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**FACTORS AFFECTING EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT OF
TONGANS IN AUCKLAND**

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ABSTRACT

Tongans have always experienced difficulties achieving in the New Zealand education system and it is still very much the case today. Some Tongans have managed to succeed but still a considerable number of them have failed.

This research study examines factors that contribute to the academic success and failure of former Tongan secondary school students in Auckland. It focuses on their experiences at home, the support they received and other external factors that affected them, in an attempt to provide an explanation for 'achievement' and 'underachievement' of Tongan students in Auckland.

A qualitative case study approach was used to study the experiences of twenty former Auckland secondary school students. The main methods of data collection were semi-structured interviews for student participants and questionnaires for parents.

Three main issues emerged from the findings. Firstly, parents and the home environment played a most significant part in determining the academic success or failure of their children. Secondly, certain aspects of the Tongan culture influence the values parents place on education and thus affect their perception of support for their children. Thirdly, the parents' degree of affiliation

with the church affects their decisions which gradually has an impact on their children.

As a consequence, the study recommends that parents need to realize the significance of the role they play in their children's education. Failure to recognize this could mean that 'underachievement' will continue to exist.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

1.0 Introduction

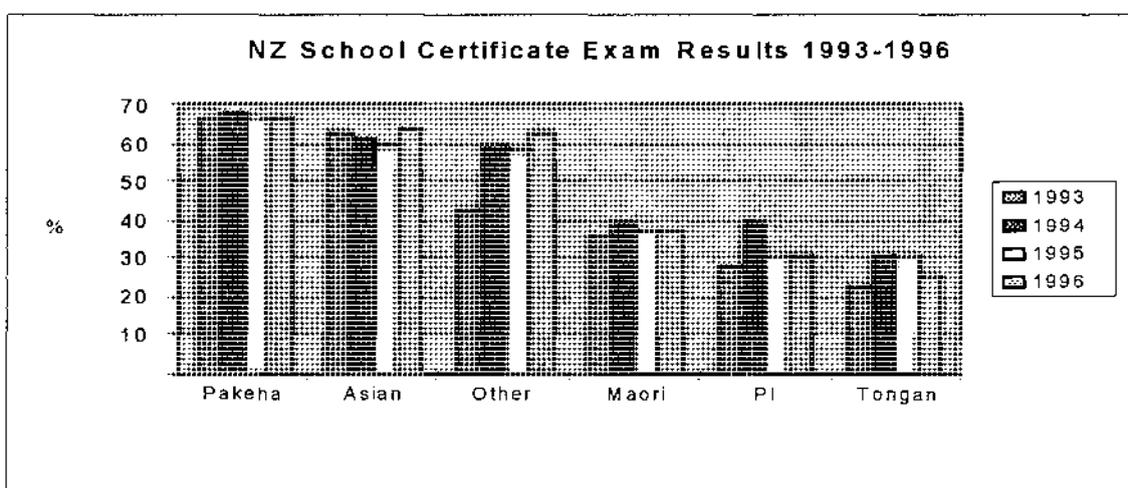
Underachievement in New Zealand secondary schools has been a problem for Pacific Island people for a long time and unemployment over the years is testimony to the presence of underachievement. (Apart from Hawk and Hill's (1996) study, limited research has addressed this problem). Underachievement is closely associated with a person's socio-economic status and ethnic background. It has been a stigma that has been associated with Pacific Island and Maori people in New Zealand for a long time. Their children's academic performance in School Certificate and Bursary exams throughout the years has confirmed that Tongan students' achievement is below that of other ethnic groups in New Zealand.

Fig. 1.1 and Table 1.1 and 1.2 illustrate that underachievement is indeed a problem associated with Pacific Islanders and judging from the graphs, it seems that it is going to persist into the twenty-first century if nothing is done to address it. For instance, Figure 1.1 shows that Tongans have consistently been located at the bottom of the New Zealand School Certificate Examinations between 1993 to 1996, compared to other ethnic groups. Tables 1.1 and 1.2 also indicate the low level of academic achievement of Tongan students in both

University Bursaries and School Certificate examinations in terms of the grades obtained between the period 1993 to 1996. What is disturbing is the fact that not all Pacific Island students are underachievers. Of course there are a considerable number of Tongan students who fail the exam or drop out of school, but there are others from low socio-economic backgrounds who do extremely well. This contrast made the researcher realize that a person's socio-economic status is not the sole contributing factor to the underachievement of Tongan students in New Zealand.

This thesis will attempt to identify the factors that contribute to underachievement and those that facilitate educational achievement, based on the past educational experiences of Tongan secondary school leavers in New Zealand.

Fig.1.1



(Based on statistics supplied by NZQA, 1997)

Table 1.1

UNIVERSITY BURSARIES 1993-1996*Tongan Candidates living in New Zealand Grade Distribution Percentages*

YEAR	Total	A	B	C	D	E
1993	645	4.7	10.4	27.1	41.2	16.3
1994	642	5.1	8.4	34.1	36.8	15.1
1995	562	4.1	14.4	35.2	35.4	10.3
1996	657	1.2	5.8	13.4	32.3	11.1

(Based on statistics supplied by NZQA, op cit)

Table 1.2

SCHOOL CERTIFICATE 1993 - 1996*Tongan Candidates living in New Zealand Grade Distribution Percentages.*

Year	Total	A	B	C	D	E
1993	1757	1.4	6.9	15.1	42.8	33.9
1994	1629	2.4	6.4	18.5	42.1	30.6
1995	1909	1.2	8.1	21.9	40.3	28.5
1996	1601	1.0	7.9	17.6	37.9	35.5

(Based on statistics supplied by NZQA, op cit)

1.1 Researcher's Story

The choice of research topic arises from the researcher's curiosity and distress at seeing Tongans not doing well in a country that seems to have everything a Tongan student needs. The researcher's primary and secondary education was spend in Tonga. After primary school he attended a state boarding institution for boys in the 1980's. The food was of poor quality; students were often hungry; the manual work in the farm (after school and early in the morning) was hard, and he was away from his family five days a week. Sometimes he had to pretend to be sick just to go home and eat something good. Regardless of the difficulties he faced as a high school student, he was still able to achieve.

His interest in the academic achievement of Tongan students in New Zealand originated from the fact that he was a secondary school teacher in Tonga and have always believed that good facilities assist educational achievement. He only came to realize the contrast been Tongan and New Zealand schools when a friend invited him to her high school in South Auckland early last year. What shocked him as an outsider was the fact that the facilities in South Auckland schools were not what he expected. He heard stories upon arrival in New Zealand that South Auckland schools were mainly for Pacific Islanders and that they were not good. To his surprise, they had all the facilities that a Tongan high school principal could ever want - good library, computers, cafeteria, self contained staff room, gym, and well facilitated class rooms.

The researcher has taught senior forms for three years and helped prepare his students for the national exams. English was and still is a major problem for students in Tonga because it is a second language. It often becomes a barrier that prevents some of our students from achieving at school. The facilities at his school were very limited compared to the schools that he saw here in Auckland. The Encyclopedias in their library are long out of date and there were few good reading books available for their students. Staff resources were limited and he had to ask some of his friends who taught in government schools to lend him some of their materials.

The cold season in Tonga was difficult for students. Their classrooms had a lot of missing louvres and the students were often cold when he used to run extra classes at night or early in the morning. However, one of the things that he admired was their effort as they turned up - braving the cold for the sake of knowledge. Not all of them passed, though, but the effort shown by these students was exceptional.

On the contrary, the standard of living in New Zealand is higher and Tongan children have access to good quality and well facilitated schools, whose resources are of much better quality than the one the researcher had been to. In addition, these children are exposed at an early age to the English language, something that is regarded by most parents in Tonga as the key to success. New Zealand offers the necessary tools for effective learning, yet a lot

of Tongan students still underachieve. The researcher's visit to this South Auckland school made him aware that there is more to educational achievement in New Zealand than just well facilitated schools. This visit was what really stimulated his interest in this study.

Gibson and Ogbu (1991) propose that the traditional explanation of ethnic minority underachievement has failed to consider the perspectives of the groups themselves. This is because the dominant group evaluates the behaviours of minorities from the perspective of the dominant group's perceptions of their own social reality or from the perceptions and interpretations that the dominant group members have of their own social reality of minorities (cited in Callender, 1997:14). The researcher has decided to do this study on Tongans in order to ascertain, from their own perspective, the factors affecting achievement and underachievement.

As a Tongan scholar, the researcher believes he has a responsibility to his people in finding ways that will help them better understand the problem of underachievement. He believes that this is a very important study because it attempts to reveal the factors that assist and hinder educational achievement of Tongans in New Zealand. The outcome of this study is hoped to provide Tongan parents with information that will help them better understand their children's educational needs, more aware of the problems that their children face at school, realize the impact their own priorities have on their children's

achievement and help them facilitate a home environment that is conducive to success.

1.2 Research Questions

1. What factors appear to contribute to the success of Tongan secondary school students in Auckland?
2. What are the obstacles/barriers that prevent them from succeeding?
3. What support do parents provide for their children to enable them to achieve their goals ?
4. Is this support sufficient and relevant to their children's need ?
5. Does the amount of parental influence and control over their children have any effect on their academic achievement and personal adjustment ?

1.3 Thesis Outline

This thesis consists of eight chapters. Chapter Two reviews the literature that is related to this study. It also provides a definition of underachievement and a discussion of the of the life of Tongans in New Zealand and their impact on the educational achievement of their children.

Chapter Three provides the context for this study. It deals with the culture and life of Tongans in Auckland and how they have adapted to their new environment. Chapter Four discusses the methodologies used for data collection and analysis in this study, with an emphasis on the procedures

followed during data collection. Chapter Five is the presentation of the findings arising from the interviews and questionnaires. Chapter Six consists of a discussion on the analysis of data collected. Chapter Seven discusses the implications of the findings and also includes recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

For the purpose of this study “underachievers” are defined as ‘individuals who left high school prior to completion of a study program and failed to gain an academic qualification.’ In contrast, “achievers” are defined as ‘individuals who completed a course of study at tertiary level and have received or will soon complete their program and be awarded an academic qualification.’

The lack of research on the Tongan community in New Zealand regarding their educational experiences and level of achievement has forced the researcher to look at the topic in the light of other minority groups’ experiences. The literature in this section is valuable in the sense that it documents the experiences of other related groups. The latter part provides insight into the way of life of Tongans in Auckland in order to provide a social context for this study.

2.1 UNDERACHIEVEMENT AND MINORITY GROUPS

Underachievement has been associated with minority groups. There has been a significant interest in this area and considerable research conducted in an effort to provide an explanation for this phenomenon. Ogbu (1978) researched

several minority groups. He discovered that Puerto Ricans, American-Indians, and Mexican-American's attainment level was lower than that of Anglo-Americans. Furthermore, these groups also terminate their schooling earlier than that of Anglo-Americans. Carter (1970) confirmed that Mexican-Americans attending the same school districts as Anglo-Americans have lower grade point averages and that the gap between the two groups increases substantially during the intermediate grades. He reported that mental withdrawal, manifest in boredom, failure to work, inattentiveness, and discipline problems, begins sometime from the third to the sixth grade (cited in Ogbu, *op cit*:220-221).

West Indians in Britain also share the same unfortunate experience. Ogbu discovered that not only do West Indian children perform less well than English children, they also perform less well than other immigrant children. A Parliamentary Select Committee Report in 1973 stated that some 5500 immigrant pupils were enrolled in special schools, mostly schools for the retarded in England and Wales in 1971. Of these children, 70% were of West Indian origin (cited in Ogbu, *op cit*:240).

The Maori people of New Zealand are a minority group in their own country. Like the minority groups previously mentioned, they also experience underachievement and an increasing rate of school dropouts. Marshall (1993) argues that ethnic groups have historically experienced comparatively high exclusion and 'drop out' rates, high levels of under-achievement and youth

unemployment, disproportionate social problems of teen-age pregnancy, drug abuse, teenage crime and truancy. Hirsh (1988) states that 72% of Maori have left school before sixth form certificate whereas only 37% of Pakeha students have left (cited in Marshall, 1993:11).

Mara *et al.* (in Coxon, *et al.* 1994: 209) claim that there is a substantial and consistent evidence that at all levels of the education system Pacific Island students achieve less well than their Pakeha counterparts. Legat (1988) points out that the state education system is clearly not working for Pacific Island children just as it is not working for the Maori. She cited a Samoan community worker as saying:

Our community makes a big song and dance when 10 kids come through, but what about the hundred who don't. I was watching a television program recently about blacks in the States - how few have succeeded... but how so many are living in poverty, in suburbs where there is so much crime. I thought, that's how it's going for us here if nothing's done. We're at the bottom of the heap now - how much lower can we go ? (Legat, op cit: 70)

Pacific Islanders in New Zealand are also a minority group. This term is representative of a large number of ethnic groups including Tongans, Samoans, Cook Islanders and Niueans. Their academic achievement level is

similar to those of Maori. Table 2.1 makes a comparison between Pacific Islanders and the dominant Pakeha group.

Table 2.1 Number (%) of Pacific Island and Pakeha candidates who passed School Certificate and University Bursary Exam 1993 - 1996

New Zealand School Certificate Exam				
Year	1993	1994	1995	1996
Pacific Island	27.9	31.2	31.1	30.8
Pakeha	65.6	68.4	67.0	67.2
New Zealand University Bursary Exam				
Year	1993	1994	1995	1996
Pacific Island	47.4	50	54	49
Pakeha	77.0	80	80.2	80

(based on statistics provided by NZQA, op cit)

The difference in the academic achievement level of these two groups is very obvious. There is approximately 30% difference between the Pakeha group and Pacific islanders and it appears to be increasing. Students leaving school without a formal qualification is something that Pacific Islanders have in common with Maori in New Zealand.

The proportion of all school leavers in 1996 leaving with no formal qualification was 19.1%, an increase of 1.0 percentage point from 1995. The proportion of Maori leaving with no formal qualification was 39%, up 3.6 percentage points from last year, continuing an increase since 1993. The proportion of Pacific Island students leaving with no formal qualification was 26.6%, up 2.3 percentage points from 1995 (*Education Statistics News Sheet*, 1997:1).

What makes the difference in the achievement level of these two groups? Hawk and Hill (1996) conducted a very important study on eight Decile 1¹ schools in Auckland in an attempt to discover the factors that affect the academic achievement of students in these schools with Pacific Island-dominated rolls. Hawk and Hill's (1996) revealed that the fact that the majority of students from the eight schools in their study did not have the resources available to those in other schools nor the experience that other New Zealand children have. These factors, according to their view, restrict students' ability to achieve at school.

The purpose of their research was to "identify, understand and describe the things that impact on students achievement in order that the knowledge will enable all parties involved to work together in order to improve opportunities for

¹ To assist the government in funding schools more equitably they were ranked on a socio-economic indicator scale from one to ten. This was compiled by the Ministry of Education (1994) from the following data: addresses from a random sample of 60 students from each secondary school, equivalent household income, parents' occupation, household crowding, parent's educational qualifications, income support payments received by parents, Maori ethnicity and Pacific Island ethnicity. During 1995 the two ethnicity dimensions were combined and school deciles re-determined.

the students...” Their findings will be discussed in more detail due to the fact that this was the latest and most comprehensive study conducted on Pacific Island student dominated schools in New Zealand.

Hawk and Hill (1996) discovered that there are various contributing factors to the underachievement of Pacific Island students in these schools. Many students start their secondary school years up to two and three years behind in language and numeracy skills compared with similar cohorts in other schools. For a range of reasons, often beyond the control of the schools and the students, students do not have the skills in English and Maths that enable them to easily complete a year 9 curriculum.

2.1.1 Poverty

Poverty was cited in Hawk and Hill's (1996) study as a contributing factor to underachievement. In addition to the physical and material deprivation experienced by Pacific Island students in New Zealand, Hawk and Hill (1996:76) claim that there is a lack of the cultural capital that is an advantage in the western materialistic and individualistic world. “This results in the feelings of hopelessness and failure that are described throughout this report”. Quite often poverty deprives students of an environment that is conducive to success. The following accounts help depict the home environment where many Pacific Island students come from:

I had a student that we were very concerned about so I called on the home. It was a very old house, very clean. There was a dog and a cat. The lawn was very tidy. It was a similar standard of living to that of a Tongan village. They had a tripod gas cooker and no hot water. There were sheets at the windows for curtains. It was very clean and very poor (Senior Management cited in Hawk and Hill, op cit:76).

When the mother took me up to her bedroom there were mattresses on the floor and no other furniture. She had no desk to work at, no books, no newspaper, no pencil or paper and the family shared clothes. This girl had done well in a couple of School Cert papers even though she only attended about one day in three because she minded siblings while her parents were at work (Principal, cited in Hawk & Hill, Ibid).

Poverty also affects the quality and quantity of food available at home. They discovered that food was not always available in the qualities or quantity needed by growing adolescents, and teachers believed this to be a major contributing factor to tiredness, poor health, problematic behaviour and short concentration spans.

2.1.2 Parental expectation and support

Parents also contribute to the underachievement of Pacific Island students. Most, if not all, parents have expectations for their children and quite often these expectations are unrealistic and in contrast to their children's area of interest. To make things worse, parents often do not provide the necessary

support their children need. This often leads to poor performance and loss of interest in school work. Foliaki (1993:98), a Tongan scholar in New Zealand, describes her father in the following words: "He was a very ambitious person, my Dad. He expected his children to follow the same path and his expectation was very precise: we were all going to be medical doctors."

A teacher in Hawk and Hill's (1996) study makes a very interesting and soul searching comment about Pacific Island parents:

Parents say that education is a priority and it is important that their children get qualifications but I challenge them to add up how much they spend on education and supporting their children compared to how much they give to the church and other things. If it was a priority, they would be prepared to support it (Hawk & Hill, op cit:80).

It appears that those who really benefit from education in New Zealand are students from secure economic backgrounds. According to Ainsworth *et al.* (not dated:21) high academic attainment in New Zealand has been closely linked with social status and wealth. "Attainment thus becomes a commodity which can be chosen, but those who benefit from it cause disadvantages to other groups, creating social polarization " (Echols,1990, cited in Ainsworth, *op.cit.*:22).

2.1.3 Schools and Underachievement

New Zealand schools are often insensitive to the needs and problems of Pacific Island students in general. Foliaki (*op cit*:106) points out that Pacific Island students do not find school enjoyable in New Zealand and blames the teachers for failing to make learning process enjoyable:

I think education should, if it is effective, create the desire to learn, and it should allow the kids to experience the fact that learning is pleasure. At present Pacific Island children in general are not experiencing education as positive and enjoyable, and are not successful at it. If students learn not to like learning, and feel they are not capable of learning, then it is the educators who have failed. I think that New Zealand educators have really failed in relation to Maori and Pacific island children.

2.1.4 Low Teacher Expectation

Hawk and Hill (*op cit*:61) discovered that teacher's low expectation of their students also contribute to underachievement. The following comments from the respondents in their study prove this point:

They (teachers) have low expectations of the kids so the kids respond accordingly... (Teacher)

We need to lift expectations - the kids' expectations of the staff, and the staff's expectations of the kids. Too many of us say, "Oh well, you don't know our kids" (Teacher)

2.1.5 Dezoning

Dezoning has been mentioned as one of the factors that affects the academic performance of students in New Zealand, according to Hawk and Hill (*op cit*). Dezoning basically gives the students the freedom to attend a school of their choice, provided that they get accepted. As a result, the brilliant and wealthy students are more inclined to move to schools with better facilities and reputation. In South Auckland's case, students move out from their pre-dezoning schools and leave those who could not do the same behind. A teacher made the following comment about the issue of dezoning:

The top has been creamed off since dezoning and this has changed the nature of the school. We are left with kids who needed those role models. There has been a change in attitude towards race that is an intrinsic result of dezoning. When there was zoning, people had responsibility for this community. Kids went to school with the people they lived beside and there was a citizenship responsibility. Now we are left with the people who are loyal to us and a group who thinks no one wants them (Hawk & Hill,op cit:95).

Another teacher participant claims that the good kids have been shipped out and that their school has become a ghetto school. The worse thing about it is that the kids are beginning to identify themselves more and more with the ghetto culture that they see in USA films and videos (*op cit*:96).

2.2 TONGAN ADAPTIVE STRATEGY

The topic under study is directly related to Tongans adaptive strategy to life in Auckland. Their adaptive strategy seems to have a negative impact on their children and their performance at school. It results from a tension between their social and cultural upbringing in Tonga and that of urban New Zealand. The influence of their Tongan social and cultural upbringing play a very significant part in this dilemma because the majority of Tongans in New Zealand are originally from Tonga. Statistics confirms that nearly 6 in every 10 Tongans in New Zealand in 1991 were born in Tonga” (*Statistics New Zealand,1995:15*). Most Tongan parents in New Zealand grew up in Tonga and were neither mentally nor socially prepared for the life overseas. Their method of adaptation in New Zealand is very similar to the way of life in Tonga, which is quite often not compatible with their new environment. However, it is their children and their education that suffer the consequences.

Their adaptive strategies are very much *kainga* or family-oriented. A traditional Tongan family will be very similar to Macphersons’ (1978) definition of the good Samoan family as one which exhibits order, which maintains high standards of behavior amongst its members, which brings up its children correctly and shown an awareness of its obligations to the extended kin group of which it is a member (cited in Utumapu,1992: 64).

Sharing with one's relatives is a very important aspect of the Tongan culture and is very much a part of the Tongan adaptive strategy in New Zealand. Fusitu'a (1992) gives us an insight to the hospitable and sharing nature of Tongan migrants toward their relatives in the following ways. Fusitu'a explains that upon arrival in New Zealand, accommodation was not a problem as the *kainga*, extended family network operated to ensure the welfare of its members, even if the household exceeded the limit deemed suitable by health regulations.

In a society that depends on each other to share meagre resources, reciprocity plays a vital role. Graves et al. (1977) point out that Polynesian people share their resources through kin-networks because cooperation and hospitality are two essential elements of their culture instead of establishing a strong economic base for the immediate family. He also emphasized the importance to Tongans of maintaining a reputation for willingness to help one's relatives, regardless of the fact that it can become quite costly and burdensome at times. The assistance given to relatives falls into two major categories: assisting relatives within New Zealand and remittances to relatives in Tonga.

Hill *et al.* (1982) states that family obligations is an important concept embedded within the Tongan way of life and values. He also claims that these obligation are not enforced commitments, but due to the 'sharing' nature of the Tongans, or the Polynesian peoples in general, is recognized more as a

natural occurrence or 'the thing to do'. Lafitani (1992), a Tongan scholar who has conducted a study on the way of life of Tongans in Canberra, points out that Tongan migrants normally share money or materials with others because of the traditional view that it is a form of investment. Those who give generously will be respected and treated as guests during ceremonial or church functions.

These Tongan cultural values continue to be practiced by Tongan migrants overseas and is causing both economic and social problems for them in New Zealand. Such practice diverts money that should have been allocated to their children's education to maintaining ties with relatives.

2.2.1 The Church

Church is another important aspect of the Tongan culture and it also plays a vital part in the lives of the Tongan migrants in New Zealand. Lafitani (op cit: 29) believes that this is due to a need for social harmony and the hope of keeping our language and traditional cultural values alive. Nearly all of the Tongans in New Zealand are Christians. The majority of them belong to Tongan churches where the service is conducted in the Tongan language. According to a recent study on Tongans in New Zealand, nine out of ten Tongans belong to a religious group (*Statistics New Zealand*, 1995: 11).

Louden (1977, cited in Fusitu'a, *op cit*: 51) believes that the church becomes an important aspect of migrant's lives due to the inadequate and limited participation opportunities in the larger societies. The church then becomes the major source of direction, motivation and purpose for the migrants. Legat (1988) also claims that the church is still immensely strong and still holds the allegiance of the vast proportion of Islanders who see it as a rock of support in a new country. The churches are a safety mechanism, a cornerstone for Pacific Island life.

On the other hand, religion appeals to many migrant Tongans due to the spiritual and worldly rewards it offers them. Cowling (1989) claims that the churches offer opportunities for both men and women to gain status - men as ministers, stewards and lay preachers and women as lay preachers and as leaders of women's groups (cited in Fusitu'a, *op cit*:48). Status is important to Tongans, and even though social status is determined by birth, the lack of social status can be compensated by ones' religious status. Fusitu'a (*op cit*: 51) believes that religious status can be seen as a substitute for social status.

Giving, as previously stated, is very much a part of the Tongan culture. This traditional practice was adopted as part of the values of the church by the early missionaries, and is still very much alive in Tongan migrant communities overseas today. Lafitiani (*op cit.* 30) states that one has to contribute a lot in obligations such as *misinale*² and *fakaafe*³.

Marcus (1975) expands on this issue by claiming that the church has become the focus of conspicuous competitive gift-giving with no expectation of reciprocal return (cited in Baker, 1977:62). Tongamoa (1987) also adds another dimension to this dilemma when she points out that churches are usually involved in fund raising mainly to support their respective churches in Tonga.

Such generosity toward the church indirectly contributes to the underachievement of Tongan children because it deprives them and their families of the chance to establish a strong economic base in New Zealand. The children realize this and do not like it. Hawk and Hill's (*op cit*) findings discovered that many teachers and some students questioned the decision-making about family use of available money. A number of students felt angry that so much money goes to the church when they needed school equipment,

² *Misinale* is an annual function where the members donate money to the church in a competitive sort of way. The amount of money a person/family gives is announced in public and quite often the next person/family tries to exceed that. This is how it becomes competitive.

³ *Fakaafe* refers to a feast church members prepare for the church.

uniform and trips. Students cited church commitments as part of the reason for not doing their homework or getting to it very late at night.

2.2.2 Tongan Discipline Methods

The Pacific island method of discipline has been an issue of debate in New Zealand. This is due to the difference in the type of discipline used by Tongans and that used by the larger Pakeha society. Kavapalu (1993) looked at the Tongan method of discipline and gives us an insight to the 'dark side' of punishment in Tonga which, in many respects, is still practiced by Tongan parents in New Zealand. This issue has often led to confusion on the part of the child - who seems to be getting two conflicting messages from both the home and the school. As a result, quite often this leads to children getting what Legat (1988) calls 'identity crises' - a state when the child is uncertain about the value of his/her home culture and its worth in the New Zealand context (*op cit: 70*).

Schoeffel *et al.* (1996) conducted a study on Pacific Island parents concerning their attitudes to child training and discipline in New Zealand. It becomes evident from this study that physical punishment is the preferred method of discipline, and it is carried out by Samoan and Tongan parents in the study to preserve their cultural identity. Tongan and Samoan parents laid particular emphasis on the importance of their children growing up with a "Samoan" or

“Tongan” cultural identity and value system”. She also emphasized that some Polynesian parents see the state as a threat to their authority and their culture:

Some mentioned that the State was taking away from parents the right to punish children physically, and that their children knew and took advantage of this. Most questioned the right of the State to intervene in family matters, asking rhetorically how, if parents could not discipline their children as they saw fit, they could raise their children properly (Schoeffel, *op cit*:137).

Despite the fact that physical punishment is condemned by law in New Zealand, it is still the accepted method to many Tongan parents here. Kavapalu (1993) argues that physical punishment is becoming increasingly problematic for Tongans themselves...but it remains the most widely accepted form of discipline and in Tongan socialization theory is both normative and functional.

This is due to the fact that physical punishment in the Tongan context is a form of teaching. Commenting on the cultural aspect of physical punishment to Tongans, Kavapalu stresses that punishment forcibly teaches children behavioral and emotional control. Borofsky (cited in Kavapalu, *Ibid*;) adds that Tongan child punishment also teaches their subordinate role in the learning process.

The instructive purpose of the Tongan punishment is in question when childrens' performances at school are affected. Legat (*op cit.* 70) claims that the kids with serious identity crises tend to perform poorly on both situations, at home and in school.

2.2.3 Employment and the Tongan Community

Many of our people who migrate as laborers can at best become only second class citizens. The migrant's first hand knowledge of living is restricted to a small circle of urban workers who rarely can see beyond their weekly pay - packets, horse racing and beer parties (Latu,1975, cited in de Bres, 1975: 21).

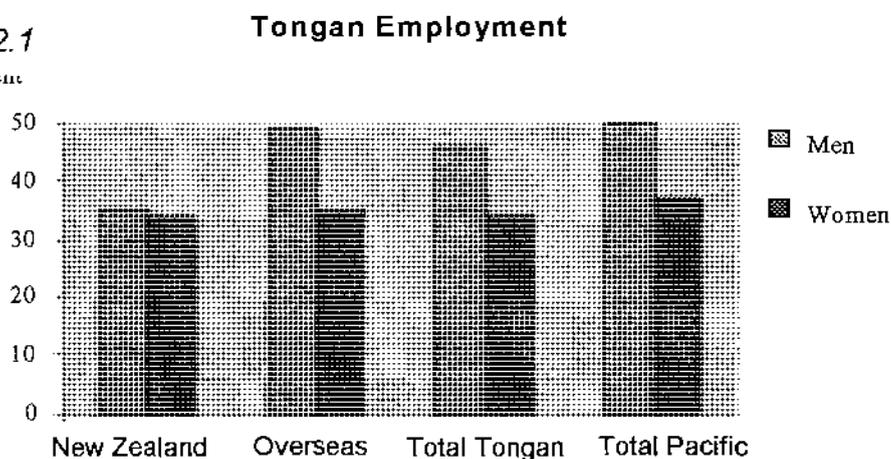
Low paid employment is something that is generally associated with the Pacific Island community in Auckland. Spooniey (1978:63) states that the Polynesian migrant has tended to remain at the bottom of the structure in the semi - and unskilled jobs and has argued that there is discrimination in the workplace. He conducted a study on 44 Auckland firms who employed Pacific Islanders and suspects that the Polynesian migrant's plight in the workplace is due to the work of what he calls 'gate keepers', managers at various firms who do not see Polynesians as suitable for supervisory roles. "We deliberately do not employ Islanders in certain departments because we suspect public reaction would not be too favorable" was the response from one of the managers in Spoonleys' study (*op cit.*:67). It is obvious from Spoonley's study that managers have a

certain pre-conceived idea about or discrimination against Pacific Islanders in general. For example, “.. it was freely admitted by a number of employers that they felt that Pacific Islanders were best suited to jobs which required little skill” (*op cit*: 66).

Tongans are also part of the bigger picture. Whitehead (1974:76) describes Tongan workers in Auckland in the 1970’s as unskilled production line workers and over-represented in the ‘manufacturing’ sector. As already mentioned, the majority of the Tongans in New Zealand were born overseas. According to Statistics New Zealand (*op cit*:15) nearly six in every 10 Tongans living in New Zealand were born in the Pacific Islands (Tonga). This is very significant in relation to this study because again it is overseas - born Tongans that contribute most to the employment sector, as outlined in Fig. 2.1.

Fig. 2.1

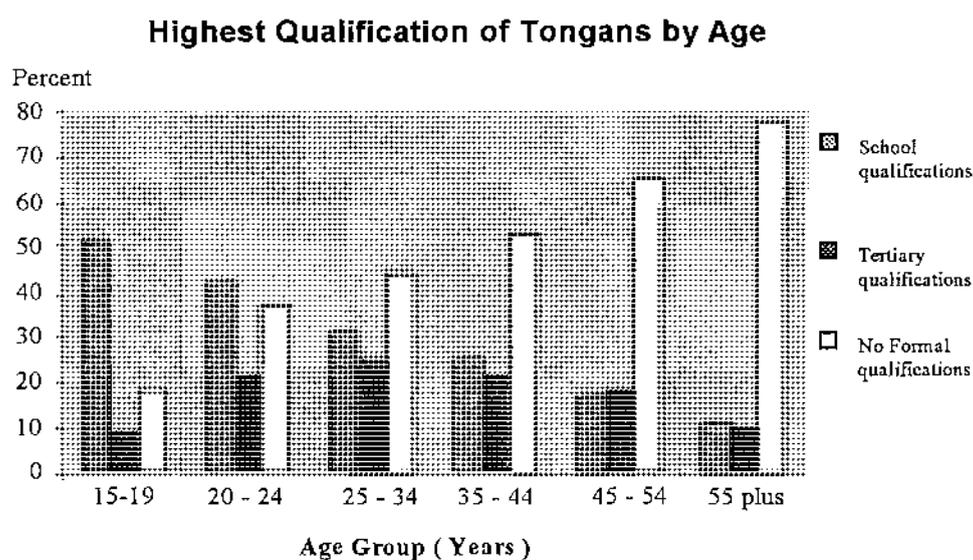
Percent



(based on statistics from *Statistics New Zealand*, *op cit*: 15)

There is also something interesting about the significant number of overseas - born Tongans in the employment sector - the majority will be engaged in low paid jobs due to the low level of education they acquire. With reference to Fig.2.2 the majority of the people in what may be called the parent category (45-55+) have no formal qualification whatsoever. This group consist mainly of immigrants.

Fig.2.2



(based on statistics from Statistics New Zealand, *op cit.* 27)

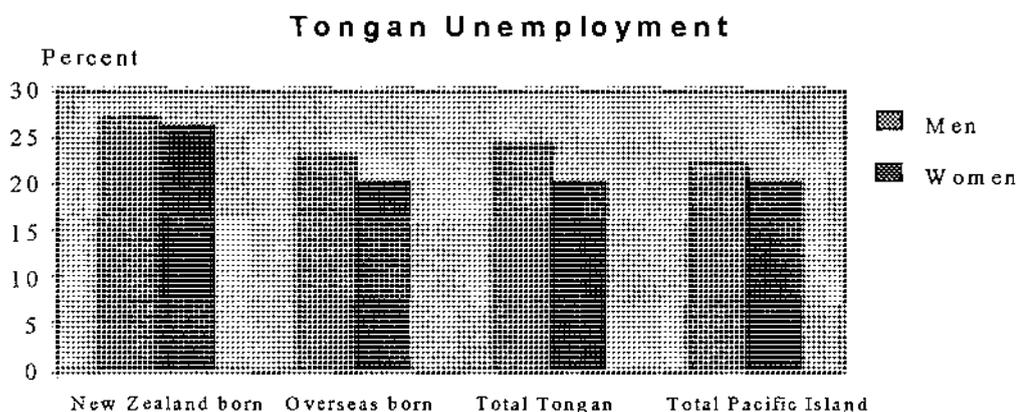
The fact that the majority of migrants from Tonga are unskilled and not qualified forces them to work in low paid jobs in factories. Krishnan *et al.* (1994:63) adds that clerical work was not common amongst Tongans with only one in ten Tongans involved in 'clerical' work, compared with one in six for all employed Pacific Island people (57% of the total Tongan population in New Zealand). In

1991 half of the Tongan population aged 15 years and over had a yearly income equal to or above \$9,500 (*Statistics New Zealand, op.cit.* 47).

2.2.4 Unemployment and other related issues

To make things worse for the migrants, unemployment is another part of life in New Zealand and a lot of Pacific Islanders, including Tongans, belong in this category. The unemployment rate for Tongans in New Zealand is higher than that of Pacific Islanders in general (see Fig.2.3). Most importantly, it is New Zealand-born Tongans that have the highest rate of unemployment. As a result they have to resort to unemployment benefits, which, at the moment, are not enough for most families to live on. With reference to Fig.2.3 the graph indicates that unemployment is now becoming a serious problem in the Tongan community in New Zealand.

Fig. 2.3



(Based on statistics from *Statistics New Zealand, op cit.* 42)

Statistics New Zealand reports that more than one in every five people in the Tongan labor force (22%) was unemployed in 1991. Men were more likely than women to be unemployed and New Zealand born Tongans were more likely than women to be unemployed than those born overseas" (*ibid*).

What is more alarming about Tongan unemployment in New Zealand is the fact that the age group most vulnerable to unemployment is that of students who just dropped out of school (15 - 19 year olds). " Young Tongans are more likely to be unemployed than their elders... At ages below 25, unemployment levels were higher among New Zealand born Tongans...." (*op cit*:43). This is very serious because it means that underachievement, New Zealand born Tongans, and unemployment are all inter-related.

As a result of unemployment (whatever the reason maybe) a significant number of people resort to the dole, (approximately \$133 per week) which is obviously not enough for a family in South Auckland to live on. Parents who are on the benefit cannot help their children who are trying to trying to succeed at school. In fact it makes things more difficult for them. Their income will determine the kind of educational experience that their children will receive. With reference to Fig.2.1, the fact that men are more likely to be unemployed than women is a concern because men are traditionally the bread winners for their families.

2.2.5 Language Barrier

The use of the English language as the medium of communication in New Zealand has made things harder for the not so well educated Tongan migrant to find a good job. Spoonley (*op cit:66*) states that language was definitely a serious problem in the workplace and quotes one of the managers in his study as saying: "If only they (Pacific Islanders) spoke better English, we would have few problems. If they are going to be accepted here, then they must be able to speak better English than they do now." The problem in the workplace determines to a certain extent the kind of income for that particular migrant family.

On the other hand, English can also create a barrier in the communication between the home and the school and it can also affect the academic performance of their children. Foliaki (*op cit:107*) states that parents are aware of the importance of being involved but did not have the language skills to take part. She also says that it was simply unrealistic to expect Tongan parents to turn up to board meetings as they cannot understand the proceedings.

2.2.6 Residential Area

Another factor that affects the academic achievement of our students is the environment surrounding the place where they live. This is directly related to the type of employment that people are engaged in. According to Loomis (1990), Polynesians, like many migrant workers, have been forced out of inner

city areas in recent years. He compares this with the situation in many Third World countries, where the poor are housed at the edge of the city, or in special government run townships. Hawk and Hill's (*op cit*) study proved that poverty in Pacific Island family is real and is affecting academic performance of students in schools. A senior management person in their research made the following comment:

*I had a student that we were very concerned about so I called on the home. It was very a very old house, very clean. There was a dog and cats. The lawn was very tidy. It was a very similar standard of living to that of a Tongan village. They had a tripod gas cooker and no hot water. There were sheets at the windows for curtains (cited in Hawk & Hill, *op cit*:76).*

Most Tongans in New Zealand live in South Auckland where housing is cheaper. The homes in this area are often overcrowded with relatives and therefore fail to provide an environment that is conducive to study. Loomis (*op cit*: 89) quotes a housing worker as saying that 80% of the 25,000 inadequately housed families were Polynesian. Krishnan *et al.* (1994:21) points out that low incomes and crowded housing concentrated in poor housing areas affect educational aspirations and attainment. An environment where violence, crimes, and overcrowded housing predominates, is definitely not a place for students who wish to achieve.

2.3 Summary

The early part of the literature in this section provides some background information on underachievement in relation to other ethnic minority groups. There is one thing that is consistent in all these groups and that is low level of academic achievement in examinations. They are generally below that of the dominant groups. The study by Hawk and Hill (1996) found that there are external factors that affect the academic achievement of students in their study. For instance, some of the students come from homes that are poor and cannot provide an environment that is conducive to their children's education. They do not have excess to the technology and resources that are available to those from a wealthy family.

Hawk and Hill (*op cit*) also discovered that parents are partly responsible for their children's underachievement. Their unrealistic expectations often make students loose interest in their studies, especially if it is not what their children want to do. The teachers are also part of the blame due to their low expectation for their students. The students realise this and make no attempt on their part to achieve.

The latter part of this section discusses how Tongans' adaptive strategies affect the academic achievement of students in New Zealand secondary schools. Church is a major contributing factor here. The Tongan churches in Auckland encourage competitive gift giving and fail to emphasize the

importance of education. The maintenance of family ties is often costly and has a detrimental effect on most Tongan families, taking into consideration their already low income. When all these 'commitments' are deducted from their weekly or fortnightly income, it is surprising what is left for accommodation, food and their children's education.

These factors take away a substantial amount of the financial backing that students need and thus affect their educational aspirations and achievement. It appears that parents who are financially secure have a greater chance for their children to achieve their goals in school. The intention of this research is to find, firstly, how the above mentioned factors affect the underachievement of Tongan students in New Zealand and, secondly, any other underlying factor(s) associated with the topic.

The following chapter discusses the Tongan way of life in more detail in an attempt to set the context for this study.

CHAPTER THREE

SETTING THE SCENE

3.0 Introduction

This chapter sets the context for this study by providing a chronological discussion of the factors relating to Tongan migration to New Zealand and the adaptive strategies of these migrants to life in the new country. The first part of this chapter attempts to provide an historical discussion of the significance of education to Tongans and how our people came to New Zealand with a view to educate their children. The latter part discusses the Tongan way of life in Auckland in an attempt to show that our people's educational aspirations can be affected by their way of life.

3.1 EDUCATION IN TONGA

Formal education was introduced to Tonga by the early missionaries in the late nineteenth century. Mission schools were established and Tonga witnessed the dawn of a new era. Gradually, the government realised the importance of formal education and joined the missionaries in their effort to educate Tonga's illiterate masses. Government schools were established and certain government legislation, such as the Education Act of 1927, enforced compulsory education for all people between the ages of seven and sixteen.

From this point onwards, Tongans have learned to respect education and realise the benefits it can bring to them if they become successful. Even those who failed to complete their secondary school education still acknowledge the importance of education today. Since the mid-twentieth century, the importance of having a formal education has increased.

3.1.1 Cultural and Social values associated with education in Tonga

Tonga's current monarch became Tonga's first university graduate. In fact, he was the first Pacific Islander to graduate with a university Degree. Thus, education became more appealing and challenging to the Tongan people. Since then Tonga has witnessed more of its citizens graduate with qualifications in various fields.

Subsequently, the educated person, regardless of his/her social rank, becomes recognized as *poto* or knowledgeable and is respected in the village. The increasing popularity of a University type education has had a great impact on the people, especially when they realized that it could act as a vehicle for upward social mobility. For a people who have been under the rule of Kings and Chiefs for centuries, the cultural value and social status attached to being "educated" was attractive and promised liberation.

3.1.2 Migration: In search of a 'better' life and education

Commoners soon realized that tertiary education was expensive and only the privileged upper middle class families could afford to attain it. The need to have further education and an improved living standard is so great that many people considered migration as an option that could meet these needs. A lot of the early Tongan migrants to New Zealand decided to work to provide their children with that opportunity. This was cited by participants in Fusitu'a's (1992) study as one of the reasons for migration.

New Zealand schools are better equipped, financed, and of higher standard than those in the islands. This would offer their children a better opportunity to achieve their dreams. Fusitu'a (1992:77) supports this and has provided the following statements from his participants as evidence.

We came to New Zealand to educate them because in Tonga, only those with power and authority were able to send their children to school overseas

Another participant in Fusitu'a's study commented on the social hierarchy in New Zealand in comparison to the rather static one they left behind.

... in Tonga ... you know who is wealthy and who is poor - our differences were really obvious. Here it is different. And here it is possible to get what you need to lift your status if you go back (ibid).

What the second participant referred to as “what you need to lift your status if you go back” is education. One’s status in Tonga is very important. If one is not born into the aristocratic class, the only vehicle for upward social mobility in Tonga’s once rigid social hierarchy system is education. Today this is evident in Tonga as the commoners are slowly but gradually taking over high positions in government.

3.2 Early Migration and Employment

During the man's first four weeks in the factory he worked at odd jobs - he swept the floors, helped out in the cafeteria and oiled the machines. He was afraid of the factory; he understood little of what went on in it. Caught in the noise, the overwhelming size of the building, the intricate system of machines and conveyor belts and cables, the large number of workers whose language he didn't understand, he felt small, lost. It was as if he was trapped in the belly of a huge metallic fish, he told his wife when he came home from work the second day. He felt safe in the fish only at morning tea time and in the lunch hour when he was with the other Samoan workers (Wendt, 1973:53).

Polynesian migration to New Zealand started in the early years of the Second World War. Cook Islanders, Niueans, Tokelauans and Samoans were among the first Polynesians to settle here, due to their colonial connection with the New Zealand government. According to Challis (1973:44) migration from the above mentioned countries only gained momentum in the 1950’s. However, it was only in the 1970’s that Tongans began to arrive in appreciable numbers

although their entry has always been restricted. With reference to Table 3.1 the number of Tongan migrants to New Zealand started to rise dramatically between the late 1960's and the 1970's. The majority of these migrants came to New Zealand for short periods of time, though some settled permanently.

Table 3.1 **Tongan Migration to New Zealand 1969-1974**

1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	Total
1,550	2,056	3,720	4,752	5,585	7,209	24, 882

(Adapted from Hill *et al. op cit.* 6)

Most of them were unskilled people who came to New Zealand in search of paid employment, education for their children, and a chance for a better life in the new country. Many of them did not receive a good formal education in Tonga and it was a struggle for them to adapt to their new environment and to find a good job. Legat (1988) points out that the professional classes, the doctors, teachers and lawyers, stayed behind in the islands.

The early migrants came at a time when there was plenty of work in New Zealand and when *palangis*⁴ picked the type of job they wanted to do. They usually left the hard manual work to Pacific Islanders who were willing to do anything to earn money. Legat (*Ibid*) claims that when New Zealand wanted muscle and compliant diligence for repetitive factory tasks and dirty manual work *palangi* workers often didn't want, the immigrants took it up. She also says that those early migrants were generally unskilled and poorly educated people.

Many of the early Tongan migrants worked in unskilled or semi skilled jobs upon arrival. Wendt's (1973) extract above portrays the early migrant as an alien in a foreign country. His lack of a good formal education and skills made them feel more alienated in the work place. A great number, if not the majority of the migrants from Tonga, did not have any formal qualifications. They could not earn a decent living in Tonga at the time and the only way for them to move their families up the social ladder was to find better paid employment elsewhere. Hill *et al.* (1982) conducted a study on the Fisi'ihoi family, a Tongan migrant family in New Zealand in the early 1980's. The following comment was made about the father:

⁴ *Palangi* or *Pakeha* is a Polynesian term describing a person of European extraction. These terms would be used interchangeably in this study.

When in Tonga, Mr. Fisi'ihoi worked for the Tongan Construction Company as a laborer earning \$2.65 per day... In New Zealand, Mr. Fisi'ihoi has a job at Fisher Tile Planning in Glen Innes... His present wage is approximately \$4.60 per hour (Hill et al, op cit: 8).

The above mentioned comparison of Mr. Fisi'ihoi's Tongan and New Zealand wage gives us a fair idea as to what motivated the early Tongan migrants to come to New Zealand. Their chances of having a good life in the islands were very slim and the only remaining option was to migrate overseas.

As discussed in more detail in the previous chapter, another problem associated with the unskilled employment of the early migrants was the use of the English language. The language barrier was due to the fact that the majority failed to get a good formal education in Tonga. Migrants with limited English were unlikely to be employed in white collar jobs. As a result, the early Tongan migrants ended up doing unskilled jobs in factories and consequently set an 'image' that gives reason to the wider Pakeha society to assume that all Polynesians are unskilled workers, and that they are only useful for manual labor. Such an 'image' has helped to preserve racism in the work place even today.

3.3 OVERSTAYERS

History has shown again and again that man is by nature a migrant...Not so long ago, you, our Pakeha brothers, emigrated to New Zealand from Britain and Ireland because of need...We are asking New Zealanders through you, Honorable Minister, to have compassion and to be humane with island overstayers (Finau, cited in de Bres & Campbell, 1976:19)

Things did not go smoothly with the Tongan migrant community in New Zealand in the 1970's and early 80's. Illegal migration in relation to Pacific Islanders was a big issue in New Zealand then. Pacific Islanders were the main target of the Immigration and Police Departments operation to deport illegal migrants. Many of the Tongans came to New Zealand to work on a temporary basis at that time. They discovered that the costs of travel and living in New Zealand, plus the maintenance of family ties in Tonga, meant they wouldn't be saving much if they were to return home at the end of their contract. So many of them decided to breach the Immigration Act and stay on as illegal migrants.

The Police, operating in conjunction with the Immigration Department, conducted dawn raids on the Pacific Island community, including Tongans. The callous nature of these raids appeared to be based on a strong and deep seated sense of arrogance, ignorance, and racism. Homes were attacked and people were rudely dragged out of bed and put in Police vans. De Bres and Campbell (*op cit.*21) cite a Tongan spokesperson as saying: "*It is as if these*

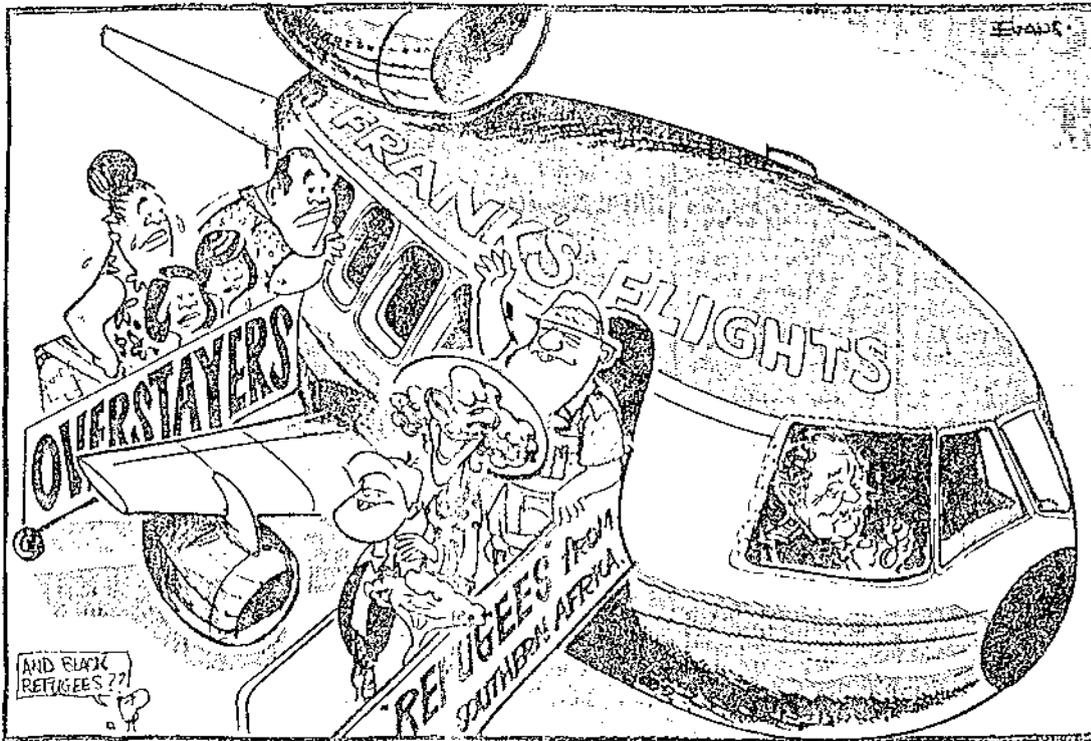
people have committed some ghastly crime - a murder, or rape." In reality, this practice was more or less like a witch-hunt and many Tongans were deported in the process. The majority of the people that were 'attacked' in these raids were legal migrants. According to Templeton (1976):

The action taken in connection with the detection, apprehension, and removal of illegal immigrants has had its effect on the attitudes of Pacific Islanders in New Zealand...the innocent people affected are entirely Pacific Islanders. They are the ones who face up to the Police and Immigration Officers and who suffer the indignity of having their homes searched... when their homes have been targets and no arrests have been made this leaves a real sour taste and lasting resentment (cited in de Bres & Campbell, op cit:24).

It is ironic that these raids did not apply to *Palangis* who committed the same crime. The following cartoon portrays the irony behind the crack down on Pacific Island illegal migrants.

Figure 3.1

Tongan illegal immigrants



14 September 1976. Gratefully acknowledged to N. Z. Herald.

3.4 The Tongan Family Unit

At the very heart of Tongan life is the family unit, and it is that which keeps Tonga very strong: her loyalty within herself, her spirit of closeness, and the bonds of unity among her people (Hill et al., op cit: 3).

The extended family is an integral part of the Tongan people's existence (as already discussed in Chapter 2) and this is reflected in the fact that its members share their resources with one another and help each other in times of need. Prior to the 1970's, from my personal experience, the extended family members - parents, their children, and their grandchildren all lived together as

one family unit. Sharing was one of the central values of the unit - members were expected to help each other in times of need. Even when they separated, each member knew what was expected of them. The sharing nature of Tongans could be related to the fact that the Tongan society is very much a communal one. Helu (1997) observes that sharing, in the Tongan context, is a custom which promotes social cohesion and the survival of the group.

However, sharing took up a new meaning in New Zealand at the time of the early Tongan migrants. It wasn't only to do with just sharing one's surplus resources. It meant the economic, social, and physical survival of the group. Sharing was extremely important at that time because without the support and care of the extended family unit, the early migrants would not have been able to survive on their own.

Even today new Tongan migrants do not have to worry about accommodation because this is catered for by the *kainga*⁵. Food and accommodation would be provided until the new migrants are able to find a job. In return, the new migrants are expected to contribute to the *kavenga faka-famili*⁶ and to show the same hospitality to members who were to come in the future. The generosity of the *kainga* even goes to the extent where they get some of their members over to New Zealand and provide them with jobs.

⁵ *Kainga* refers to members of the extended family.

⁶ *Kavenga faka-famili* refers to obligations of the extended family, such as weddings and funerals.

3.5 Church and the exploitation of the migrant community

Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people (Marx, 1970:131).

The church is another very important part of the lives of Tongans in New Zealand. Tongans have been 'devout' Christians since the introduction of Christianity by the early missionaries. Even today, it is still regarded as important, although some Tongans have begun to question its relevance in today's society.

Christianity in the Tongan context is interwoven with the Tongan culture in more ways than one. The religious ceremonies in Tongan churches, whether it be Methodist or Seventh Day Adventist, are similar because they have organized it in a way that is socially and culturally acceptable. *Respect*, a value that Helu⁷ (1997) referred to as one of the two essences of the Tongan culture, is being transferred directly to the church setting. The traditional hierarchical system is again also part of the transfer.

For instance, the King or his nobles would receive special seats in church that are away from the rest of the people. If they are in a church function, tradition dictates that their presence be acknowledged. They always receive the best food and reception during church feasts. The roles played by the church and

culture are complimentary to each other. The church legitimizes the control of culture (ruling class) over the people and in return, culture (respect for authority) justifies the actions and decisions of the churches.

The early migrants to New Zealand brought with them their religion. It provided them a with a chance to meet, talk, and share their experiences and any problems encountered in their new environment. It was a time to be among one's own ethnic group, to speak one's language, and to rejuvenate one's 'energy' before the commencement of the new working week. After the feeling of isolation in the work place during the week the migrant looked forward to a reunion with his/her friends or relatives in church. The researcher believes that the Tongan churches compensated the migrants' trivial state of existence in this *Palangi* dominated society by providing them with a sense of self worth and a chance to feel accepted.

On the other hand Helu (*op cit*) believes that religion was practiced by Tongan migrants overseas as a form of response to their new environment.

Many Tongans are lost. Take for example a couple from my village in Ha'apai. They come from a tiny little village. Their mental universe is so narrow, so tiny, and you slap them down in Auckland or in Sydney or in San Francisco, and they are completely lost. They have to have some anchoring and the only thing that they are used to is religion. So they rush at

⁷ Helu, I. (1997) Interview with the researcher in Tonga. Permission to quote secured.

religion as a kind of response to the their strange environment. I am not saying that they do this knowingly - much of it is unconscious... it is like an instinctual reaction to the new environment.

Giving is a compulsory requirement of most, if not all, of the Tongan churches. Again this is another aspect of culture that is being transferred to the church setting. One of the most important sacrificial ceremonies practiced in Tongan churches is feasting or *fakaafe*, which has already been discussed in Chapter Two. In addition, many Tongan people in New Zealand have allocated a great portion of their income for the construction of new church buildings or the purchase of a new church hall.

It could be said that the *kavenga faka-siasi*⁸ have taken precedence over the immediate needs of the families and their children. This supports the assumption that religion is sacred to some Tongan parents and it has become their first priority. This is evident in South Auckland when we look at the number of, and the architecture of pre-existing Tongan church buildings and the ones currently under construction. Photograph 1 is a picture of a newly opened Free Wesleyan church in Mangere. The cost of this project was estimated to be \$2,209,927.34. Another newly constructed building for the *Tokaikolo* Church (Photograph 2), due to opened on 17 December 1997 is estimated to be close to \$5 million.

⁸ *Kavenga faka-siasi* is a Tongan term for church obligations, which includes donating money.





Helu (1997) gave a very interesting elucidation as to why the Christian religion has become so important to the lives of Tongan migrants overseas.

I think that the Christian religion is appealing, very appealing to people who have been for a long, long time ruled solely by strong rulers like our chiefs. And when this religion promises freedom and security, people would rush at that, just as they did when Christianity first appeared within the Roman Empire. Many slaves flocked to that because they felt this is a teaching which will liberate them. When I think of Tongans, they would naturally turn to this religion which promises to give them a bit of relief and a sense of happiness after this life (Helu, Ibid).

Whatever the reason(s) may be for religion dominating the lives of Tongan families, it still plays a very important part in the life of Tongan migrants overseas.

3.6 Cultural and Family Obligations

Weddings and *Fai'Aho Ta'u Ua Taha* (Twenty-first Birthday celebration) are one of the most expensive cultural ceremonies today and one that requires the help of the *kainga*. The relatives from both families prepare a big feast and the *faifekau* or minister, church members, friends and relatives gather to partake of the food. Such a feast is expensive to prepare. A traditional feast consists of roasted piglets, yams, a variety of sea foods. Other Western dishes have been added today to make it more modern and this adds to the expense.

The bride's maternal uncle (her mother's brother) is *tu'a* (inferior) to her, and he is expected to provide the pigs and yams for the feast. Our culture gives a woman the power to do whatever she wants with her maternal uncle. She can take whatever she wants from his house, abuse his children, and even sell her uncle in the market in exchange for money (that is if anyone wants to buy him). Even though this does not happen these days the maternal uncle knows that it is his obligation to provide food and financial support when his niece gets married or turns twenty-one. It is a lot of money to spend but the 'true' Tongan Uncle feels obligated to do it even it means not paying the mortgage and no *kiki* (meat) for a week for the family. A lot of Tongan migrants in New Zealand still prefer the traditional Tongan weddings, even though some have opted to have theirs conducted in the *palangi* way. Whichever way they do it, it is still a big and expensive occasion.

The Tongan newspaper *Taimi Tonga* (Tonga Times) has a lot of readers in Tonga and New Zealand. With its headquarters in Auckland, the editor publishes stories about weddings and twenty-first birthday parties of the Tongan community in New Zealand. The media has provided the opportunity to make a statement about who is who in the Tongan migrant community.

3.7 The death of a relative

The funeral of an Islander is either a large one or a whopper (cited in Challis, op cit: 47).

A funeral, in the Tongan context, is a very sad and emotional occasion; and again one that is expensive. Such an occasion draws the church and the deceased's *kainga* and friends together. A real traditional funeral consists of relatives, friends and church members staying up the night before burial at the home of the deceased. Even people who are not remotely related to the family will just turn up. The *kainga* of the deceased will then prepare food and hot drinks for the mourners. Gifts are exchanged in the process.

After the burial the *kainga* of the deceased will then invite the mourners back to the home and they will again be given food to take home (normally raw meat like beef and mutton, for instance). If I take something to a relatives' or a friend's funeral, that person is obligated to come to my funeral or to a member of my *kainga's* funeral. This is due to Tonga's time honored custom of reciprocity.

Without the financial backing of the *kainga* and the church members, that particular family would find it hard to raise a sufficient amount of money on their own. However, a family can choose not to have a big traditional funeral, but the deceased would be regarded as *faka'ofa* because he/she was not accorded a

proper and decent funeral. The deceased's status is somehow reflected in the quantity and quality of the food served. In such a case, the family's dignity will be adversely affected and so would their social standing in the community if they did not have a big traditional Tongan funeral.

This is exactly the same case with the Tongan migrant community in New Zealand. The only difference is that migrants do not normally bring their deceased home. The deceased in New Zealand, for instance, is kept in a funeral parlor before burial. As a result, an Islander's funeral will be much more expensive than the average New Zealand one because they have to pay for the funeral parlor and also take care of the traditional aspects of the funeral as discussed previously.

3.8 Fund Raising: further exploitation of the migrant community

Fund-raising has become a part of life for the Tongan community in New Zealand. Tongan churches here raise funds for new buildings and other church projects. Churches in Tonga have also looked at migrant communities overseas as potential gold mines to be exploited. Brass bands from church schools in Tonga have visited the Tongan community in New Zealand in the past and continue to do so today for the same purpose. This is understandable because church schools do not get much assistance from the government.

Furthermore, the Tongan Ministry of Education have decided to join the churches in exploiting the migrant community in New Zealand. They sent a brass band from Tonga's top government secondary school in 1996 to raise funds in New Zealand. They were reported to have raised thousands of dollars. This act is wide-spread and is affecting the welfare of migrant Tongans throughout the world.

3.9 Summary

These aspects of the life of Tongans in New Zealand provide an insight into their culture, outline the type of background that Tongan students come from, and provide a better understanding of why they underachieve at school. Students who come from such a background are likely to experience difficulties because part of their family income is removed by the obligations and organisations already mentioned.

The following chapter provides a discussion of the methods used for gathering and analysing the data collected. Justifications of the methods is also provided.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological approach used in this research. It also presents the research questions and a description of the sample. A detailed account of the procedures for gathering and analyzing data is provided. Particular attention is also given to ethical considerations and methodological limitations of this study.

4.1 Research Design

This research was designed to realize the aims of the study using a qualitative case study approach. This method incorporated semi-structured interviews (Merriam, 1998) with student participants and questionnaires for their parents. The interviews were conducted either in the English or Tongan language, depending on the wishes of the participants. The parent participants were included to provide a secondary source of information. Taking into consideration the time frame for this research, the researcher used telephone interviews and follow up questionnaires to obtain parent's perceptions of factors affecting the educational achievement of their children.

4.1.1 Justification for Research Design

The topic under study is complex and the researcher's intention was for the participants' educational experiences to be brought to light using a qualitative approach. Qualitative research, writes Bogdan and Biklen (1992), demands that the world be approached with the assumption that nothing is trivial, that everything has the potential of being a clue that might unlock a more comprehensive understanding of what is being studied. Patton (1985) adds that it is an effort to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and the interactions within it:

This understanding is an end in itself, so that is not attempting to predict what may happen in the future necessarily, but to understand the nature of that setting -- what it means for participants to be in that setting, what their lives are like, what's going on for them, what their meanings are, what the world looks like in that particular setting (cited in Merriam, 1988:16-17).

The life of a human being cannot be studied under a microscope. His/her actions are influenced not only by his/her genetic makeup but also by his/her environment and other factors that are external to his/her existence. The researcher could have adopted a more positivist approach but to have done so, however, would have meant that human values and judgments would not have been acceptable for analysis, even though they could have provided a logical explanation for human action. Furthermore, an empirical study would not have

been appropriate because the purpose of this research was to study the whole ecology concerning Tongan students' educational experiences. The qualitative research approach, using the case study method, was chosen because it recognizes the significance and credibility of human values and judgments in understanding human action.

The qualitative case study method was chosen for its flexibility to focus on a limited number of participants and because of the researcher's belief in Stenhouse's (1982) argument that there is an interpretive, rather than theoretical explanation of human action. He suggests that researchers have turned to the case study method in the face of the difficulties which they have encountered in attempting to apply a classical scientific paradigm of research to problems in which human behavior, action or intention play a large part. Merriam (1988) adds that case study brings about an in-depth understanding of the situation and its meaning for those involved because the interest is in a process rather than a specific variable, in discovery, rather than in confirmation.

The issue under study more or less lies within the 'lived' experience of the participants. Consequently, a method that would best bring their 'lived' experiences to light was needed and the interview method was chosen. Interviews not only offer the participants a chance to share their 'lived' experiences and for these to be documented, but also because the knowledge

that their experiences are regarded as important is in itself empowering. Dexter (1970) notes that interviews are an opportunity for participants to tell people something and this in itself is pleasurable and reinforcing (cited in Merriam, 1988:76).

The researcher was constantly aware of Bishop's (1996) emphasis on the need to realize the importance of working within a situation that enables the experiences and understandings of the research participants to be heard. Bishop argues that the traditional approach to research was where the participant's stories were retold in a language determined by the researcher. Connelly and Clandenin (1990) emphasized the need for researchers to recognize that the people who are involved in the research process are not just "informants, but are participants, with meaningful experiences, concerns and questions" (cited in Bishop, 1996:24). Bishop believes that *narrative inquiry* is suitable for Maori because it approaches them in an holistic, culturally appropriate manner because storytelling within their own cultural context and language rather than in the cultural context and language chosen by the researcher. Furthermore, it opens up the complexity of human experience and the multiplicity of reflected interpretations where none is privileged, absolutist or authoritative beyond the sense in which it can be contextually verifiable.

Different ethnic groups in Aotearoa/New Zealand have different 'realities' and perceptions of 'truth'. Therefore, the stories told by the participants in this study have to be treated as the 'truth' as they understand it. Attempts were made to use narrative inquiry with both student and parent participants even though it was not carried out in full with the latter. Telephone interviews with parents were dropped in favor of written questionnaires after the completion of interviews with parents from the underachiever group. The rationale for this change, was that it allowed parents more time to reflect on the past and provide well thought out responses.

Connelly and Clandenin (1990) also point out the need for the researcher to allow time and space for the research participants to tell their story rather than for the researcher's story to dominate, which has had for so long (cited in Bishop, *op cit*). Miles and Huberman (1994) add that qualitative data's emphasis on people's lived experience, are fundamentally well suited for locating meanings people place on the events, processes, and structures of their lives: their perceptions, customs, assumptions, prejudgements, presuppositions" and for connecting these meanings to the social world around us.

The researcher allowed the participants time to reflect on their past experiences and to think about the question before making a response. Whether the time was sufficient enough for participants to tell their stories is

debatable because there was only one meeting, unlike Bishop's study where the researcher met with the participants more than once. Some of the participants from the "underachiever" group were not very comfortable with the idea of being interviewed by a university student and could not understand why their experiences could be important to the researcher. However, the researcher assured them at beginning that their 'stories' were important to the Tongan community in New Zealand, especially to parents who still have children at school. Their experiences, they were told, would help the Tongan community have a better understanding of the factors that contribute to underachievement. That helped them become more comfortable with the interview. The researcher, however, could not verify the degree of comfort experienced by the participants during the interviews, but he did his best to enable them to tell their stories.

Interviews were used because of their ability to elicit information from people regarding past experiences that could not be observed by the researcher. Webb and Webb (1982) argue that we cannot observe situations or behaviors that took place at a previous point in time and nor can we observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. The only way to find this out is to ask the people concerned (cited in Merriam, 1988:72).

Semi-structured interviews were used in this study because, as Merriam (1998) explains, it allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging world view of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic. In addition, Merriam (1988) continues by saying that structured interviews were used when a large sample was involved. The researcher realised that it would be hard to establish rapport with participants if he were to use a structured interview. Therefore, a semi-structured interview would assist the researcher to establish rapport with participants during the interview and thus enhance the chance of getting more reliable data. The early part of the interview was designed to extract specific factual information from the respondents while the latter part had more open-ended type of questions which was designed to extract more personal information.

The decision to use the English and Tongan languages as the means of communication during interviews was based on two issues: Firstly, 50% of all participants were born in New Zealand and were more comfortable with English; Secondly, the researcher thought it would be culturally insensitive not to offer another option for participants who wanted their interview in Tongan. Accordingly, the researcher felt obligated to accommodate the need of all participants in this study by giving them an option regarding the language they were more comfortable with.

Research issues such as initiation, benefits, representation, legitimation and accountability were raised by Bishop (Appendix 1) in his research on Maoris in New Zealand . These issues helped guide the researcher throughout the whole research process. The following sub-headings contain questions raised by Bishop (1996:22) and a discussion of how they relate to this study.

Initiation

Who initiated the research and why ?

What were the goals of the project ?

Academic underachievement has been associated with ethnic minority groups in New Zealand for decades. The researcher initiated this study in the hope of finding the factors that affect the academic achievement of Tongans in New Zealand.

Benefits

What benefits will there be ?

Who gets the benefits ?

Exposing the factors that affect the achievement of Tongan students in Auckland is a benefit. The intention is that those who benefit from this should be the Tongan community in New Zealand. The researcher hopes that by sharing the experiences of the participants involved in the study it is hoped to

make Tongan parents in New Zealand more aware of the impact of their decisions on the academic achievement of their children.

In addition, Tongans who are currently studying in New Zealand secondary schools can perhaps read the stories of the participants, see where they are located in relation to these stories, and hopefully decide to stay in school.

Representation

What constitutes an adequate depiction of social reality ?

Whose voice is heard ?

The participants' stories establish an adequate depiction of social reality because they are based on real-life-first-hand experience. The researcher made sure that the participants are given the chance to tell their stories and for their voices to be heard.

Legitimation

What authority does the text have ?

What happens to the results ?

The participants' stories are legitimate for the same reason mentioned above - they are based on real life experiences. The findings are hoped to provide the Tongan community in Auckland with an awareness of underachievement and the factors that contribute to or detrimental to achievement. The findings of this

study will be available at the University library to be use as a potential platform for future research. If funding was available, the findings could be translated into the Tongan language and distributed to interested parents in the community.

Accountability

Who is the researcher accountable to ?

Who is to have accessibility to the research findings ?

The researcher is accountable to the participants and the findings will be made accessible to them. The fact that participants were given transcripts of their interviews to double-check and make changes shows that the researcher is accountable to his participants.

4.1.2 Research Sample Selection

The time period within which participants attended secondary school in New Zealand was a determining factor in the selection process. Only participants who attended secondary school between the 1980's and 1990's were selected. This was due to the researcher's personal belief that their experiences would be similar and comparable.

The number of participants to be selected was not decided before the commencement of the interviews. This was based on the researcher's belief that the number would be decided during the process when no new information emerged from the interviews. To do otherwise would mean that certain issues and themes would not be fully discovered and realized.

The main focus of this research was to ascertain the factors that contribute to or are detrimental to the academic achievement of Tongan students in New Zealand. It was then decided that two groups of people need to be involved in this study: "achievers" and "underachievers". The "achievers" group is representative of participants who completed high school and went on to complete a tertiary qualification or are about to complete one. On the other hand, the "underachiever" group consisted of participants who left high school prior to obtaining a University Bursary qualification. Fig.4.1 outlines a brief summary of the selection criteria for both groups and what they mean.

Fig. 4.1

Selection Criteria

<p>"ACHIEVERS"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Participation must not be restricted to New Zealand citizens only ■ Participants must spend a considerable amount of time as students at a New Zealand secondary school ■ Their secondary school experience must be between the 1980's and 90's ■ Currently hold a tertiary qualification or are close to receiving one <p>"UNDERACHIEVERS"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Participation must not be restricted to New Zealand citizens only ■ Participants must have spent a considerable amount of time as students at a New Zealand secondary school ■ Their secondary school experience must be between the 1980's or 90's ■ Left secondary school prior to completing University Bursary

Table 4.1 contains the qualifications of participants from both groups and pseudonyms given to them to protect their identity. It should be noted that Anne, a participant with a Diploma, is listed in the "underachiever" group. The justification for her inclusion in this group is that she failed in her early school experience despite the fact that she succeeded well academically some years later.

Table 4.1 Participant Names and Qualifications

"UNDERACHIEVERS"		"ACHIEVERS"	
NAMES	QUALIFICATION	NAMES	QUALIFICATION
CLARE	failed SC	GREG	<i>Masters Degree</i>
JOANNE	failed SC	JOHN	<i>Masters Degree</i>
KATE	failed SC	ROBYN	<i>Bachelors Degree</i>
JAMES	failed SC	CHRISTINE	University student
TONY	<i>School C</i>	EVE	<i>Masters Degree</i>
TIMOTHY	<i>School C</i>	KATHY	University student
SAM	failed SC	ANDREW	<i>Bachelors Degree</i>
WAYNE	failed SC	KRISTI	University student
SYLVESTER	<i>School C</i>	LUCY	<i>Bachelors Degree</i>
ANNE	failed SC	JENNY	Polytech student
		*ANNE	<i>Diploma</i>

** Anne is a special case in that while she left school after failing the School Certificate exams, she subsequently resumed her studies and achieved a Diploma of Social Work*

4.1.3 Justification for Sample

There is no better way to identify the factors that assist and hinder academic achievement than to talk to those who have experienced academic failure and success. That is the simple reason behind the selection of participants. Those from university and other tertiary institutions ("achievers") have proven themselves to be academically successful. Some of these participants have

graduated with University qualifications and are now working. The rest are close to completing their studies. On the other hand, participants from the "underachiever" group have all left high school. Sixty percent of them left school after failing the School Certificate examinations and are either working in unskilled/semi-skilled occupations or on the dole.

Anne, who is listed in both groups, actually fits the selection criteria for "underachiever" group because she left school after failing the School Certificate exams and that qualifies her to be in that group. Her experiences were similar to that of participants in the "underachiever" group and that was enough justification for her to be in that group. Anne is included in this group in the hope that her case will inspire others from the same group to realize that it is never too late to resume formal education. The fact that her name is mentioned again (in asterisk) in the "achiever" group is due to the fact that she subsequently resumed her studies and achieved a Diploma. Her case will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Six.

Participants from both groups went through different educational experiences. Their experiences have made them aware of the factors that contributed to their success or failure. Therefore, they qualify as reliable sources with something to offer.

4.1.4 Pilot Survey

Based on Anderson's (1990) belief that it is important to test the instruments to see whether there is any possibility that worthwhile results will be found, the researcher conducted pilot studies prior to the commencement of the actual study. The interview questions (Appendix 2) were trialled to examine the depth of the responses to the questions and the length of the actual interview. This was the researcher's first experience with conducting interviews.

Four pilot interviews were conducted with friends: two from the "achiever" group and two from the "underachiever" group. The participants in the pilot interviews were not part of the research sample and the researcher made this clear to them. The researcher personally asked these people to help out with the pilot interview. The purpose of the pilot interviews was explained to them and they were informed that these interviews would help the researcher decide on the relevance of the questions. Feedback from these participants regarding the questions was taken into consideration while the questions were being reviewed. The general responses from the pilot studies confirmed that the interview questions were suitable for the purpose of documenting educational experiences and background information.

After the completion of the pilot interviews, minor changes were made to the wording of the questions. Some questions were simplified while others were reworded with the intention to get a more detailed response from participants.

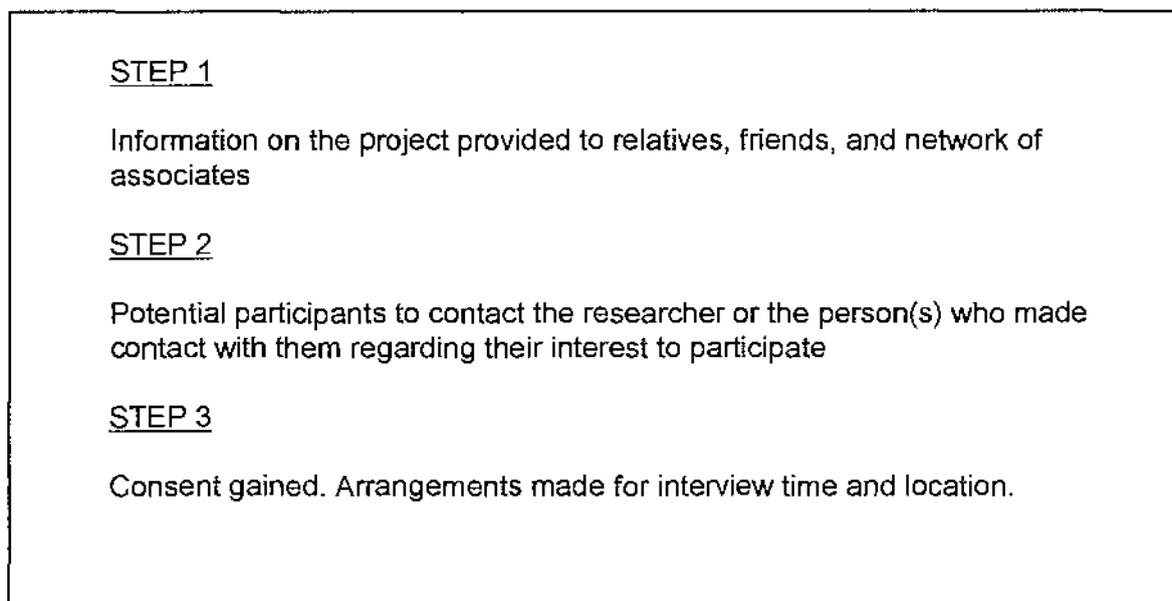
4.1.5 Procedure

The research topic and proposed methodology were discussed with two Tongan scholars in New Zealand prior to the commencement of the study. The aim was to get a professional opinion on how best to conduct the study and how best to approach participants. Their opinions and perceptions regarding the topic provided helpful information to the researcher. The scholars suggested the importance of having parents included in the study. They also shared their perception of the topic and also recommended potential participants to contact. One of these consultants is currently working closely with the Pacific Island community in Auckland and was recently involved in a government-funded research project on several South Auckland schools.

The expert opinion of two prominent Tongan educators were sought and interviews were conducted with them in Tonga early this year. They are Professor Futa Helu (Director of 'Atenisi Institute) and Dr. 'Okusi Mahina (Senior Lecturer - Auckland University). Due to the limited amount of research done on the Tongan community in New Zealand, the intention of the interviews was to find out about these Tongan scholars' perceptions of the topic and to reaffirm the relevance of the research questions based on their perceptions. Their views confirmed to the researcher that the research questions were relevant. Both saw the significance of the home environment and the part that parents play in their children's education. Their views regarding the topic under study are discussed in the next chapter.

Certain steps were taken to gain informed consent and to recruit participants for this study. Fig 2 outlines the procedure involved prior to the actual data collection.

Figure 4.2 **Steps taken to secure Participant Consent**



From the outset the researcher realized the difficulty in obtaining participants for this study. Participants in the “underachiever” group had already left school, had got jobs, and would be difficult to locate, let alone make arrangements with, for an interview. At the same time, university graduates might have gained employment while current tertiary students were still busy at studies and the same problem would apply to them. Nevertheless, this study was and is important to the researcher and the Tongan community and he had to devise a strategy to contact them. Accordingly, a procedure had to be established to

locate and contact prospective participants. The Tongan communities in Auckland are connected by such organizations as the church, the extended family, and friends. For this purpose, the researcher utilized a network of friends, relatives and associates to inform people in the Tongan community of the intentions of the study and to recruit volunteers. This, in fact, is the Tongan way of contacting others who are not known to them.

An *Information Sheet* (Appendix 3) was designed and distributed to potential participants, via these networks, to provide them with background information regarding the subject of the study. They were requested to contact the researcher or the person who made contact with them to confirm their participation and to arrange a meeting time and venue of their choice.

4.1.6 Data Collection

Before the actual interview took place the researcher needed a confirmation of the participants consent to participate in the study. Once verbal consent was established, each participant was given a *Consent Form* (Appendix 4) to read, complete and sign. The researcher assisted those participants who had difficulty understanding the content of the form (mainly participants from the "underachiever" group). He explained it to them in Tongan or English when he suspected that the participants were confused or when it took them longer to fill up the form. The researcher, once again, reminded the participants of their

right not to answer any question they were not comfortable with. After this was clear, the interview proceeded.

If the participants did not understand the questions asked then the researcher rephrased the questions for them until they understood. The researcher realized that participants needed to comprehend the questions in order to provide accurate and meaningful responses. Patton (1990) says that "without sensitivity to the impact of particular words on the person being interviewed, the answer may make no sense at all – or there may be no answer" (cited in Merriam, 1998:76). The following (Figure 3) outlines the steps taken during the data gathering process.

Permission was sought from student participants to interview their parents. They were informed that the content of their interview was not going to be disclosed to their parents. The consent of parents from the "underachiever" group to participate in the study was sought during the interview with their children. It was made clear to them that the interview was to be done on the telephone. A time was arranged with them after the interview with their child was over. Those participants who requested that their interviews be conducted away from home were willing to ask their parents if they would answer a questionnaire.

Fig.4.3

Steps Taken During Data Gathering ProcessSTEP 1

Provide information on the study via network

STEP 2

Contact with volunteers and gaining of informed consent

STEP 3

Interview with participants from the “achiever” and “underachiever” groups. Interviews were audio taped and transcribed by the researcher for analysis.

STEP 4

Permission sought from participant to interview parents/ give parents questionnaire. Researcher arrange a phone interview with parents.

STEP 5

Parent interviews conducted via telephone (for “underachiever” group) and questionnaires given out to parents from the “achiever” group.

STEP 6

Summary and analysis of data and information gained from interviews and questionnaires.

STEP 7

Writing up of results

The telephone interviews (Appendix 5) were conducted in the Tongan language at a time chosen by the participants. At no stage during the telephone interview did the parents ask about what their child said about them in their interview. As previously stated, the researcher also had no intention of revealing any information provided by the student participants to their parents.

However, certain factors arose, regarding the telephone interviews, which made the researcher decide to change the approach. They are listed below:

- It was felt that telephone interviews were an inconvenience for the parent participants, even though they had decided upon the time.
- It was felt that parents might not be at ease on the phone if there were family members around during the interview.
- The researcher did not have the necessary technology to record every word that was said on the phone. As a result, the researcher could only summarize what was said.

The telephone interview was then replaced by a questionnaire (Appendix 6), which was more convenient to the parent participants. The questionnaires (written in Tongan) were given to student participants to give their parents. They were asked to complete them in their own time and their child-participant would then send it to the researcher. This method was thought to be a more reflective exercise in the sense that it allowed the participants more time to think about the topic, reflect on their past experiences with their children and then complete the forms. This would not have been possible with the telephone interview method because it is hard for parents to reflect seriously on past events while on the phone.

4.1.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of making sense out of the data. And making sense out of data involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read – it is the process of making meaning (Merriam,1998)

Since there are no formulae or recipes for the 'best' way to analyse the stories we elicit and collect, as Atkinson (1996) argues, the following steps were observed. The interviews were fully transcribed by the researcher, as indicated in the *Information Sheet*. The researcher personally transcribed the interviews as this was considered by Mishler (1986) to be an important part of the coding and analysis process. This helped the researcher to code and analyze the participant's responses within their appropriate context. During and after transcription the researcher read and checked for emergent themes. These were then listed down for the purpose of confirmation after the transcripts were double checked and returned by participants.

The transcripts were sent back to the participants to be read and verified by them. Some participants took the time to read the transcripts and make corrections or comments regarding statements made during the initial interview. These were then returned to the researcher for analysis. Those who were satisfied with the original transcription, requested that they keep the transcripts.

The researcher re-read the transcripts upon their return. The intention was to confirm or modify the themes discovered prior to the transcripts being sent to participants. For the analysis of interview data the researcher used what Miles and Huberman (1994) call descriptive coding. Such coding attribute a class of phenomena to a segment of text. For instance, codes such as LCK-P-SUPP (for lack of parental support) or LCK-S-MOTV (lack of student motivation) were given to passages and appeared in the left hand margin of each transcript to assist the researcher with the analysis (refer to Appendix 7.). It is important to note that these codes were not prescribed before analysis but emerged from the reading of the transcripts. After coding was completed the researcher went through the transcripts in an attempt to check for any regular occurrence of any particular theme(s).

Coloured pens were used throughout the analysis to high light certain categories or themes that emerged. The researcher decided to give each of them a distinct color. The categories that supported these themes were also given a similar colouring for easy identification. After the themes were identified, they were then listed on to cards. The interview extracts that identified with them were cut out of the transcripts and pasted under each theme.

4.1.8 Validity and Reliability

As stated earlier, each participant was given a copy of the interview transcript to read and make corrections after transcription was complete. The transcripts were then returned back together with the changes (if any) to the researcher for analysis. Care was taken with regard to the translation of interviews that were conducted in Tongan. Those interviews were translated into English by the researcher to ensure that translation was not out of context. Transcripts containing the translated version of the interviews were taken for verification by a professional Tongan translator (*name available on request*).

Stenhouse (1982) pointed out that in order to establish the fact about a situation, we must use evidence from different sources to cross check. Denzin (1978) suggested that four different modes of triangulation exist: the use of multiple and different sources, methods, investigators, and theories (cited in Lincoln & Guba, 1985:305). In this study the participation of parents enables them to complement the data provided by their children and provides multiple sources.

4.1.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are a very important element of any research because they ensure that the rights of the participants are protected. This study paid special attention to the following ethical guidelines, outlined by Anderson (1993:20):

- That risks to participants are minimized by research procedures that do not necessarily expose subjects to risks
- That the risk to participants are outweighed by the participated benefits of the research
- That the rights and welfare of participants are adequately protected
- That the research will be periodically reviewed
- That informed consent has been obtained and approximately documented

The researcher's familiarity with the participants cultural background made him aware of other ethical considerations relating to their culture. This included observing certain cultural codes pertinent to the involvement of the female participants. Tongan culture dictates that women be treated with dignity and should be visited at their homes if a man, or in this case a male researcher, wishes to engage in conversation with them. The same principal was observed while conducting the interviews.

The majority of the female participants from both groups were interviewed at home, while four participants from the "achiever" group requested that their interview be done at the University campus for their own convenience. Since this was their expressed wish, the researcher had no choice but to do as they requested. Participants were also informed of their right not to answer any question they did not want to and to withdraw from the study at any time they wish. Fortunately, no one did.

4.2 Methodological Limitations

A number of potential limitations must be acknowledged and discussed. The researcher's gender and inexperience with the interview technique and prior knowledge of the participants could be a potential limitation to this study. The researcher did not spend much time prior to or during the interview to get to know the participants better.

The telephone interview method was another limitation mainly because of the researcher's failure to include it in the pilot study. The telephone interviews did not provide in-depth answers from parents due to the reasons previously discussed in the Data Collection section of this chapter. The researcher was not sure whether the time of the interview was suitable for the parents, even though they were the ones who decided on the time. In addition, the fact that there was no visual contact between the researcher and the parent participants made the telephone interview somewhat awkward.

Finally, the limited number of participants in this study was a limitation because it may have limited the external validity of the findings. The fact that only twenty participants were involved in this study means that any attempt to claim that the results are representative of the experiences of all Tongan students in New Zealand is potentially weak. However, this was not the intention of the study. As Dey (1993) explains, "if we cannot expect others to replicate our account,

the best we can do is explain how we arrived at our results (cited in Merriam,1998:207).

4.3 Summary

This chapter has outlined the overall methodological approach used. It has provided a discussion of matters relating to research design, sample selection process, and a description of the participants. Justification has been given for the decisions made through out the research process with a full account of the procedures involved in the gathering and analysis of data. Attention was paid to ethical considerations involved in the study along with the potential methodological limitations of this study.

The following chapter contains a narrative presentation of the results of this study.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter contains a detailed presentation of data and information gathered through questionnaires and interviews with participants. They are based, as indicated earlier, on the patterns that emerged from the rich and detailed data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The major themes that arise from these categories are discussed in Chapter Six.

The researcher has summarized sample quotations into tables to highlight the key issues emerging from the data. The methodology is similar to that used in the matrices in Miles & Huberman (1994). However, this research did not need the depth of complexity in the matrices used in their studies. The following sub-headings: parental support; personal sacrifice by parents; parental expectation; home environment; discipline; language barrier; pregnancy; lessons; peers and church, indicate the main categories that emerged from the interviews with participants from both "achiever" and "underachiever" groups and the feedback from their parents.

5.1 Parental Support

Parental support contributed to the success of participants in the “achiever” group. Conversely, it was the lack of this support that caused problems for those participants in the “underachiever” group. The New Zealand-born candidates in the “underachiever” group faced problems that ranged from lessons at school, personal attitude problem, or lack of self-motivation. Difficulty with lessons and self motivation are both related to the lack of parental support. It is interesting to speculate then whether these problems could have been alleviated if the parents had had regular communication with their children and their teachers about their child’s progress.

A lack of interest and support on the part of the parents concerning their children’s education no doubt has an adverse effect on their children’s educational achievement. This is reflected in the fact that only two (Joanne and Timothy) out of ten indicated having supportive parents. Five participants (Clare, Kate, Sam, Sylvester and Anne) stated having no parental support whatsoever.

I received no real parental assistance. My parents did not receive a good education themselves. The only assistance they provided was supplying us with lunch money and school materials (Sam).

They did not provide any support at all. They were busy most of the time and my dad worked most of the time (Clare).

None (Kate)

No. My father was pretty busy, he was working (Sylvester).

None. My mom was always standing in the shop and homework was just left. If you ask Mom, she would kind of deny that that ever happened, but I know 'cause I know inside me... (Anne).

An additional factor was that all of them come from homes that are not conducive to study, that is they are either noisy or overcrowded. Three participants in the "underachiever" group (James, Tony & Wayne) indicated having little parental support.

There appears to be a discrepancy with regard to the definition of the word *supportive*, as it applies to parents in the "underachiever" group. For instance, Joanne's parents (regarded by their daughter as "supportive" parents) say that she (the only girl in the family) was never hit, and was allowed to do as she pleased. It is also interesting to note that Joanne's main difficulty at school was that she couldn't get on with the teachers, which is a reflection on her upbringing. The type of freedom she received at home, which she perceived as

support, was in contrast to the expectation of teachers and the reality at school life.

Q: What kind of difficulties did you face at school ?

A2: I didn't really get along with the teachers.

Q: Yeah. But why ?

A2: Maybe because we had our differences...

As indicated above, there are important questions regarding the meaning of supportive parents and how that support is perceived by participants. Therefore, the issue of Joanne's parents being supportive, as suggested by their daughter, is in question. The freedom that her parents allowed her made Joanne perceive this to be an act of support. To her this freedom was support because she was not very enthusiastic about school.

Apparently, her freedom had no clear and visible boundaries and the fact that she indicated spending an occasional 1/2 hour a day to study at home confirms the abuse of this freedom. The lack of boundaries and positive parental expectations may have had an adverse effect on her achievement and motivation. This point, however, is considered more fully in the next chapter.

As a result, only Timothy's parents provided personal home-based support among all the parents in the "underachiever" group. The findings regarding the

general lack of parental support is cause for concern because it is contrary to that of parents in the “achiever” category. The lack of parental support appears to be associated with student discouragement (Clare, Joanne, Kate & Anne) and their failure in the New Zealand School Certificate examinations. This factor is fully discussed in the next chapter.

The parents in the “achiever” group appeared to be more supportive than those in the “underachiever” group. From the information provided by their children, some of them gave their children ample time to do their schoolwork at home and exempted them from work. Despite the fact that most of the parents in this group, like those parents in the “underachiever” group, did not receive a good formal education, they demonstrated more support for their own children:

Well my parents, they hadn't gone very far in the education system, so they couldn't really help us with our homework. What they did was provide us with enough time, ample time to do our homework and things like that. Even though my mom worked, she came home and still fixed dinner, did the dishes, and did all the little mundane chores so that we have enough time to do our homework (Robyn).

I think my mother played a big part in my education because she always kind of saved me from household chores and stuff,

which meant I had a lot of time to myself, you know to do studies. Like she was always like controlling everyone and so I didn't really have any distractions like a lot of my friends, you know, they had younger siblings they had to take care of and like do other things as well (Christine).

Oh, tremendous support, you know. I didn't have to do any running around or mowing the lawn... School work always came first.. (Andrew).

Table 5.1 has a summary of the responses from parent-participants in both groups concerning the support they provided. Some of the information provided by parents in the “underachiever” group contradicts what their children previously mentioned. The responses provided by both student and parent participants in the “achiever” group regarding this issue are similar. In contrast, there appear to be more apparent differences between the perceptions of students and parents in the “underachiever” group. Some student participants in this group tend to perceive that parental support was not forthcoming, while their parents claim that support was indeed provided. For instance, Kate, Sam, and Sylvester previously reported receiving no parental support, whereas their parents said that in their view they did provide support. Clare and Anne indicated receiving no parental support and their parents confirmed that. Their

parents cited work commitments as the main reason for their inability to provide support.

Other parents who did not provide enough support cited their low level of formal education as the main reason for their failure to actively demonstrate it to their children. Table 5.1 displays the responses of parents concerning their perceptions of support for their children. It is important to note the difference in their perceptions. Parents from the “achiever” group generally provided internal personal and moral support whereas parents from the “underachiever” group provided support in more external and concrete ways, such as sitting with students while they do their homework.

Genuine parental support can be verified by the attendance or absence of parents from PTA meetings or Parent Teacher interviews at school. Those parents who value their children’s education can demonstrate their support by attending these meetings. A summary of their responses is outlined in the Table 5.2.

Table 5.1

Support as perceived by Parents

Achievers	Underachievers
<p>"I encouraged them to work hard and to do their homework all the time. I've supported them in everything"</p>	<p>"Her mother was supposed to check their homework and ensure that they do their schoolwork. I was the only one working at the time"</p>
<p>"I did the housework just to give her the time to do her schoolwork. I also worked at the time"</p>	<p>"Sometimes I would just sit there with her while she does her homework. I couldn't really help her, but I just sat there to give her moral support"</p>
<p>"I constantly reminded her that love and obedience are important and should be shown to her teachers at school."</p>	<p>"Pushed her to do her homework"</p>
<p>"She was exempted from work after school so she could focus on her studies"</p>	<p>"Just encouragement"</p>
<p>"I encouraged her to work hard at school"</p>	<p>"I talked to him and encouraged him. I couldn't really help him with my level of education"</p>
<p>"We told him what we expected and we showed constant support for his studies. We wanted him to do his best and God will do the rest"</p>	<p>"I encouraged him to work hard in his area of interest. I couldn't really speak, because his area of study was different from mine"</p>
<p>"We gave her as much time as possible to do her work. I wanted her to do her homework"</p>	<p>"Helped him with his homework and also when he had problems at school"</p>
<p>"We paid for her education"</p>	<p>"I made sure that he does his homework. I also reminded him to trust in the Lord"</p>
<p>"Made sure that they do their homework and supporting them in everything to do with their education"</p>	<p>"I did not have time to help my daughter at home. I was a solo mother trying to run a shop"</p>

Table 5.2

Parental Attendance at Parent Teacher Interviews		
<i>Groups</i>	<i>As reported by Students</i>	<i>As reported by Parents</i>
Achievers	80%	80%
Underachievers	10%	50%

This analysis shows that parents in the “achiever” group attended PTA and parent-teacher interviews on a more regular basis than those in the other group. This is evidence to the support provided by parents in the “achiever” group to their children. Eve, from the “achiever” group, explains why her parents did not attend these meetings:

*I never told them about PTA meetings ...I always told my teachers that they were busy and I had my own reasons. First of all, you know, when you are young and you look at your parents and because of the school I went to, there weren't many island parents... Language was a barrier for my mother... It was my way of protecting them too because I was thinking “I don't want my mom and dad to go there and be **ma** (embarrassed), you know, feel uncomfortable. You know how*

our island parents are. They go there and they just say "yes" and I thought that don't want that and I thought "stuff it" and I never told my parents about parent-teacher interviews... (Eve).

John's parents were not in New Zealand at the time he was in secondary school. Therefore, Eve is the only one in this group with parents that missed PTA and parent-teacher interviews.

The majority of parents (90%) in the "underachiever" group, based on information provided by student participants, did not turn up for such meetings. An interesting and perhaps significant discrepancy exists, however, between parents and student participants on this issue. In contrast to the student's perception, parents reported that they did attend the meetings.

Student participants were asked about what made them to continue or discontinue their education. Their responses, once again, establishes the significance parental support has in affecting educational success. The following quotes testify to that fact:

I'd say the main motivator for me to carry on at University would have been my parents... My parents were very supportive.. Whenever there were like nights when the teachers want to talk with the parents, one of my parents will

be there. They would always be there to get our reports and see how we were doing (Greg).

First of all was my parents. I was sent over here for school - for education. My parents went through a lot of grief and hardship to be able to afford to send me here (John).

My dad, my dad...[He] wanted me to go further and so I started to think about that. I suppose I did it for him (Robyn).

I think definitely the background, the home background...I think it really starts from home. It is just the support and your parents wanting you to become something and then always having that in mind and being encouraged, I think, made heaps of difference, and that's why I'm succeeding (Christine).

...the contributing factor would be my family, my father especially. Without the encouragement and support, it was nothing like palangi encouragement and support, but it was like Tongan encouragement and support, like "Tokanga ki he ako" (pay attention at school). I look at it and think "well, yeah, that was support, that was encouragement"... Just seeing them working hard, they were all working. My dad was working, my

mother was working. They did opposite shifts so there would always be someone at home... It was just a conviction, yeah, to me it was a conviction, you know, you're not going to play around with their work. You're going to try hard (Eve).

Well, it could be my parents and my family and there are those teachers that helped out. And there's just me 'cause I just didn't want to end up doing nothing in a few years from now (Kathy).

I think first and foremost it would probably would be my family. They were very supportive of everything that I've done. The only sort of bad thing about them was their expectations were always high. They always expected me to do well. But then again that's a good thing. So it was my family... (Andrew).

Mostly my parents. I just do it for them. Get a Degree and make my parents happy (Kristi).

Family, friends and teachers all gave encouragement to me, always making me strive to do well at school. There were always different stories told about past lives or just made up ones that were told to me so that I would learn from them. I

should say it was mainly my mother's advice that made me stay in school (Jenny).

In summary, the above data indicates that of all the participants in the "achiever" group, only one attributed her success to her teachers. She reported that it was her teachers' constant support and encouragement that made her have confidence in herself.

I think the only thing that really pushed me to continue on is the teachers. They thought that I could be something (Lucy).

The rest of the participants from the "achiever" group attributed their success to their parents and their families. The participants' acknowledgment of their parents' role in their success is testimony to the sacrifice and support provided at home:

On the other hand, the majority of the participants in the "underachiever" group blamed themselves for their decision not to continue their education. Two of the participants suggested that lack of parental support and a hostile home environment as reasons for their decision. These comments are important and are listed below.

I blame the way, I mean the violent environment at home...I know that I still had problems at school with the way the

teachers were teaching, but if home was all right I would still be able to cope. The problem at home did not help (Sam).

My parents are part of it. If they supported me and also left part of the Tongan traditions back in Tonga and live a New Zealand life, things would've been better...The words that my mom used usually lowered my self esteem and my self confidence and I just felt like nothing...This type of treatment that I received really affected my school work. As a result, I couldn't bear the thought of going to school and wasting my parent's money and not doing well. So that was it (Kate).

The rest of the participants either blamed themselves or their friends for their decision not to continue their education.

Summary

Based on the information provided by student participants, parents from the 'Underachiever' group did not really provide the necessary support needed by their children. In contrast, student participants from the 'Achiever' group indicated receiving support at home. To confirm this support, the majority of them acknowledged their parents' support as the main reason for continuing their education and for succeeding.

5.2 Personal Sacrifice by Parents

Perceptions of personal sacrifice by parents was cited by four participants in the "achiever" group (Greg, John, Eve & Lucy) as the main reason they continued their education. These personal sacrifices refer to the way the parents worked hard in order to provide their children with a decent education. All of them were born in Tonga but three of them (Greg, Eve & Lucy) came to New Zealand at a very young age. All three stated being aware of these sacrifices:

My parents are hard working, they were hardly at home. They were always working, you know. But we could see them working for one reason - that was for us, and that motivated me a lot to achieve (Greg)

Eve related an interesting story about the sacrifice that her parents made on her behalf beginning in the 1970's. Her story may be similar to other Tongan success stories in New Zealand, and is worth mentioning:

I remember when we first came from Tonga we lived in my uncle's house in Ponsonby. My Mom and my Dad were factory workers out in New Lynn. Both of them had to work and I remember as a child I used to wake up early in the morning and go to New Lynn and there my mom and I, 'cause my Dad

started early - he was the supervisor at Crown Lynn, you know, one of those places that make pottery and stuff. He started like in the six o'clock shift. There was only one car and Mom and I had to get up in the morning and we would wait in the car 'cause mom started work at eight. So we would sleep in the car for another two hours and then would wake up and go into the bathroom in the factory and wash up...

Across the street was the kindergarten that I went to. Mom started 8 o'clock, Dad went on break, took me to kindergarten. I always remember that they kept reminding us that "there was no reason why we came here but for your education" right from when we were young.

Her father made the following comment regarding the sacrifice they made on their daughter's behalf while she was at secondary school. He claims that their children's education was a top priority and that the Tongan custom of having to decorate one's living room was just not a priority.

... We were not concerned about what we had inside our house. We bought the house and spend our money on buying desks, encyclopedias, and books for our children to read at home...(father).

John's parents sent him over to New Zealand to attend secondary school. His parents stayed behind in Tonga to work while he stayed with an aunt. He cited the sacrifice his parents made on his behalf as a motivating factor:

I was sent over here for school - for education, and my parents went through a lot of hardship to be able to send me over here...

The statements show the influence that parental sacrifice and the hard work they endured have a positive impact on their children's education. The fact that these participants saw the sacrifices their parents made, was what made it effective.

Summary

Personal sacrifice on the part of parents appears to have had a positive effect on Eve and John. Both participants were old enough to realize the sacrifices their parents made and understand why they were made. With this in mind, these participants were determined to succeed.

5.3 Parental Expectations and Aspirations

It is interesting to note the difference between the expectation of parents in both groups. Table 5.3 displays a comparison of groups in terms of perceived parental expectation. Parental expectations in the "underachiever" group were

oriented toward jobs. Their expectations ranged from 'getting a good education' to being the 'best they could' and not one mention of going to University. Their expectations was neither specific nor ambitious. In contrast, parents from the Achiever group were more ambitious with their expectations. Theirs were centered on high education and careers.

Table 5.3 **Parental Expectation**

Achievers	Underachievers
"To reach a high standard education and to pass the University Entrance examination"	"Just to achieve a good education and be the best she could be"
"To work for God and to be used as an instrument in His service"	"I wanted her to be a nurse or teacher so she could help people"
"I left it up to her to decide what she wanted to pursue... I only wanted her to realize that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom"	"I wanted her to do her best and be successful. I also wanted her to use her talents for the Lord"
"I wanted her to do well and to be able to go to University"	"Just to be the best she can be"
"I wanted her to go to University"	"I wanted him to become a church minister and to work for the church"
"I wanted him to get a good education and to be able to utilize his God-given talents to its maximum capacity"	"To get a Certificate and become an Auto Mechanic"
"I wanted her to do well and to go to University"	"To be able to get a good job in the future"
"I wanted her to become a nurse, like me. But when she made to University, I left it to her to decide"	"To get a good education and to be able to take care of herself in the future"

It is difficult to provide a logical explanation for the lower expectation on the part of the parents. It is notable, however, that nine parent participants worked/are working in unskilled or semi skilled jobs. Thus, according to their own life experiences, they may not hold "high" expectations in terms of academic achievement. Timothy's father, an accountant, is the only professional working parent in the group. Low parental expectation has potential negative implications on the educational achievement of their children. Failing to tell their children to aim high and to offer the necessary support needed could lead to a lack of self-motivation, disinterest in school work and low student goals.

Summary

Parents from both groups had different types of expectations for their children. The expectations of those from the Achiever group were more academically oriented whereas the expectations of parents from the Underachiever group were oriented toward jobs. Interestingly, participants turned out to be what their parents expected of them.

5.4 Home Environment

The home environment helps shape the educational experience of each student and could thus determine academic success or failure. As seen in Table 5.4 five out of ten participants from the "underachiever" group indicated coming from quiet and favorable homes. However, it is interesting to note that

the participants from conducive home environments were not motivated to study. These five participants indicated studying from between 0 to 45 minutes a day at home, which is minimal. Therefore, a quiet and conducive environment may be a necessary but not sufficient condition for education support, depending on other factors such as motivation and support from others.

Table 5.4 **Type of Home Environment**

Achievers	Underachievers
<p>“The environment at home was ideal and conducive to us learning”</p> <p>“.. the kids would make a hell lot of noise”</p> <p>“The environment was conducive to getting good grades”</p> <p>“I didn’t really have a lot of distractions”</p> <p>“We didn’t have any kids running around”</p> <p>“There was just us three kids at home. It was always quiet”</p> <p>“It’s just real comfortable...”</p>	<p>“The home was too noisy and I couldn’t concentrate. The home was just too busy”</p> <p>“At home, there are no distractions ‘cause there are no kids”</p> <p>“Too many people at home for church functions”</p> <p>“It was nice and quiet, good for study”</p> <p>“There weren’t any kids around”</p> <p>“There were no kids at home to disturb me if I wanted to study, but I didn’t”</p> <p>“..the light wasn’t good or sometimes it was too noisy..”</p>

Out of the 10 participants in the “achiever” group, only John indicated having lived in an overcrowded and noisy home. As previously stated, John lived with relatives in Auckland at the time because his parents were still in the Islands.

John's following anecdote is a classic example of the worse kind of home environment a student could possibly come from.

All I had was a bed. Like I said, I was sleeping under the house. Under their house was about this high [he demonstrates the height]. It was not a proper bedroom. You had to crawl. In it was about 1 meter and a bit. Like I said, you know, the four families occupied the four bedrooms and there were some living in the living room as well. You know the Tongans, you cannot have the brothers and sisters living together in the same room. So, obviously the girls will have the rooms and the guys will sleep in the lounge. So I ended up sleeping under the house because basically there were about 14 or 15, sometimes 17 if relatives come over to visit.

So I ended up underneath the house because it was a bit peaceful. I had to make a makeshift light and my bed wasn't a proper bed. It was just a mattress. And I just did my studying just sitting up, so that was pretty hard, man.

What I usually do when I get home is that I'd have dinner and what happened is that we had kids in our household in those days and it was full. Most of the people at home don't know

what studying is. So they would make a hell lot of noise, you know, the kids would be watching their program... What I did was I had to my meal early and then hit the sack. I had to adjust to the environment. So I hit the sack until they - the TV would go up to 12 midnight in those days - go to sleep and then I wake up to do some study

John did face these hardships at home but he adjusted himself well to the challenges of the new environment and succeeded regardless.

Summary

A quiet and conducive home environment is no doubt important for students to have. However, such an environment would be ineffective in the absence of personal motivation for students and parental support. Participants from the Underachiever group came from conducive environments but it appears that the absence of parental support neutralised the effectiveness of the environment. John also proved that one does not have to come from a conducive home environment in order to succeed. He was self motivated and he succeeded regardless.

5.5 Home Discipline

The type of discipline used by parents in the "underachiever" group is noteworthy. James was the only participant who indicated receiving parental

reprimands as the only method of discipline. On the other hand, the majority reported receiving a combination of parental reprimands and hidings. Kate and Sam are classic examples of children who have been exposed to traditional forms of discipline at home. They indicated that corporal punishment was the only method of discipline at home and commented on the severity of these punishments and its effect on their education. Kate stated that she sometimes ended up in the hospital to get fixed up after getting a hiding from her mother. The following quotes provide us with an insight to the negative impact of the extreme use of corporal punishment on students:

Hidings were the form of discipline that was used at home. Hidings every time, especially when I am reported for any misbehavior at school. They were pretty strict at the time and sometimes they went too far. It was Mom who used to give me the hidings and I usually end up in the hospital to get me fixed up. This type of discipline took my mind off school work. When I am given a hiding at home I used to think about it for sometime and it makes me real mad. As a result I try to run away from school. I usually go to school one or two days a week (Kate).

They used exactly the kind of discipline that is used in Tonga, such as, if you do something wrong you will be beaten up. My studies were affected - big time. Sometimes I felt that they were

trying to put me down. The beatings that were dished out to us was not just some minor ones. It was even done in church. I was beaten up in church at one time, it was done outside the church. As a result of these kinds of treatments I felt that they were trying to put me down in front of the people. I guess that was one of the reasons I decided to leave school (Sam).

Of all the participants in the "achiever" group, Christine and Eve were the only ones who indicated coming from homes where physical punishment was never used. The rest of the participants in this group claim they were hit at home when they did something wrong, though none of them called it 'abuse'. The following quotations consist of some of their responses to the issue of discipline:

I'm never hit, but I think the only discipline I remember was being told I couldn't go to social and stuff like that, you know, like being grounded and privileges being taken away... (Christine).

We got smacked, just short and simple, we got a smack. But the thing with my dad is that he always gave us a warning. Each of us had a fair warning. If we did something wrong he would say "The next time you do it you are going to get

smacked” and it wasn’t like those slaps with your hands. You got the belt ! But I mean, fair enough, you got a warning (Robyn).

Oh, no. We were never hit. My dad didn’t believe in hitting us. Tafulu pe (lectures). And sometimes when he talks you feel like “God, just give me a hiding and get it over with” ‘cause he has a loud voice... (Eve).

Sometimes, but not to do with school work - just other stupid things we do (Kathy).

Their discipline, I think palangis will call it child abuse, but it worked with us kids. You know, a hiding with a spoon... (Lucy).

Quite painful - laughs... (Greg).

Three participants from the first group stated that their parents were strict at home. However, they also believed that this helped with their studies.

During my school years I was quite, as you might call it - sheltered, you know. I mean, I came from a very strict Tongan Christian home background. My father - he was a hard man

and there was always one way, you know, with my dad. There was no middle ground (Greg).

My parents were very, strict, very, very strict. I couldn't do things that my peers were allowed to do like go out, socialize and stuff like that. We weren't even allowed to join sports until we pushed them to let us join sports at seventh form... (Kathy).

My father was very strict and he can be very domineering. But he's got a good heart and he pushed us to work hard. I think that's the real reason why I succeeded because my dad pushed us.. (Lucy).

None of them expressed any problems with the use of physical punishment, of all the participants (Achiever group) who indicated receiving physical punishment at home. In fact, some of them laughed as they related these incidents. It becomes clear, however, that even though physical punishment was used, it never affected their academic performance because it was not carried out to the extreme and was never used regularly. On the other hand, it is difficult to verify the true impact of physical punishment on the educational performance of participants from the Underachiever group, but the fact that two participants reported receiving nothing but beatings is cause for concern. This factor is explained and analyzed more fully in the following chapter.

Summary

It appears that whether discipline was present at home or not is not so much the issue in the findings. It is how and when it was applied that is important. Physical punishment was used in both groups and apparently it had no negative effect on the participants from the Achiever group. However, one thing that comes out clearly from the participants' stories is that they seemed to understand why it was used. Also physical punishment was never used regularly. This experience is similar to that experienced by those from the Underachiever group. Nonetheless, the cases of Kate and Sam should be noted because the extreme physical abuse they were exposed to at home led to their decision to leave school.

5.6 Language Barrier

All new migrants from the islands face problems related to adapting to their new environment. Language is often a significant part of the problem. This was reported to be a problem by participants from both groups. Of the participants from the "underachiever" group who were born overseas, 80% entered New Zealand as teen-agers (James, Timothy, Sam and Wayne) with the exception of Anne who migrated to New Zealand when she was only six months old.

The four participants mentioned above discovered, when attending high school in New Zealand, that English was a real barrier to their achievement. They had difficulty trying to understand their teachers and their subjects. Their transfer

from Tongan schools, which do not enforce the use of English, together with the fact that their families speak Tongan at home, contributed to this dilemma. The following quotations highlight the fact that English was a significant barrier to educational success in this group:

The English language was the main problem. Teachers used big words which made things more difficult (James).

The English language was the main problem that I faced. As an immigrant to New Zealand, the language was a problem. I was in my teens when we moved over here and it was hard to pick up the language. Speaking the English language and understanding it were the main problems I faced, especially during classes. The fact that English was a problem pushed me to hang out with students who experienced a similar problem (Timothy).

The English language was a problem especially in the beginning (Sam).

It was a real struggle at the beginning but then I slowly started to pick up the language (Wayne).

The severity of this problem is confirmed when 50% of the participants from the Underachiever group with similar problems indicated that English was the main reason they left school:

Mainly because of my problem with English. I came from Tonga straight into Form 4 and that was difficult for me to cope with the language. English was a barrier and the fact that I was shy to ask questions made things difficult...I guess that social benefits attracted me and removed any motivation to try and pass School C (James).

The problem with communication in English gradually forced me to leave school. I was just discouraged and this led on to a loss of interest in my education (Timothy).

The fact that all of the participants who found English to be a barrier also repeated forms five and six, indicates that language is a major factor affecting achievement. Furthermore, three of the respondents indicated a lack of parental support at home, which added to their adjustment problems. This will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

On the other hand, there was one participant (John) from the “achiever” group who faced the same problem as those previously mentioned. Again, he came

from Tonga as a teenager to attend Secondary School in New Zealand.

According to him:

I grew up in Tonga and I spoke Tongan. When I came over to New Zealand it was a problem and I must agree that I failed English during school tests but somehow I passed the final exam which counted. I don't know but I did face those problems and it is normal anyway if English is your second language.

It is interesting, however, to note how this participant overcame his problem with English. He sought extra help from his teachers and spend time after school doing additional work.

As I have said before I kept on failing in the term tests and I knew that I had to pass in the external exam. I went and asked another teacher to actually tutor me after hours and help me with my essay writing and all and I actually did that throughout.

In his case, determination and hard work were responsible for his ability to overcome his problem with English. He also claims that it was the "thought of home" and "the sacrifice his parents made" on his behalf that motivated him to put in the extra effort. Another possible factor for his determination to improve

his English would be the thought of returning home to Tonga in disgrace without any qualification and becoming the laughing stock of the village.

Summary

Language appeared to be a barrier only to students who came to New Zealand to attend secondary school. What is important to take note of is the way they responded to this barrier. Participants from the Underachiever group saw it as a barrier but made no effort to overcome it. John, the only participant from the Achiever group who experienced a similar problem saw this barrier as a challenge which he must overcome, which he did.

5.7 Pregnancy

Teen-age pregnancy is now a common phenomenon in Western societies, including New Zealand, where sex education is integrated into the school curriculum and where parental control on children is, to a certain extent, restricted by law. Even though only one participant mentioned it, it is still important for it to be included in this section. Pregnancy was cited by Clare as one of the reasons for dropping out of school:

The only reason why I went back to school the following year was because my parents forced me to go. It was during that year that I got pregnant and then decided to stay for good (Clare).

The fact that Clare was forced by her parents to return to school and to repeat form five that year provided her with a motive to get pregnant as a way out of school. Another contributing factor would be the lack of parental support at home. Clare reported receiving no parental support whatsoever. Her father, also noted that he was in the United States at the time of her pregnancy.

Summary

Pregnancy in this study is just a single case and it sometimes happen. What is important to ask is how it happened. The only explanation that can be given, based on the data available, is that parental support was absent at home.

5.8 Lessons

Difficulty with lessons or school work was cited by participants in the “underachiever” group as one of the reasons for leaving school. In fact, this was the underlying reason for their lack of motivation and their general disinterest in their education.

Classes were sometimes hard and most of the time I just don't bother to do my homework . I left school mainly because I did not pass my school Certificate exams the first time (Clare).

... I just left 'cause... seeing I was second year fifth, I had a feeling that I have to do it again (Joanne).

School was just so difficult for me... I just didn't do well at school... (Kate).

I never really understood what the school work was about... (Anne).

Three of the participants who indicated having problems with schoolwork are New Zealand-born, including Anne, who was born in Tonga but migrated to New Zealand at a very young age. However, what is interesting is the fact that three of them came from non-supportive home backgrounds. The credibility of the parental support claimed by Joanne has already been discredited in section 5.1.

Summary

Again the lack of parental support emerges. None of the parents in the "underachiever" group made any attempt to find outside assistance for their children. If money was the problem, one option would have been to contact the teachers at school and request extra remedial classes for their children or ask a relative or friend to do it for them if English is a barrier. The fact that this was not done could mean that there was a lack of communication between the students and their parents with regard to what they were doing at school.

5.9 Peers

The friends that participants from both groups chose to be affiliated with played an important role in their educational experiences. Only Joanne and Anne from the “underachiever” group cited having friends that had a positive impact on their lives at school. However, their definition of ‘positive impact’ was vague. The fact that the majority of the participants in this group associated with friends that had no interest in their studies comes as no surprise. Instead of going home after school, the majority visited the shopping mall or went to the city to ‘*muck around*’. Anne and Joanne were the only ones who reported going straight home after school. Their reason for doing so was that they were afraid of being reprimanded by their parents.

Conversely, the majority of the participants from the ‘achiever’ group reported having friends who took their studies seriously and who were a positive influence on their education. Their description of their friends are cited in the following table together with that of the “underachiever” group.

Table 5.5

Personality of High School Friends

Achievers	Underachievers
<p>"My folks wanted me to hang out with Palangi kids because, you know, for academic purposes"</p>	<p>"My friends were naughty. We wagged a lot. We were boy crazy and we missed classes most of the time"</p>
<p>"They were pretty good... We all knew what we were going to do in the future, and that was to go to University"</p>	<p>"My friends were outgoing, wild and fun to be with"</p>
<p>"They were really good. They were basically on my wave length, like our interest were"</p>	<p>"We used to sneak out and smoke cigarettes in the Boys toilet or smoke marijuana on the playground during recess time. No one noticed us (Sam).</p>
<p>"I don't think I would have made it without their help"</p>	<p>"They were all right.."</p>
<p>"They were quite bright. They topped the school"</p>	<p>"They were mostly interested in sports"</p>
<p>"Most of them were Christians"</p>	<p>"We were all pretty smart, actually, but we were all pretty rebellious"</p>

It is interesting to note that friends of participants from both groups more or less obtained an academic achievement level similar to that of their participant friends. Based on the facts presented in Table 5.5 it can be assumed that the participant's choice of friends says a lot about their priorities and affiliations at the time. The friends of participants from the "achiever" group were more educationally-oriented, while those of the "underachiever" group had interests other than education.

Table 5.6 Achievement Level of Participant's Friends

Achievers	Underachievers
"A number of them were studying to be doctors..."	"Most of them are mothers"
"All my friends made it to University.."	"They are still at school"
"I think they are all successful"	"Most of them are on the dole"
"Most of them are at University"	"Most of them work in stores, warehouses and Food Town"
"Only a few of them went on for further education.."	"Some have left New Zealand and some just fool around and some are working"
"Not many of them are at University"	"They are working in factories"
"A couple have graduated now.."	"Most of them are unemployed and are on the benefit. The only one that did well was Paea Wolfgramme" (Tonga's 1996 Olympic boxing sensation)
"I'm the only one at Uni. The rest of them are working"	"On the dole"
"A couple of them have completed their Degrees.."	"One guy is not working where his qualifications should have taken him..."
"Some of them are doing well"	"Some of them have done well, while a lot of them have had kids born out of wedlock"

Table 5.6 depicts a surprising and yet similar story concerning the friends of participants from both groups. Their friends more or less achieved the same level of education as they accomplished themselves. Thus, it can be assumed

that the type of friends that participants associated with had an effect on their level of academic achievement.

Gangs was also cited by one participant in particular. Even though this was just a single case it is still significant. Gangs have become well established in New Zealand, especially amongst people from low socio-economic backgrounds, and including many Pacific Islanders and Maoris. The same concept is transferred to the school setting. Students from similar backgrounds form groups that promote anti-social behavior within the schools. These behaviors include vandalism, smoking and alcohol consumption on school grounds.

Sam indicated that he was involved in a gang at school and used to do drugs during school time. He considers that joining the gang was due to fact that he was from a dysfunctional home and an abusive father:

I used to hang out with guys that smoked marijuana. We used to drink alcohol and stuff like that after school. However, they were caught and expelled from school, but I was not caught... I felt accepted and appreciated by members of our group and felt in control of my life... (Sam).

On the other hand, Kate also indicated having had affiliations with a gang at school: *I was involved with a gang at school..*, but did not go into detail as to

comment on the extent of her involvement and whether the gang affected her school work or her decision not to continue her education. However, it is important to take note of the fact that Kate, like Sam, comes from a home with 'zero' parental support.

Summary

It appears that participants' choice of friends was based on similar interests. For the "underachievers", it had little to do with schoolwork. The "achievers" were more inclined to associate with students who took their education seriously. It is also important to note that the two who indicated having affiliations with gangs at school again came from homes where support was absent.

5.10 Anne's Story

As mentioned in Chapter 4, Anne belongs to both groups, even though her story is included with those of participants from the "underachiever" group. The fact that she resumed her studies and succeeded after years of being a school drop-out is worth mentioning. Anne's story is unique because she came from an overcrowded home where the mother was busy all the time at her shop. *"We had heaps of people living with us. Mau nofo pe he fale koloa (we lived in the shop) and we had three shops and people lived above all three shops"* (Anne). Her mother had to work to provide for the needs of countless relatives who were under her care. In addition, she was a solo parent. The lack of parental

support at Anne's home has already been discussed under the section Parental Support (5.1).

Anne admitted having difficulty with the lessons at school but claims it was not related to the English language because she actually grew up in New Zealand. She also realized that she would fail the School Certificate exams she sat that year and was contemplating finding a job. However, it was the episode below that provoked her to quit school:

*Do you know what happened to me on my last day at school ?
I was walking out of the College and Sister Mary (not her real name) was walking towards me. She was going up to the Chapel and she said "I'm off to the chapel to pray that people like you don't come back to school" and then I just thought "Don't worry about me 'cause I'm not coming back to this school". As soon as she said that I said to myself "I'm not even going to bother.*

When Anne sensed that she would fail the exam she was determined to get a good job when she left school:

Everybody was waiting for the results and I said to my mom "I know I'm not going to make it" and she goes "We wasted all

that money..." and so the pressure there was that I was just going to be like all my mom's brothers and sister's kids who come from Tonga and go and work in the factory. And I said to her "That's why I'm determined to go and find an office job and I don't care what it was, even if it was just doing photocopying, as long as I wasn't in a so called factory..."

She finally got a job at the Countrywide Bank and worked there for six years. While working, she realised that she did not enjoy it. An uncle (a social worker) suggested to her that she do a course in Social Work if she wanted a better job. She then left her job and pursued a two year Diploma in Social Work. She, however, acknowledged the support and assistance of her class mates as the main reason she succeeded.

Summary

A good role model and close personal support appear to be the factors behind Anne's success. There was no father figure for her at home, since her mother was a solo parent at the time and that could have contributed to her problem. The uncle who suggested that she continue her education was perhaps viewed by Anne as a good role model and she followed his advice. The support she received from her class mates also helped her with her studies.

5.11 Church

Kate cited church as one of the problems that affected her efforts to do school work at home. The members of this particular church spend a great deal of time practising dances and songs for church functions at her home. She reported that her father was a deacon at the church and he was thus expected to demonstrate his commitment to the church by accommodating various church activities, as previously mentioned, at his home. According to Kate:

There were too many people who came home for church functions such as dance and singing practice. It was noisy and it affected any attempts to do my homework...

She alluded to church as a contributing factor to her decision not to continue her education. According to her, it was just too much:

...We grew up in a family that placed a lot value on the church. We had church seven days a week. If my parents wanted us to do well they should've given us time to study

Even though this was the only complaint about the church, its economic repercussion on the family income was great. All parents from both groups indicated making donations to their respective churches. Table 5.7 provides a summary of the amount of money that parent participants contributed to the church as part of their annual donation:

Table 5.7

Summary of Parent Participants Annual Church Donation (\$)

ACHIEVERS	UNDERACHIEVERS
0	0
100 (x2)	100
500 (x2)	1,000
2,000	2,000 (x2)
2,500	3,000
5,000	5,000 (x2)
7,800 (x2)	20,000 (x2)

Note:

One participant from the "achiever" group indicated giving nothing to the church, even though they attended church regularly. The other participant from the "underachiever" group donated nothing to the church simply because they do not attend church.

Table 5.7 shows that parents from the "achiever" group make annual church donations that ranged from \$100 to \$7,800. The majority made donations that were below \$2,000. Those from the "underachiever" group donated more to the church than participants from the "achiever" group. Only one indicated donating \$100. The majority gave between \$1,000 to \$5,000. Two reported making donations of more than \$20,000 a year! This is not surprising at all because a lot of Tongans do this all the time.

This is a considerable amount of money to spend, taking into consideration Tongan families' level of income. It is not surprising to note that these

donations to the church would leave some of their children's education needs unfulfilled. For instance, none of the participants in both groups had a personal computer at home. Only 12 participants had their own room and only six participants indicated having had study tables and lights. The significance of these statistics will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

Summary

Based on the statistics provided in Table 5.7 it is obvious that the church takes away considerable financial resources that could have been invested on children's education. The question that could not be answered is: what would have happened if this money was spend on their children's education?

5.12 General Summary

This chapter has attempted to generate the main themes to emerge from the findings. It seems significant that the priorities of parents and the way they view education play an important part in determining the educational experience of their children. Parental support is evidently an important 'ingredient' in bringing about educational success.

The discrepancy in the information provided by both student and parent participants is important to take note of. There appears to be a tendency for parents in the "underachiever" group to distort the information they provide. This could either be an attempt to cover themselves from any criticism on their

part or a genuine memory lapse. However, parental support has proven to be an essential element to the success of children in schools.

The following chapter discusses the results of the research and attempts to provide an explanation for themes that arose from the findings.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION

6.0 Introduction

It is apparent from the findings in the previous chapter that the home and the school environment have a direct influence on the factors discussed in the previous chapter. The type of upbringing received by each participant in this study had an impact on hi/her level of academic achievement at school. The school, to a certain degree, also had a minor part to play. In order to interpret and consider the implications of these findings, this chapter sets out to discuss in more detail the part that the home plays with regard to the factors discussed in the previous chapter.

6.1 Home Environment

The child functions in the classroom as a total person, bringing with him all the results of his previous learnings and experiences which have shaped his emotional, physical and intellectual being: his self-identification and his level of adjustment, his motives, values and aspirations, his attitudes to and perceptions of school, learning and the world about him, his health and nutritional status and his sensory functioning, his level of cognitive functioning, his preferred ways of knowing and learning and his competence in language use (Watts, 1983, cited in Eckermann: 17).

The home environment plays a significant role in students' educational experience. In fact, it helps shape their educational experience and thus determine their level of academic achievement. It is notable that the majority of the participants from the "underachiever" group (six out of ten) come from homes that are quiet and conducive to study. Usually such an environment is conducive to success, but not so in this case. The lack of parental support (which impacts on self motivation and what their children do with their time at school and at home) in the "underachiever" group neutralised the effectiveness of the home environment.

A quiet and conducive home environment was effective for participants from the "achiever" group. With the exception of John, who was staying with relatives in an overcrowded house, the rest claimed that the environment at home helped their studies. The present study confirms Mahina's⁹ (1997) belief that the home environment plays a very important role in the underachievement of Tongan students in New Zealand. However, this study would like to emphasise that in the absence of parental support, an effective home environment would be worthless.

The quality of support provided by "achiever" parents at home together with the value they place on education enabled their children to stay in school and they gradually succeeded. In other words, the home environment is only as effective

⁹ Mahina, 'O. (1997) Interview with the researcher in Tonga. Permission to quote secured.

as the people who control it. Without parental support, the environment is ineffective.

The type of home environment students come from is, to a great extent, shaped by their parents. The following factors affect parent's perception of education and what constitutes a home environment that is conducive to their children's education:

- level of formal education
- their work
- culture
- status in the community
- degree of affiliation with the church
- the place of education in their priority list

The parents need to be aware of the importance of their priorities and how they affect their children and their education. Parents who are closely affiliated with the church, for instance, are inclined to donate a substantial sum to the church or whatever the priority may be. This means that this money is not invested on their children's education. What participants in this study referred to as conducive home environments are mainly to do with the privacy and silence they get at home. This did not include other relevant tools for education such

as study tables, chairs and personal computers - items that are regarded as important and even possessed by some academically successful *pakeha*.

There is no doubt of the need for students to have their own rooms to ensure that they can work in private without any disturbance. Study light, table and a chair in the bedroom are a step in the right direction. It allows the student to study in comfort and in private. The majority of participants from both groups indicated having no study light and table and this is disturbing. None of them had a personal computer at home at the time and this shows that perhaps some of these parents invested their money on other things apart from education, such as the church. As seen in Table 5.7, some of the parent participants have a substantial amount of money to invest on these educational items.

6.1.1 The Significance of Parental Expectation

We don't want them to follow in our footsteps. We want them to see the sufferings of getting up at 5 or 6 in the morning, in the cold and limping to work. That's because of no education. We want them to hate that way of living. Schooling back in the Islands was hard, walked for miles to go to school with only one meal a day. With the opportunities that these children have today there is no excuse for them to go through the hardships that we're going through (Parent, cited in Fusitu'a, 1992:79).

The above statement is representative of the general expectations of Tongan parents in New Zealand, even though these hopes are not often backed up with the necessary support required by their children, as suggested in chapter 5. It is also interesting to note that although the above statement alludes to a hope of a better future for their children, the expectation is not clear. Apparently, they do not want their children to be factory workers, but exactly what they want their children to achieve or how that is going to be done is vague.

This is similar to the expectations of the majority of parents from the “underachiever” group. They failed to convey a clear message of what they expected from their children and perhaps this was part of the reason why their children left school. It can be argued that parents’ inability to be clear on their expectations was because they were too busy with other things, such as work or church, and that education was not really a priority.

The lack of understanding of the New Zealand school system and the barriers their children face as a minority group often obscure parent’s perception of reality. Many Tongan parents think that the availability of the things they did not receive as students in Tonga (such as good food and more money) should guarantee their children success. Unfortunately, things are not that simple.

Children quite often turn out to be what their parents expect them to be. In the context of this study, students from both groups basically followed a pattern set by their parent's expectation. The expectation of the majority of parents from the "achiever" group were centred on high education for their children and careers whereas those from the "underachiever" group's expectations were oriented toward jobs and service work. Participants from both groups lived up to their parent's expectation.

The low expectation expressed by parents in the "underachiever" group would indicate that they actually wanted their children just to go to secondary school, do whatever they could, get a job, and help them. It could also be that the parent's aspirations for participants from this group were somewhat nebulous and were not supported by unequivocal demands and expectation.

One explanation for the higher academic expectation of parents from the achiever group is that their children's education was actually part of the reason for migration to New Zealand. In other words, these parents really wanted their children to receive a good education and to be able to succeed. However, it must be noted that high parental expectation by itself cannot guarantee a child academic success. Other contributing factors come into play, such as parental support, conducive study environment and the child's genetic make up.

6.1.2 Divergent Perceptions of Parental Support

Anecdotal evidence suggests that there is a tendency for well educated parents to have children who in turn become academically successful. Well educated parents tend to have a better understanding of what is involved in their children's education and what support their children need. In addition, there are societal, communal, family and personal pressure on parents from such backgrounds to ensure that their children succeed. Support, in this context, refers to anything parents do for their children that helped bring about academic success.

Parental support was perceived by parent participants in different ways. Those from the "achiever" group looked at it as providing their children with ample time to do their school work or by attending school meetings regarding their children's academic progress. On the other hand, parent participants from the "underachiever" group perceived 'support' as providing food, bus fare and school fees for their children. Their divergent perceptions of support confirm what was previously discussed.

The lack of parental support appears to be unanimous in the "underachiever" group and apparently it is a crucial factor in the underachievement of its participants. Helu (1997) talks about the factors surrounding a plausible New Zealand scenario where both parents work and there is no one at home to supervise the children after school and its potential impact on the children:

There are two conflicting interests in a household in New Zealand. One is to create a viable economic position and for that - both parents try and find work. The other interest is their children, the development of their children. If you pursue one of these things, that means that the other is neglected. Most parents find work, the working couple as they say. And the children are left to their own devices.

They come home after school, the home is deserted - it is very unattractive. They then dial their friends on the phone and arrange to go on the street for a walk. They go to the milk shake stand for some soft drinks and from there they graduate to the pub. I think that is the main problem in New Zealand, the neglect of children because of the conflict of interest...

There was a disparity between the views of student participants and their parents regarding the issue of parental support. The majority of the parents claimed they provided assistance while their children contradicted their claims. There are two conceivable explanations for this conflict. It is possible that parents claimed to have provided it to avoid getting blamed or that they were sincere in what they perceived as 'support' but they do not have the same perception and definition of the word as their children.

The majority of parents from the achiever group did not receive a tertiary education but had respectable jobs in Tonga prior to their migration to New Zealand. This could be enough reason for parents to want their children to do

well in school. Some of these parents lost the 'status' their jobs gave them in Tonga when they arrived in New Zealand. In fact, some of them are still working in jobs that they wouldn't normally do in Tonga, such as cleaning or working in factories. These jobs are reserved in Tonga for the uneducated. These parents realised that the jobs that their qualification got for them in Tonga cannot do the same for them in New Zealand. This gives them even more reason to ensure that their children achieve what they could not and in so doing restore the status they themselves once had.

On the other hand, the majority of parents from the "underachiever" group migrated to New Zealand in the 1970's because they could not earn enough to look after their families in Tonga. The majority of parents in this group did not complete secondary school in Tonga and did not obtain the 'status' that some of the parents from the other group had. Therefore, they did not get to appreciate the importance of education as much as parents from the other group. It appears that their initial reason for migrating to New Zealand was to get a better life (to acquire more material wealth) and it is doubtful whether education was a priority. This is reflected in their inability to push their children to stay in school and to provide the support they need in order to do well. Their limited knowledge of education and their inability to effectively communicate in English hindered any hope of full participation in their children's education.

Judging from the experiences of participants in this study, it becomes clear that there is a great need for parents to provide the support that their children need if they want their children to do well. Failure to do so can result in what participants from the “underachiever” group experienced. Teachers in Hawk and Hill’s (1996:298) study unanimously agreed that by actively involving parents in their child’s learning and welfare is pivotal to their achievement.

6.2 Implications of Language Barrier on Achievement

The difficulty expressed by student participants regarding the English language is expected of people who migrate to a new country with a different language. This was faced mainly by participants who came from Tonga to attend secondary school in New Zealand. Four participants from the “underachiever” group cited English as a barrier to their achievement, even though only two claimed that it was the reason for dropping out of school. All four indicated struggling at the beginning but subsequently learned to pick up the language. However, it can be argued that what they actually “picked up” was the ability to communicate verbally with others and to be understood by their peers, and not necessarily an improvement in their writing capability. Conveying their ideas in written English was still a struggle and presumably that is partly why they left school.

The language barrier was not restricted to the student participants only. It also affected their parents too. Perhaps this was the main reason for the majority of parents in the “underachiever” group not attending these meetings. The English language to them, like their children, was a barrier that prevented them from full participation in these meetings. Their insufficient level of formal education also contributes to their inability to participate fully. Hawk and Hill (1996) acknowledge the problem faced by Pacific Island parents with regard to the English language.

Some of the parents who valued education in Tonga and were more involved with their children’s education there are often faced with problems similar to that previously discussed. This includes understanding the English language and the New Zealand education system, which is quite different to the one in Tonga.

Lack of personal motivation was another problem that prevented 40% of participants from the “underachiever” group from overcoming their problem with English. This is normally the feeling when a teenager tries to be competent in using a language that is foreign to him/her. In the context of this study, this was a big step for the participants concerned, taking into consideration that they were from Tongan schools that do not enforce the use of the English language. It is a bit unrealistic to expect students from Tonga who already had

problems with English to migrate to New Zealand, enrol at high school and expect them to succeed.

John, the only participant from the “achiever” group to experience the same problem overcame his by his determination to succeed, encouraged by the thought of the sacrifice his parents were making in Tonga on his behalf. This was what motivated him to succeed. On the other hand, this was not the case with the four participants from the “underachiever” group. Their parents were here with them in New Zealand and personal motivation was almost absent.

Apparently, there were external factors that discouraged these participants from even trying to improve in English. The striking contrast in the way of life of Tonga and New Zealand had an impact on these participants. The ‘easy’ life they experienced in New Zealand was very tempting and prevented any attempt on their part to stay in school. They were aware of the fact that they were entitled to a social welfare benefit from the state even if they could not get a job. Three out of four testified to that effect.

6.3 The Discipline Debate

As reported in the previous chapter, participants from the “underachiever” group received more physical punishment than those from the “achiever” group. This is definitely cause for concern but the question is: To what extent is physical punishment a contributing factor to the underachievement of Tongan

students in Auckland? Anecdotal evidence suggests that physical punishment, in the Tongan context, does not necessarily lead to underachievement. There are very successful Tongan people today who received physical punishment from their parents.

Anecdotal evidence confirms that a considerable number of academically successful Tongans have attributed their success to the type of discipline they received in Tonga, including physical punishment. They interpreted the use of physical punishment as an act of "ofa" or love. Parents often say the following words after using physical punishment on their children: "Ko 'eku 'ofa 'eni na'aku taa'i ai ko e" which is simply translated as "I gave you this hiding because I love you." This might sound misguided and inappropriate to other cultural groups such as Pakehas, for instance, but it is the accepted way for most Tongans.

The Tongan culture comes as a total 'package' and discipline is a very important part of it. The Tongan culture places a lot of emphasis on *respect* and *obedience*. Physical punishment is then utilised as a tool to ensure that members of the family, for instance, are respectful and obedient. Physical discipline is not only culturally appropriate but it is also acceptable. If it is removed then in the opinion of the researcher attempts to practice the Tongan culture in New Zealand will fail.

In the context of this study, physical punishment, as claimed by participants from the “underachiever” group, actually happened and probably had an effect on them. On the other hand, seven out of ten participants from the “achiever” group received physical punishment but still succeeded. Therefore, physical punishment (perhaps with the exception of Kate and Sam) cannot be blamed as the main contributing factor to the underachievement of participants in this study. Parental support, which was not evident in the “underachiever” group, could perhaps be the main contributing factor to their underachievement.

6.4 Peers and Achievement

The friends of the participants in this study shared similar interest. For instance, participants from the “achiever” group had friends who took their education seriously. Their after school activities included studying together in the library or at home. On the other hand, participants from the “underachiever” group mainly associated with students who had no interest in their education. Their after school activities included bus rides and mucking around in shopping malls. It is noteworthy that parents from the “achiever” group expected their children home straight after school and some of them personally picked their children up from school. On the other hand, parents from the “underachiever” group did not seem to care about the time their children got home.

Parents from the “achiever” group actually knew their children’s friends and at times instructed their children with regard to whom they could associate with.

One parent even told his son to mingle with *palangis* so he could learn from them. Another instructed his daughter to mix with the bright students in the class in order to improve her grades. On the other hand, no such instructions were given by parents from the “underachiever” group to their children. Some of them were not even aware of their children’s friends at school.

Gangs or groups of people who often practice anti-social behaviour like tagging and smoking pot was another issue that emerged in the findings. This issue is included in this section because it is closely associated with the friends students associate with. Anecdotal evidence suggest that students who come from dysfunctional home backgrounds and are exposed to physical abuse have a tendency to join groups that practice anti-social behaviour at school. The fact that Sam comes from a similar family background more or less made him a suitable candidate for the gang.

There are two possible explanations for gangs practising anti-social behaviour at school. First of all, it is a cry for recognition because respect and love are not found at home. Secondly, it is a channel for these students to express their anger and frustration for the problems they face at home. Sam suggested that hanging out with the gang made him feel accepted and in control of his life.

Sam was the only participant who reported his involvement in a gang. However, his involvement could be a result of a consolidation of the following factors:

- lack of parental support
- an abusive father
- the extreme use of physical punishment

Once again, the lack of parental support is a possible reason for Sam's involvement in the gang. A Pacific Island teacher made the following comment about alcohol and drugs in relation to Pacific Island students in Auckland: *Alcohol is a problem with our kids. "How can you become a PI guy without being drunk all the time?". Alcohol is their way to solve problems and to raise self esteem* (cited in Hawk & Hill, 1996:151).

6.5 Scrutinizing the Churches' Role

Church is an institution that most Tongans hold dear, since its introduction by the early Pakeha missionaries. In the context of the Tongan community in New Zealand, the role of churches should be carefully scrutinised with regard to the underachievement of Tongan students in this study. They provide some kind of stability to the life of Tongans overseas in exchange for money. Most, if not all, of the Tongan churches extract money from their members. This money goes toward the construction of new churches in New Zealand or in Tonga. In New

Zealand today, the Tongan community is exploited like a gold mine by the churches with no consideration to the welfare of their families.

Table 5.7, which outlines the monetary contribution parent participants made to the church shows that those from the “underachiever” group gave more generously than those from the other group. It is astonishing but not unusual for Tongans to do this because people usually give more than this during *Misinale* (annual church donations to the church) time. Table 5.7 presents the amount of money that could have been invested in their children’s education. This should have been sufficient to get their children study tables, lights, chairs, and even a personal computer.

The participant from the “underachiever” group who indicated being directly affected by church activities at home suggests that churches not only take money from Tongan parents but also take up their children’s study time. Nevertheless, it must be noted that parents (and not the church), could be responsible for taking up children’s study time at home because they make the decisions. In this case, what happened is a reflection of parents’ priorities.

Hawk and Hill (1996) discovered that many students mentioned being put under pressure to be involved in certain activities and how difficult they find it to say “no” even when they know their lives will be over-pressured and their schoolwork will suffer. Such church activities include Bible studies and singing

practices. They also found out that there was a general consensus that although parents say that education is important and that they want their children to achieve, the reality is that the church has priority over both money and the time.

Their (church personnel and parents) ideas are unrealistic. The kids are tired. Nearly every Island kid in our school is tired most of the time. I say to a parent "Your son is very tired, and he is not coping with his schoolwork". They say "Yes, but church is important".... And they still expect them to pass School Cert.... School is expected to produce miracles (Pacific Island Teacher, cited in Hawk & Hill, 1996:131).

Helu (1997) believes that Tongan churches contribute to the underachievement of Tongans in New Zealand. He claims that the churches in Tonga tend to send missionaries over to migrant communities in New Zealand and Australia to rob and to deprive them of any economic wealth. He continues to say that the churches are wreaking havoc to the lives of Tongans overseas and that they (churches) should be looked upon as a "kind of evil".

6.6 Summary

This chapter discussed the issues that arose from the findings of this study. The need for parents to offer support to their children came through very strongly in the findings. Also, their expectations and aspirations for their children need to be backed up by support at home. As stated before, the

conducive home environment could only be effective if the parents are supportive.

The next chapter discusses the implications of the findings and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER SEVEN

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the implications of this study to the Tongan community in New Zealand, the parents, churches and the schools. It also includes recommendations for future research.

7.1 Parents Expectation and Change

The dedication of Tongan parents to their children's education in a natural Tongan setting, is not questioned. However, a lot of Tongan parents who migrate to New Zealand are unprepared for what to expect in the new country. Their level of formal education contributes to making their adjustment and adaptation more difficult. Parents have to learn to make adaptations to accommodate New Zealand conditions before expecting their children to succeed academically. This means some aspects of their Tongan lifestyle has to change. The same also applies to religious requirements which may inadvertently interfere with their children's educational pursuits.

Back in the Islands, for example, people do not pay for accommodation because they own their own homes. Here in New Zealand, people pay rent or

rates and the cost of living is significantly higher than it was in Tonga. Therefore, parents have to be more careful in selecting their priorities. They need to be aware that education could be used as a vehicle for upward social mobility and improved quality of life in New Zealand and thus make it a priority.

The findings suggest that parents have a major role to play in the education of Tongan children in New Zealand. The support at home played a large part in the level of achievement of participants in this study. Parental support is vitally important. Without this support, children are doomed to fail. It is understood that a lot of parents have to work to support their families. Notwithstanding this, however, it is recommended on the basis of findings from the present study, that more personal and emotional home-based support for their children is needed. For example, parents should consider excusing their children from household chores during the academic year and checking on their homework.

There is a need for parents to be more aware of the necessity to review their priorities in light of the findings of this study. If their children's education is important to them, then verbal commitments alone are not sufficient. Perhaps a redirection of their financial resources from the church to education would be a step in the right direction.

Hawk and Hill's (1996) AIM HI study and findings of the present study confirm that language barriers make it extremely difficult for parents and the school to

communicate. It was also noted that there are areas of misunderstanding and a lack of parent knowledge about how schools operate and the respective boundaries of the roles and responsibilities of the school and the roles and responsibilities of the parent(s). The need for parents to be educated about these issues was raised in the AIM HI Report and outlined in the Discussion Chapter of this thesis (see Chapter Six). It is extremely important that parents fully understand their role and what is expected of them as parents with children in New Zealand schools. It was also suggested that students need understanding and parental support and monitoring. This, indeed, is a relevant point and was again raised in the findings of this study.

7.2 Tongan churches: New Outlooks and Roles

The church leaders need to be aware that the church is partly responsible for the underachievement of Tongans in Auckland. With reference to Table 5.7 in Chapter 5, it is clear that the church help to remove the financial backing children and their families need for education.

Realising the influential role played by the church in the Tongan migrant community, it is recommended that Tongan church leaders emphasise the importance of education and the family from the pulpits on Sunday mornings. Churches must come to realise that they need to establish strong ties with the younger generation if they are to survive in the twenty first century. These young people have been exposed too much to the *pakeha* environment and

could one day lose respect for church and their traditional culture. It is possible that Helu's (1997) prediction about young Tongans not attending church within the next five to ten years could happen. However, the churches could change all that by changing their outlook and doing something positive for the young generation, like supporting plans that could help the young with their education.

They could also allow church buildings to be utilised as meeting places for Tongan parents to discuss ways of how to best help their children. Parent education support groups, led by local scholars, could be formed and this may help parents to become more realistic concerning the support that they can give the church versus support required to assist their students to achieve personally and educationally.

7.3 The Tongan Community and Collective Responsibility

It is suggested that the Tongan community in Auckland take collective responsibility for the academic achievement of their students. As a community, Tongans have an abundant supply of human and financial resources. As individuals, many of them are hopeless. Individual parents can perhaps help their own children, as those in the achievement group did, but it is important that the Tongan community consider the following questions carefully in order to understand the need for collective responsibility:

- How many parents understand the New Zealand education system?
- How many parents realise the importance of parental support?
- How many of them are aware of the type of support that their children need?
- How many of them understand the need and realise the necessity to review their priorities, as suggested?
- How many of them understand English and can fully participate in their children's education? (for example, attending and understanding parent/teacher interviews)
- How many Tongan church leaders in New Zealand could realise that reinforcing traditional values and beliefs could have an adverse effect on Tongan student's educational achievement ?
- Why is it that other minority groups like Asians, for instance, are experiencing more educational and personal success than Tongans in New Zealand ?

These questions can only be considered and answered collectively by the Tongan community. A well known Tongan academic figure who has the respect of the community, with the backing of the churches, could lead a committee of academics to discuss strategies to address the problem. Their recommendations could then be written up and distributed to the various Tongan churches simply because they are popular meeting places for Tongans. The churches would then inform the members of the recommendations and from there the people can decide on how to best implement them. One of the options they could look at include establishing

Homework Centres in Tongan settled Auckland suburbs. These Centres could be funded by the Tongan community or the churches and perhaps subsidised by the state through community and lottery grants. There are an abundant supply of Tongan graduates who can be recruited as workers at these centres. Such Centres would provide moral support and offer role models aimed at increasing motivation and academic achievement of Tongan students.

Experiences and information gained in this study lead the researcher to believe that the Tongan community in Auckland has got the potential to address the problem of underachievement. The community has access to many Tongan specialists in the field of education, the resources, and also the *loto* or determination to address the problem. The old saying *Tonga mo'unga ki he loto* (Tonga's mountain is their heart) is a true metaphor. Once Tongans set their hearts to do a task they complete it and that is why we see beautiful and expensive churches in South Auckland today. It was that kind of determination that made Tonga a power to be reckoned with in their colonial past. However, that kind of determination is needed to be transferred over to address underachievement.

It is apparent from the recent construction of new churches in South Auckland that the Tongan community has got the resources to fund projects to help reduce underachievement of Tongans in Auckland. Hopefully the church will

accept that it has an important role to play in supporting the educational achievement of Tongan students.

7.4 Schools as Change Agents

It is suggested that schools with a high intake of Tongan students need to be more sensitive to the needs of the parents and endeavour to foster an environment where understanding, collaboration and consultation is able to flourish. The first step toward establishing such an environment is the recruitment of a liaison officer (preferably a Tongan with qualifications who is familiar with the New Zealand education system) to provide assistance for Tongan parents and to act as a mediator between parents and the school. His/her salary could be shared by the school concerned, and the parents. His/her job description could be as follows:

- Translate Progress Reports and Newsletters for parents
- Assist parents with any queries regarding their child or the school
- Promote closer ties between parents and school by establishing a Tongan Parent Association and organising regular meetings
- Organise meetings between teachers and parents on matters regarding their children's academic progress and to act as a translator for parents
- Design programs or workshops that will encourage parents to take more interest and to play a more active role in their children's education

- Ensure that the academic needs of Tongan students are met at school

It is hoped that such a person will make Tongan parents more eager to participate and more interested in their children's education. It is important that the liaison officer organises meetings between the school administration and Tongan parents only. Such meetings will make parents feel more comfortable to ask questions concerning their children's education.

It is also suggested that schools use people like John, a participant in the present study, to talk to students in their schools about their past experiences. The fact that he faced difficulties at school, but was able to overcome them and became very successful in life, would help motivate Pacific Island students. On the other hand, people like Anne, another participant, who dropped out of the school system for years and later decided to return and became successful can also be used to motivate students.

7.5 Summary

The issues previously discussed in this chapter confirm the important role that parents play in their children's education and the support they need to provide. It also raises the need for parents to reconsider their priorities. It was also pointed out that individual families cannot be expected to accomplish this task on their own because a lot of them do not have the knowledge or understanding of the New Zealand school system. Also included is the need for

the Tongan community to shift its human and financial resources from the church toward finding a collective solution to this problem. Furthermore, the schools have a part to play by fostering an environment where Tongan parents can feel comfortable to participate.

The results of this study lend support to the recommendations contained in Hawk and Hill's (1996) AIM HI Report. The influence of the home environment and the church on the academic achievement of students, as suggested in the AIM HI Report, was confirmed in the findings of this study. One of the most important features of this study is that it offers parents examples of how to demonstrate support to their children (p.134). The AIM HI Report is the most recent study to date on underachievement in New Zealand. Even though it did not look at underachievement in terms of individual ethnic groups, the issues that were raised in the Report are relevant to the Tongan community and it is recommended that it be translated into the Tongan language and made available to Tongan parents in Auckland. Likewise, the findings of this thesis should offer some concrete advice on how to improve the educational achievement of Tongan students.

7.6 Recommendation for future research

The following areas are suggested for further research in this area of investigation:

1. An extensive and detailed investigation into the role of the church in the underachievement of Tongan students in Aotearoa/New Zealand.
2. To verify the effectiveness of schools' method(s) of communication with Tongan students, parents, and community.
3. Tongan parents' perceptions of education and its impact on their children's education.
4. An investigation into the apparent difference in the academic achievement level of people born and educated in Tongan secondary schools and those born and educated in New Zealand. What makes those from the former group more successful ?
5. The importance of role model and support at home to the academic achievement level of Tongans in New Zealand secondary schools.
6. A study to confirm whether educated Tongan parents necessarily produce academically successful children ?

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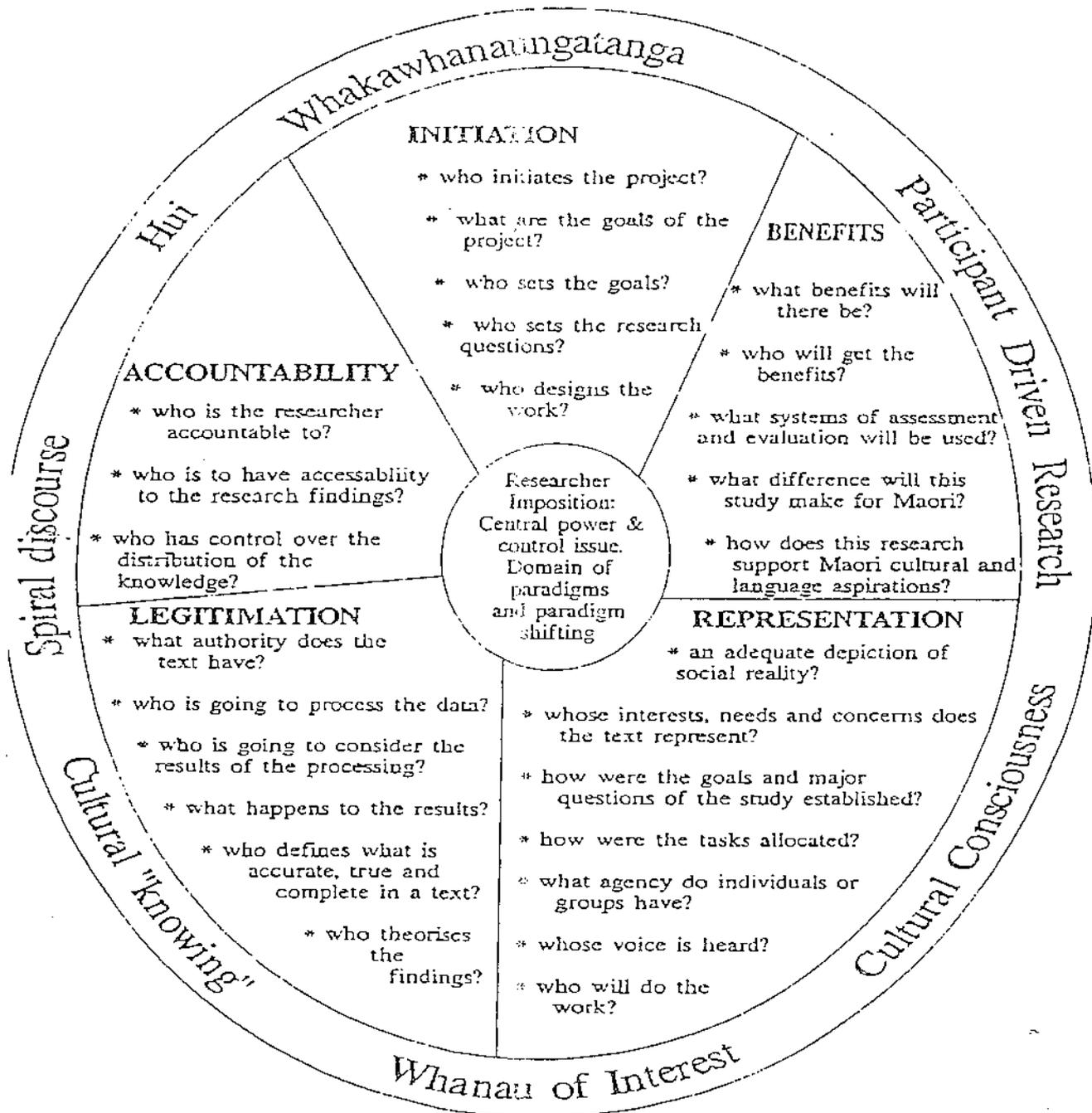
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APPENDIX 1

A MODEL OF CRITICAL AND CULTURAL CONSCIOUSNESS



from: Bishop, R. (1995) *Freeing ourselves from neo-colonial domination in research: An indigenous approach to creating knowledge*. Keynote address to New Zealand Association for Research in Education. Massey University, Palmerston North.

APPENDIX 2

STUDENT INTEVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Were you born here in New Zealand ?
2. [if answer is No] How old were you when you entered the country ?
3. Which secondary school did you attend ?
4. What were your friends like at school ?
5. Were they Tongan ?
6. What did you and your friends do in the after school times ?
7. Where are your friends now ?
8. Did you experience any difficulties at secondary school ?
9. [if answer is Yes] How did you overcome these difficulties ?
10. What was the main reason for continuing/not continuing your education ?
11. Were your parents at school for PTA/Parent Teacher Interviews or school functions?
12. What kind of discipline did your parents use when you were a student ?

13. Who was at home when you got back from school ?
14. a) Was there any reading books at home ?
b) How much time did you spend reading them ?
15. Please describe the environment at home and whether that had any effect on your studies at the time ?
16. Did you have the following items when you were in secondary school ?
 - a. Own room
 - b. study table
 - c. study light
 - d. chair
 - e. personal computer
17. Approximately how much time did you spend on studying each day ?
18. How often did your family go to church at the time ?
19. Can you recall a particular teacher at secondary school who was able to make his/her subject enjoyable for you ?
20. a) Did your teachers encourage you to work hard at school ?
b) Did they commend you when you did well at school ?
c) What else did they do to help you ?
21. How many of them showed real interest in your education ?
22. What kind of discipline did your teachers use when you were at secondary school ?

23. How would you describe your secondary school teachers in general ?
24. Looking back on your past educational experience as a student, what do you think encouraged you to continue on with your education/ discouraged you from continuing your education ?
25. What would be the most memorable moments of high school ?

APPENDIX 3

INFORMATION SHEET

Malo e lelei,

My name is Malimoeao Mafi and I am a Tongan graduate student at Massey University Albany. As part of my graduate studies in education I am doing a comparative study on the educational experiences of Tongan students who have decided not to continue their education in New Zealand secondary schools and those who decided to.

My interest in this area is personal and also academic. By studying the contrasting educational experiences of those who have left school and those who are still continuing, I hope to be able to make recommendations on how to improve the situation for future students. Only by understanding the problem can I make recommendations. For this reason, I am asking for your assistance. Your participation will be valuable because it will help to better understand obstacles that affect student's educational achievements and the factors that assist their achievements.

The study involves an interview with the researcher. For the study I would like to interview as many Tonga students possible to document their experiences. This interview can be conducted in Tongan and English, depending on your choice. We will decide on a time and place that is convenient for you. You can decide if you want to be identified or remain anonymous in this research. You have the following rights:

- to refuse to answer any particular questions and to withdraw from the study at any time

- to ask any questions about the study at any time during participation
- to provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give your permission to the researcher
- to be given access to a summary of the findings of the study when it is concluded

The interviews will be recorded on tape (with your permission) and will be transcribed by myself as the researcher. You are asked to indicate on the *Consent Form* (a form which will be given to you before the actual interview) what you want done with the tapes after transcription is completed. The tapes could either be:

- given to you
- destroyed by the researcher
- stored in a research archive for *future use* (e.g. for preparing reports, follow up studies). Your permission would again be sought by the researcher prior to any future use of audio tapes.

The information provided during the interviews will be strictly confidential. A summary of the research will be available to participants should they want it.

If you would like to participate in this study, please contact me at the number listed below. I would appreciate your assistance in passing on this information to anyone else you think may be interested.

Maliumoeao Mafi
Department of Policy Studies
Massey University (Albany)



The Massey University staff who are responsible for supervising this study are listed below. You are welcome to make contact with them at any time.

Dr. Mollie Neville

Department of Policy Studies

Massey University (Albany)

Telephone: (09) 443 9636

Dr. Ken Ryba

Department of Educational Psychology

Massey University (Albany)

Telephone: (09) 443 9606

APPENDIX 4

CONSENT FORM

My signature below indicates that I fully understand the content of the Information Sheet and that the details of the Project has been explained to me. I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, and that I can decline to answer any question in the study if I want to. I, therefore am willing to participate in this study and I understand that the information I provide will be strictly confidential, unless I indicate that I wish to be identified.

I consent to participate in this research project as set out in the Information Sheet.

Signed:.....

Name:.....

Date:.....

Below is a list of choices regarding your participation in this study. Please indicate by ticking your preferred choice:

Please tick one box from each below :

- | | | | | | |
|----|--------------------------|--|----|--------------------------|--|
| 1. | <input type="checkbox"/> | I prefer to remain anonymous | OR | <input type="checkbox"/> | I prefer to be named |
| 2. | <input type="checkbox"/> | I agree to the interview being recorded on tape | OR | <input type="checkbox"/> | I do not agree to the interview being recorded on tape |
| 3. | <input type="checkbox"/> | I agree that the interview tapes to be kept by the researcher for possible future use as indicated in the Information Sheet. | OR | <input type="checkbox"/> | I would like the tapes to be destroyed at the end of the Project |
| 4. | <input type="checkbox"/> | I permit my quotes to be used from the interview | OR | <input type="checkbox"/> | I do not permit my quotes to be used from the interview |

APPENDIX 5

PARENTS' TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

1. How long have you been in New Zealand ?
2. Do you belong to a church ?
3. [if answer is Yes] Which one ?
4. Is it a Tongan church ?
5. Would it be all right for me to ask to if you support your church financially ?
6. [if answer is Yes] Approximately how much money do you donate to the church a year ?
7. Did your children go to church ?
8. Were they involved in young people's programs at church ?
9. What did you want your child to achieve in school ?
10. Did you talk to your child about your expectations concerning their education ?
11. What things did you do at home to support your child's education ?
12. What sort of support did you give your child at home ?
13. Did you encourage or help them out with their assignments and other schoolwork ?
14. What would you say would be the most important contribution you have made to your child's education ?

15. Did you have reading books at home for your child to read after school ?
16. Did your child read them ?
17. How would you describe the type of discipline you used on your child ?
18. Did your son have friends at school ?
19. How would you describe his/friends ?
20. Were they a good influence ?
21. Did your child come straight home after school ?

22. Did you have time to attend PTA meetings and other school functions at your
child's school ?

23. Please rank the following and provide reasons to explain your answer:
 - a. family
 - b. education
 - c. church

24. Why do you think your child left /continued his/her education ?

3. Please write down the name of the church/domination that you belong to.

.....

4. Do you support your church financially ?

- a) Yes
- b) No

5. If your answer to questions 4 was Yes, state below an approximation of the amount of money you donate to the church annually.

\$.....

6. Did your child go to church at the time ?

- a) Yes
- b) No

7. Did he/she participate in the youth programs ?

- a) Yes
- b) No

8. Did you encourage and push your child to do his/her homework or other school related work ?

- a) Yes
- b) No

9. What did you wish for your child to achieve when he/she was in secondary school ?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

10. Did you ever make your wishes known to your child ?

- a) Yes
- b) No

11. Did your child come straight home after school ?

- a) Yes
- b) No

12. How often did you attend PTA or Parent Teacher meetings at school ?

- a) Always
- b) Most of the time
- c) Seldom
- b) d) Never

13. What sort of support did you give your child at home ?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

14. What would say was your most important contribution to your child's education?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

15. What sort of discipline did you use at home at the time ?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

16. What sort of friends did your child used to associate with ?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

17. Rank the following and provide reasons for your answer:

- a. family
- b. education
- c. church

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

*What kind of discipline did your parents used when you were in high school ?
Was the typical Tongan discipline like ta ?*

Oh, no. We were never, my dad didn't believe in hitting us. *Tafulu pe*. And sometimes when he talks you feel like "God, just give me a hiding and get it over with" 'cause he has a loud voice. When I was in third form I wagged school, picked up by the police, and taken to the police station. I had to ring my dad to come and pick me up. Dad came to pick me up, didn't say a word to me from the police station to home, didn't say anything. I remember 'cause I was sitting in a room like this and he just walked in and the police talked to him and he just looked at me and he turned around and walked away - which meant I had to get up and follow. I followed him into the car, sat down in the car, he just drive *'ikai ke lea ia. 'ikai ke lea mai ia kia au* - he didn't say anything. We got home I went into my room. I was crying and crying and crying in my room and then I came out and he was painting the stairs. *'ikai ke sio mai ia kia au 'ikai ke lea mai ia kia au* and it was like "what am I going to do about this ?" He was just painting the stairs and then I went into my room and then, my mom was at work at the time, then he came in and he said to me "Don't tell your mother" and that was it, nothing else - I never got anything else. Up to this day my mother doesn't know about that, she doesn't know. My dad and I talked about it and I said "what ?" and he said "You broke my heart, Yvette, I can't talk to you. *Kapau teu lea atu kia koe*, what can I say, you really broke my heart" you know that kind of stuff. And I think that's why I started trying and I started doing better in school 'cause I'm thinking, you know, 'my dad's really upset.' *'ikai pe ke lea mai ia kia au*, he didn't say anything to me. He's quite affectionate, he will come and hug you or kiss you or say hello but he didn't do that - nothing. It really, really cut me, man.