in informal conversations and talk. The findings reveal that the caring nature of participants encouraged them to find little things that are important to their team and support them. Sharing with the team whether it be food or informal chat along the corridor or in the lunchroom, builds the team trusts among them, which is reflected in their performances. This indicates how they view and value the organisation as a family.

In relation to this study, framing of teams and organizations by participants as a family ignites their respect, compassion and loyalty not only towards the organization but also

towards their teams. Participants' actions in their given contexts enhance their responsibilities to their teams/organizations as families. They, at times do tasks that their team members were supposed to do but they picked those up as well to support the overall benefit of the team/organization.

Families do have expectations towards their members as shown in the findings. Some of the expectations are spoken and some are unspoken. However, members of the *kainga* do know that the *famili/kainga* expect them to do their best in all they do in whatever contexts as they are representing their *famili/kainga*. With this expectation, participants were energized to achieve the best in what is given to them.

Participants also shared that they sometimes face difficulties getting their diverse team to work as a family. Some participants shared that when they are in their community groups or their church groups, they find it relatively easy to get people to work together as a family. However, when they are the workplace, they do face some frictions in trying to do so. At the same time, with their *loto'i Tonga* and *'ulungaanga fakatokilalo* interlaced with *mateaki* and informal talk, they weave their tauhi va with their teams to work together as a family despite their differences.

5.4.2 Fala for fua fatongia – leadership sensemaking



Giftng of a fala during my nephew's first birthday celebration, 2016

Source: Researcher Personal Archive

The second use and purpose of a *fala* is for *fua fatongia*. *Fua* means to carry in the Tongan language. *Fatongia* is comprised of two words, which are *fa* and *tongia*. *Fa* is the flower of a pandanus tree, which are fragrant and are used for making dance costumes and Tongan dance necklaces. *Tongia* is “the immediately permeating fragrance of a round bunch of ripe pandanus fruit, straightaway after plucking or cutting” (Helu, 2006; Thaman, 2000; Mahina, 2006). According to Tofuaipangai and Camilleri (2016), *fatongia* as an obligation is a gift that is comparable to the sweet fragrance of a newly cut plant in this context a *fa*. *Fatongia* is not forced but a gift and a pleasure (Tofuaipangai & Camilleri, 2016) in which the giver willingly give and the receiver accepts with much appreciation. *Fua fatongia* refers to carrying of sweet fragrance from one individual or *kainga* to another and from one generation to the next.

The findings shows how participants’ leadership practice influences others in their given contexts. Although leadership is understood through meaning managing via discourse and *potalanoa* on the *fala*, it does not end there but needs to be transferred into action. This leads to the second use of the *fala* which is used for *fua fatongia*.

Leadership practice as a gift



Using of *fala* for *fua fatongia* at a wedding

Source: nz.Pinetrest.com

In a *fatongia*, the *fala* is being gifted to others. It is being handed from one *kainga* to another and from one generation to another to fulfil willing obligations. Participants' practice of leadership in their given contexts through discourse and actions contributed to the organisations' success. The findings reveal how the participants' *loto 'i Tonga*, their act of *tauhi va*, the *anga fakatokilalo*, their *ngaue mateaki* tied with service and their Christian faith weave together in their practice of leadership to positively influence others to act on a given task. Eventhough the participants claim that they were doing their jobs as just a *fua fatongia*, but I see it as presenting these as gifts to benefit the ogranisations that they work for. Participants shared how they worked long hours and extra hard to achieve the best for their team/organization.

When participants positively influence their fellow team members to act in a given task, team members also benefit with new knowledge, which I see as also a gift. Some of the participants also talk about mentoring other young people in the area of leadership, I see this as gifting their leadership knowledge, understanding and sensemaking to these young generations which will be carried on to the next generation through discourse and actions.

5.4.3 Summary

This chapter saw the use of the *tou-lalanga* and the uses of *fala* as a metaphorical framework to exploring and understanding the participants' leadership practice in their given contexts. The *tou-lalanga*, guided me to understand the concept of discursively approach to leadership. The socially construction of meaning by the leadership actors weaves a *fala* as that symbolised by the concept of *tou-lalanga*. When leadership actors make sense of the meaning of a discourse then they are influenced to act reflected in their leadership practice. The uses of the *fala* to sit on and *po-talanoa* and to gift to others in *fua fatongia*, reflect how participants' framing of leadership are shaped and contribute to their socially construction of meaning when matters are discussed. Participants'

influences and leadership knowledge are a gift to their given organizations as well as others in the team. These wealth of knowledge are also passed on to young generations through mentoring.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

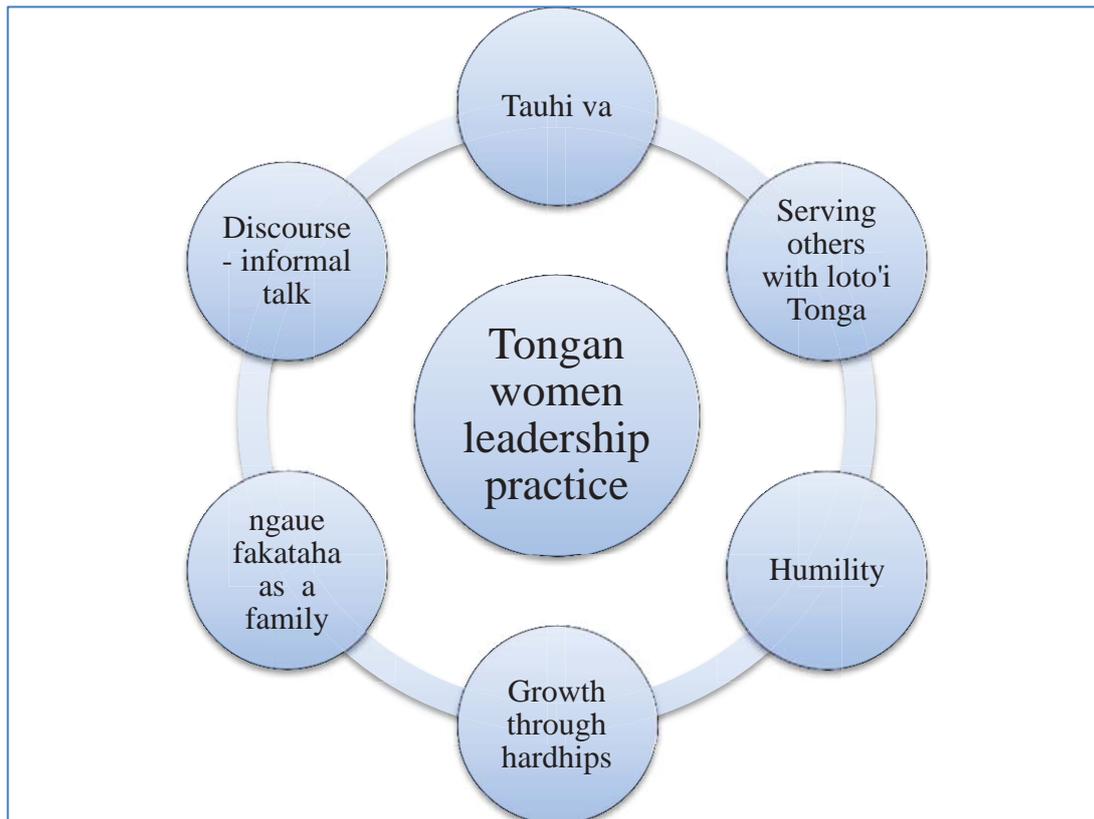
6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will briefly summarise the main findings from the research in relation to the research questions, then continue to provide the strengths and limitations to the study. Implications and suggestions for future studies will follow.

6.2 Summary of the Findings

This study aimed to address the research question; “To explore the leadership practice of Tongan women in New Zealand”. In order to understand how Tongan women practice leadership in their given contexts I wanted to explore what factors that informed their leadership practices.

At the end of this study, I come to understand how participants use various frames to enhance their leadership practice. Through their practicing of leadership in ensuring others are influenced to act in a given task, they somehow reframe their pre-concieved frames to appear more meaningful to others in their teams. Participants practice leadership through their *tauhi va* with their team members, serving others through ‘*ulungaanga fakatokilalo and loto 'i Tonga*, value of informal talk, growth through hardships, and through framing of their team/organization as a family. The diagram below summarises the participants’ leadership practices as reported in the findings. These practices enhanced the participants’ respect, loyalty, compassion and value of their team/organization.



Summary of the participants' leadership practice as revealed in the findings.

The essential underlying theme that emerged from the findings is the influence of the concept of framing when participants practice leadership in their given contexts. I used the metaphor of *lalanga fala* to frame how the participants make sense of leadership and their leadership practices. The process of *tou-lalanga* enhances how participants observed and experienced leadership through their familial framing of *tauhi va*, service, humility, surviving through hardships, working together and showing of their *loto'i Tonga*. During participants' upbringing, certain strands interlaced through the *tou-lalanga* of *kainga* members and people that they encountered. These strands wove the frames that informed the participants' making sense of leadership.

How much participants contribute to the construction of meaning which leads to influencing others to act in a given context are shaped by the frames pre-concieved by their *famili/kainga* during their life journey. The findings show how participants' practice of leadership enhanced the frames that they learned and experienced during their life journey. The *fala* as a finished product indicate the woven understanding and sensemaking on leadership that emerged from the participants' *talanoa* .

These woven understanding and sensemaking on leadership were laid as foundational frames to how participants practice leadership.

The use of *fala* to spread on the floor for people to sit on and *potalanoa* enhance how the participants reframed their pre-concieved frames, understanding and sensemaking of leadership with the co-construction of leadership in their given contexts. By reframing these frames such as the frame of power and authority as traditionally and generally perceived to lie with males. The findings indicate how participants reframed this based mainly on their Christian faith that percieved both male and female as equal in the eyes of God. Through reframing, participants gained confidence to speak up and challenge male counterparts when they feel repressed by them.

It is through reframing some of the pre-concieved frames that participants make more sense of how they can contribute to meaning making when working with their team members. The findings reveal various ways how participants communicating with their team members. This built the confidence and trust between participants and team members, which reflected on how tasks and goals were achieved through teamwork.

Through reframing, I come to appreciate more the second use of the *fala* and that it is gifted to others through *fua fatongia*. Gifting of the *fala* to others indicate how the participants' frames of leadership can be passed on to others such as their team members and the organizations. It is interesting to note that others can further reframe these frames to suit their given contexts and tasks.

6.3 Implications

At the end of this study, the question that lingers on is how this study contributes to the literature on leadership especially on Tongan women leadership. It is vital to understand how the study can be helpful to New Zealand organizations and Tongan women in providing better practices. This study offers insight into the interesting ways that Tongan women understand their leadership; however, the data did not address how these affects/impacts on

organizations. This could be an indication for further studies to explore how Tongan women's understanding of leadership affects the organizations' effectiveness.

Adding to that, Tongan women value the organizations that they work for as they value their *kainga* and their *loto 'i Tonga* is made known through their actions and how they relate to others in the organizations. There are certain behaviour that are reflected from Tongan women that may seen as weaknesses however this is their way of showing respect to others.

Theoretically, since there are very few literatures on Tongan leadership and especially women, this study will contribute to the literatures. This research does add value to how Tongan women's use of framing can help enhance their leadership practice in not only New Zealand organization but worldwide.

The concept of *potalanoa* on a spread *fala* in the Tongan culture closely relates to the concept of discursive approach to leadership. Members of the *kainga* sitting on a *fala* and converse indicate how they interlace their understanding of the topic of discussion and weave their sensemaking. During a *potalanoa* process of a *fala*, the actors involved in the *potalanoa* take off their ranks and authority but come together as equal. This process enhances the co-construction of meaning which influence members to act. I believe that in the Tongan context, this *potalanoa* concept reflect that even though discursive approach to leadership is seen a recent addition turn in the leadership literature, it has been practiced in Tonga for a long time. Therefore, this study brings to light how discursive leadership has long been a practice in Tonga but underresearched.

This study brings awareness to New Zealand organizations in the following ways. New Zealand organizations would make sense of how Tongan women in the organization practice leadership and contribute to the social constructions of leadership in their given contexts. This awareness could help New Zealand organizations to provide further support to Tongan

women in their organizations through providing of mentors to help them in building their confidence in working with people of different ethnic groups. This is mostly in the case of Tongan migrant women who are used to working in Tongan organizations.

In practice, New Zealand organization not limiting to organization that employ Tongan women, should build their cultural competency in terms of understanding the various cultural frames that inform the diversity of the New Zealand workforce.

The main themes in the study can be used as a guide to New Zealand organizations on how they can better employ Tongan women. The findings can also be applied to Pasifika women on a wider scale because some of the frames that emerged from this study are common in other Pacific Islands too such as respect, humility, working collectively and growing through hardship only to name a few.

6.4 Strengths and Limitations

There are a number of strengths that I acquired while conducting this study that contributed to the development and completion of this study. These strengths are:

- The significant contribution of this study to organisations in New Zealand provides them with a framework on how to understand what frames Tongan women's understanding of leadership which then are reflected in their leadership practice
- The use of *talanoa* was appropriate for this study as it was successful in creating a safe space for both the researcher and the participants. The *talanoa* enabled the participants to freely share their reflections, which contributed to the depth of this study. I as the researcher managed to refocus the *talanoa* to the aim of the study by using of probing questions and the semi-structured *talanoa* questions.

- The study findings show how the Tongan cultural values are embraced and practiced in New Zealand organisations, through the participants' work.

Generalizability is one limitation to this study. The study focuses only on Tongan women in New Zealand organisations in which women from other ethnic groups may not share the same experiences. However, I am confident that some aspects of this study may be applicable to other ethnic groups and may initiate further studies based on other ethnic groups. Due to the word limit, not all the data were being able to be used in the study, however, they are kept safely for future references should I write other articles based on this study.

6.5 Suggestions for Future Research

For further studies, I believe that branch off from this study would be to explore whether the leadership practice of Tongan women contribute to the success/effectiveness of New Zealand organizations. This would add value to the research on Tongan women's contribution to leadership as well as finding ways that organizations can value the contribution of cultural diversity to the success/effectiveness of the organization.

It would also ideal to explore the leadership practices of other Pacific ethnic women to compare and contrast. Majority of leadership literatures in the Pacific focus on traditional leadership that mainly emphasize on male leadership based on chieftain. However, it would be interesting to explore how women in various Pacific islands practice leadership in their various contexts. This will add value to the body of literature on leadership to identify the various ways people from diverse backgrounds understand and practice leadership.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 : Research Information Sheet



MASSEY
BUSINESS
SCHOOL

Tongan Women and Leadership in New Zealand Information Sheet

December 1, 2015

Malo e lelei!

My name is Seluvaia Paea and I would like to invite you take part in this study by allowing me to have a *talanoa* with you at a time and place that suits you. The *talanoa* will take approximately 1–1½ hours. I am interested to explore how your journey in leadership contributes to the effectiveness of the organization(s) that you have worked for either in the past or now.

I was born and raised in the village Nukunuku, Tonga. I am a full time student completing a Master of Business Studies (MBS) at Massey University in Albany. I am interested in learning about the contribution of Tongan women leaders to New Zealand organizations and I want to understand the cultural and educational factors and their impacts on New Zealand born and Tongan born women of Tongan descent who are in leadership positions.

With your permission I would like to audio record our *talanoa*. The recorder can be turned off at any time during the interview. All the information you provide will be confidential and your name will not be used unless you specifically request it. I will provide you with a copy of the transcript of our *talanoa* if you wish. Further, you may withdraw from the study at any time within **two weeks** of your interview being completed. All documents and transcripts forms will be stored in a locked filing cabinet at the Centre for Teaching and Learning for five years.

It is not anticipated there will be any harm or risks to you as a result of participation however if you have any concerns please feel free to talk to me or contact my supervisors.

If you have any questions regarding this study or in relation to your participation in this study, please do not hesitate to contact me on 094140800 ext 43421 nor email:

S.T.V.Paea@massey.ac.nz Alternatively you can contact my supervisors: Dr Ralph Bathurst 09 414 0800 ext 43404; R.Bathurst@massey.ac.nz and/or Dr Rebecca Gill 414 0800 ext. 43376; R.Gill@massey.ac.nz.

I would like to thank you in advance for your time and looking forward to hearing from you.

Malo 'aupito

Seluvaia Paea

Te Kunenga
ki Pōrehuroa

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Appendix 2 : Massey University Human Ethics Approval

HoU Review Group

Ethics Notification Number: 4000015198

Title: Tongan women and leadership in New Zealand

Thank you for your notification which you have assessed as Low Risk.

Your project has been recorded in our system which is reported in the Annual Report of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee.

The low risk notification for this project is valid for a maximum of three years.

If situations subsequently occur which cause you to reconsider your ethical analysis, please log on to <http://rims.massey.ac.nz> and register the changes in order that they be assessed as safe to proceed.

Please note that travel undertaken by students must be approved by the supervisor and the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor and be in accordance with the Policy and Procedures for Course-Related Student Travel Overseas. In addition, the supervisor must advise the University's Insurance Officer.

A reminder to include the following statement on all public documents:

"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named in this document are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you want to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Dr Brian Finch, Director (Research Ethics), email humanethics@massey.ac.nz. "

Please note that if a sponsoring organisation, funding authority or a journal in which you wish to publish require evidence of committee approval (with an approval number), you will

have to complete the application form again answering yes to the publication question to provide more information to go before one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. You should also note that such an approval can only be provided prior to the commencement of the research.

You are reminded that staff researchers and supervisors are fully responsible for ensuring that the information in the low risk notification has met the requirements and guidelines for submission of a low risk notification.

If you wish to print an official copy of this letter, please login to the RIMS system, and under the Reporting section, View Reports you will find a link to run the LR Report.

Yours sincerely

Dr Brian Finch

Chair, Human Ethics Chairs' Committee and

Director (Research Ethics)

Appendix 3: Research Talanoa Questions

Personal Details

- Name
- Place of birth
- Position in organization
- Age

Questions relating to Identity

- Can you reflect on what does it mean to you to be a Tongan woman?
- What other terms or identities do you adopt or in other words, in what other ways would you describe yourself?
- Can you tell me a little about your background and upbringing (in terms of family, school, community)?
- How do you think your upbringing has influenced who you are now?
- Can you think of an influential person (or event) in your life that have influenced your journey to where you are now?
- Do you think being brought up in Tonga or New Zealand had made a difference in your thinking or behaviour? Explain.

Questions relating to Leadership

- As you know, my project is about Tongan women's leadership, so I wanted to ask: how would you define leadership?
- Would you say that you are a leader? Why or why not?
- What activities or work that you do that makes you see yourself as a leader?

- As a leader, was there any event or person that has influenced the way you lead?
(How?)
- Do you think that being a (Tongan) woman has affected your leadership?

Questions relating to participant's influence in the organization

- Do you think that being a tongan woman in your organization has influenced the organization, and how?
- What strengths do you believe you bring to the organization?
- Can you reflect on an even that you have used those strengths in your leadership in the organization?
- Can you tell me of a situation or event within your work with the organization that your leadership has made a difference?

Wrap up

- Is there anything that you would like to add to your reflections?
- Do you have any questions for me that you haven't already asked?