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E lē sua se lolo i se popo e tasi

-Samoan proverb, translated as: It takes more than just one coconut to produce a great flow of oil.

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Abstract

Pasifika boys in Aotearoa New Zealand continue to be over-represented in negative educational statistics and under-represented in traditional indicators of success such as the National Certificate of Educational Achievement endorsement and university entrance. However, these deficit-framed measures provide only a partial understanding of how Pasifika students define and experience success. To gain a fuller understanding, this research asks, *"How do Pasifika boys define and experience success at an Aotearoa New Zealand secondary school?"* This study responded to the need for more relational, culturally grounded perspectives by positioning Pasifika boys as co-constructors of knowledge rather than subjects of research. Thus, the methodology emphasised student voice through the philosophical influence of Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR). The primary method of data collection was talanoa (informal conversations). Conducted with Year 9 and 10 Pasifika boys, the study involved eight talanoa sessions where participants shared school experiences, home life, and collaboratively developed an initiative to enhance success within their school. Data were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis.

The findings suggest that success for Pasifika boys is experienced through identity affirmation and meaningful connections with peers, teachers, family, and their wider community. The voices of the participants echo earlier Aotearoa New Zealand research that found Pasifika students' success is shaped by strong connections with teachers, peers, family, and community, as well as learning environments that affirm identity and foster belonging. This has important implications for teachers, school leaders, and policymakers. Firstly, teachers are encouraged to adopt culturally responsive and relational pedagogies that prioritise clear dialogical instruction, affirmation, and meaningful relationships. Secondly, school leaders are urged to embed structures and practices that centre student voice, strengthen whānau (or family) engagement, and value collective forms of success. Finally, policymakers are challenged to move beyond narrow achievement metrics to support systems that recognise relational, cultural, and holistic dimensions of success for Pasifika learners.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents	v
List of Figures	vii
List of Tables	viii
Chapter One: Introduction	1
1.1 Chapter Introduction.....	1
1.2 Inequity	2
1.3 Definitions of Pasifika.....	2
1.4 Definitions of Success.....	3
1.5 Positionality	5
1.6 Research Questions.....	6
Chapter Two: Literature Review	7
2.1 Chapter Introduction.....	7
2.2 Literature Review Methodology.....	8
2.3 Ethnic-Racial Identity	9
2.4 Culturally Responsive Enablers	12
2.5 Systemic Barriers	15
2.6 Relationships, Reciprocity and Vā.....	17
2.7 Chapter Summary.....	19
Chapter Three: Methodology.....	21
3.1 Chapter Introduction.....	21
3.2 Research Purpose and Questions	21
3.3 Research Questions.....	21
3.4 Philosophy and Research Approach	22

3.5	Participants and Sampling	24
3.6	Ethical Considerations	27
3.7	Autonomy	27
3.8	Informed Consent.....	28
3.9	Avoidance of Harm (non-maleficence)	28
3.10	Beneficence	29
3.11	Confidentiality	29
3.12	Te Tiriti o Waitangi Obligations and Te Ara Tika Principles	29
3.13	Researcher Positionality and Monitoring Interpretation.....	30
3.14	Thematic Analysis	30
3.15	Familiarisation	32
3.16	Coding.....	35
3.17	Thematic Development	38
3.18	Reflexivity and Bias Checking.....	40
3.19	Chapter Summary.....	40
Chapter Four: Findings.....		42
4.1	Chapter Introduction.....	42
4.2	Success as Relational, not Individual.....	42
4.3	Success as Effort, Aspiration, and Enacted Agency	50
4.4	Teacher Relationships and Pedagogy Shape Engagement and Motivation	55
4.5	Navigating School Systems, Power, and Perceived Injustice	58
4.6	Chapter Summary.....	61
Chapter Five: Discussion		63
5.1	Chapter Introduction.....	63
5.2	Experiences of Success.....	64
5.2.1	Success as Relational.....	64

5.2.2	Success as Effort, Aspiration, and Agency	65
5.3	Influence of School Culture	66
5.3.1	Peer Interactions.....	67
5.3.2	Educational Context.....	69
5.3.3	Ethnic Expectations and Systemic Influences.....	71
5.4	Chapter Summary	73
Chapter Six: Conclusion		75
6.1	Chapter Introduction.....	75
6.2	Purpose and Methodology of This Research	75
6.3	Summary of Key Findings	75
6.4	Contribution, Significance, and Limitations	76
6.5	Recommendations for Future Research	76
6.6	Like Travelling Moana	77
6.7	Personal Reflection	77
Reference List		80
Appendix A: Letter to Request to Enter Institution to Conduct Research		90
Appendix B: Information Sheets and Consent Forms for Participants and Whānau.....		93
Appendix C: Samoan Translation of Whānau Information Sheet and Consent Form...		105
Appendix D: Tongan Translation of Whānau Information Sheet and Consent Form		111
Appendix E: Coded Talanoa Transcripts.....		119
Appendix F: Code Definitions		172

List of Figures

Figure 1 - Tapasā Pasifika Success Compass	5
Figure 2 - The Fonofale Model of Health	8
Figure 3 - Talanoa Reflective Notes	33
Figure 4 - Audio Transcription	34
Figure 5 - Journal Reflection	34

Figure 6 - Annotated Audio Transcript.....	35
Figure 7 - Coding.....	37
Figure 8 - Field Notes.....	38
Figure 9 - Codes Mapped to Themes.....	39

List of Tables

Table 1 - Talanoa Dates	26
Table 2 - Participant Quotes: Success as a Collective and Relational Achievement.....	43
Table 3 - Participant Quotes on the Role of Family in Shaping Student Motivation, Aspirations, and Engagement	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Table 4 - Participant Quotes Showing how Family Support Sustained Student Engagement.....	45
Table 5 - Participant Quotes Showing how Cultural Events Nurtured Pasifika Identity and Relational Connections	46
Table 6 - Participant Quotes on Brotherhood and Relational Support in School Success	48
Table 7 - Participant Quotes Showing how Effort, Aspiration, and Agency Were Shaped by Family, Culture, and Personal Goals	51
Table 8 - Racialised Stereotyping in Peer Interactions: Participant Quotes of Disrespect and Misinterpretation	58

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Chapter Introduction

According to findings from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Aotearoa New Zealand ranks 33rd out of 38 developed countries for inequity in education, indicating significant disparities in educational achievement and opportunity between different groups of learners (Macfie, 2025). These inequities are particularly evident for Pasifika learners, who continue to experience unequal educational outcomes throughout their schooling years, with disparities emerging in early education and extending into adulthood (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2022; Smaill et al., 2024). At Year 3, just 4% of Pasifika students are meeting curriculum expectations, and by Year 8 only 6% of Pasifika students are working at the expected curriculum level compared with 25% of non-Pasifika peers (Cheng, 2025; Gabel, 2025). Such gaps in foundational learning continue into secondary school, where Pasifika students achieve university entrance [UE] at roughly half the rate of their peers (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2022). This is significant because UE is the minimum qualification required for admission to universities in Aotearoa New Zealand and is widely recognised as the key school-leaving credential. In addition, achieving UE opens pathways to higher-paying entry-level jobs and supports greater job stability and career progression. On average, individuals with UE earn around \$10,400 more per year than those without it—amounting to approximately \$400,000 in additional income over a lifetime (Watson, 2026). Although more Pasifika students gained UE between 2011 and 2019 (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2022), the gap between Pasifika and European students stayed almost the same, shrinking only slightly from 31% in 2011 to 29% in 2019. By 2019, half of Year 13 Pasifika students had not gained UE, compared with just 22% of European students. For the past decade, this inequity has remained largely unchanged, limiting Pasifika students' access to further study and career opportunities while negatively impacting students' whānau (or family) and wider community. This introduction discusses Pasifika students' educational inequity by firstly outlining the key terms of Pasifika and success before describing the concept of Pasifika success in education, contrasting this with traditional stereotypical views of success for this group. Finally, a discussion of the researcher's positionality is presented along with the research questions.

Educational achievement is a foundational determinant of well-being that influences employment prospects, income security, and long-term health outcomes (Bealing, 2021; World Health Organization, [WHO], 2017). Attainment of educational qualifications provides essential access to stable, well-paid employment and pathways out of socioeconomic disadvantage (Bealing, 2021). However, when educational pathways are limited, as they are for many Pasifika learners, the advantages of well-paid employment, and income security leading to improved health outcomes and well-being, remain elusive

(Bealing, 2021; New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2022). Restricted school achievement contributes directly to concentrations of Pacific individuals in low-wage, insecure employment, which in turn restricts their capacity to accumulate savings, achieve home ownership, and invest in their future (Bealing, 2021; Smaill et al., 2024). These economic pressures exacerbate health vulnerabilities, with chronic conditions such as type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease being significantly more prevalent among Pacific communities (Ryan et al., 2019). Such structural disadvantages extend beyond individuals, embedding cycles of intergenerational poverty that limit opportunities across whānau and future generations (Bealing, 2021; New Zealand Productivity Commission & The Treasury, 2024). Therefore, addressing educational disparities is not merely an issue of equity in schooling; it is a critical lever for helping to dismantle systemic social and economic disadvantages in Pacific communities. Fundamentally, improving educational access and outcomes is one way to reduce cycles of inequity in employment, health, and intergenerational well-being.

1.2 Inequity

This enduring inequity is particularly concerning because of the projected population growth of the Pacific population, with estimates that there will be 225,000 learners of Pasifika descent in Aotearoa New Zealand by 2028, which is 17% of the learner population (Statistics New Zealand & Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 2010). Moreover, estimates suggest by 2040 Māori and Pasifika learners will be the majority of primary school students (Tereposky, 2025). This underscores the urgent need for schools to strengthen initiatives and develop culturally responsive practices that address the inequities Pasifika learners face, as their presence will make up an increasingly significant proportion of the student population.

1.3 Definitions of Pasifika

The term Pasifika, taken from Tapasā: Cultural Competencies Framework for Teachers of Pacific Learners (2018), is used in this research to identify individuals from a broad group of culturally varied Pacific peoples who have settled in Aotearoa New Zealand yet maintain strong family, cultural, and linguistic ties to their ancestral homelands (Ministry of Education, 2018). These individuals represent a diverse and youthful population in Aotearoa New Zealand, comprising of more than sixteen distinct ethnic groups, languages, and cultures (Pasifika Futures, 2017). The largest of these ethnic groups are Samoan (49%), Cook Islands Māori (21%), Tongan (20%), Niuean (8%), and Fijian (5%). Notably, more than one-third of Pasifika are under the age of 15, reflecting a young and growing demographic (Ministry for Pacific Peoples, 2020). Despite diversity across groups, Pasifika learners often share key cultural values that shape their identities and experiences in education. These include the central importance of family and collectivism, spirituality, reciprocity, and respect, particularly for elders and authority figures (Ministry of Pacific Peoples, 2018). These values provide a foundation for thriving and resilient communities, reinforcing the holistic connection between education, identity, well-being, and aspirations for future generations.

1.4 Definitions of Success

Traditionally, success within the Aotearoa New Zealand education system has been narrowly defined through academic achievement measured by standardised tests, which are assessments administered and scored consistently to measure and compare student achievement, knowledge, or skills across individuals or groups against a common standard. Examples include e-asTTle and Progressive Achievement Tests (PATs) (CORE Education, 2019; Kayser, 2021). The New Zealand National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) framework for senior secondary students was developed to provide a wider range of assessment types, still, success in Aotearoa New Zealand education is frequently reduced to academic achievement, reflecting traditional European monocultural, ethnocentric norms. This view of success, using the fiction of universal benchmarks to maintain its dominance (Kayser, 2021; Ladson-Billings, 2014), ignores Indigenous knowledge and the importance of alternative ways of thinking. Such an approach risks marginalising wider forms of learning, such as cultural knowledge, creativity, leadership, and well-being, which are highly valued by Māori and Pasifika communities (Kayser, 2021; Ladson-Billings, 2014).

This view of success is reflected in recent discussions around NCEA, requiring students to meet minimum standards in literacy and numeracy before gaining any NCEA qualification (Darr, 2023). Schools typically expect all students, regardless of their background or culture, to assimilate to these standards. Consequently, NCEA's original aim of recognising diverse pathways to success is threatened by the constraints of a narrow, test-driven approach, as concerns have been raised that the introduction of mandatory literacy and numeracy co-requisites may lead to increased "teaching to the test" (Darr, 2023, para. 7), narrow learning experiences, and disproportionately disadvantage already vulnerable learners (Darr, 2023).

Traditional definitions of success in education have failed to acknowledge the diverse realities of ethnicity, neurodiversity, and other aspects of learner identity (CORE Education, 2019; Kayser, 2021). Such narrow and exclusionary conceptions of success have contributed to the marginalisation of Pasifika students, where students may experience limited connection with the education system. Addressing this marginalisation, in the first instance, requires the development and promotion of more inclusive and culturally responsive understandings of success. These understandings must be explored within the school communities impacted by the definitions. Understanding how Pasifika male students themselves conceptualise success within the context of secondary schooling is a necessary first step in this process, which this research endeavours to undertake.

For Pasifika peoples, the definition of success extends beyond individual academic achievement to encompass the collective well-being and accomplishments of families, communities, and wider society (Fa'avae, 2017; Matapo, 2019; Si'ilata, 2014). The concept of *vā* (or relational space) is central to this

understanding, as it emphasises the importance of nurturing respectful, balanced relationships between people, communities, and the environment (Anae, 2016). When vā is maintained and honoured, it strengthens the connections that allow collective success to flourish. Within this view, schools, churches, and families work collaboratively to create opportunities for young people to thrive (Fa'avae, 2018). Vā is important to success as it nurtures respect, reciprocity, and collective responsibility, and it honours relationships, ensuring that no one's contribution is overlooked.

There have been recent moves at a policy/national level to share a broader definition of success, which is more aligned with Pacific values, as illustrated by Tapasā Pasifika Success Compass (Tapasā; Ministry of Education, 2018). This forms part of the Tapasā cultural framework, defining educational success as being achieved when teachers recognise, value, and integrate into their practice the knowledge and understandings that Pasifika learners, parents, and communities already hold (Ministry of Education, 2018). This framework reinforces the idea that for Pasifika learners, success cannot be divorced from their wider cultural and relational contexts (Fa'avae, 2017; Matapo, 2019; Si'ilata, 2014; Si'ilata et al., 2019). Tapasā (see Figure 1) illustrates collective success by placing students, parents, families, and communities at the centre, showing that success grows when vā is cared for and strengthened. The compass points represent values that are integral to Pacific cultures: reciprocity, service, respect, spirituality, belonging, alofa (or love), and leadership, which orient teachers towards practices that nurture both academic achievement and cultural identity.

Figure 1

Tapasā Pasifika Success Compass



Note. From *Tapasā: Cultural competencies framework for teachers of Pacific learners*, by Ministry of Education, 2018,

(https://res.cloudinary.com/dwvcp193/image/upload/v1754005965/extracted_pdfs_from_sspak/Tapasā-Cultural-Competencies-Framework-for-Teachers-of-Pacific-Learners-2019.pdf).

Tapasā underscores that collective success has broader implications for learners' future opportunities, including employment, income, and participation in their communities (Statistics New Zealand & Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 2010). This view challenges deficit approaches that focus narrowly on individual achievement and instead position success as a communal accomplishment that benefits both the learner and their wider networks (Bills et al., 2022). In this sense, Tapasā supports a transformative understanding of education in Aotearoa New Zealand, where teaching and learning are not just about academic attainment but also about strengthening identity, belonging, and relationships.

1.5 Positionality

By situating myself transparently within this research, I aim to demonstrate reflexivity and accountability. I position myself in this research as a Pākehā, female educator who has worked as both a classroom teacher and a dean in an Aotearoa New Zealand secondary school. My research topic emerged from

years of classroom observation and professional reflection on the persistent academic underachievement of Pasifika boys, whom I have taught for many years, despite their visible success in other aspects of school life, such as sports, music, and the arts. These observations often left me questioning my own practice, wondering what I might be doing wrong and how I might better serve my students.

As a teacher, I have been positioned as an authority figure, and as an attendance dean, I was often noticed as someone responsible for student discipline and pastoral care. These roles afforded me insights into the challenges Pasifika boys and their whānau face within schooling systems, but they also highlighted my privilege and my responsibility to critically reflect on the power I hold in educational spaces. I recognise that I come to this work as an outsider to Pacific cultures. My background is shaped by my Catholic upbringing, which instilled values of mercy, justice, humility, and a deep commitment to understanding others' contexts. These values influence how I approach teaching and research, and they frame my desire to conduct this project in a way that is respectful, relational, and accountable to the communities involved. Fundamentally, I acknowledge the risk of reproducing deficit narratives, and stereotypical representations, seeking instead to privilege the authentic voices of Pasifika students, recognising these young people as experts in their own experiences of success.

1.6 Research Questions

The study aims to answer the research question: How do Pasifika boys define and experience success within an Aotearoa New Zealand secondary school? It does so by exploring students' experiences at school to better understand the enablers and barriers that shape their success. The findings aim to raise awareness and inform school-based practices that better support Pasifika boys' educational journeys in Aotearoa New Zealand secondary schools. There are four key objectives:

- Explore Pasifika boys' perceptions of what success looks and feels like in their secondary-school experience.
- Identify the supportive factors that contribute to their sense of success, both academically and holistically.
- Examine the challenges and barriers that impact their ability to experience success.
- Highlight areas of focus to strengthen culturally responsive and effective support for Pasifika boys in secondary schools.

By positioning Pasifika boys as the central voices in this study, the research seeks to move beyond deficit-based narratives and test-driven measures, instead defining success as a multidimensional and relational construct.

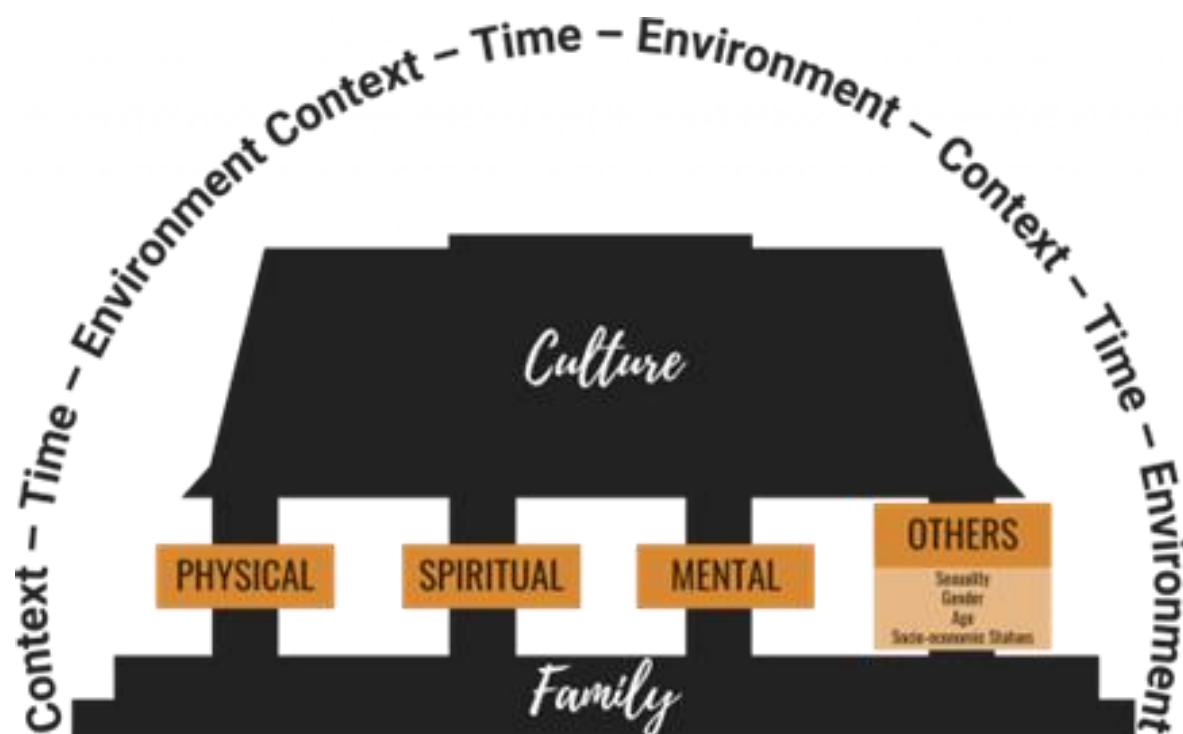
Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Chapter Introduction

Pasifika boys' pathways through Aotearoa New Zealand secondary schools remain marked by persistent disparities in UE, sense of belonging, and overall well-being that underpins both engagement and achievement (Smaill et al., 2024). The term *Pasifika* is used in this research as an umbrella term to describe trans-culturally diverse peoples from the Pacific region who reside in Aotearoa New Zealand while maintaining familial and cultural connections to their ancestral homelands (Ministry of Education, 2018). Yet, these young men articulate rich visions of success grounded in family pride, cultural identity, and collective service (Le Va, 2024; Reynolds, 2018). This persistent inequity, unchanged over the past decade, continues to limit Pasifika students' future educational and career opportunities. Achieving UE opens access to university study, benefiting not only the student but also their whānau and the wider community (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2022; Smaill et al., 2024). The mental health and well-being of Pasifika students play a crucial role in enhancing long-term health and social outcomes for Pacific communities (Watkins, 2024; Marriott & Alinaghi, 2021). Well-being for Pasifika students is a holistic and culturally grounded concept, rooted in the Fonofale model (see Figure 2). The Fonofale model, originally developed by Pulotu-Endemann in 1984, conceptualises Pacific well-being as holistic and relational (as cited in PASS, n.d.). This model represents well-being as a Samoan fale (or house), where family forms the foundation, culture is the roof, and the supporting posts represent spiritual, physical, mental and other dimensions. These interconnected elements foster identity, belonging, and a sense of purpose, all of which are essential for student success. In addition, the WHO (World Health Organization, 2017) highlights the key role of schools in promoting well-being, influencing lifelong behaviours, which supports broader community health. To effect change and achieve equitable outcomes for Pasifika male students, it is essential to develop a deeper understanding of the factors shaping their formative school experiences, as their ongoing underachievement highlights the urgent need for schools to implement strategies that address their unique challenges.

Figure 2

The Fonofale Model of Health



Note. Reprinted from *Fonofale Model of Pacific Well Being*, by Pacific Advance Secondary School (PASS),

<https://pass.school.nz/about/fonofale-model-of-pacific-well-being/>.

This literature review synthesises international and domestic research on how marginalised ethnic groups experience monocultural education systems. By pairing these insights with Ministry of Education reports on Pasifika education, this review explores school-based strategies that support the success of Pasifika boys while identifying the ongoing challenges that limit it. Firstly, the review briefly outlines how the search was undertaken and then the discussion is organised into four thematic sections: (1) ethnic-racial identity, (2) culturally responsive enablers, (3) relationality, family, and community engagement, and (4) systemic barriers and equity. Each theme demonstrates that well-being is fostered through the maintenance of *vā* and the development of positive ethnic-racial identity, emphasising how relationships, belonging, cultural affirmation, and identity shape Pasifika boys' academic engagement and broader experiences of success.

2.2 Literature Review Methodology

This chapter reviews relevant literature drawn primarily from databases accessed through Massey University's Discover portal and Google Scholar using the keywords ethnic-racial identity, well-being, pastoral care, Pasifika education, Pasifika outcomes, Pasifika boys, and Pasifika youth. Additional sources were identified through recommendations from academic supervisors and professional colleagues.

Reference lists from both database searches and supplementary sources were also examined to locate further relevant literature.

The initial search identified approximately 130 sources. After applying filters relating to peer-reviewed journal articles, geographic location, and publication date, 68 sources remained for further consideration. Abstracts were then reviewed to determine relevance to the research focus, resulting in the inclusion of 51 sources in this literature review. Analysis of these sources revealed four key thematic areas that form the structure of this chapter: (1) ethnic-racial identity; (2) culturally responsive enablers; (3) systemic barriers; and (4) relationships, reciprocity, and *vā*.

2.3 Ethnic-Racial Identity

Race and ethnicity can be understood as related but distinct social constructs that shape how individuals are identified and how they experience the world (Chavous et al., 2003; Rivas-Drake et al., 2014; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004). Race refers to socially constructed categories based on perceived physical characteristics, such as skin colour, that have historically been used to organise and stratify groups within systems of power (Chavous et al., 2003; Rivas-Drake et al., 2014). Ethnicity, in contrast, refers to shared cultural practices, values, language, ancestry, and a sense of belonging to a cultural group, emphasising identity, heritage, and lived cultural experience (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004; Webber & Waru-Benson, 2022). Together, race and ethnicity are not fixed biological traits but dynamic, socially and culturally constructed identities shaped through relationships, context, and broader societal structures, with ethnic-racial identity (ERI) representing a multidimensional construct that encompasses individuals' beliefs, attitudes, and sense of belonging related to their ethnic and racial group memberships (Chavous et al., 2003; Rivas-Drake et al., 2014; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004). ERI involves both content (what individuals believe and feel about their group) and process (how these beliefs develop over time through exploration and commitment) and is shaped by developmental stages and social contexts (Chavous et al., 2003; Rivas-Drake et al., 2014; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004; Webber & Waru-Benson, 2022). It reflects the interplay of cultural heritage and racialised experiences, evolving across the lifespan as individuals navigate their social environments (Chavous et al., 2003; Rivas-Drake et al., 2014; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004). Research suggests that a strong sense of ERI can positively influence not only academic achievement but also social-emotional well-being, particularly for students from minoritised groups (Chavous et al., 2003; Rivas-Drake et al., 2014).

Chavous et al. (2003) conducted a longitudinal mixed-methods study with 606 African American youth to examine how different patterns of racial identity, specifically the constructs of centrality, private regard, and public regard, relate to educational beliefs and academic outcomes. Participants were selected in 9th grade and followed through to the 12th-grade year and two years beyond, with data collected through interviews, self-report questionnaires, and school records. The study found that youth who expressed high levels of racial pride and group belonging (or private regard and centrality) reported more positive school

beliefs, e.g., school importance, and self-efficacy, and had higher levels of academic attainment, e.g., graduation, and college attendance.

Furthermore, Rivas-Drake et al. (2014) conducted a structured literature review to examine how ERI related to psychosocial, academic, and health-risk outcomes among minority adolescents in the United States. They focused on research published since 1990 and included studies of African American, Latino, Asian American and Pacific Islander, and Native American youth. ERI is a complex concept, so researchers (Chavous et al., 2003; Rivas-Drake et al., 2014) break it down into smaller parts that can be measured and analysed. According to Rivas-Drake et al. (2014), common ERI constructs include:

- Affirmation and Belonging: Positive feelings and pride about one's ethnic or racial group.
- Private Regard: How individuals feel about their own group (e.g., "I'm proud to be Samoan").
- Public Regard: Beliefs about how others view one's group (e.g., "People think negatively about my ethnic group").
- Exploration/Search: The process of learning about and seeking to understand one's ethnic background and identity.
- Commitment: A sense of attachment or clarity about one's ethnic identity.
- Centrality: The importance of ethnic-racial identity to one's overall self-concept.

The review included only empirical studies of community-based adolescent populations. The authors considered a broad range of ERI-related constructs to reflect the contemporary diversity of definitions in the field (Rivas-Drake et al., 2014). Findings showed that adolescents with strong ERI, marked by high private regard, centrality, and awareness of negative public regard, exhibited more positive academic attitudes and higher post-secondary attainment. One key implication is that fostering positive affective components like pride, can support youth well-being and success. In addition, the study identified various racial identity profiles among African American high school students, including the "Buffering/Defensive" profile. These students exhibited high racial centrality and private regard but low public regard, meaning they valued their racial identity and felt positively about their group, despite perceiving that others viewed their group negatively. The study found that these students maintained positive academic attitudes and achieved higher educational outcomes, suggesting that a strong, positive racial identity can buffer against the adverse effects of societal devaluation and racism.

The findings of Rivas-Drake et al. (2014) have important implications for the Aotearoa New Zealand context, particularly in supporting positive educational outcomes for Pasifika youth. The study highlights that key dimensions of ERI, such as private regard, centrality, and exploration, are linked to well-being, positive academic attitudes and higher educational attainment. In Aotearoa New Zealand, where Pasifika students often experience marginalisation and cultural misrecognition in mainstream education settings, integrating ERI-supportive practices into schools could help strengthen student engagement and

resilience. For example, curriculum and school environments that affirm cultural pride and provide space for identity exploration may foster stronger self-concept and academic motivation among ethnically minoritised youth. In addition, "Buffering/Defensive" profile identified in the U.S. context, may be especially relevant in Aotearoa New Zealand, where experiences of systemic racism persist. Supporting students in developing a strong, positive ethnic identity could help buffer against the negative impacts of discrimination, fostering well-being and promoting long-term success even in challenging social environments.

While Chavous et al. (2003) offer valuable insights into how racial identity influences academic outcomes, it was conducted within a U.S. context using largely Western research methods that may not fully capture the cultural realities of Pasifika youth in Aotearoa New Zealand. A study by Puna and Tiatia-Seath (2017) supports the findings of Chavous et al. (2003) and Rivas-Drake et al. (2014), showing that strong cultural identity, family support, and connection help Aotearoa New Zealand-born Cook Islands youth feel mentally strong and well. This qualitative study by Puna and Tiatia-Seath (2017) investigated the perceptions of Aotearoa New Zealand-born Cook Islands youth (aged 16–24) on positive mental well-being and its role in suicide prevention, using 21 talanoa-based interviews. The use of talanoa (informal conversations) supported this research, as it provided a culturally safe and relational space for youth to share personal stories, reflect on identity, and express emotions in ways that aligned with Pacific values. Through talanoa, participants were able to articulate the significance of cultural knowledge, family connections, and belonging in their lives. Participants were recruited through social media and Cook Islands community networks, with ethical and culturally appropriate processes guiding the research. Thematic analysis grounded in Pacific traditions of relational engagement and collective knowledge-sharing, through the use of the talanoa methodology revealed three key protective factors: strong familial and social support, pride and participation in cultural identity, and the importance of language retention. Youth identified open communication with family, cultural engagement (particularly through dance), and a sense of belonging as essential to their well-being. Similarly, Bills et al. (2022) and Siope (2011) found that schools that intentionally strengthen relationships between the school, families, and the wider community, while recognising parents as valued contributors to the school environment, enabled Pasifika students to draw on their cultural knowledge and strengths, enhancing engagement, self-confidence, well-being, and academic achievement. This research suggests that strengthening cultural identity, intergenerational ties, and connectedness fosters resilience by offering a culturally embedded buffer against mental distress, while also reinforcing feelings of affirmation, belonging, and positive private regard among Pasifika youth.

Pasifika students in Aotearoa New Zealand consistently experience lower rates of UE attainment than their European peers, with just 50% of Year 13 Pasifika students attaining UE in 2019 compared to 78% of European students (NZQA, 2022). This disparity has remained largely unchanged over the past decade (NZQA, 2022; Smaill et al., 2024). However, some schools have demonstrated stronger outcomes for Pasifika learners than others, suggesting that school-based practices may influence student success

(Smaill et al., 2024). In response to this, Smaill et al. (2024) conducted a qualitative study across six secondary schools in Aotearoa New Zealand where Māori and Pasifika students consistently achieved UE rates at least 10% above the average for schools in similar Equity Index (EQI) bands. These schools were purposefully selected for diversity in school type, location, socioeconomic context, and the proportion of Māori and Pasifika learners. At each site, the researchers focused either on Māori or Pasifika student pathways, gathering data through interviews, focus groups, and surveys involving nearly 200 participants, including Year 13 students, whānau or Pacific families, teachers, and school leaders. Data collection aimed to understand the school-based practices that supported these students to succeed. Smaill et al. (2024) found that schools where Pasifika students achieved higher rates of UE relative to their EQI band average recognised the importance of culture and created learning environments that actively affirmed Pasifika languages, identities, and cultures. These schools developed innovative strategies to foster whānau connections, such as celebrating student success through cultural events, forming whānau and community groups, sharing meals, and engaging informally at sports events. While these initiatives primarily focused on relationship building and celebrating achievement, they also served as opportunities to raise awareness and share information about UE. Many schools also introduced systems that allowed staff to remain with the same students from Years 9 to 13, enabling enduring, learning-focused relationships. In addition, structures were established to ensure multiple staff monitored each student's progress, helping to prevent anyone from falling through the cracks.

2.4 Culturally Responsive Enablers

Culturally responsive education for Pasifika students in Aotearoa New Zealand is defined as an approach that recognises and affirms the unique identities, languages, and cultures of Pasifika learners as foundations for their learning and success (Bishop, 2019; Ministry of Education, 2018 & 2024). It requires teachers to actively engage with worldviews, values, and knowledge systems of Pasifika communities, and to build respectful, reciprocal relationships that centre the student's cultural background in teaching and learning. This approach is grounded in the belief that when Pasifika students see their cultures reflected meaningfully in the curriculum and classroom practice, their engagement, motivation, and achievement are enhanced (Ministry of Education, 2018).

Research shows that culturally responsive approaches in education are critical for closing achievement gaps (New Zealand Qualifications Authority [NZQA], 2022). Using the National Certificate of Educational Achievement [NCEA] data from 2019, the NZQA study examined whether systemic differences in assessment programmes contributed to lower UE attainment rates for Māori and Pasifika students who had already achieved NCEA Level 3. The analysis found that the most common barriers to UE were not meeting the three-subject requirement and failing to meet the literacy requirement. Māori and Pasifika students were disproportionately affected, as they were more likely to be enrolled in programmes containing higher proportions of unit standards, which do not contribute to UE, and were less likely to have completed five or more courses offering 14 or more credits in Years 11 and 12. Importantly, the study

identified 32 schools where Māori and Pasifika UE attainment exceeded expectations, suggesting that school-level practices can play a significant role in reducing inequities.

These findings highlight the need for schools to critically examine programme design and students' access to university pathways. The NZQA (2022) report recommends regular monitoring of participation and achievement data by ethnicity to identify inequities and inform targeted interventions. It also emphasises the importance of providing equitable access to UE-approved achievement standards and ensuring students receive timely guidance regarding key UE requirements, including approved subjects and literacy criteria. The findings suggest that many students miss out on UE not because of a lack of ability, but because they are either unaware of these requirements or enrolled in programmes that do not adequately support their attainment (NZQA, 2022). Consequently, schools need robust course-tracking systems, informed academic guidance, and culturally responsive pathway planning to ensure Pasifika learners are well positioned to access tertiary education opportunities.

A second study builds on the systemic insights gained from the national data analysis. A study commissioned by NZQA and conducted by New Zealand Council for Educational Research [NZCER] explored how specific schools successfully addressed these inequities (Smaill et al., 2024). The study investigated how six Aotearoa New Zealand secondary schools with consistently high UE attainment for Māori and Pasifika students achieved these outcomes. Researchers used a culturally grounded, braided rivers (or He Awa Whiria) framework, drawing on Māori, Pacific, and Western knowledge streams to guide all aspects of data collection and analysis. Data were gathered from nearly 200 participants, including students, whānau, teachers, school leaders, and board members, through interviews, focus groups, and surveys, with Māori and Pacific researchers leading engagement with their respective communities. The study identified five key conditions supporting success: strong relational connections, cultural affirmation, high expectations, effective teaching, and equity-focused leadership. These findings underscore the importance of culturally responsive, relational, and strengths-based practices in promoting equitable outcomes for Māori and Pasifika learners, offering valuable guidance for schools seeking to close long standing achievement gaps.

Te Kotahitanga project was a multi-phase kaupapa Māori research and development initiative aimed at improving Māori student achievement in mainstream Aotearoa New Zealand secondary schools (Bishop et al., 2009). The study's implications highlight the importance of teacher mindset, culturally affirming pedagogy, and the centrality of reciprocal, respectful relationships for addressing systemic inequities and supporting Māori student success. In its first phase, the researchers conducted interviews with Māori students, their whānau, principals, and teachers to understand classroom experiences and identify barriers and enablers to success, which informed the creation of the Effective Teaching Profile [ETP]. During the second phase of the Te Kotahitanga project, the focus shifted from understanding Māori students' experiences to implementing and evaluating ETP developed from insights gathered in Phase 1.

The findings from Phase 2 showed that when teachers adopted the ETP and engaged in culturally responsive, relational pedagogy, Māori students became more engaged, attended school more regularly, and showed improved academic outcomes. The ETP emphasises rejecting deficit thinking and fostering agentic, culturally responsive relationships, and it outlines six key culturally responsive approaches grounded in Māori concepts: *manaakitanga* (or care), *mana motuhake* (or high expectations), *ngā whakapiringatanga* (or secure learning environments), *wānanga* (or interactive dialogue), *ako* (or reciprocal learning), and *kotahitanga* (or collaborative improvement). The findings are supported by Averill et al. (2009), who found that teaching approaches that emphasise collaborative and discussion-based learning, support the shared construction of knowledge, and position students as active participants in the learning process and prioritise patience, clear instruction reduce uncertainty, and promote greater engagement and participation in learning. These findings underscore the importance of culturally responsive, relational, and strengths-based practices in promoting equitable outcomes for Māori learners,

Although Te Kotahitanga (Bishop et al., 2009) focused on Māori learners, its findings have implications for Pasifika students in Aotearoa New Zealand schools, as both groups have experienced the impacts of colonisation and systemic marginalisation. The project demonstrated that culturally affirming pedagogy, respectful teacher–student relationships, and the rejection of deficit thinking significantly improved student engagement, attendance, and academic outcomes. Hattie’s (2008) findings align with the core tenets of Te Kotahitanga (Bishop et al., 2009) by demonstrating that positive teacher-student relationships and a warm socio-emotional classroom climate are paramount for student achievement. Crucially, the Best Evidence Synthesis (BES) similarly establishes that quality teaching must concurrently optimise both academic and social outcomes for diverse learners (Alton-Lee, 2003). Together, the BES, Te Kotahitanga (Bishop et al., 2009), and Hattie’s (2008) research form a powerful educational consensus, indicating a quality teacher who rejects deficit thinking to combine high academic expectations with culturally responsive, relational support, is a key lever for student achievement. These principles are relevant also for Pasifika learners, who, like Māori students, often face stereotyping, low expectations, and a lack of cultural recognition in the classroom. Similar findings have been identified in Pasifika-focused research, where student achievement is enhanced when teaching practices affirm Pasifika cultural identities, languages, and values, and when strong relationships are built between teachers, students, and families (Chu et al., 2013; Fletcher et al., 2009; Siope, 2011).

Laban (2024) provides further evidence of the importance of culturally responsive schooling practices in supporting Pasifika student success within Aotearoa New Zealand secondary schools. Drawing on *fa’afaletui* (or weaving together of ways) and *talanoa* methodologies, the study highlights how strong, respectful relationships between teachers and students, particularly when teachers recognise and affirm students’ cultural identities, are central to well-being, engagement and achievement. Consistent with the findings of Te Kotahitanga (Bishop et al., 2009), students in Laban’s study defined success in relational and cultural terms, emphasising making their families proud, feeling respected, and experiencing a sense

of belonging within the school environment, all of which contributed to their sense of well-being (Bishop et al., 2009). Importantly, the research demonstrates that when teachers reject deficit assumptions, maintain high expectations, and create culturally safe and supportive learning spaces, Pasifika students are more likely to participate, engage, and achieve academically (Laban, 2024; Fletcher et al., 2009). However, while these findings emphasise the importance of culturally responsive pedagogy and relational practice, there remains a need for research that moves beyond teacher-led approaches to examine how Pasifika students themselves can be actively partnered with and empowered in culturally grounded ways of learning, leadership, and decision-making within schools (Cook-Sather, 2006; Mitra, 2004). This highlights the importance of culturally responsive approaches such as talanoa, which centre student voice and position Pasifika learners as co-constructors of knowledge and agents of change (Cammarota & Fine, 2008). Such work is necessary to deepen understanding of how culturally sustaining practices can be enacted in ways that are not only responsive to, but led by, Pasifika students.

2.5 Systemic Barriers

There is a substantial body of research highlighting the limited progress in improving Pasifika students' educational outcomes in Aotearoa New Zealand, with ongoing disparities linked to systemic barriers such as institutional racism, deficit thinking, and a lack of culturally responsive practices (Chu et al., 2013; Fowler, 2023; Ministry of Education, 2024). Pacific communities have consistently named racist deficit thinking as a significant barrier to educational equity (Fowler, 2023; Samu, 2020; Savage et al., 2011). This sort of thinking refers to a belief system in which educators attribute a student's underachievement to internal student or cultural shortcomings, such as a lack of ability, motivation, or family support, rather than examining the influence of teacher attitudes, classroom practices, and systemic inequalities (Bishop, 2019; Fowler, 2023; Samu 2020). This mindset is often reinforced by negative stereotyping, where assumptions about Pasifika students' behaviour, intelligence, or backgrounds are shaped by biased generalisations rather than individual potential. As discussed by Hattie (2008), this perspective leads teachers to focus on what they perceive as students' deficiencies, resulting in practices like remedial work, behaviour control strategies, simplified curricula, and transmission teaching. Such practices reinforce educational disparities, as they fail to recognise students' strengths, cultural identities, and the impact of teacher-student relationships on student achievement and well-being.

Pasifika students revealed experiences of deficit thinking during community consultations for the *Pacific Lalanga Fou – Report* (Ministry of Pacific Peoples, 2018). The project adopted a year-long culturally grounded, mixed-method approach, to gather rich, community-driven insights for refreshing the original 1999 *Pacific Vision* (Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 1999). Guided by Pacific values and worldviews, the primary data collection method was talanoa supplemented by an online survey of 568 people for those unable to attend in person. Between July and September 2018, 1,861 participants from diverse backgrounds, through talanoa, shared their perspectives on success, identity, culture, economic development, and well-being. Thematic analysis of the talanoa data was conducted collaboratively by

Ministry for Pacific Peoples and Pasifika Futures to ensure cultural accuracy, while descriptive statistics were used to analyse survey responses. This approach ensured that the findings authentically reflected the voices and aspirations of Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand. At these consultations, many rangatahi (or youth) spoke about facing discrimination and racial stereotypes at school, which often affected their self-confidence. One participant said, “I feel like they stereotype us. They expect us to be dumb, they think we’re dangerous and violent and assume that we’re all good at sport.” (p. 45). Participants perceived this deficit thinking as a barrier that manifested as teachers underestimating the potential of individual students. A participant noted that, “teachers don’t push us to excellence...I feel limited with options, with the mindset my teacher has towards me.” (p. 46). Another manifestation of this barrier related to participants feeling that teachers lacked understanding of their family expectations, and struggled to connect with them. One person shared that, “non-Pacific minded teachers don’t understand [family obligations] that are going on outside of the school environment, and the struggles at home.” (p 46).

Another systemic barrier is a lack of information related to Pasifika student achievement and progress, both at the local and nationwide level, with the last comprehensive education report being completed in 2012 (Education Review Office, 2012). The absence of recent Ministry of Education reporting on Pasifika education limits the ability to monitor progress, set targeted goals, and respond to the specific needs of Pasifika learners, contributing to ongoing disparities in educational outcomes (Smaill et al., 2024). The Education Review Office’s 2012 report, the third national evaluation of its kind, examined how Aotearoa New Zealand schools engage with Pasifika learners and respond to improving their educational achievement outcomes (Education Review Office, 2012). Data were collected from 302 schools varying in decile, size, and location. The evaluation reviewed schools’ assessment practices, awareness of the Pasifika Action Plan 2009-2012 (Ministry of Education, 2013), engagement strategies, board knowledge, and partnerships with families. The findings remained consistent with those of the 2009 and 2010 reports; despite clear disparities in Pasifika learners’ outcomes, most schools had not enacted meaningful change. Few schools were analysing assessment data to inform targeted teaching, and there was minimal focus on Pasifika students’ writing achievement. Although schools often mentioned Pasifika students in their overarching curriculum statements, these acknowledgements rarely translated into classroom planning or practice that genuinely reflected the students’ cultures, knowledge, or perspectives. When the curriculum does not connect with students’ lived experiences, it becomes a barrier that restricts their ability to relate to the content and fully engage with their learning. Likewise, schools showed inconsistent efforts in engaging with Pacific families, with many relying on general approaches used for all parents, rather than culturally tailored strategies. These findings highlight the urgent need for schools to move beyond surface-level commitments and take deliberate, culturally responsive actions that recognise and build upon the unique strengths, identities, and aspirations of Pasifika learners and their families.

2.6 Relationships, Reciprocity and Vā

In order to understand how Pasifika people engage with others, since engagement plays a critical role in both learning and well-being, it is vital to have knowledge of the Pasifika concept of vā (Anae, 2016; Ka'ili, 2005). This concept refers to the sacred, relational space that exists between people, emphasising the need to nurture and maintain respectful, reciprocal relationships. Rather than seeing space as empty or neutral, vā is understood as an active and living space that binds individuals, families, communities, and environments together through shared values and mutual care (Anae, 2016; Ka'ili, 2005). In educational contexts, honouring the vā means recognising that student success is inseparable from the quality of relationships with teachers, peers, and wider communities (Airini et al., 2010). A number of studies discuss strategies used to develop vā, cultural involvement, and culturally responsive practices in educational settings, highlighting the importance of relational approaches that centre Pasifika values, identities, and ways of knowing (Anae, 2010; Reynolds, 2017, 2018;). These studies can be loosely clustered into two categories. Firstly, those indicating school leadership and classroom teaching practices for Pasifika students have seen limited change (Flavell, 2017; NZCER, 2017; Siope, 2011). Secondly, those studies that illustrated strategies used to develop vā, cultural involvement and responsiveness (Bill et al., 2022; Cunningham et al., 2022; Flavell, 2017).

Honouring the Pasifika concept of vā within schools requires intentional and sustained relationship-building, yet findings from the NZCER National Survey (Bonne & Spiller, 2016) reveal that while there is growing awareness among educators, significant gaps remain in fostering deep, reciprocal partnerships with Pasifika communities. The NZCER National Survey (2017) of primary and intermediate schools used a large-scale, mixed-methods approach to gather perspectives from principals, teachers, trustees, and parents about practices related to Pasifika students' education, culture, and achievement. The survey was distributed to a representative sample of 349 schools, with 200 principals, 771 teachers, 176 trustees, and 504 parents responding. Key findings showed that over two-thirds of teachers made efforts to learn which Pasifika cultures their students belonged to, and 37% had received professional learning on how to engage Pasifika learners, up from previous years. The survey identified substantial variation by school decile, with higher-decile schools less likely to engage in culturally sustaining practices such as partnering with Pasifika families, supporting heritage languages, or drawing on Pasifika expertise. In contrast, some lower-decile schools, often with larger Pasifika populations, were more likely to report targeted efforts and stronger cultural connections, suggesting that socioeconomic context may influence both the urgency and capacity for building meaningful relationships that reflect the values of vā. The findings highlight growing awareness and some positive developments but also underscore persistent gaps in culturally responsive practice and the need for greater access to Pasifika-focused expertise, professional learning, and community engagement strategies to improve outcomes for Pasifika students.

According to Cunningham et al. (2022) academic socialisation involves the culturally shaped ways parents communicate the value of education to their children, which in Pacific families is deeply embedded within intergenerational expectations. Through storytelling, Pacific parents utilise a unique form of parental involvement that reinforces educational success while simultaneously upholding cultural practices and honoring past generations. These intergenerational messages show that family is often positioned at the core of decision-making and identity, with success understood not as a personal accomplishment but as something that reflects on and honours the wider family unit. Because individual success is so deeply bound to collective well-being, the concept of *vā* requires schools to prioritise genuine, reciprocal relationships with these families, as demonstrated in Flavell's (2017) research on home-school partnerships with Pacific communities. Drawing from a qualitative study involving interviews with seven Pacific parents and twelve students at a high-decile Aotearoa New Zealand secondary school, the research explored how families perceive their role in supporting their children's academic achievement. The findings revealed that Pacific families value education deeply and want to be involved, but face barriers such as limited communication, rigid school structures, and cultural misunderstandings. Parents emphasised the importance of timely, flexible contact with teachers, such as phone calls or emails, rather than formal reporting processes, such as parent-teacher conferences that often came too late. These insights highlight the need for schools to move beyond one-way communication models and instead embrace culturally responsive practices, such as *talanoa* that foster mutual understanding and collaboration between parents, teachers and students.

An example of a project that nurtured *vā* or the relational space between parents, students and teachers was the project *Ngāue Fakataha ki he Ako 'a e Fānau* (Flavell, 2017). The programme used *Talanoa Ako Cycle*, which encourages parents and their children to actively discuss their child's goals and progress at three key meetings throughout the year. A key implication from this project is that when parents receive reports and guidance beforehand, they arrive prepared to contribute meaningfully. This preparation strengthens the *vā* by ensuring all parties can enter the discussion with mutual respect, and shared purpose, resulting in a more inclusive and empowering learning environment.

Despite studies like Flavell (2017), Pasifika students in Aotearoa New Zealand often navigate "siloed" worlds where their cultural, spiritual, and educational lives are kept separate, contributing to feelings of invisibility and disengagement (Siope, 2011). This disconnect between home and school environments has been identified as a key factor in underachievement among Pasifika learners (Airini et al., 2010). The practice of de-siloing students' experiences at Pacific Advance Senior School (PASS); bringing together faith, family, culture, and education, honours the Pacific concept of *vā* by nurturing the relational spaces between people and their environments (Bill et al., 2022). *Vā* is supported by nurturing respectful relationships, and PASS supports this by ensuring students are not forced to separate their cultural and spiritual identities from their schooling. Instead, PASS strengthens the *vā* by integrating all aspects of students' lives into the learning environment, reinforcing connections between learners, their families, their

communities, and their education. At PASS, teachers are addressed as "Aunty" or "Uncle", fostering familial bonds that build mutual respect and deepen connections between students and staff. The school is structured into four villages, with each student assigned a village parent responsible for their pastoral care and maintaining communication with their family. Fortnightly *aiga fono* (family meetings) are held, and families are welcomed at any time, reinforcing strong, ongoing partnerships between home and school. These practices at PASS reflect a commitment to nurturing *vā*, the sacred relational space that connects individuals, families, and communities through mutual respect and care.

2.7 Chapter Summary

Pasifika boys' secondary-school journeys in Aotearoa New Zealand remain shadowed by stubborn inequities in UE attainment, belonging and holistic well-being, even as these young men envision success through family pride, cultural identity and collective service. Anchored by the Fonofale well-being model (Pulotu-Endemann, 1984, as cited in PASS, n.d.) and WHO (2017) assertion that schools shape lifelong health, this chapter critically reviewed literature from 130 sources retrieved via Massey Discover, Google Scholar, and reference-chaining. After outlining the search process, the chapter organises findings into four themes.

First, scholarship on ERI shows that strong cultural pride, private regard and opportunities for identity exploration bolster academic motivation and resilience. Second, studies of culturally responsive enablers, affirming pedagogy, high expectations, and UE-aligned curriculum design, demonstrate that centring Pacific worldviews lifts achievement. Third, analysis of systemic barriers exposes deficit theorising, stereotyping and opaque assessment structures that funnel Pasifika learners into non-UE pathways while gaps in Ministry reporting blunt accountability. Finally, research on relationality, reciprocity and *vā* illustrates how sustained home-school partnerships, and de-siloed schooling foster belonging and engagement.

Collectively the evidence shows that when educators reject deficit framings, design UE-aligned pathways and cultivate partnerships that honour *vā* Pasifika students are better positioned to experience success across academic and holistic domains. Data collection methods across the cited studies span large-scale quantitative analyses of NCEA records, longitudinal mixed-methods tracking, talanoa interviews, and kaupapa Māori intervention research, ensuring both statistical robustness and Pacific voice.

This literature review identifies a clear gap in the research related to understanding Pasifika boys and success. Specifically, research exploring how Pasifika students can be meaningfully involved in, and empowered through, culturally grounded processes that enhance their ethnic-racial identity, strengthen agency, and challenge systemic barriers within schools. Addressing this gap requires methodological approaches that privilege student voice, relational ways of knowing, and culturally responsive forms of inquiry.

Therefore, the following chapter outlines the methodological approach adopted in this study, which draws on the philosophy of Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) (Kornbluh et al., 2015) and utilises the Pacific methodology of talanoa to centre Pasifika boys as co-constructors of knowledge and agents of change. This approach aligns with the relational principles of vā and seeks to generate insights that are reflective of Pasifika students' experiences, but also capable of meaningful change within secondary schooling.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Chapter Introduction

This methodology chapter describes the process and foundation required to ensure rigour and trustworthiness across this study of teenage Pasifika boys. It does this by outlining the research philosophy and design, process of participant recruitment and sampling, ethical considerations, as well as data collection and analysis. Qualitative data were gathered through talanoa sessions, during which participants shared their schooling experiences and perceptions of success. Guided by the action-oriented philosophy of YPAR (Camarota & Fine, 2008; Kornbluh et al., 2015; Mirra et al., 2015), participants were actively engaged in co-developing an initiative designed to improve outcomes for Pasifika boys.

3.2 Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore how Pasifika boys experience success in Aotearoa New Zealand secondary schools, using their voices to understand the factors that enable or hinder their success. The intention was to collect and analyse information that will inform school-based practices to better support Pasifika boys' educational journeys in Aotearoa New Zealand secondary schools.

The aims of the research:

- Explore Pasifika boys' perceptions of what success looks and feels like in their secondary-school experience.
- Identify the supportive factors that contribute to their sense of success, both academically and holistically.
- Examine the challenges and barriers that impact on their ability to experience success.
- Highlight areas of focus to strengthen culturally responsive and effective support for Pasifika boys in secondary schools.

3.3 Research Questions

The central research question guiding this study is:

How do Pasifika boys define and experience success within Aotearoa New Zealand secondary school?

This is explored through three key sub-questions:

- How do Pasifika boys define and describe success in the context of secondary schooling in Aotearoa New Zealand?
- What factors enable or support Pasifika boys to experience success?
- What challenges or barriers impact on Pasifika boys' ability to experience success?

3.4 Philosophy and Research Approach

My personal learning as an educator and my faith, guided by the verse: “To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” (King James Version, Micah 6:8), underlines principles that resonate with ethical, participatory, and context-sensitive research. This research is influenced by these principles and my faith, resulting in a commitment to epistemic justice, which values Indigenous and community-based ways of knowing (Palmer & Caldas, 2015; Walker, 2019). My commitment to justice means humbly working alongside participants to co-construct knowledge, which underlines the epistemological and ontological beliefs present in this research. Ontologically, this research aligns with a relativist stance that considers reality neither singular nor fixed. Instead, it is shaped by cultural, social, and lived experiences (Levers, 2013). I see the lived experiences of Pasifika boys as deeply rooted in their unique cultural and social contexts, and these realities can be better understood through genuine, prolonged engagement and guided interpretation. Approaching the experiences of Pasifika boys with empathy and care, upholds the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989) and ensures that participants’ voices are not just heard, but also respected and authentically represented.

Furthermore, my commitment to acting justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly alongside participants, informed the decision to integrate talanoa within this study as an act of decolonisation that privileges the cultural identities, values, and knowledge systems of Pasifika boys (Farrelly & Nabobo-Baba, 2014; Vaioleti, 2006). The concept of ‘research’ itself is deeply entangled with European imperialism and colonialism (Smith, 2021), as colonisers sought to maintain control by instilling the belief that the knowledge held by Indigenous and colonised peoples, developed through their own traditions, education, and cultural worldviews, was inferior or lacking in value. Education is widely recognised as neither culturally neutral nor historically innocent, having played a central role in sustaining colonial epistemologies that marginalise Indigenous and Pasifika ways of knowing (Battiste, 2019; Jackson, 2019; Smith, 2021). Yet, “when it is at its best, [education] embraces and anticipates change.” (Tuck et al., 2018, p. 8). Western research traditions have often positioned knowledge as something extracted and sanitised, devaluing the everyday meaning-making practices of Indigenous communities. In contrast, talanoa reflects Pasifika relational worldviews and centres collective storytelling, reciprocity, and *vā*, thereby denaturalising dominant epistemological frames and creating space for culturally grounded knowledge to be generated (Talení, 2025; Vaioleti, 2006). Through talanoa, participants were not only invited to share their schooling experiences but were also supported to critically examine the structural and cultural factors that shaped those experiences, including barriers to success, and to contribute ideas for responses grounded in their cultural realities, thereby addressing the study’s aim to examine barriers to success and identify culturally responsive ways to better support Pasifika boys. In this way, talanoa affirmed Pasifika identities, disrupted deficit narratives, and enabled Pasifika boys to engage in education and research on their own cultural terms.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child [UNCRC], 1989), particularly Articles 12, 13, 29 and 30, informed the decision to use talanoa. Articles 12, 13, 29 and 30, affirm children's rights to be heard, to express themselves freely, to have their cultural identities recognised, and to participate meaningfully in matters affecting their lives. These rights-based principles guided the choice of methodology, so that it moved beyond consultation and instead positioned Pasifika boys as active contributors and co-researchers in the research process. The process involved participants reflecting on their past and present schooling experiences, collaboratively identifying and implementing an initiative, and then collecting and analysing data to evaluate the impact of their action. By aligning the research design with the UNCRC (1989), the study ensured that student voice was not only elicited but acted upon, fostering a sense of ownership, leadership, and empowerment among participants. In this way, student agency was enacted in practice, as Pasifika boys transitioned from sharing their perspectives to shaping an initiative aimed at enhancing Pasifika learner success.

Talanoa was the primary method of data collection in this study, providing a culturally grounded, relational approach through which participants shared their schooling experiences. Talanoa has been described as “unconcealed storytelling” (Tecun et al., 2018, p. 157), enabling open-ended dialogue that is shaped by context rather than predetermined questions. Vaioleti (2006) further explains that tala refers to telling or informing, while noa reflects openness and the absence of fixed boundaries; together, talanoa facilitates fluid, responsive conversations that reflect participants' lived realities. This approach was particularly appropriate for engaging Pasifika boys, as it supported the development of trust, reciprocity, and culturally safe spaces where meaning could be expressed not only through words, but also through humour, silence, body language, and environmental context.

Talanoa sessions followed a broad, consistent structure designed to foster relational connection, cultural safety, and open dialogue. Each session began with a karakia (or prayer) and the sharing of mea'ai or meakai (or food), acknowledging both the cultural grounding of the research and the practical reality that participants were often hungry; this helped settle the group and create a relaxed, welcoming environment. Following this, sessions moved into informal discussion guided by a series of general conversation prompts. These prompts were intentionally broad and responsive to participants' lived experiences, including questions such as “How's your day going?” Or “I haven't been at school this week—what's happened?”, and prompts linked to recent school events (e.g., Year 13 boys leaving, Pasifika prize giving). This flexible structure enabled participants to shape the direction of the talanoa while the prompts acted as gentle entry points, facilitating conversation, strengthening relationships, and ensuring discussions remained connected to participants' school experiences and the focus of the study.

The use of talanoa as both a methodological and relational practice shaped not only how data were generated, but how meaning was collectively constructed within the study. Through the deliberate enactment of vā across the research process, participants engaged in dialogue that was grounded in

relational accountability, enabling them to interpret, question, and build on each other's experiences. As a result, the knowledge generated through talanoa was not produced as isolated individual accounts, but as shared and negotiated understandings. This relational grounding influenced the analytic process, where patterns of meaning emerged as interconnected and mutually reinforcing, rather than as discrete or independent themes. In this way, talanoa functioned not simply as a method of data collection, but as the relational condition through which participants' interpretations of success were co-constructed and understood.

While talanoa was the primary method of data collection, the study was philosophically influenced by YPAR, particularly its emphasis on student voice, agency, and the co-construction of knowledge. (Kornbluh et al., 2015; Maltby et al., 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mirra et al., 2015; Sahoo & Kurane, 2023). These principles were reflected in the ways participants engaged in critical dialogue about their schooling experiences, identified factors that supported or hindered their success, and contributed an idea for change. Participants were involved in developing a student-led initiative aimed at improving outcomes for Pasifika boys, demonstrating elements of collaboration and shared decision-making. However, the study did not follow a formal action research cycle. Data collection and analysis remained centred on participants' narratives shared through talanoa, rather than iterative cycles of implementation, evaluation, and refinement. As such, YPAR functioned as a guiding influence rather than a methodological framework, shaping the participatory and strengths-based orientation of the study without structuring the research design.

Talanoa and YPAR share commitments to relationality, power-sharing, and the privileging of participant voice (Cammock et al., 2021). In this study, talanoa provided the primary culturally embedded method through which knowledge was generated, while YPAR-informed philosophy supported opportunities for participants to reflect, contribute, and engage in the co-construction of an idea for change (Cammarota & Fine, 2008; Kornbluh et al., 2015; Mirra et al., 2015). This combination enabled the research to remain grounded in Pasifika ways of knowing while supporting meaningful participant involvement.

3.5 Participants and Sampling

The concept of *vā*, the relational space that connects individuals and communities, is foundational within Pacific worldviews and underscores the values of respect, reciprocity, and collective responsibility (Talen, 2025). Accordingly, the researcher sought to honour *vā* through the intentional development of relationships with the school's Pasifika community prior to, during and after the research was conducted. This involved attendance at Pasifika Komiti meetings committee meetings for Pasifika parents with sons at the school, participation in fortnightly Pasifika breakfasts, and active support of cultural events such as the *fiafia* night. A school *fiafia* night is a culturally significant community event that celebrates Pacific diversity through student performances. This event serves as an opportunity for students to showcase and rehearse performances in preparation for the regional Polyfest competition. *Fiafia* nights bring together

students, families, and the wider school community to acknowledge cultural heritage, collective identity, and the commitment involved in preparing performances.

These engagements extended beyond visibility, serving as expressions of relational accountability and cultural respect. Building trust with Pasifika students, whānau, and the wider school community was critical to ensuring the research was both welcomed, sustained and meaningful. Formal endorsement from the school's Pasifika Komiti affirmed the cultural legitimacy of the project within the school context and supported the recruitment of participants.

Ethics approval was granted on September 8th, 2025, from Massey University's Ohu Matatika 2, which has expertise in tikanga Māori, Pacific research and social sciences (Professor Tracy Riley, personal communication, September 8, 2025). A formal letter requesting permission to conduct the research was emailed to the principal of a Catholic boys' secondary school in a city in Aotearoa New Zealand (see Appendix A). Approval to undertake the study was subsequently granted by the principal and the school's Board of Trustees. Participant recruitment started the following day.

Participants were recruited through purposeful sampling to intentionally select Pasifika boys whose lived experiences could inform a phenomenological talanoa-based inquiry, recognising knowledge as collectively constructed through relational dialogue and grounded in participants' realities rather than imposed from the top down (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Vaioleti, 2006). This approach prioritises depth over breadth and ensures that participants' experiences were presented as rich narratives, enabling the researcher to "discover, understand, and gain insight" into the phenomenon under study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016 p. 96). Through talanoa, these information-rich stories were collectively challenged, legitimised, probed, clarified, and re-aligned, generating contextual and robust knowledge that supported deep exploration of participants' lived experiences and critical reflection (Kornbluh et al., 2015; Vaioleti, 2006).

Participant selection occurred through an open call for expressions of interest, with the project advertised via school notices and the school's social media accounts, Pasifika and general Facebook and Instagram pages to ensure accessibility and visibility within the community. In addition, the Pasifika Komiti promoted the study within the school's Pasifika community, encouraged student participation, and endorsed the research as a valuable opportunity for Pasifika boys to share their experiences and perspectives. Form teachers of Year 9 and 10 students identified Pasifika boys in their class and encouraged them to attend a meeting during assembly time, where the researcher presented information to students. Interested participants were given whānau and participant information sheets and consent forms to take home (see Appendix B).

Several year group meetings were held during intervals, with mea'ai or meakai (or food) provided, to offer

students opportunities to ask questions about the study and to discuss participation collectively with their peers. This sampling approach supported inclusive participation and encouraged students who felt a connection to the research focus to self-nominate. Parent and participant information sheets and consent forms were emailed and sent home with students who expressed interest during year-group meetings. This was followed by a secure Google Form used to obtain parental consent for students who wished to participate in the study. The recruitment process that followed this event resulted in six Pasifika boys, who had parental consent, volunteering to participate in the study.

On 25 September 2025, an information evening was held for parents and whānau. The date was intentionally chosen to coincide with the Pasifika Komiti's monthly meeting to encourage collective attendance and engagement. Mea'ai or meakai (or food) was provided as a gesture of hospitality, and families were invited to bring their children and extended whānau, reflecting Pasifika values of inclusivity and communal participation. Parent and participant information sheets and consent forms were made available in English (see Appendix B), Samoan, (see Appendix C) and Tongan (see Appendix D), which are the predominant Pasifika languages at the school, to ensure accessibility and understanding. The Komiti Chairperson attended and supported the researcher's presentation, further strengthening the sense of partnership, trust, and cultural alignment between the school community and the research project.

Table 1 presents the dates and times of the talanoa sessions shared with whānau during the information evening. Following cultural guidance from the research supervision team and the Pasifika Komiti, the frequency of talanoa sessions was increased to twice weekly to maintain momentum, and to nurture vā between the school Pasifika community and school leadership, signalling that the school valued both the research and the time contributed by participants.

Table 1

Talanoa Dates

Friday 10 th October 2025	12:50 to 1:30
Wednesday 15 th October 2025	2:20 to 3:10
Friday 17 th October 2025	12:50 to 1:30
Tuesday 21 st October 2025	2:20 to 3:10
Friday 24 th October 2025	12:50 to 1:30
Tuesday 28 th October 2025	12:50 to 1:30
Friday 31 st October 2025	2:20 to 3:10

This study involved six participants, comprising one Year 10 student and five Year 9 students. The boys identified as a range of ethnicities, reflecting the diverse cultural identities within the Pasifika student cohort. While the sample size was small and not intended to be representative of the wider Pasifika student population, it provided a purposeful group of participants whose lived experiences and perspectives were central to the focus of this study.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

According to Berg (2009), a central principle pertaining to research within the social sciences is to do no harm (p. 60). Ethical considerations in this research reflect the Massey University (2017) Code of Ethical Conduct for research, teaching and evaluations involving human participants and the Māori ethics framework in Te Ara Tika. Four ethical issues were highly relevant to this research: autonomy, informed consent, avoidance of harm, and maintaining anonymity. In addition, four Te Ara Tika principles were applied: whakapapa (purpose and relationships), tika (research design), manākitanga (cultural and social responsibility), and mana (justice and equity).

3.7 Autonomy

Adolescents have limited autonomy due to their developmental stage and experiences, making them inherently vulnerable in research settings (Busher, 2021; Massey University, 2017). Autonomy involves the capacity to give freely informed consent grounded in one's own principles and views (Busher, 2021; Massey University, 2026) and aligns with Articles 12–15 of the UNCRC (1989), which affirm children's rights to express their views in all matters affecting them and to have those views respected. Participants under 16 years are treated as children under the Massey University Code of Ethical Conduct, which requires consent procedures that reflect their developmental capacity and the need for parental or guardian consent. For this reason, parents and guardians were invited to an information evening with their sons, during which the proposed study, including potential risks and benefits, was presented. Information sheets and consent forms were provided to both parents/guardians and students and were translated into Samoan and Tongan to reflect the most prevalent Pasifika ethnicities at the research site. This approach aligns with Article 5 of the UNCRC, which recognises the role of parents and guardians in supporting children to exercise their rights in ways consistent with their evolving capacities. To uphold autonomy the consent process involved both parents and students, ensuring that decisions were based on shared understanding and that participants exercised agency free from coercion or manipulation.

In addition to obtaining parental consent and participant assent, several measures were implemented to uphold participants' autonomy throughout the study. Participation was voluntary, and boys were reminded at each talanoa session that they could withdraw at any time without consequence. Talanoa sessions

were conducted in culturally safe, relational environments. Should a sensitive issue arise, clear referral pathways were in place to the school counsellor and senior leadership to ensure appropriate pastoral support. All data were anonymised through the use of pseudonyms. Together, these safeguards ensured that the study upheld autonomy alongside the ethical principles of care, respect, and protection for child participants.

3.8 Informed Consent

Informed consent is defined in the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations Involving Human Participants (2026) as a process through which participants are provided with clear, accessible information that enables them to make a voluntary and knowledgeable decision about their involvement, free from coercion or undue influence. The Code further emphasises that when research involves children or young people, additional safeguards are required, including parental or caregiver consent alongside meaningful participant assent and the use of developmentally appropriate communication.

In this study, informed consent was achieved through a multi-layered process designed to mitigate risks associated with researching adolescents. Students and their whānau were provided with detailed information about the purpose, design, and methodology of the research, what participation would involve, and how data would be used and stored, consistent with Massey's guidance on transparency and participant understanding. Written information sheets and consent forms were available in English, Samoan, and Tongan to ensure accessibility. An information evening was held where the Pasifika Komiti Chairperson acted as a cultural and linguistic bridge to support genuine understanding. In addition, participants and whānau were provided with written information sheets and consent forms. Consent documentation comprised three versions of both the consent forms and participant information sheets, one in English, one translated into Tongan, and one translated into Samoan (see Appendices for copies).

3.9 Avoidance of Harm (non-maleficence)

Harm includes damage to reputation, dignity, interpersonal relationships, and physical or psychological well-being, all of which are identified within Massey University's Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations Involving Human Participants (2026) as risks that must be actively mitigated throughout the research process. In this study, these requirements were addressed through the use of talanoa as the primary method of data collection, which positioned Pasifika boys as active contributors and knowledge-holders, ensuring that the research was conducted with participants rather than on them, while also being informed by participatory principles that supported collaboration and shared meaning-making. This approach aligns with the UNCRC, particularly Article 19, which uphold children's rights to express their views freely and to be heard in matters affecting them. By fostering meaningful participation and co-creation, the study minimised the potential for exploitation as it nurtured respect for participants and the researcher, protection, and the fulfilment of participants' rights in accordance with Massey's

ethical obligations.

3.10 Beneficence

Beneficence, (Massey University, 2026), requires researchers to actively promote positive outcomes for participants rather than merely avoiding harm. In this study, beneficence was enacted through the use of talanoa, which enabled Pasifika boys to articulate their own definitions of success and to co-design an initiative grounded in their cultural values and lived experiences. This participatory process fostered leadership, confidence, and cultural affirmation, and generated knowledge intended to inform school practices that better support Pasifika learners. In this way, the research was designed to create meaningful educational, relational, and community-level benefits that extend beyond the immediate study.

3.11 Confidentiality

Confidentiality requires researchers to protect participants' identities and personal information and to ensure that data are collected, stored, and reported in ways that prevent unauthorised disclosure (Massey University, 2026). This obligation is reinforced by Article 16 of the UNCRC, which affirms every child's right to privacy in relation to family, home, and correspondence (United Nations, 1989). In school-based research, maintaining confidentiality can be challenging, as preserving rich contextual detail must be carefully balanced against protecting participants' emotional, social, and psychological well-being (Dovemark, 2019). Information sheets advised participants and their whānau that, due to the small-scale nature of the study, maintaining complete confidentiality might not always be possible. In this study, confidentiality was actively negotiated through the enquiry process, with participants involved in decisions about how their identities, stories, and contributions were represented. This collaborative process allowed confidentiality to be thoughtfully upheld while also honouring participants' agency, including where individuals chose to be named and recognised for their contributions.

3.12 Te Tiriti o Waitangi Obligations and Te Ara Tika Principles

Research undertaken in Aotearoa New Zealand is guided by the values embedded within Te Tiriti o Waitangi: partnership, participation, and protection. While these principles are not specific to research practice, they establish broad ethical responsibilities for researchers when designing and conducting studies within Aotearoa New Zealand institutions (Massey University, 2026). Accordingly, this study was informed by the Māori ethical framework outlined in Te Ara Tika, described in the Code (Massey University, 2026), which integrates tikanga concepts into research practice and provides guidance on ethical responsibilities in relation to rights, roles, and outcomes for Māori communities.

The four principles of the Te Ara Tika framework, whakapapa, tika, manaakitanga, and mana, guided the ethical design and enactment of this study. Whakapapa emphasises the importance of establishing and maintaining meaningful relationships, which in this research was enacted through sustained engagement

with the school's Pasifika community prior to recruitment, including regular attendance at Pasifika Komiti meetings, participation in Pasifika breakfasts, and support of cultural events. Tika informed the purposeful and culturally responsive use of talanoa to ensure the research process was appropriate, relevant, and capable of achieving its aims. Manaakitanga framed the researcher's cultural and social responsibilities, ensuring that participants were treated with care, dignity, and respect, including the provision of mea'ai or meakai (or food) and the creation of relationally safe talanoa spaces. Mana, understood as justice and equity, underpinned the study's intention to produce outcomes that affirmed cultural identity, strengthened student voice, and contributed to more equitable educational practices within the school community.

3.13 Researcher Positionality and Monitoring Interpretation

I position myself in this research as a Pākehā, female educator who has worked as both a classroom teacher and attendance dean in an Aotearoa New Zealand secondary school. I come to this study as an outsider to Pasifika cultures, shaped by a Catholic upbringing that emphasised mercy, justice, and humility, values that continue to influence both my teaching and research practice. The focus of this enquiry emerged from years of classroom observation and professional reflection on the persistent academic underachievement of Pasifika boys, despite their visible success in other aspects of school life such as sports, music, and the arts. Through my professional interactions with Pasifika boys, I gained insight into their schooling experiences and the systemic challenges faced by them and their whānau, prompting critical reflection on my own practice and a desire to better understand how schools might more effectively support their success.

This study addressed the research question: How do Pasifika boys define and experience success within Aotearoa New Zealand secondary school? It explored students' experiences of school in order to better understand the enablers and barriers shaping their success. The research had four objectives: to explore Pasifika boys' perceptions of what success looks and feels like; to identify factors that support academic and holistic success; to examine the challenges that hinder these experiences; and to highlight areas of focus for strengthening culturally responsive school practices. By positioning Pasifika boys as the central knowledge holders in this study, the research sought to move beyond deficit-based and test-driven measures and to reframe success as a multidimensional and relational construct grounded in students' lived realities.

3.14 Thematic Analysis

Reflexive thematic analysis is a qualitative method used to identify, analyse, and interpret patterns of meaning across a dataset to address the research question (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017; Braun & Clarke, 2008, 2022). This approach is inherently repetitive and emphasises researcher reflexivity, acknowledging that the researcher's perspectives, experiences, and assumptions actively shape the analytic process (Braun & Clarke, 2008, 2022; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Following Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2022) six-phase approach to reflexive thematic analysis, the analytic process was undertaken in ways that were

consistent with the relational, dialogic principles of talanoa and the participatory philosophy of YPAR. Analysis began with data familiarisation through repeated reading of transcripts and revisiting audio recordings, checking in with the boys, so to allow close attention to the boys' voices, meanings, and relational contexts in which their stories were shared. Initial codes were generated across the dataset to capture significant features of participants' talanoa, with coding remaining flexible and responsive rather than fixed or predetermined (refer to section 3.16 below). These codes were then examined contextually, with consideration given to how meanings were connected across participants' experiences, relationships, and schooling contexts, to develop four candidate themes.

Thematic review and refinement occurred iteratively, with ongoing movement between individual accounts, the wider dataset, and the research aims. This process was informed by participatory philosophy associated with YPAR, particularly its emphasis on reflection and shared sense-making. Themes were defined and named to represent understandings rooted in participants' lived realities (refer to section 3.17 below for more details about themes). The transcripts provided a written account of participants' voices and analysis took into account tone, humour, body language, and shared understanding, not just spoken words. The interpretive analysis honoured talanoa as a culturally grounded method of knowledge-making, with YPAR-informed principles of participant agency, power sharing, and the recognition of youth as experts shaping the analytical process.

Thematic analysis was selected because it aligns with the relational and dialogic nature of talanoa. Talanoa is not simply a data-collection technique but a culturally grounded process that privileges storytelling, *vā*, collective meaning-making, and emotional safety (Fa'avae et al., 2016; Vaiotei, 2006). Reflexive thematic analysis offers the flexibility required to honour these features, allowing themes to be developed inductively from participants' narratives while remaining attentive to the cultural, social, and relational contexts shaping those accounts (Braun & Clarke, 2008, 2022). Rather than fragmenting talanoa into decontextualised units of data, this approach supported a holistic reading of the boys' stories, enabling patterns of meaning to be interpreted in ways that respected Pacific ways of knowing and being. This meant that participants' narratives were analysed in relation to the relationships, emotions, cultural values, and shared experiences embedded within each talanoa session, rather than being reduced to isolated quotes or technical codes. By maintaining the integrity of the stories and the relational context in which they were told, the analysis preserved the cultural meaning of participants' experiences and ensured that the findings reflected not only what was said, but how and why it was shared within a collective space.

Furthermore, thematic analysis aligns closely with the philosophy of YPAR, which positions participants as knowledge holders whose lived experiences are central to generating insights and informing action (Cammarota & Fine, 2008). By collaboratively engaging repeatedly with the boys' narratives through cycles of familiarisation, coding, and theme development, the analysis foregrounded student voice and

agency, ensuring that the meanings identified were grounded in participants' own interpretations of their schooling experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2008, 2022). Through ongoing reflection and revisiting emerging interpretations with participants, the analysis remained open to revision as new insights surfaced across successive talanoa sessions. This repetitive engagement created space for participants' priorities to redirect the analytic focus, as a living dialogue between data, participants, and the researcher. Consequently, the responsiveness of the study was increased, as was the likelihood that the actions developed were grounded in the realities of the boys' lived experiences rather than externally imposed agendas.

3.15 Familiarisation

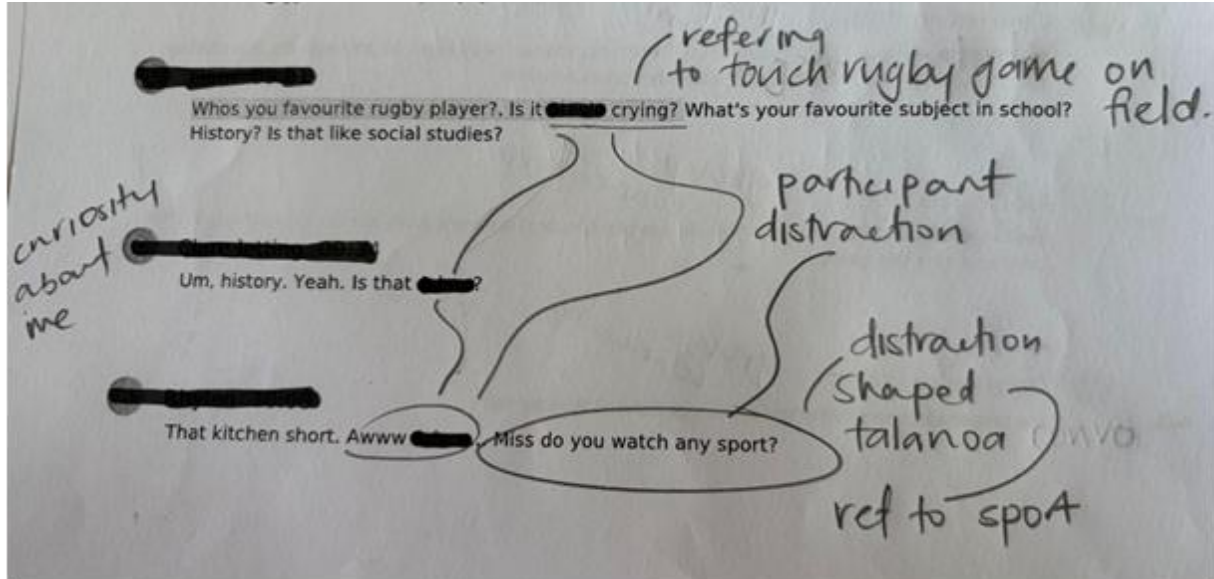
Familiarisation was the first phase of the reflexive thematic analysis process and involved sustained, immersive engagement with the talanoa transcripts, field notes, and a reflective journal. This phase was not treated as a preliminary technical step, but as a critical analytic process through which I began to develop a deep, contextual understanding of the boys' narratives and the relational dynamics embedded within each talanoa session (Braun & Clarke, 2008, 2022).

Talanoa sessions were recorded using two devices, an iPhone and a laptop. Immediately following each talanoa session, the audio files were cross-checked for accuracy and combined to produce a single, comprehensive transcript for each session. That evening, transcripts were reviewed manually to check for accuracy, tone, and contextual meaning and notes were made in the margins. During this process, I listened to each recording multiple times while reading the transcripts, enabling me to re-enter the emotional and relational atmosphere of the talanoa. This was particularly important given the dialogic nature of talanoa, where meaning is conveyed through humour, overlapping talk, pauses, and collective storytelling rather than through linear responses to predetermined questions (Vaiolati, 2006). Margin notes were used to capture early impressions, key phrases, and moments of emotional tone, including shared humour and shifts in focus, supporting deep immersion in the data. These annotations were informed by the field notes recorded during and immediately after the talanoa sessions. Figure 3 illustrates one such moment, where a game of touch rugby on the field momentarily drew participants' attention away from the conversation, prompting an organic shift to discussion about sport and relational connection, with participants asking the researcher whether she or her children played sport. This interaction reflects the fluid, relational nature of talanoa and the way meaning-making was shaped through everyday interruptions

and shared interests.

Figure 3

Talanoa Reflective Notes



Note. Black ink in Figure signifies confidentiality of names or identifiable information mentioned by participants.

To deepen familiarisation, transcripts were revisited across several days rather than in a single sitting. While cultural advice was not routinely sought during this process, it was consulted in instances where participants' meanings or interactions were ambiguous. This approach reflects the contextual nature of talanoa, where meaning is not derived solely from verbal statements but is also inferred through body language, facial expressions, participant behaviour towards other group members, and the context in which the session took place. This spacing supported reflexivity by allowing reflection so that emerging insights surfaced gradually and reduced the risk of premature interpretation (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Reflective journalling was used alongside transcript review to document emotional responses, assumptions, and moments of uncertainty. For example, Figure 4 illustrates when one participant described "we talk too much" in class. I initially interpreted this as a comment on my behaviour during talanoa sessions, as I had a personal goal of leaning into the moments of silence and using wait time. Figure 5 shows the note I made in my reflective journal to check my assumption with the participant and revisit this comment at the next talanoa session. During the next talanoa session the participant disclosed that he talks and jokes "to make the lesson fun for his peers", and it frequently stems from boredom and difficulty in understanding the lesson content. This moment was documented in my reflective journal as a reminder to interrogate how my professional assumptions could shape interpretation and to remain attentive to the boys' own explanations of their behaviour.

Figure 4

Audio Transcription

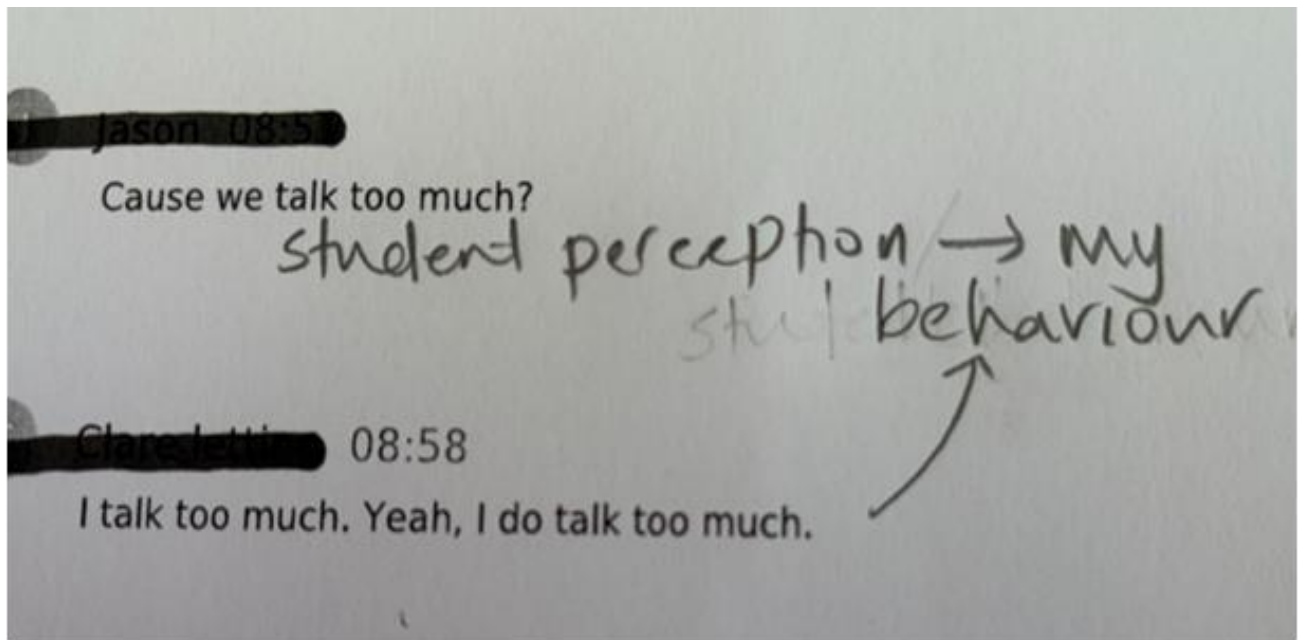
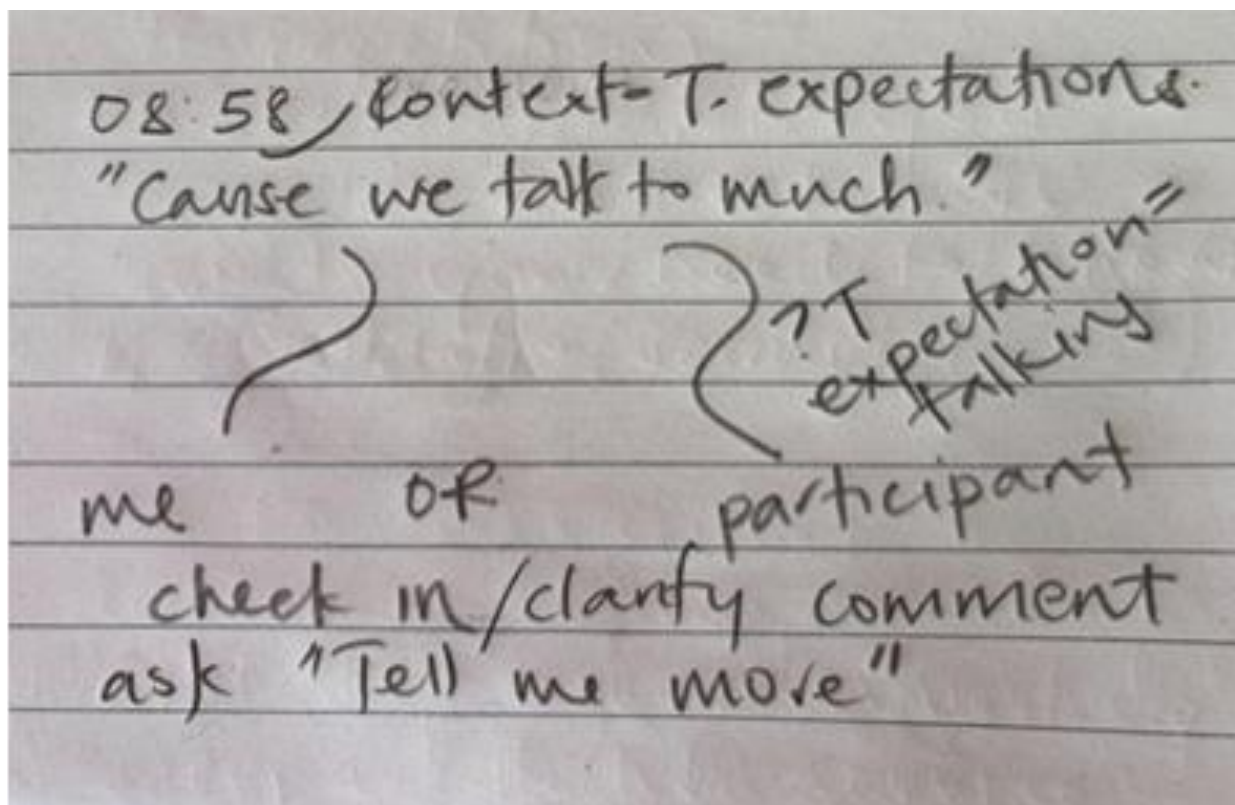


Figure 5

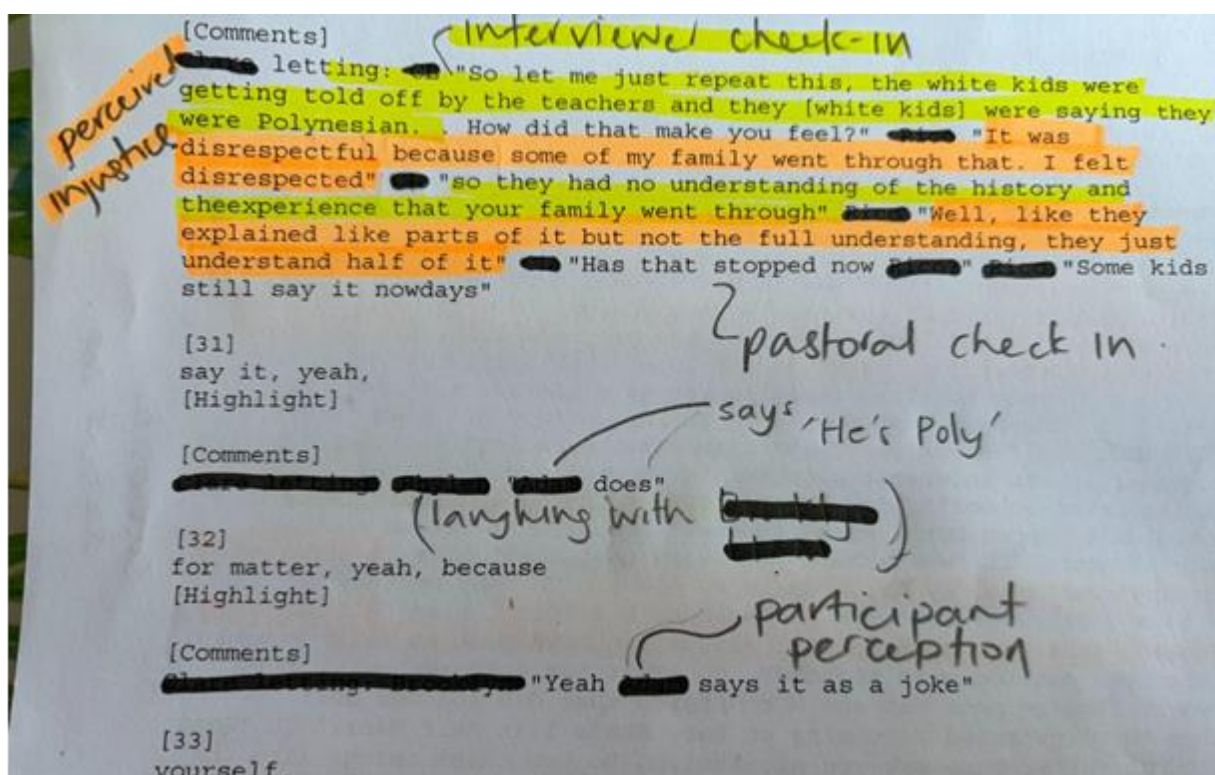
Journal Reflection



Field notes and post-talanoa reflections were integrated into the familiarisation process to situate participants' words within the relational contexts in which they were shared. These observations included attention to body language, humour, silences, and relational interactions that were not always captured in the written transcripts, thereby preserving the social and cultural textures of each talanoa session and strengthening the credibility of the analysis (Fa'avae et al., 2016). For example, participants were frequently distracted by sports games taking place on the field visible from the hui room. Figure 6 shows the annotation on the audio transcript. Post transcription a comment was recorded in my field notes then revisited in a subsequent talanoa session, during which further probing indicated that the boys appeared to normalise the comment from this particular student. Through this immersive and reflexive familiarisation process, I established a contextual understanding of the data that provided a rigorous foundation for subsequent coding and theme development.

Figure 6

Annotated Audio Transcript



3.16 Coding

Coding was the second phase of the reflexive thematic analysis process and involved the systematic identification of meaningful features across the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2008, 2022). Building on the depth of understanding developed during familiarisation, I engaged in line-by-line coding of all talanoa

transcripts, field notes, and reflective journal entries. This process was inductive, with codes generated from the data rather than imposed through a pre-existing framework, ensuring that participants' voices remained central to the analytic process (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

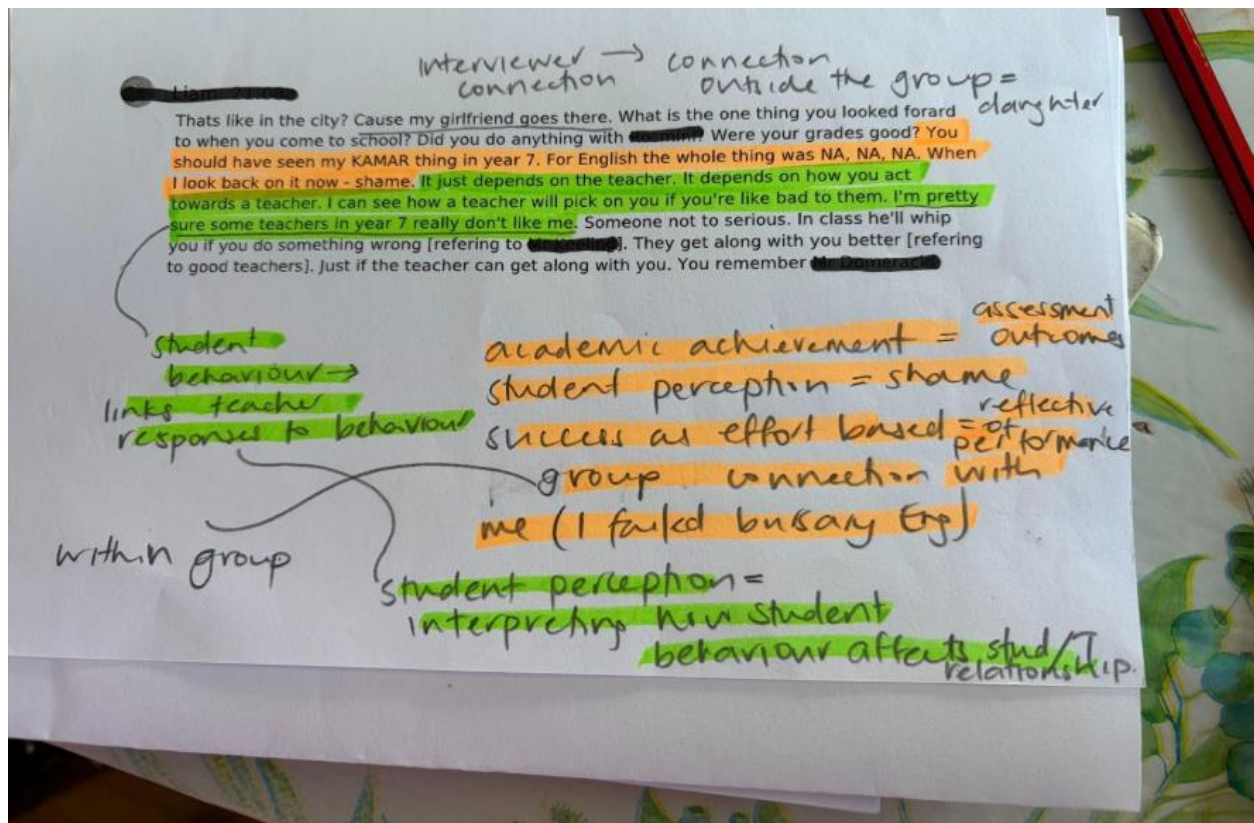
Initial coding was undertaken manually using printed transcripts. Segments of text were highlighted and labelled with short, descriptive phrases that captured the essence of what was being communicated. These codes were intentionally kept close to participants' language in order to preserve meaning and reduce the risk of premature abstraction (Braun & Clarke, 2022). For example, "I got Excellence" and "Non-Achieve, Non-Achieve, Non-Achieve" was coded as academic achievement as it referenced grades or academic success. "He's straightforward [pause] if you need help, he helps you out" was coded teacher practice as it described an action or strategy used by a teacher in the classroom. Appendix F shows a list of initial codes, their definitions and Appendix E shows coded audio transcripts.

Throughout the coding phase, reflections in the journal were written to document emerging patterns, analytic uncertainties, and moments where my own assumptions were challenged (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). In several instances, I became aware of a tendency to interpret humour as disengagement, reflecting my professional background in pastoral care. By documenting these assumptions in my reflective journal and revisiting the transcripts, I identified a discernible rhythm within the talanoa sessions in which humour and banter frequently followed moments of deep and personal disclosure. I also observed that as sessions drew to a close, the boys' conversations instinctively shifted toward joking and playful interaction, suggesting that humour functioned as a strategy for managing emotional intensity or ease potential whakamā (or embarrassment) rather than as an indicator of disengagement.

Coding was not a linear or once-only activity. Instead, it involved multiple cycles of review in which codes were refined, merged, or redefined as new insights emerged (Braun & Clarke, 2008, 2022). Figure 7 shows an example of this process. An early code labelled 'group connection' was used to capture conversations where the group was establishing connections, for example four participants remembered being in my Year 7 English class. The code 'interviewer connection' was added when the participants established a connection with just the researcher. For example, when one participant noted a relationship to a person that we both, the researcher and participant, knew. Another example was the code 'relational banter', being abbreviated to 'banter', to better describe the interactions between the boys (see Appendix E).

Figure 7

Coding

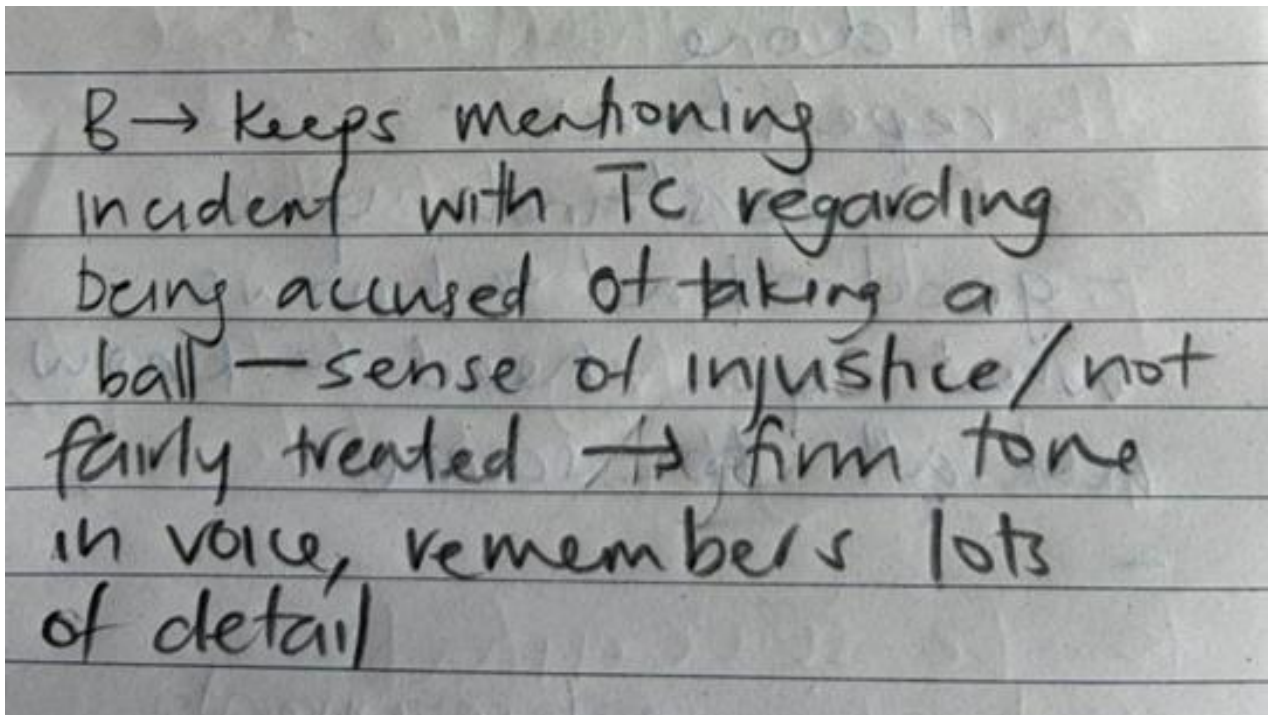


These refinements were recorded in the margins of the talanoa audio transcriptions, creating an audit trail that made visible how interpretations evolved over time.

Field notes and reflective journal entries were coded alongside transcripts to ensure that non-verbal cues, emotional shifts, and contextual factors were integrated into the analysis. For example, in Figure 8 a field note documented that one participant repeatedly returned to an incident in which he had been accused of theft across the eight weeks of talanoa sessions, with his tone consistently conveying hurt and anger. Although the transcript alone captured only the spoken words, coding this alongside the field notes enabled the episode to be interpreted as an experience of injustice rather than simply an expression of anger, ensuring that the emotional context informed analytic decisions and deepened understanding of the participant's lived experience. This ensured that coding extended beyond what was said to include how and in what circumstances meanings were produced, maintaining the relational integrity of the talanoa process within the analytic phase (Fa'avae et al., 2016).

Figure 8

Field Notes



By the end of this stage, a comprehensive coding framework had been developed that reflected both the breadth and depth of participants' experiences (see Appendix F). These codes provided the foundation for subsequent theme development, enabling patterns of meaning to be identified in ways that were grounded in the boys' lived realities and the relational contexts in which their stories were shared.

3.17 Thematic Development

Theme development was the third phase of the reflexive thematic analysis process and involved moving beyond descriptive coding to identify broader patterns of meaning across the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2008, 2022). This phase required interpretive work in which individual codes were examined in relation to one another and grouped together into participant themes that captured shared understandings of success, schooling, and relational experiences (see Figure 9). Drawing on the boys' talanoa narratives, four overarching themes were developed: (1) success as relational, not individual, (2) success as effort, aspiration, and agency, (3) navigating school systems, power, and perceived injustice, and (4) teacher relationships and pedagogy shape engagement and motivation. Figure 9 illustrates how the descriptive codes were organised and mapped into the four overarching themes.

Figure 9
Codes Mapped to Themes

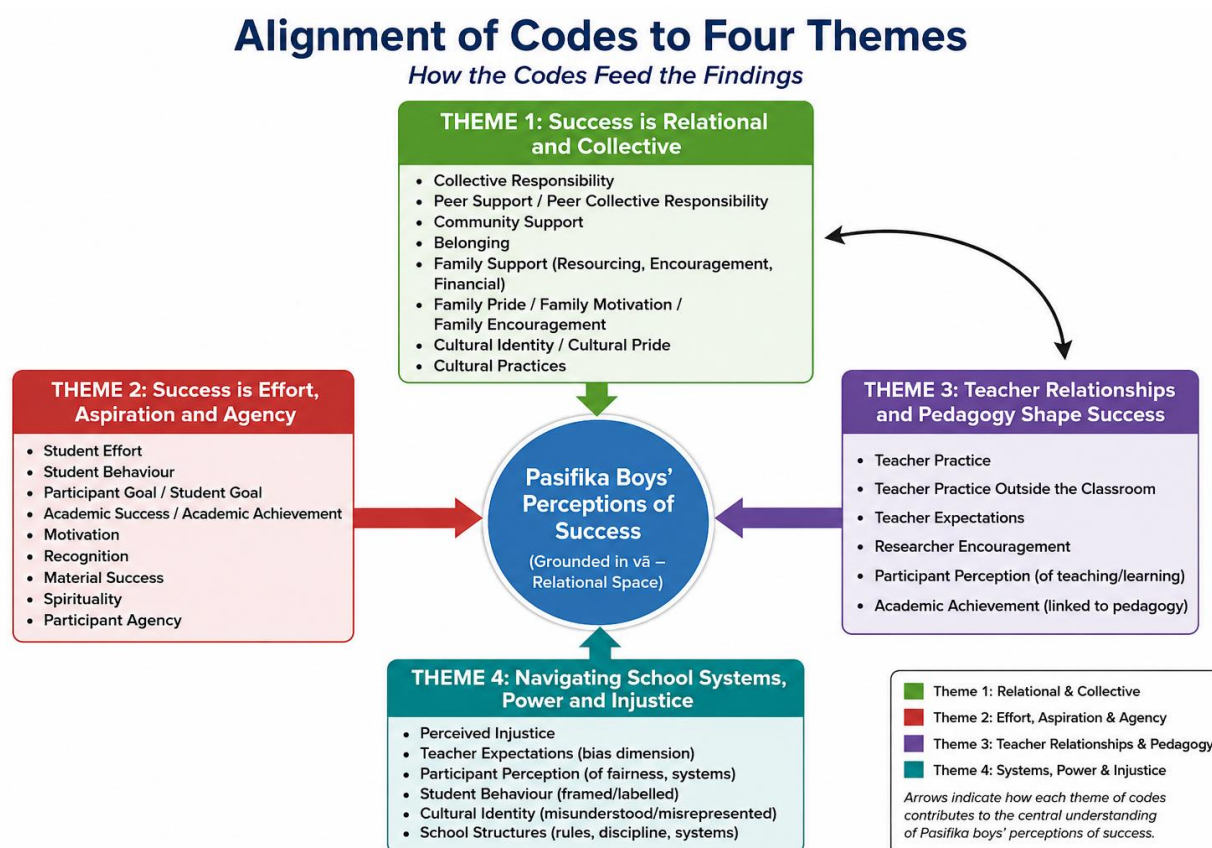


Figure 9 illustrates how the four themes emerged from the coding process and how they relate to one another. While each theme represents a distinct aspect of participants' experiences, they were not experienced in isolation. Relationships with family, peers, and teachers influenced students' motivation and aspirations, while experiences within school systems shaped how they engaged with learning and perceived their opportunities for success. The thematic map therefore reflects the interconnected and relational nature of success described by participants.

Across all four themes, relationships and context emerged as the central organising features of the analysis. Rather than clustering descriptive codes solely by topic, codes were grouped according to how they connected through the boys' social worlds, lived experiences, and interactions within the talanoa sessions. This required moving iteratively between individual stories and broader patterns of meaning to ensure the themes reflected participants' understandings rather than the researcher's assumptions. For example, individual accounts were first considered within their own context before being compared across participants. Patterns such as family guidance, humility, and responsibility emerged across narratives,

while returning to individual stories ensured these themes remained grounded in participants' lived realities. Through this process, the findings demonstrate that Pasifika boys experience success as relational, contextually situated, and shaped through ongoing interactions with family, school, and wider social systems.

3.18 Reflexivity and Bias Checking

To monitor the influence of my positionality on interpretation, reflexive thematic analysis was employed. Reflective journaling was used following each talanoa session to document emotional responses, emerging assumptions, and moments of uncertainty. This practice enabled me to surface how my professional identity and expectations shaped early analytic decisions. For example, when participants described pride in being helpers, I initially interpreted this through a deficit lens, assuming marginalisation. Through reflective journaling and repeated transcript review, I recognised this bias and reinterpreted the role as a source of mana, reflecting trust and contribution. My cultural supervisor confirmed this aligns with Pasifika values of service, also evident in participants' home responsibilities. However, this raised questions about how schools reinforce this identity and its impact on learning. No teacher data were collected to confirm this perception. Participants' accounts suggest that the timing and expectations of helping roles may at times have occurred during teaching and learning time. A concern for both my cultural adviser and me was that this identity appeared to be reinforced by teachers and senior leaders, positioning Pasifika boys primarily as helpers within the school community rather than as learners with equal academic potential. This prompted further analytic questioning about how well-intentioned recognition of service may inadvertently narrow expectations and reproduce constrained role identities.

Field notes and annotations on audio transcripts supported analytic transparency by capturing how codes and themes were refined across successive cycles of analysis. For instance, an initial code labelled connection was used to identify moments when relational links were established within the talanoa group, such as when a participant and I discovered that he lived on a street close to where I had grown up. During later reviews, this code was refined to differentiate between connections formed within the talanoa space and those based on relationships external to the group, such as when a participant referred to my son having coached and managed his school cricket team the previous season. These refinements were documented in analytic memos, providing a clear record of how interpretations evolved and helping to ensure that the findings authentically reflected Pasifika boys' lived realities.

3.19 Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined the methodological approach used to explore how Pasifika boys understand and experience success in their schooling context. The study was philosophically influenced by YPAR, which positioned participants as active contributors to the research process and recognised their voices as central to knowledge construction. Talanoa was used as the primary method of data generation, as it provided a culturally grounded and relational space that supported trust, reciprocity, and meaningful

dialogue.

Ethical considerations were embedded throughout the study, with attention to informed consent, confidentiality, and relational accountability. Data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2022) reflexive thematic analysis, adapted to align with the participatory and relational principles of talanoa. Analysis involved sustained engagement with the data, relational coding, and iterative theme development, ensuring that findings remained grounded in participants' lived experiences.

Together, these approaches formed a culturally responsive and participatory methodology that honoured Pacific ways of knowing and shaped the analytic lens through which the data were interpreted. The following chapter presents the findings of this analysis, outlining the key themes that emerged from participants' talanoa and illustrating how Pasifika boys collectively defined and experienced success within their schooling context.

Chapter Four: Findings

4.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter presents findings that described what success looks and feels like for participants, the factors that enabled and supported their success, and the challenges and barriers that shaped these experiences. Guided by the Pacific methodology of talanoa and philosophically supported by YPAR, the study positioned participants as knowledge holders and agents of change. This ensured that their perspectives directly informed both the interpretation of findings and the areas of action identified for strengthening culturally responsive support within the school.

Data were generated through a series of student talanoa sessions, using eight talanoa transcripts, field notes, and a reflective journal. Together, these multiple sources provided a rich, layered understanding of how success for Pasifika boys is defined, experienced, enacted, and at times constrained within school structures and relationships. This understanding reveals that success is deeply embedded in relational connection, collective identity, and feeling seen, heard, and valued within the school environment. Analysis of the data revealed four interconnected themes that capture the boys' lived realities: (a) success as relational, not individual; (b) success as effort, aspiration, and enacted agency; (c) teacher relationships and pedagogy shape engagement and motivation; (d) navigating school systems, power perceived injustice. This chapter presents each theme in turn, drawing on participants' own words to centre their voices and honour the *vā* established through the talanoa process. In doing so, this chapter offers a strengths-based account of how Pasifika boys define and experience success as a relational and culturally situated phenomenon, shaped through agency, identity, and connections with family, school, and community.

4.2 Success as Relational, not Individual

Pasifika boys understood success as something shaped through relationships rather than achieved in isolation. Participants described success not only in terms of individual outcomes, but through connections with peers, *whānau*, and faith communities that provided support, guidance, and encouragement. Shared experiences and relational spaces within the school were seen as contributing to motivation, a sense of belonging, and the ability to persist. Importantly, these relational experiences began to shape how success was felt, shifting it from something externally recognised to something emotionally and relationally experienced.

Students' thinking reflects a collectivist cultural mindset, in which success is measured by collective responsibility and pride rather than personal status. Participant Five shared: "So you're not alone when you're failing, and when you're succeeding, you're doing it together." Success was not described as an

individual pursuit, but as a collective journey in which achievement and struggle were shared across the family unit. Participant Four elaborated on this by linking success directly to his family, particularly his father: “My dad keeps me going [pause] I look up to him. He carries the family, and he inspires me to be like him, and he carries our last name with pride.” This collectivist orientation is further evidenced in Table 2, which presents a range of participant quotes illustrating how success is understood in terms of collective responsibility and shared family pride rather than individual status. Here, the desire to succeed is not about individual ambition but about honouring family lineage and identity.

Table 2

Participant Quotes: Success as a Collective and Relational Achievement

Participant One	My family, they keep me going
Participant Two	I wanna get an award, make my mum and dad proud
Participant Three	Yeah, I wanna make my family proud too
Participant Four	Making my family proud My dad keeps me going [pause] I look up to him. He carries the family, and he inspires me to be like him, and he carries our last name with pride.
Participant Five	Looking after your family, the ones you love. Being there for them So you're not alone when you're failing, and when you're succeeding, you're doing it together
Participant Six	Family, they support you when times are bad, like keep you going

Family emerged as a central relational foundation by setting expectations, providing guidance, and support that shaped how participants understood schooling and sustained their engagement across academic and extracurricular domains. This pattern is illustrated in Table 3, which presents multiple participant accounts highlighting the influence of family on their motivation, aspirations, and engagement. Participant Three described how his family provided ongoing guidance and expectations around education, explaining that they would “give me lectures, being good at school” reflecting how families reinforced expectations around conduct, effort, and aspiration in the home. Similarly, other participants referred to family expectations as a motivating force, with Participant One noting that he was driven by a desire to “not let my parents down,” highlighting how motivation was grounded in responsibility to family rather than individual achievement.

Table 3*Participant Quotes on the Role of Family in Shaping Student Motivation, Aspirations, and Engagement*

Participant One	So if I'm skipping class for like a specific reason, say I'm skipping math, for example, they'll say, "No, you can't do that. You have to focus on maths." not let my parents down
Participant Two	Work hard and be good in class My dad, he came to New Zealand when he was fourteen and he had a rough childhood and he's still happy all the time and he plays rugby
Participant Three	Give it your all, all the tasks you do My dad helps as well as my nephew. He's one and just really special to me. I wanna look after him give me lectures, being good at school
Participant Four	Tell me to try my best in everything I do My dad he's like a strong man and he helps me out
Participant Five	Tell me to try hard We want you to do well My dad wants me to do well
Participant Six	Homework and all the tasks; give it your all I look up to him. He carries the family and he inspires me to be like him and he carries our last name with pride

Support was also enacted through practical resourcing that enabled consistent participation in sporting and cultural activities. This is illustrated in Table 4, which presents multiple participant accounts describing how families provided practical support to sustain their engagement. As Participant Three explained, "They support me with my sport and culture, they pay my fees." highlighting how families actively structured routines and removed barriers to participation. Together, these accounts show that family support involved not only encouragement but also the active organisation of routines, expectations, and resources that enabled consistent participation in schooling and extracurricular activities. In this way, the family operated as a key relational resource, with participants describing how support such as paying fees, organising routines, and ensuring attendance enabled them to participate consistently in extracurricular activities. As illustrated in Participant Three's account, families played an active role in structuring engagement, which contributed to a sense of belonging through sustained involvement in sport and cultural contexts. Alongside this, participants' descriptions of family expectations, including a desire to "not

let my parents down,” highlight how whānau reinforced standards around behaviour, effort, and commitment. These combined accounts suggest that success was understood not simply as individual achievement, but as something built through consistent effort, reliability, and a sense of responsibility to others.

Table 4

Participant Quotes Showing how Family Support Sustained Student Engagement

Participant One	They make sure I’m not late that I’m on time They give me support. They’re always there no matter what happens
Participant Three	They support me with my sport and culture and pay my fees Take me to sports practice and games
Participant Four	My parents pay my fees Mum she’s overboard, she goes on too much about what I need to do
Participant Five	Remind me to do my homework, study and stuff
Participant Six	They look for a tutor for Polyfest training

Participants described cultural events as relational spaces that strengthened Pasifika identity and nurtured connections between students, their whānau, and the wider Pasifika community. Events such as the Pasifika picnic evening, fiafia night, and prize-giving functioned as key supportive contexts in participants’ experiences of success, strengthening identity, belonging, and connection within the Pasifika community (see Table 5). These shared cultural events enabled Pasifika boys to define success not only in academic terms, but as feeling culturally recognised, emotionally supported, and connected within the school community, thereby strengthening their sense of belonging and well-being. When reflecting on the Pasifika prize-giving evening, Participant Three stated that what made the evening special was “just getting together with everyone,” before explaining, “The people are like your people.” Together, these accounts show how cultural events operated as relational spaces that strengthened Pasifika identity and nurtured relationships through shared experiences of support and connection. These spaces were described as culturally affirming, where shared language, performance, and identity were visible and valued within the school environment. Similarly, other participants emphasised the importance of being surrounded by peers who shared similar cultural backgrounds, with Participant One noting that these events felt different because “everyone understands where you come from.” Participant Two echoed this sense of collective belonging with, “Yeah, we’re in it together.” In addition, participants referred to the presence of whānau and the celebration of cultural performance as reinforcing a sense of pride and recognition that extended beyond the classroom. Together, these accounts show how cultural events

operated as relational and culturally grounded spaces that strengthened Pasifika identity, affirmed belonging, and supported well-being through shared cultural experience.

Table 5

Participant Quotes Showing how Cultural Events Nurtured Pasifika Identity and Relational Connections

Participant One	Felt good. It felt like I had a lot of support around me and people backing me up and that everyone understands where you come from I'm not joining the Polyfest group... cause our numbers are too small compared to other schools and that's embarrassing. It's not like [school name removed]. [School name removed]'s like good as. It was my first time, and I want to go again.
Participant Two	Yeah, we're in it together. I enjoyed it.
Participant Three	Like talking to them. Different people you haven't met and people you know Same culture and that, so it's more meaningful It's basically a celebration of like our success during the year and also like service in our community just getting together with everyone The people are like your people
Participant Four	People showed up for me Seeing all their hard work pay off The careers evening sets us up it gives us an idea of what we want to do I have never been to a fiafia night with no free food, what kind of fiafia night is that?
Participant Five	Being recognised for your efforts I like seeing everyone get an award except for me. It was fun seeing other people win MAPS (Māori and Pasifika Support), it's like all the Polynesian girls are there
Participant Six	Yeah, I definitely felt like belonged, like mainly because people are there to support me. But also I'm not just doing this alone I liked seeing how happy they were when they won fiafia night is socialising with people you don't know, you get to know them and learn more about your culture

	Felt good, felt like I had a lot of support around me and people backing me up
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While cultural events were largely described as affirming and supportive spaces, some participants also highlighted moments where comparisons with other schools shaped their willingness to engage. For example, Participant One explained, “I’m not joining the Polyfest group... cause our numbers are too small compared to other schools and that’s embarrassing. It’s not like [school name removed]. [School name removed]’s like good as.” This comment reflects how perceptions of scale, performance, and reputation influenced participation, with larger or more established groups positioned as benchmarks of success. In this instance, the participant’s reluctance to join was not due to a lack of cultural connection but rather a tension between cultural pride and perceived inadequacy. The feeling of embarrassment suggests that cultural identity, while a source of pride, can also become vulnerable when it is publicly compared or judged against others. This highlights the complexity of cultural events as spaces where pride and belonging are negotiated alongside concerns about representation, status, and collective performance, which in turn can shape students’ confidence and willingness to participate.

As relationships were nurtured through these collective cultural experiences, it also shaped how participants felt success, shifting it from something externally recognised to something emotionally experienced. Participants described success as something that was felt emotionally, emerging through experiences of support, encouragement, and affirmation within shared school events and spaces. Participant Six reflected, “Felt good, felt like I had a lot of support around me and people backing me up,” while Participant Two noted, “Yeah, I enjoyed it.” and Participant One shared, “It was my first time, and I want to go again.”

Brotherhood emerged strongly in the boys’ descriptions of what success looked and felt like at school, particularly through relationships with older Pasifika students who acted as mentors, role models, and cultural anchors. Participant Three spoke warmly of senior students, describing how they supported their learning and development: “He was like my coach last year. He taught me new skills and that stuff we all do. Like a role model,” and “Like at rugby he was always helping me teaching me what I can do in the game and that.” These relationships were not limited to sport or performance but extended into everyday care, with Participant Six stating, “They help me when I need it.” Brotherhood was further strengthened through deliberate relationship-building initiatives supported by the Pasifika Komiti, which encouraged senior students to introduce themselves to whānau, as Participant Four explained: “The Year 13s introducing themselves to our families and that. Getting them to know our parents, so they know that we’ll be under control, looking after our Pasifika boys.” This practice underlines the relational nature of success for participants. It emerges not so much through individual actions, but rather as a concept inextricably linked to relationships, a network of Pasifika brothers that support vā.

In addition, participants described brotherhood as a reciprocal and emotionally significant relationship across year levels, experienced through care and leadership, positioning success as relational rather than individual. Participant One shared “the younger boys look up to them,” followed by the collective affirmation, “We all do.” Several boys connected this sense of brotherhood to their participation in cultural activities such as Fa’ataupati (or the Samoan Slap Dance), with Participant Three describing it as a way of honouring and farewelling senior students: “It’s more like trying to farewell our Year 13s. What they remembered when they first started. Like with the Polyfest and that.” The departure of Year 13 students was experienced with sadness, reinforcing the emotional depth of these bonds. Table 6 shows that brotherhood was a central feature of how the boys described success at school, reflected in their relationships with their peers and older Pasifika students who served as mentors, role models, and cultural anchors. Participants observed that Pasifika and Māori Year 7 students were initially drawn to the Year 13 Pasifika boys for guidance and a sense of belonging, particularly at the beginning of the school year. As Participant Six explained, younger students would “come hang with the Year 13s at the start of the year ‘cause they feel safe with them.” These interactions were observed regularly during lunchtime, with the Year 13 Pasifika boys consistently congregating near the tuck shop, creating a visible and accessible gathering space. Initially, this space was predominantly occupied by Pasifika boys, with participants suggesting that existing relational ties, such as cousins, older friends, or connections through siblings, influenced early participation. However, as the year progressed, this group became more diverse. Participant Six noted that “more Year 7 boys, even Pālangi ones, start joining too,” while Participant Five added that “the older boys look after us,” indicating that the relational space expanded beyond initial cultural and familial connections. This pattern, observed consistently across the year, suggests that what began as a culturally grounded space of safety and belonging evolved into a broader social hub, shaped through ongoing interaction and relationship-building. This highlights how relational spaces grounded in Pasifika identity can extend beyond cultural boundaries while maintaining their role as sites of belonging and connection.

Table 6

Participant Quotes on Brotherhood and Relational Support in School Success

Participant One	the younger boys look up to them [collective affirmation] We all do we should make a period for us Pasifika boys to get together,
Participant Two	Sad [in response to being asked how he feels about the Year 13s leaving] as they help me when I need it You’re failing, and when you’re succeeding, you’re doing it together
Participant Three	He had a really good conversation with me about what I wanted to do after the Pasifika Careers evening and what I enjoyed about it

	The Fa'ataupati was more like trying to farewell our Year 13s. What they remembered when they first started. He was like my coach last year, he taught me new skills and that stuff we all do. Like a role model Like at rugby he was always helping me teaching me what I can do in the game and that. make a classroom like 3 times a week we'd just get together and work for a bit
Participant Four	I would look up to the Year 13s, when they have been organising events for us, like the picnic early this year. You're not alone with friends The Year 13s introducing themselves to our families and that. Getting them to know our parents, so they know that we'll be under control, looking after our Pasifika boys. We could do our homework together and then go out and play rugby.
Participant Five	We will all miss them. They help us and we can go to them for stuff Friends support you like if you do something bad. So you're not alone The older look after us
Participant Six	The younger boys will miss them [Year 13s]; we all will. They help me when I need it Come hang with the Year 13s at the start of the year 'cause they feel safe with them. Then later more Year 7s join even the Pālangi ones

Furthermore, participants viewed their peers as a central source of support for their own success, which was not articulated in isolation but understood through relationships with others and the collective encouragement that friendship provided. Participants described how their friends acted as emotional and behavioural anchors, with Participant Five explaining that “Friends support you, like if you do something bad,” and adding, “So you’re not alone.” This sense of togetherness was further reflected in Participant Two’s comment that “you’re failing, and when you’re succeeding, you’re doing it together,” illustrating that both struggle and achievement were experienced collectively rather than individually. Through talanoa discussions, participants moved beyond describing these relationships to collectively identifying peer support as a key factor influencing their engagement and well-being, recognising both its protective role and its potential to shape behaviour. This shared understanding informed their discussions about how such support could be strengthened within the school context. For example, Participant One proposed a school-based initiative to formalise these peer connections, suggesting that “we should make a period for

us Pasifika boys to get together,” with Participant Three adding we could “make a classroom,” where “like three times a week we’d just get together and work for a bit.” Participant Four added, “We could do our homework together and then go out and play rugby.” While the study did not follow a formal action research cycle, this discussion during the talanoa sessions reflects the philosophical influence of YPAR, as participants engaged in collective sense-making and contributed ideas for change grounded in their lived experiences. In this way, peer relationships were not only described as important but were actively analysed and used as a basis for proposing an initiative to enhance support and belonging, reinforcing success as something cultivated through structured, relational, and collective effort.

Participants’ accounts described faith and their relationship with God as an important foundation for success. In Pacific worldviews, the concept of *vā* refers to the sacred relational space that connects people, communities, and the spiritual world, with God understood as the ultimate unifying force that holds these relationships together. Reflecting this understanding, participants frequently referred to God when discussing what contributed to their success and how they understood their accomplishments. Rather than viewing success as something achieved solely through individual effort, participants often described their abilities and achievements as gifts received from God. Participant Two referred simply to “the man above” as being important to his success, while Participant Five explained, “Like He is always there for you. Just believe in Him.” These comments suggest that participants viewed their relationship with God as a source of support, guidance, and reassurance. Participant One similarly emphasised the importance of faith, encouraging others to “find that connection with God” and stating that “cause without God, nothing is possible.” Participants also described faith as providing purpose and direction. As Participant One explained, “God gives you like an end goal... some people might make \$1000 and then have no more goals, but if you believe in Christ, your goal after that is to make yourself a better person or give more to Christ.” This perspective positioned success as an ongoing process rather than a final destination, with achievement linked to continual self-improvement and personal growth. Participants also spoke about acknowledging God through their achievements. As Participant One explained, “we thank God for our gifts by being successful.” Success was therefore described not only in terms of achieving goals but also as a way of acknowledging and honouring God through effort, character, and the use of one’s abilities. Across the talanoa sessions, faith emerged as a recurring influence on how participants understood success, providing a sense of purpose, direction, and meaning in their lives.

4.3 Success as Effort, Aspiration, and Enacted Agency

Success was described by participants as something actively worked towards rather than passively achieved. Within this theme, success was understood as shaped through effort, aspiration, and enacted agency, and guided by family expectations, cultural values, and personal goals. A summary of participant quotes associated with each sub-theme is presented in Table 7, illustrating how effort, aspiration, and enacted agency are shaped by family expectations, cultural values, and personal goals. Participants

positioned themselves as having responsibility for their progress while recognising that their motivation and direction were relationally informed by the people and expectations around them.

Table 7

Participant Quotes Showing how Effort, Aspiration, and Agency Were Shaped by Family, Culture, and Personal Goals

Participant	Effort	Aspiration	Enacted Agency
One	I worked on my Social Studies assessment and I got Excellence on it, I did Work hard Looking after my little sister Mopping Emptying the dishwasher vacuuming, cleaning the house, washing the dishes, sweep the deck	Being rich I look up to Sean Johnson - very well respected among the whole of League. A good talker as well. Humble and calm, a good leader, kind as well [referring to Sean Johnson] winning stuff	We should vote for the 2026 Pasifika Leader as well Miss. Maybe 3 times a week, we could work together for a bit and then just go outside and play, if we finish on time.
Two	Being good at school Not being naughty Washing the dishes, cleaning the car Just behave in class	I wanna get an award [at Pasifika prize giving] Being humble is important Yeah I wanna get good grades I wanna go to uni. But I don't want to pay off debt Getting prizes Going up on stage	Can I go to university? Miss, Can we visit AUT? Yeah just all the Poly boys Miss, just for one period a day. family helps you to stay grounded, like not too cocky
Three	Well behaved Having good manners I got excellence on it [English assessment] Chores, vacuuming, cleaning the house	Like smart as well	I don't think I'm smart enough for a scholarship. Don't have an ego Ah Miss, I'm sure you can put in a good word

Four	Getting everything done you need to Being good at school, not being naughty Helping around with your family, just like getting everything done that you need to do Mowing the lawns	Can I get an award for English, Miss? I wanna get a certificate on stage to make my family proud	We could do a survey. I'll tell you what we could ask, what you're interested in because it gives us ideas
Five	I did my schoolwork For year 7 English the whole thing was NA [non achieve] NA, NA. When I look back now-shame Give it your all. All the tasks you do, homework, and tests. All of that Sweep the deck, do the vacuum	Having good grades I wanna be a builder How can I become the boss? Are you going to go for Poly Leader? Yeah when we're in year 13 maybe Vote for me for Poly Leader. I'll be the best Poly leader	Go to the city campus and look at our futures and like what we want to do in the future looking after your family... the ones you love. Being there for them at their lowest and showcasing your love towards them
Six	Give it your all. It's really important for life We went singing at William Sanders Retirement Village as a service to the community Dishes, vacuuming, the lawns, looking after my little brother	I got motivated to get a blue card with KFC Making your school proud Representing my country well. My country is the Cook Islands Be successful, have a good family and be an All Black or in the NRL	Make a classroom [for us Poly boys]

Participants described effort through the everyday actions and responsibilities they carried out across school and home contexts. In Table 7, the column labeled "Effort" presents participant quotes that illustrate how these practices were enacted in their daily lives, including completing schoolwork, meeting expectations, and managing responsibilities across at home, within their community and at school. For example, Participant Five described effort as "I did my schoolwork," while Participant Four referred to "getting everything done that you need to," and Participant One explained it as "working well," highlighting how effort was embedded in routine task completion. Within this theme, effort is therefore understood not simply as completing tasks, but as a sustained commitment to responsibility and self-management across school and home contexts.

Participants also positioned effort in strongly behavioural terms. When Participant Four described effort as "being good at school," this was clarified as "not being naughty," indicating that being good was understood less in relation to academic achievement and more as behavioural compliance within classroom spaces. This framing was reinforced by comments from Participant Three who added "well behaved" and Participant Two elaborated with "just behave in class", suggesting that effort was often measured through adherence to expected conduct rather than learning outcomes alone. This interpretation suggests that effort was not solely understood as a reflection of individual motivation or agency but was also constructed through whānau and school-based expectations of behaviour, where being good was equated with compliance rather than academic engagement. In this way, participants' understandings of effort in part reflected externally defined expectations of behaviour and responsibility.

Effort also meant sustained commitment, captured in the instruction from his parents to Participant Five to "give it your all. All the tasks you do, homework, tests. All of that," and in accounts of academic perseverance, from Participant Three, "I had to finish my assessment. [Social Studies] I got Excellence on it." At the same time, participants recognised effort through contrast, with Participant Five recalling earlier setbacks such as, "For English [Year 7] the whole thing was NA [not achieved] NA, NA, NA. When I look back on it now – shame," positioning effort as something learned over time. However, participants' accounts also suggest that effort was not always clearly distinguished from achievement, with references to outcomes such as Excellence or Not Achieved indicating that effort was sometimes understood through academic results rather than the process of sustained exertion.

Importantly, this understanding extended beyond school work into family life, where effort was enacted through daily chores and responsibilities. Tasks described by Participant One, such as "vacuuming, cleaning the house, washing the dishes," and "sweep the deck," were framed as expected contributions within the home, while Participant Six referred to responsibilities including "dishes, the vacuuming, the washing, the lawn, looking after my little brother." These accounts reinforce that effort was not limited to academic achievement but also involved demonstrating reliability, service, and commitment to their families. In this way, participants' understandings of effort appear to be shaped less by Western notions of

cognitive effort and more by culturally grounded expectations of responsibility, contribution, and accountability to others. Effort can therefore be understood as a relational construct, where values of service, compliance, and fulfilment of obligations within both school and home contexts influenced how effort was enacted and recognised, at times privileging relational responsibility over individual academic exertion.

Aspiration refers to the hopes, goals, and future-focused motivations that participants held about who they wanted to become and how they wished to be seen by others. In Table 7 the boys articulated their aspirations in both personal and relational terms, linking success not only to achievement but to moral direction, recognition, and contribution. Participant One described success as “winning stuff... winning your life, not doing bad things,” signaling that aspiration included staying on a positive pathway as much as gaining rewards. Participant Six expressed a desire to honour the institutions and people around them, with “making your school proud” and “representing my country well. My country is the Cook Islands,” reflecting how achievement was connected to identity. Career and educational ambitions were also prominent, with Participant Five stating “I wanna be a builder,” and Participant Two sharing “I wanna go to uni. But I don’t want to pay off debt,” illustrating both practical and aspirational thinking about the future.

Recognition featured strongly in how the boys’ imagined success, captured in this question by Participant Four “Can I get an award for English, Miss?” and the statement “I wanna get an award and make mum and dad proud,” from Participant Three alongside references to “getting prizes. Going up on stage.” from Participant Two. For Participant One, aspiration extended to material success, summarised simply as “being rich.” However, this comment was made in the context of not attending the Year 10 camp due to cost, where the same Participant noted that “all the white boys were going, not the brown ones.” In this way, the aspiration to “be rich” can be understood not solely as a reflection of Western individualism or material gain, but as a response to observed inequities in access and opportunity. Rather than representing a purely individual goal, this aspiration reflects an awareness of the structural and financial barriers that shaped participation, and a desire to overcome these limitations in the future. As such, participants’ visions of success blended personal advancement with relational and cultural considerations, including family pride, representation, and the ability to access opportunities that were not always equally available.

Within this theme, enacted agency is understood as participants’ capacity to make choices, exercise responsibility, and act in ways that align with their values and the expectations of their families and communities, rather than being based on individual autonomy alone. In Table 7 the boys described enacted agency as relational and guided, rather than individually driven, with Participant Two noting that “family helps you to stay grounded, like not too cocky,” and Participant Three adding, “don’t have an ego.” Enacted agency was closely connected to care for others, as expressed by Participant Five in the belief that success involves “looking after your family... the ones you love. Being there for them at their lowest

and showcasing your love towards them.” Parental influence was also evident in how choices were negotiated, with Participant Four explaining, “So if I’m like skipping class for a specific reason... they’ll say no you can’t do that. You have to focus on maths,” and confirming that “there are subjects that are important to my parents.” At the same time, Participant Three demonstrated his initiative within school systems, illustrated by the comment, “Ah Miss, I’m sure you can put in a good word,” reflecting confidence to advocate for himself. When asked about qualities of successful people, Participant Six identified being “smart,” “calm,” “humble,” and able to “stay grounded,” highlighting that agency, for these Pasifika boys, was enacted through qualities shaped by their faith, family, community and cultural values.

4.4 Teacher Relationships and Pedagogy Shape Engagement and Motivation

This section shows how teacher practice that nurtured strong relationships in and outside the classroom played a pivotal role in shaping students’ engagement, learning, and sense of belonging. Teachers were valued not only for what they taught, but for how they connected with students, their whānau, and the wider Pasifika community. Participants highlighted specific classroom examples that they believed supported their learning.

Teachers who were approachable and explicit in their support were highly valued, as Participant Two explained, “He lets you know that if you need help you can ask him,” while Participant Four described a teacher who was “straightforward, right on to it and then, if you need to learn something, he’ll go straight to it.” Participant One emphasised the importance of clarity in instruction, asking teachers to “explain more and like walk through the steps,” adding “go step by step.” This preference for direct, scaffolded teaching reflects how relational trust enabled through direct instruction supported students to seek help without fear of judgement, improving their confidence in the subject and willingness to engage in learning. Importantly, participants also contrasted supportive and restorative disciplinary approaches with more punitive responses. As Participant Five reflected, “If you do something wrong he’s not going to punish you, he’s gonna give some advice on how not to do it again. Whereas Miss it’s like, go to the Dean’s room.” Together, these examples illustrate how Pasifika boys experienced learning as most effective in classrooms where teachers were accessible, proactive, and restorative in their pedagogical and relational practice, creating relationally safe environments that strengthened engagement, motivation, and a sense of belonging.

Participants consistently emphasised the importance of repetition as a key strategy that supported their understanding and confidence in the classroom, particularly when it was linked back to prior learning. Participant Five explained that learning was most effective “if a teacher explains stuff like over and over and everyone gets it and not like writing random stuff on the board and expect us to know it,” demonstrating a preference for structured, revisited explanations rather than one-off instruction. In

contrast, frustration was expressed toward teaching approaches that assumed immediate understanding, with Participant Five stating bluntly, “He sucks. He expects us to know on the first try.” Participant Six described the challenge of disconnected learning, noting, “The stuff we learn in week one and then when we get to week nine he expects us to like still remember everything.” When the researcher clarified, “Ok, so you need repetition?” the Participant affirmed, “Yeah that’s what it’s called.” Together, these comments illustrate that repetition, particularly when it revisits and connects to earlier learning, was not experienced as tedious or remedial, but as an essential mechanism through which Pasifika boys consolidated learning, built confidence, and felt supported to succeed.

Participants identified competition and tangible rewards as powerful drivers of extrinsic motivation that supported their engagement in learning. Participant Six shared candidly, “Miss I got motivated with a blue card and KFC.” The blue card signified that the student had exceeded behavioural and effort expectations across six of his nine teachers. This account illustrates how formal recognition and small incentives encouraged effort, participation and a positive change in behaviour. When reflecting on classroom strategies that made learning enjoyable, students contrasted passive instruction with interactive approaches. In response to the researcher’s prompt about effective strategies teachers used, Participant Six explained that activities such as “Kahoot or something like a board game” were motivating, recalling, “We made board games last year for Social Studies.” Participant One expanded on this, noting, “Yeah it got the stuff out of us and we used our creativity.” These examples suggest that competitive, game-based learning activities, such as student-created board games, rather than gamification found in online learning applications such as Duolingo, increased motivation through rewards and recognition. These activities created opportunities for active participation, creativity, and shared enjoyment, reinforcing the value of extrinsic motivators when embedded within interactive and relational pedagogical practices to sustain engagement for Pasifika boys.

Participants also spoke about the impact of negative labeling and teacher expectations on their motivation and engagement in learning. These experiences highlight how some teachers’ assumptions appeared to shape classroom relationships and learning outcomes. In one exchange, the researcher asked, “Do you do the work in his class?” to which Participant Three replied, “Yes,” but when asked about other classes, responded, “Not as much.” When questioned about consequences, Participant Three explained that not completing work resulted in “Detention, and a cross,” and when asked whether the teacher’s expectations played a role, Participant Three and Six responded in unison, “Yeah.” Participant Two shared, “I forgot my homework and he gave me a cross,” while Participant Three added, “In class he’ll whip you if you do something wrong,” using metaphorical language to describe being firmly verbally reprimanded rather than physically punished. Together, these accounts illustrate how disciplinary responses were closely tied to perceptions of compliance and adherence to classroom expectations. The boys also reflected on how teacher expectations were shaped by prior behaviour, Participant Five stating, “It just depends on the teacher. It depends on how you act towards a teacher, I can see how a teacher will pick on you if you’re

like bad to them. I'm pretty sure some teachers in Year 7 don't really like me," and Participant Two adding, "Sometimes teachers are like if you have a bad first lesson with them they'll keep it with them for the rest of the year and say oh yeah he's a bad kid and even if he changes, she'll give you a reputation for the rest of the year." This was reinforced by Participants Two and Four agreeing, "Yeah it depends on how you behave." Participants further expressed that expectations were not evenly distributed, with Participant Five reflecting, "I feel that they expect me like to get a not achieve or an achieve. But then other boys they're like expect them to get like excellence and merits." Through talanoa discussions, participants collectively identified these patterns of low expectations and negative labelling, creating space to critically reflect on how such assumptions shaped their experiences of schooling. While these perceptions were described as persistent and difficult to shift, the study's philosophical alignment with YPAR supported a process in which participants were able to name and examine these inequities, and contribute ideas aimed at strengthening support and expectations for Pasifika boys.

Relationships that enabled teachers to genuinely know students as both learners and people were consistently identified by participants as central to building trust and engagement. Participants described how meaningful connections were formed when teachers took time to understand students' lives beyond academic performance, including their interests, families, and cultural identities. As Participant Six reflected, "I think it's about forming a connection with your students and understanding them." This emphasis on connection was reinforced through accounts of teacher presence beyond the classroom, which participants interpreted as a clear signal of care and relational commitment. Attendance at cultural and sporting events was frequently mentioned as a powerful form of affirmation, demonstrating that teachers valued students as whole people rather than solely as learners within the classroom. For example, Participant Two highlighted one teacher's regular attendance at sporting events, stating that "Miss [name removed] always goes to those things... first fifteen rugby games." Similarly, Participant Three referred to seeing teachers across multiple school contexts, asking, "Is that the one with the [colour removed] hair?" before confirming, "Yeah, I've seen her and her friend [also a teacher at the school] at the rugby games and fiafia night." Participant Four added, "Yeah, I saw the principal and sir at the Pasifika prize giving," indicating that teacher engagement extended across a range of important cultural and school events. These repeated examples suggest that such visible acts of participation were not isolated, but part of a broader pattern of relational practice that strengthened connections and increased students' willingness to engage in learning. The significance of these relational practices was further illuminated through a moment I experienced at the Pasifika prize giving, when a parent asked, "Did you bring your family?" After I queried why this question had been asked, Participant Two explained, "We always bring our families to our events. It's like to get to know you, we've gotta know your background, your village, where you're from." This response highlights how relationships in Pasifika contexts extend beyond the classroom to encompass family, identity, and belonging, reinforcing that knowing students as whole people is foundational to nurturing and supporting their success. Collectively, these experiences illustrate how relational connections, whether through teaching, co-curricular involvement, or

whakawhanaungatanga (fostering connections and relationships) with whānau, shaped engagement and willingness to participate, reinforcing the broader finding that relationships are foundational to trust, motivation, and meaningful involvement in learning and research contexts.

4.5 Navigating School Systems, Power, and Perceived Injustice

This theme examines how Pasifika boys navigated school and wider social systems shaped by power, race, and perceived injustice. Participants described how everyday interactions were often filtered through racialised assumptions that influenced discipline, belonging, and expectations. Collectively, the findings highlight how navigating schooling involved managing both learning and the ongoing impact of racism and misrecognition.

Race-based interactions with peers left them feeling disrespected and misunderstood. Several boys described how everyday disciplinary moments were filtered through a racialised lens, with Participant One stating, “When we do something wrong, they [peers] say it’s because I’m Poly?’ ... I feel like it’s racist.” This comment highlights how Pasifika boys felt their actions were more closely monitored and interpreted through racial stereotypes rather than judged on their own terms. Participant Four shared, “I get blamed for having gout Miss, by the kids in my class,” explaining that this was, “Cause I’m Poly!” Highlighting how health stereotypes were racialised and normalised in peer interactions. This pattern is further illustrated in Table 8. Such experiences positioned Pasifika boys as other, reinforcing deficit assumptions and shaping how they understood their place within the school community. These accounts expose how social myths and stereotypes were normalised in everyday interactions and embedded into interactions at school. While some experiences of racialisation were immediately recognised by participants as unfair and harmful, others were more ambiguous, requiring the boys to actively interpret and question the power dynamics embedded in everyday peer interactions. For example, in a subsequent talanoa session, Participant Four expressed uncertainty around the use of racialised language within the school, asking, “White people saying the n-word, is that racist?” The study’s philosophical alignment with YPAR, enacted through talanoa, supported a dialogic space in which participants could question and collectively interpret this experience and develop shared understandings through discussion and reflection. This process of sense-making highlights how racism could be embedded and negotiated within ordinary school interactions, rather than occurring only through isolated or extreme incidents.

Table 8
Racialised Stereotyping in Peer Interactions: Participant Quotes of Disrespect and Misinterpretation

Participant Two	She called me a thief. I’m not a thief. I found the ball. I told her. She didn’t believe me. We’re the group that get asked to help”
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	When we do something wrong, they [peers] say it's because I'm Poly. I feel like it's racist. When white people do stuff like that they don't get told off, if we do the exact same thing we get told off. I feel like its racist.
Participant Three	our whole Year 9... all of a sudden they started saying they were Poly even though they weren't Poly they were Pālangi. It was disrespectful because some of my family went through that. They explained like parts of it, but not the full understanding. They just understand half of it
Participant Four	I get blamed for having gout Miss, because I'm Poly. All Samoans and Tongans have gout so they just assume you have gout too. White people saying the N word? Is that racist? [name removed] does
Participant One	Yeah, [name removed] says it as a joke (referring to the comment above) Miss, he's not going to pay for it. He's got darker skin than us I get blamed for having gout, too Miss.
Participant Five	He looks like a thief, Miss "Most of my family, or my dad's side, all from the Cook Islands... and I don't think you have to go very far back... it was like they said it was the worst thing. It was like police banging down doors every day. I had a few Uncles that got killed by the police
Participant Six	Miss, so my dad's like really dark and then my mum and sister are like white. We went to this hotel in Taupō, and the receptionist said, she slipped her [Mum] a note saying "Are you OK?" That's racist. We're the ones that the teachers ask to set up the chairs and tables in the auditorium for school events

The emotional impact of racial stereotyping was further intensified when participants encountered superficial engagement with Pasifika histories within school learning contexts, highlighting how power

operates through whose histories are understood and how they are interpreted. After attending a presentation about the Dawn Raids, Participant Three recounted how “our whole Year 9... all of a sudden they started saying they were Poly even though they weren’t Poly they were Pālangi,” describing this as “disrespectful because some of my family went through that.” When asked whether peers understood the historical context, he added, “They explained like parts of it, but not the full understanding. They just understand half of it.” These experiences suggest that, in some peer interactions, Pasifika histories were interpreted in ways that did not reflect participants’ lived realities, with students describing instances where these representations were experienced as inaccurate or disrespectful.

Pasifika participants also applied ethnic assumptions to their own peers in school, identifying different shades of brown within the group and linking these distinctions to behavioural expectations. This intra-group dynamic, often referred to as colourism, involves the social valuing of lighter skin tones over darker ones within the same racial or ethnic community (Amd, 2024; Hunter, 2007). This was illustrated when Participant One observed, “Miss, he’s not going to pay for it,” referring to a dark-coloured Tongan boy waiting at the tuck shop. When asked why this assumption was made, Participant One responded plainly, “He’s got darker skin than us.” Similar assumptions were evident when Participant Five commented, “He looks like a thief, Miss,” in response to a group member describing being falsely accused of taking another student’s ball. These comments suggest that assumptions linked to skin tone influenced how peers were perceived, with darker skin more often associated with suspicion or mistrust in everyday interactions among Pasifika students. These examples not only highlight how racialised assumptions operated within peer interactions but also suggest that participants were, at times, both recipients and contributors to such dynamics. Through talanoa discussions, shaped by the study’s philosophical alignment with YPAR, participants were provided with opportunities to reflect on their own language and assumptions in dialogue with others. In this process, some comments were questioned and unpacked collectively, revealing how internalised stereotypes could be reproduced within their own peer group. This reflexive space enabled participants to begin recognising their role in perpetuating the same forms of judgement and bias that they themselves experienced, highlighting the complexity of navigating identity, belonging, and power within school contexts.

This positioning echoed other racialised and colour-based assumptions described by participants, where perceptions of reliability, trust, and suitability for certain roles were linked to appearance and ethnicity rather than individual ability. Participant Six described a shared perception that Pasifika boys were often viewed as the helpers by the school’s teaching community, with Participant Six noting, “We’re the ones that the teachers ask to set up the chairs and tables in the auditorium for school events.” This role, while spoken about with a sense of pride and contribution to the school community, shaped their belief that they were recognised mainly for their reliability and willingness to assist with practical tasks. While this role was spoken about with a sense of pride and contribution to the school community, participants also described how it shaped their understanding of how they were viewed and valued within the school. Participant Two

confirming “We’re the group that get asked to help.” These everyday expectations, although not experienced as explicitly negative, influenced how Pasifika boys interpreted their place within the school community and the types of roles and contributions that were most readily associated with them.

Navigating perceived injustice extended beyond the school gates for participants, with several boys drawing on family histories and lived experiences of racism in wider society that they encountered. Participant Five reflected on the intergenerational impact of state power on his family, during the Dawn Raids stating, “Most of my family, or my dad’s side, all from the Cook Islands... and I don’t think you have to go very far back... it was like they said it was the worst thing. It was like police banging down doors every day. I had a few uncles that got killed by the police.” This account illustrates how historical and systemic injustices were not abstract concepts, but deeply personal family narratives that continued to shape family memory and identity. For this participant, injustice was embedded in whakapapa (or genealogy, lineage, and descent) and family storytelling, influencing how power was understood and experienced. These understandings extended into school life, shaping how participants interpreted authority, responded to disciplinary situations, and navigated relationships with teachers and peers. In this way, broader experiences of injustice could inform how participants engaged with school structures, contributing to feelings of mistrust, heightened awareness of power dynamics, and sensitivity to perceived unfairness within everyday school interactions.

Participants also shared experiences of racialised assumptions in public spaces that were more overt and experienced as distressing. Participant Six recounted an incident involving his family, explaining, “Miss so my dad’s like really dark and then my mum and sister are like white, so we went to this hotel in Taupō and the receptionist said, she slipped her [Mum] a note saying ‘Are you ok?’” This interaction was interpreted as an assumption of risk or harm based solely on skin colour, positioning the participant’s father as a potential threat and reinforcing harmful racial stereotypes. The participant described the incident as upsetting, particularly as it caused visible distress within the family, with his mother becoming angry at the receptionist. Experiences such as this extended beyond the immediate moment, shaping how participants made sense of racialised assumptions and their place within wider society. These understandings carried into school contexts, influencing how participants interpreted peer interactions, responded to moments of judgement or stereotyping, and navigated their sense of belonging within the school environment. In this way, experiences of racism beyond school contributed to heightened awareness of how they and their families were perceived, shaping how they engaged with others and responded to similar dynamics within everyday school life.

4.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the findings of the study, drawing on talanoa with Pasifika secondary-school boys to explore how they experience and define success within their schooling context. Through reflexive thematic analysis, four interconnected themes were identified, collectively demonstrating that success is

relational, culturally grounded, and shaped through interaction with school systems and wider social contexts.

Across the findings, participants consistently positioned success as something developed in relation to others, rather than as an individual outcome. Their accounts highlighted the influence of family expectations, peer relationships, and cultural values in shaping motivation, behaviour, and aspirations. Success was described as enacted through everyday practices, including effort, responsibility, and contribution across school and home contexts, while also reflecting broader aspirations connected to future opportunities and collective well-being.

The findings also emphasised the significance of teacher relationships and pedagogical approaches in shaping engagement, with participants describing how recognition, support, and connection influenced their willingness to participate and achieve. At the same time, participants demonstrated an increasing awareness of how power, expectations, and racialised assumptions operated within school and society, shaping their experiences of belonging and opportunity.

Taken together, these findings highlight the complexity of Pasifika boys' schooling experiences and the importance of relational, culturally responsive approaches. The following discussion chapter builds on these insights by interpreting the findings in relation to existing literature and exploring their implications for teaching practice and school leaders.

Chapter Five: Discussion

5.1 Chapter Introduction

The findings presented in Chapter Four shared Pasifika boys' perspectives on success, including the factors that supported and constrained their experiences within the school context. The findings revealed four interrelated themes that emerged from the data, success as relational rather than individual; success as shaped through effort, aspiration, and enacted agency; the influence of teacher relationships and pedagogy on engagement and motivation; and the ways Pasifika boys navigate school systems, power, and perceived injustice. Drawing on participants' voices and existing literature, this chapter discusses the meaning and significance of the findings to answer the research question: How do Pasifika boys define and experience success within an Aotearoa New Zealand secondary school? In addition, it considers how the findings of this study may inform both current and future pedagogy and leadership practices within schools.

Across the themes discussed in this chapter, *vā* provides a useful interpretive lens for understanding how participants experienced success. Rather than viewing success as an individual outcome, participants consistently described success as emerging through relationships with family, peers, teachers, and the wider Pasifika community. Through these relational spaces, participants developed a sense of belonging, responsibility, identity, and purpose, suggesting that success was experienced through the maintenance and strengthening of *vā*. These findings also suggest that well-being was closely connected to the quality of students' relationships and their sense of belonging, consistent with holistic Pacific understandings of well-being that emphasise the interconnected nature of family, culture, spirituality, and social relationships (PASS, n.d.).

While *vā* provides a framework for understanding the relational nature of success, ERI offers a complementary lens for interpreting how participants experienced affirmation, belonging, identity exploration, and perceptions of how Pacific identities were viewed within the school environment. Together, these help explain how relationships and identity shaped participants' understandings and experiences of success.

The chapter is organised into two sections. The first examines experiences of success, highlighting how success is constructed through relationships, effort, aspiration, and agency. The second considers the influence of school culture, including peer and teacher interactions, educational context and broader ethnic expectations that shape how success is experienced.

5.2 Experiences of Success

This theme highlights that Pasifika boys experienced success through culturally grounded relationships. Success was not understood as an individual outcome, but as something embedded within relationships with each other, their family, āiga potopoto, (or extended family), Pasifika community and teachers. These relational foundations were closely intertwined with students' efforts, aspirations, and sense of agency, where doing well at school was connected to fulfilling family expectations, contributing to collective well-being, and maintaining cultural identity. Cultural events, such as Pasifika prize giving, further provided contexts where identity, belonging, and achievement were affirmed together. At the same time, success was shaped through sustained effort across both school and home, reflecting Pasifika values of service, reciprocity, and responsibility. Aspirations were similarly relational, with students expressing goals that honoured their families and communities rather than solely individual advancement. These findings suggest that Pasifika boys experienced success as relational, effort-driven where achievement was connected to identity, responsibility, and collective purpose.

5.2.1 Success as Relational

So you're not alone when you're failing, and when you're succeeding, you're doing it together.

The findings indicate that participants viewed academic success through a collectivist lens, understanding achievement as something shared with and shaped by family and community rather than as an individual accomplishment. Consistent with Laban's (2024) study, participants described success as inherently relational, reflecting the central role of family and social networks in supporting educational achievement (Chu et al., 2013). Cunningham et al. (2022) highlight the importance of parental aspirations and the messages Pacific families communicate about education, while Averill et al. (2020) argue that success is often understood as reflecting not only on the individual but also on the wider family unit. This was evident in participants' desire to make their families proud, their acknowledge of support and guidance from family members, and in their recognition that their actions carried the family name and reputation.

Family support functioned as a key relational resource, with parents providing routines, expectations, encouragement, and practical guidance that supported participation in both academic and extracurricular aspects of school life. These findings align with the Ministry of Education's (2018) Tapasā framework, which emphasises the importance of family and community relationships in supporting Pasifika learners. The significance participants placed on these relationships also suggests that success and well-being were closely interconnected. This reflects Pacific understandings of well-being, which emphasise the interconnected nature of relational, cultural, spiritual, and physical dimensions of life (PASS, n.d.), as well as research highlighting the importance of belonging and supportive relationships for young people's well-being and educational engagement (Bealing, 2021). Through emotional, cultural, and practical support, family and community networks strengthened participants' resilience, sense of belonging, and engagement in learning.

Beyond the home, cultural events such as Pasifika prize giving and fiafia night functioned as important relational events that strengthened cultural identity and fostered a sense of belonging. At these events, participants experienced cultural recognition and emotional support that appeared to bridge their home, community, and school lives. These findings align with Siope's (2011) emphasis on the importance of integrative cultural events that strengthen connections between students, families, and communities. Similarly, Smaill et al. (2024) and Bills et al. (2022) argue that affirming the languages, cultures, and identities of Māori and Pasifika learners enables students to draw on their cultural strengths and social capital, supporting engagement and achievement. Rather than existing as peripheral celebrations, these events appeared to function as culturally affirming spaces where participants experienced their identities as visible, valued, and connected to their educational success. The significance of these experiences extended beyond achievement alone, as the affirmation, belonging, and cultural pride fostered within these spaces appeared to strengthen students' well-being by reinforcing connections between home, school, and community.

Viewed through the ERI lens, the significance of these cultural events extends beyond participation and enjoyment. Chavous et al. (2003) and Rivas-Drake et al. (2014) argue that affirmation and belonging are important dimensions of ERI associated with stronger engagement, self-efficacy, and educational outcomes for minoritised youth. While this work was undertaken primarily in the United States, the present findings suggest similar processes may operate for Pasifika boys in Aotearoa New Zealand. Participants' descriptions of cultural pride, belonging, and recognition indicate that ERI was closely intertwined with their experiences of success. Positive cultural affirmation within school contexts appeared to strengthen students' sense of who they were, reinforce connections to family and community, and provide a stronger foundation for engagement and achievement (Chavous et al., 2003; Rivas-Drake et al., 2014).

5.2.2 Success as Effort, Aspiration, and Agency

Give it your all. All the tasks you do, homework, tests. All of that.

Findings showed that participants associated success with effort and sustained commitment demonstrated through both academic perseverance and responsibility within their family lives. The participants did not distinguish between the twin responsibilities of school and home, characterising 'effort' as both giving their all in schoolwork and assessments and contributing to household responsibilities such as cleaning, chores, and caring for siblings or elderly relatives. Therefore effort was seen not only as academic diligence but also as reliability, service, and commitment to family. These accounts reflect Pasifika cultural values that emphasise service, reciprocity, and responsibility (Averill et al., 2020; Cunningham et al., 2022), especially as a contribution to the aiga or whānau. This is understood as an expected expression of commitment and respect, echoed in studies by Flavell (2017) and Averill et al. (2020), who highlight how Pasifika students often experience strong expectations associated with family and church commitments. Benseman et al. (2006) hint at the tension these commitments can sometimes create for Pasifika students as they navigate competing responsibilities between school, family, and community life.

This tension was illustrated in the study when participants described the need to balance homework and study with church involvement, family activities, and caregiving responsibilities. Participants did not perceive family commitments as barriers to success. Rather, fulfilling family and community responsibilities was viewed as a cultural obligation that supported their success and reinforced their sense of identity and belonging.

I wanna get an award and make mum and dad proud

Participants' aspirations, or future-focused goals, combined personal achievement with a desire to honour their families, schools, and cultural identities. These aspirations were expressed through ambitions for careers, educational success, awards, and cultural representation. Rather than viewing success as an individual accomplishment, participants framed achievement as something that reflected positively on their families, represented their communities, and upheld their cultural identities. This finding suggests that educational aspirations were closely connected to how participants understood themselves and their responsibilities within their wider social and cultural networks. Such accounts align with ERI research, which highlights the role of positive private regard in shaping motivation and achievement, whereby individuals draw pride, purpose, and direction from their cultural identities (Chavous et al., 2003; Rivas-Drake et al., 2014). This was reflected in participants' desire to honour their families, represent their communities, and achieve in ways that upheld their cultural identities.

This finding contrasts with Reynolds' (2018) research, which found that Pasifika students' academic aspirations could be influenced by peer expectations and dominant identities within friendship groups. Reynolds suggested that aspirations such as pursuing academic achievement or particular career pathways may be questioned when they appear inconsistent with how Pasifika identity is perceived within the peer group. In contrast, participants in the present study did not describe a tension between achievement and belonging. Similar to studies by Chavous et al. (2003) and Rivas-Drake et al. (2014), participants' connections to family, culture, and community appeared to reinforce their educational aspirations, suggesting that cultural identity served as a source of motivation and direction in their pursuit of success.

5.3 Influence of School Culture

The findings indicate that Pasifika boys' experiences of success were not shaped by relationships and effort alone, but were also significantly influenced by the wider culture of the school. School culture operated through everyday interactions, teaching practices, and broader systemic patterns that shaped how students were perceived, supported, and positioned within the learning environment. Peer interactions emerged as a key site where racialised assumptions and deficit narratives were reproduced, often normalised through humour yet carrying deeper implications for belonging and identity. Participants highlighted the positive impact of supportive and relational teaching practices, where clear dialogic instruction, teacher accessibility, and presence at cultural and sporting events showed genuine care

strengthened engagement and confidence. However, these experiences were not uniform, with some students describing how expectations could be shaped by reputation, influencing how they were viewed academically. In contrast, the superficial teaching of Pasifika histories left Pasifika boys feeling disrespected and potentially negatively impacted their sense of belonging. Together, these findings suggest that school culture is a powerful force, capable of both enabling and constraining success, and highlight the need for schools to critically examine how everyday practices, interactions, and assumptions shape the experiences and outcomes of Pasifika learners.

5.3.1 Peer Interactions

When we do something wrong, they [peers] say it's because I'm Poly

The findings show that Pasifika boys experienced race-based stereotyping in peer interactions, leaving them feeling disrespected and unfairly judged within the school environment. These accounts reflect the operation of racialised stereotyping within everyday school interactions and broader social contexts. In educational settings, such experiences can be understood through research on racial stereotyping and deficit discourses, which highlights how minority students' behaviours are often interpreted through pre-existing negative assumptions rather than considered on their own terms. Such experiences align with research suggesting that deficit narratives position certain cultural groups as inherently problematic or less capable, shaping how they are perceived and treated within school contexts (Berryman & Eley, 2017). The normalisation of these comments as humour reflects findings that racialised stereotypes can become embedded within peer cultures, where seemingly casual remarks continue to reproduce and reinforce harmful assumptions about particular groups (May & Sleeter, 2010).

For Pasifika students specifically, studies have identified that deficit thinking within education systems can shape how learners are perceived and treated, often positioning them as academically less capable or behaviourally problematic (Alton-Lee, 2003). Through an ERI lens, these experiences are significant because they shape students' perceptions of how their cultural group is viewed and valued by others. Rivas-Drake et al. (2014) describe this as public regard, referring to individuals' beliefs about how others perceive their ethnic group. Participants' accounts suggest that repeated exposure to race-based assumptions and stereotypes may influence not only how Pasifika boys are treated within the school environment, but also how they understand their place within it. According to Rivas-Drake et al. (2014) and Chavous et al. (2003) such experiences have the potential to undermine belonging, engagement, and confidence, particularly when negative assumptions become normalised within peer interactions. Participants in this study did not generally attribute these deficit views to their teachers on the basis of ethnicity or race. Instead, there was a clearer sense that these assumptions circulated primarily within peer interactions. This distinction may suggest that while some teachers are beginning to move away from overt deficit positioning, broader societal narratives that racialise success and behaviour remain influential within student peer cultures.

Culturally responsive frameworks such as Tapasā and the Action Plan for Pacific Education emphasise the importance of schools actively challenging deficit assumptions and creating learning environments that affirm the identities, cultures, and strengths of Pasifika learners (Ministry of Education, 2018, 2023). When racial stereotypes are left unchallenged in everyday interactions, they may reinforce feelings of marginalisation and undermine students' confidence and participation in school life (Drewery, 2007). From an ERI perspective, actively affirming students' cultural identities may also strengthen more positive perceptions of belonging and recognition within the school environment (Rivas-Drake et al., 2014). As belonging and cultural affirmation are important contributors to well-being, these practices may not only enhance students' engagement and participation in school but also strengthen their overall experiences of success.

He's got darker skin than us

The findings show that Pasifika boys internalised and reproduced colour-based assumptions within their peer groups, with darker skin tones associated with negative behavioural expectations. When this occurs, students are positioned differently within the learning environment, with implications for their sense of belonging, engagement, and experiences of success. These accounts indicate that colourism operated within Pasifika peer groups, with racialised assumptions reproduced through everyday interactions. Amd (2024) argues that, rather than viewing these beliefs as originating within the students themselves, they can be understood as reflections of a broader social context in which racial hierarchies are normalised. Research on colourism highlights how hierarchies based on skin tone often mirror dominant societal values that privilege lighter skin while associating darker skin with deficit traits (Amd, 2024; Hunter, 2007). These patterns are shaped by historical and ongoing processes of racialisation, where ideas about worth, behaviour, and capability are implicitly linked to skin colour.

Within educational contexts, schools are not separate from these wider social and political dynamics; rather, they can unintentionally reproduce and reinforce them through everyday interactions, peer cultures, and institutional practices (Amd, 2024; Hunter, 2007). As such, the presence of colour-based assumptions among students reflects the broader racialised environment in which they are socialised, rather than individual prejudice alone. For the participants in this study, these assumptions had the potential to undermine affirmation and belonging by attaching negative meanings to aspects of identity associated with skin colour. In turn, such experiences may influence how students understand themselves and their place within the school community. While these assumptions can undermine Pasifika boys' sense of belonging, confidence, and engagement (Berryman & Eley, 2017; Hattie, 2008; Ministry of Education, 2018), the responsibility for addressing them cannot rest solely with students. Instead, this finding highlights the need for schools to take an active role in disrupting racialised narratives of success by critically examining how bias operates within their own contexts, fostering culturally sustaining environments, and intentionally challenging deficit assumptions linked to skin colour.

5.3.2 Educational Context

Straightforward, right on to it and if you need any help, he helps you out.

Strong teacher–student relationships, characterised by trust, care, and accessibility, are central to Pasifika students' engagement and sense of belonging in school (Alton-Lee, 2003; Ministry of Education, 2018). Findings from the present study highlighted the value Pasifika boys placed on teachers who were clear, direct, and approachable, particularly when teachers explicitly offered support and encouraged students to ask for help. Participants described explicit, scaffolded teaching as especially effective when learning was modelled step-by-step with clear expectations. Such approaches may reduce uncertainty and provide structured guidance that supports students to develop confidence in their learning (Hattie, 2008; Rosenshine, 2012). Participants also appeared to value opportunities for collaborative and dialogic learning, where teachers encouraged discussion, active participation, and the shared construction of understanding. These approaches can further build confidence, reduce uncertainty, and strengthen engagement in learning (Averill et al., 2009; Bishop & Berryman, 2009; Ministry of Education, 2011). When teachers were approachable and proactive in offering help, students perceived the classroom as a supportive space where asking questions did not risk embarrassment or judgement. Such environments appeared to support not only engagement and learning, but also students' well-being by reducing anxiety, strengthening confidence, and fostering a greater sense of safety and belonging within the classroom.

Participants also valued teachers who revisited concepts and took time to ensure understanding. For students who may experience gaps in prior knowledge or benefit from structured guidance, repetition can reduce cognitive overload and support the gradual development of mastery by strengthening connections between new and prior learning (Hattie, 2008; Rosenshine, 2012). Beyond its instructional value, revisiting concepts also appeared to strengthen relational trust. When teachers re-explained learning and ensured students understood, participants interpreted this as a sign that teachers cared about their success. This aligns with research emphasising the importance of responsive and culturally sustaining pedagogies that prioritise patience, clarity, and relational support for Pasifika learners (Alton-Lee, 2003; Ministry of Education, 2018). In this way, repetition functioned not only as a teaching strategy, but also as a relational practice that communicated care and strengthened students' confidence to engage in learning. Teacher–student relationships were further strengthened when teachers responded to behavioural misdemeanour with guidance rather than punishment. Participants spoke positively about disciplinary approaches that involved discussion, advice, and opportunities to improve, rather than punitive responses. Such restorative approaches appeared to strengthen trust between students and teachers and encouraged students to persist in learning (Berryman & Eley, 2017). These practices contributed to classroom environments where students felt supported rather than judged.

These findings align with research highlighting the importance of relational and culturally responsive teaching practices for diverse learners (Alton-Lee, 2003; Bishop & Berryman, 2009; Ministry of Education,

2018). Such approaches recognise and value students' cultural identities, languages, and lived experiences within the learning process. Teaching strategies that emphasise collaborative and dialogic learning, co-construction of knowledge, and active student participation can build confidence, reduce uncertainty, and encourage engagement in learning (Averill et al., 2009; Bishop & Berryman, 2009; Ministry of Education, 2011). These relational and pedagogical practices were clearly reflected in participants' descriptions of effective teaching.

I feel that they expect me like to get a not achieve or an achieve [not a merit or excellence]

While participants largely emphasised the positive impact of strong teacher relationships on their engagement and success, some accounts revealed how these relationships could also be shaped by early perceptions and expectations, which contrasts with literature emphasising the influence of ethnicity-based assumptions in schooling (Alton-Lee, 2003; Bishop & Berryman, 2009; Hattie, 2008). The Pasifika boys perceived teacher expectations to be influenced by prior behaviour and reputation, rather than ethnicity. This reputation in turn shaped how academically capable teachers believed them to be. Some boys felt that once a negative impression was formed, it became difficult to change. Participants reflected that a poor first lesson or even a negative interaction at any point during the year, could result in teachers labelling them as naughty, even if their behaviour improved over time. These accounts suggest that negative labelling and lowered expectations were experienced as persistent and difficult to overcome, shaping how Pasifika boys perceived their own academic potential and opportunities for success.

Similarly research by Bishop et al. (2009), Bishop and Berryman (2009), and Hattie (2008) on teacher expectations and their influence on student achievement, suggests teacher perceptions can shape classroom interactions, feedback, and opportunities provided to students, often resulting in self-fulfilling prophecies where students perform in ways that reflect the expectations placed upon them. When teachers hold lower expectations for certain students, those students may receive less challenging work, fewer opportunities to demonstrate capability, and reduced academic encouragement, which can influence their engagement and achievement over time.

Hattie's (2009) highlighting of the stark ethnic divide in how white and non-white students perceive teacher bias, contrasts with the participants' experiences that uneven expectations stem from reputational labeling rather than explicit racial categorisation. Nevertheless, Hattie's broader finding that teachers frequently misread their classroom climate, means it is vital to dismantle deficit-based assumptions to prevent low expectations from becoming self-fulfilling prophecies. This aligns with participants' experiences suggesting that reputational labelling and uneven expectations may shape how they perceive their own academic ability and potential. A fact that reinforces the importance of relational teaching practices that combine high expectations with culturally responsive support.

I think it's about forming a connection with your students and understanding them.

The findings show that Pasifika boys valued teachers who built genuine relationships with them by taking time to understand them as individuals beyond their academic performance. Participants described how meaningful relationships with teachers were developed when teachers showed interest in their lives, identities, and communities. Teachers who demonstrated presence beyond academic lessons were particularly valued. These actions were interpreted as teachers understanding students as whole people rather than simply as learners within the classroom. This finding may be explained through research highlighting the central role of relationships in supporting Pasifika learners' engagement and achievement (Alton-Lee, 2003).

Along with actions within the classroom, teacher attendance at events such as cultural celebrations or sporting matches may strengthen relational trust because they signal that the teacher values the student beyond academic outcomes (Anae, 2010; Berryman & Eley, 2017). Such actions demonstrate an authentic commitment to students' lives and communities. As educator Susan Hassall notes in the podcast *Between Two Beers* discussion on relational leadership and education, while it is possible to pretend to care about students, "you can't pretend to show up" (Marten, & Holloway, 2026, 5:57), emphasising that genuine care is demonstrated through consistent presence and participation in students' lives beyond formal classroom interactions. In this sense, teachers' presence at community events can function as a powerful relational signal that reinforces the collective values that underpin Pasifika understandings of education and success.

5.3.3 Ethnic Expectations and Systemic Influences

They explained like parts of it, but not the full understanding. They just understand half of it.

The findings show that Pasifika boys' experiences of success were undermined when Pasifika histories were taught without the Pasifika community's input, leading to frustration, emotional harm, and a diminished sense of belonging in the classroom. Participants explained that Pasifika histories, such as the Dawn Raids, were often taught with insufficient depth, resulting in peers developing only partial understandings. This lack of understanding contributed to disrespectful behaviour, leaving Pasifika students to carry the emotional impact of their histories being trivialised. When complex histories are simplified or presented without sufficient depth, students may develop fragmented understandings that fail to capture the significance or impact of those events (Alton-Lee, 2003). Such partial understandings can allow dominant groups to reinterpret or appropriate cultural experiences in ways that minimise their historical and emotional weight (Samu, 2006). Research also suggests that when the knowledge and experiences of marginalised groups are not fully or authentically represented in the curriculum, existing power imbalances can be reinforced, with dominant groups retaining control over how histories are understood and represented (May & Sleeter, 2010). This is further supported by research highlighting the importance of teacher critical reflection, where superficial coverage of complex topics may reflect

limitations in teachers' own knowledge and how such content is introduced, rather than solely gaps in student understanding (Howard, 2003).

In addition, when students' identities and histories are not meaningfully acknowledged, the emotional dimensions of learning, particularly those connected to intergenerational experiences such as the Dawn Raids, can be overlooked or invalidated. Opportunities to engage meaningfully with Pasifika histories are therefore important not only for historical understanding, but also for how students come to understand themselves and their place within the school community. For Pasifika learners, culturally responsive frameworks emphasise the need for teaching that affirms identity, acknowledges historical injustices, and connects learning to students' cultural contexts and lived realities (Ministry of Education, 2018). Similarly, Berryman and Eley (2017) argue that when education systems fail to meaningfully engage with the histories and identities of minoritised groups, students may experience alienation and disconnection from learning. Such experiences have implications beyond educational engagement alone, as the marginalisation of students' identities and histories may also negatively affect well-being by undermining belonging, cultural affirmation, and connection to school. A key implication of this finding is that Pasifika boys experience greater success in learning environments that acknowledge and teach their histories with depth and respect, strengthening their sense of value, understanding, belonging, and cultural identity. In this way, meaningful engagement with Pasifika histories may support identity exploration, reinforce the centrality of cultural identity within students' understandings of themselves and their place in school, and contribute positively to their overall well-being (Rivas-Drake et al., 2014).

The findings show that Pasifika boys believed they were frequently positioned as reliable helpers within the school, with expectations to contribute through practical tasks shaping how they were recognised and valued. Participants described how they were often the students to whom teachers turned when help was needed with physical tasks, such as setting up chairs and tables for school events. While this role was spoken about with a sense of pride and service to the school community, it also shaped how participants understood the ways in which they were viewed by teachers. Being recognised as helpful and reliable can be affirming and contribute to a sense of belonging; however, such positioning may also reflect narrow perceptions of students' strengths, where certain groups are more frequently associated with service-oriented or physical roles than academic or leadership potential (Berryman & Eley, 2017). These patterns can emerge through everyday practices that appear positive while still reinforcing limited expectations about students' capabilities.

In this context, contributing to school events may strengthen collective responsibility and connection to the school community, but it may also constrain how Pasifika boys experience success if their contributions are recognised primarily in practical rather than academic or leadership domains. Repeated positioning in particular roles has the potential to shape how students understand their own strengths, capabilities, and future possibilities (Amd, 2024; Chu et al., 2013). This suggests that supporting Pasifika boys' success

requires creating opportunities for them to be seen and valued across multiple dimensions, including academic achievement, leadership, and cultural contribution, rather than being narrowly positioned within helper roles. Research by Alton-Lee (2003) highlights the importance of recognising and fostering the full range of students' strengths, ensuring that all learners are provided with opportunities to demonstrate academic competence and leadership. Similarly, culturally responsive frameworks emphasise the need to value students holistically, acknowledging not only their willingness to contribute but also their intellectual, cultural, and leadership potential (Ministry of Education, 2018). When students are consistently positioned in particular roles, even in positive ways, those experiences can influence how they perceive themselves and what they believe they are capable of achieving.

5.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter examined how Pasifika boys experience and define success, demonstrating that success is relational, culturally grounded, and shaped through interactions within the school, family, and wider community. Viewed through the lens of *vā*, success was not understood as an individual achievement but as something that emerged through relationships characterised by trust, care, reciprocity, and belonging. Participants' experiences highlighted the importance of family support, cultural connections, and positive relationships with teachers and peers in shaping their motivation, aspirations, engagement, and well-being. When teachers were approachable, explicit in their support, and demonstrated care beyond the classroom, students were more willing to participate, take risks, and develop confidence. These findings align with culturally responsive frameworks such as *Tapasā*, which emphasise the importance of affirming identity, strengthening relationships, and recognising the cultural strengths that Pasifika learners bring to school (Ministry of Education, 2018). Collectively, the findings suggest that well-being and success were closely interconnected, with the maintenance of *vā*, cultural affirmation, and a strong sense of belonging contributing to students' confidence, engagement, identity, and overall experiences of success.

The chapter also demonstrated that experiences of success were closely connected to identity and the ways Pasifika boys understood themselves and believed they were perceived by others. Through an ERI lens, experiences of cultural affirmation, belonging, pride, and recognition appeared to strengthen students' engagement and sense of purpose, while race-based stereotyping, colour-based assumptions, and deficit narratives had the potential to undermine confidence, belonging, and participation. These findings suggest that identity was not separate from success; rather, participants' experiences of success were shaped by how their cultural identities were recognised, valued, and affirmed within the school environment.

At the same time, the findings revealed that deficit assumptions, racial stereotyping, and uneven expectations continued to shape aspects of students' school experiences. Peer interactions, colour-based assumptions, and reputational labelling influenced how Pasifika boys were perceived and how they perceived themselves, often undermining their sense of belonging, engagement, and self-belief. These

patterns reflect wider research on deficit thinking and racialised narratives in education (Alton-Lee, 2003; Berryman & Eley, 2017; May & Sleeter, 2010). The chapter also highlighted that absence of meaningful Pasifika community input during the teaching of Pasifika histories contributed to misunderstanding, marginalisation, and diminished experiences of success. Collectively, these findings suggest that Pasifika boys experienced success in environments where vā was nurtured, cultural identities were affirmed, and culturally responsive practices enabled students to be known, valued, and supported as learners and as Pasifika young men.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

6.1 Chapter Introduction

This conclusion draws together the key elements of the study by restating its purpose and methodological approach, summarising the main findings, and evaluating the study's contribution to theory and practice. It considers the limitations of the research and outlines recommendations for future research, highlighting how this work contributes to more relational, culturally grounded understandings of success for Pasifika learners. It also reflects on the progress made since the completion of the research, particularly the implementation of the student-led initiative developed by participants, demonstrating how their insights have translated into meaningful action within the school context. Finally, this conclusion includes a personal reflection on my research journey, highlighting key learnings about relational practice, including the importance of time, reciprocity, humility, and ongoing commitment when working alongside Pasifika communities.

6.2 Purpose and Methodology of This Research

This study set out to explore how Pasifika boys experience success within an Aotearoa New Zealand Catholic secondary school, responding to the need for more culturally grounded and relational understandings of success beyond narrow academic measures. Guided by the research question: How do Pasifika boys define and experience success within an Aotearoa New Zealand secondary school? The study was philosophically influenced by the principles of YPAR, with talanoa serving as the primary method of data collection. This approach positioned participants as co-constructors of knowledge, enabling them to share their experiences, critically reflect on schooling, and collaboratively design an initiative to better support Pasifika success at their school. Data were generated through a series of talanoa sessions and analysed using reflexive thematic analysis. Relationships with participants, whānau, and the Pasifika community, as well as cultural integrity, and reciprocity, were central to both the research process and its outcomes. This study identifies a research gap related to student initiation and empowerment, concepts that have the potential to make a positive difference to Pasifika students' self-belief, agency, and achievement.

6.3 Summary of Key Findings

The findings revealed that success for Pasifika boys is deeply relational and extends beyond academic achievement. Participants described success as grounded in meaningful connections with teachers, peers, family, and community, where strong relationships fostered trust, belonging, engagement, and a sense of purpose. Affirmation through peer groups and culturally safe spaces supported resilience and participation, while teachers who demonstrated care, offered support, and recognised students' potential contributed positively to students' engagement and confidence. Participants also demonstrated strong agency in identifying barriers to success and proposing a practical, culturally grounded initiative centred

on mentoring, goal-setting, and relational support. Collectively, these findings suggest that success was experienced through *vā*, where relationships with family, peers, teachers, and community strengthened belonging, cultural affirmation, and identity. Through an ERI lens, experiences of recognition, affirmation, and belonging appeared to reinforce participants' sense of self and engagement in learning. These relational and identity-affirming experiences contributed not only to academic engagement and achievement, but also to students' overall well-being.

6.4 Contribution, Significance, and Limitations

This study contributes to both theory and practice by reinforcing and extending relational and culturally responsive understandings of success for Pasifika learners. In particular, the findings demonstrate the value of *vā* as a framework for understanding the relational nature of success, while ERI provides a useful lens for interpreting how affirmation, belonging, and identity shape students' experiences within school contexts. The findings support existing literature that positions success as collective, relational, and culturally embedded, while also providing empirical insight, grounded in student voice, into how these concepts are experienced in everyday school contexts. Practically, the study offers clear implications for teachers and school leaders, emphasising the importance of relational pedagogy, culturally responsive teaching strategies, and school structures that centre Pasifika student voice and strengthen *whānau* and community engagement. These contributions are significant as they challenge deficit-based narratives and provide actionable pathways for schools to create more inclusive and affirming environments. However, the study is limited by its small, context-specific sample within a single school, which may affect the transferability of findings. Despite this, the depth of insight generated through the culturally appropriate method of *talanoa* strengthens the credibility and contextual relevance of the findings and suggests their transferability to similar Pasifika secondary school contexts.

6.5 Recommendations for Future Research

There are many studies and strategies, within Ministry of Education reports, that identify the key themes that school initiatives should be based around. Future research is needed within schools to develop initiatives that are responsive to each school's unique context and therefore better able to meet the needs of their communities. In particular, there is a need for action research approaches that are embedded in practice, such as teaching as inquiry, where classroom teachers systematically investigate the impact of their pedagogy or intervention on student engagement and outcomes. This approach enables teachers to generate contextually relevant evidence, adapt their practice in real time, and ensure that initiatives are grounded in the lived realities of their learners. At a leadership level, school leaders can draw on inquiry-based frameworks, such as the Spiral of Inquiry, to guide the development, implementation, and evaluation of school-wide practices. Such frameworks support a disciplined, iterative process of scanning, focusing, developing hunches, and taking action, ensuring that initiatives are both evidence-informed and responsive to the unique context of their school. Alongside this, there is a clear need for ongoing, sustained professional learning and development in culturally responsive and relational pedagogy,

enabling teachers to build the knowledge, confidence, and cultural competence required to engage effectively with Pasifika learners, their whānau, and community. Finally, schools could conduct longitudinal research that follows their Pasifika students over a period of 5–10 years to meaningfully assess the sustained impact of school-based initiatives. Without this long-term perspective, schools risk implementing short-term solutions that fail to capture the complexity of Pasifika students' educational journeys and the enduring influence of relational, cultural, and systemic factors on their experiences of success.

6.6 Like Travelling Moana

Since the completion of this study, meaningful progress has been made in enacting the participants' proposed initiative. A dedicated fortnightly form time for Year 9 and 10 Pasifika boys has been established and is currently running on a voluntary basis, providing an ongoing space for connection, support, and student voice. The participants have taken an active role in gathering and analysing data from Pasifika students, parents, and whānau, ensuring that the initiative remains responsive to community needs. The group has also begun working in partnership with a community organisation, organising guest speakers and planning a Term 3 well-being programme. This programme will create opportunities for senior Pasifika students at the school to develop leadership and mentoring skills by working alongside programme leaders, further strengthening relational pathways and sustaining the impact of the initiative.

6.7 Personal Reflection

This research journey has been as much about my own learning, as it has been about understanding Pasifika boys' experiences of success. Entering this study, I believed that my role as a teacher and member of the school community would naturally grant me access to meaningful relationships and authentic student voice. In hindsight, this assumption reflected a level of naivety and probably arrogance. While I was known within the school, I came to understand that relational trust, particularly within Pasifika contexts, is not automatically conferred through position or proximity. It must be earned, nurtured, and sustained over time. This realisation called me to walk humbly, to recognise that I was entering relational spaces that required listening, patience, and a willingness to learn, rather than assuming access or authority.

As a Pālangi researcher, one of the most significant learnings emerging from this study was the importance of relationships, or *vā*, as the foundation for meaningful engagement within Pacific research contexts. Relationships were not transactional or incidental, but intentional and nurtured through ongoing care, respect, presence, and commitment within the school and wider Pasifika community. Regular attendance at school and community events, informal conversations, and continued engagement with participants and their whānau helped establish trust, familiarity, and accountability over time. Throughout the talanoa sessions, I became increasingly aware that the richness and quality of the data shared by participants was closely connected to the strength of these relationships. Moments of openness, humour, vulnerability, and honesty did not emerge immediately, but developed gradually as participants began to

feel safe, valued, and genuinely known within the space. This reinforced the importance of approaching relationships with empathy, patience, and genuine care, where participants were valued not simply for their contribution to the research, but for who they were as people. This relational foundation appeared essential in supporting talanoa as an authentic, participant-led process of knowledge sharing. Without these established relationships, the conversations may have resembled more formal interviews characterised by transactional question-and-answer exchanges, rather than the natural, fluid dialogue that talanoa seeks to foster. This highlights the importance for researchers, particularly Pālangi/non-Pasifika researchers, to not underestimate the time required to engage with participants and their communities and the importance of reciprocity when undertaking research with Pasifika communities and when choosing to use Pacific methodologies.

The timeframe of this study, approximately eight months, highlighted the limitations of working within institutional constraints when engaging in relational research. While this period allowed for the development of some meaningful connections, it also became evident that deeper relational trust requires much longer to establish. Relationships take time: time to show up consistently, time to be present beyond the research agenda, and time to demonstrate genuine care and commitment. I came to recognise that the most valuable moments in this study were not always those that were planned, but those that occurred organically through repeated interactions, shared experiences, and ongoing presence. This has challenged my thinking about the pace of research and the expectations often placed on both researchers and participants within academic timelines, reminding me that to act justly within research is to honour the time required for authentic, respectful relationships to develop.

Another significant learning was the importance of reciprocity within relationships. Entering the research, I was focused on what I hoped to learn from the participants; however, I became increasingly aware that meaningful engagement required me to consider what I could offer in return. Reciprocity is not an abstract principle but a lived practice. It involved small but significant acts of service, being present at school events, supporting students beyond the research sessions, and contributing to the school community in ways that were not directly tied to data collection. These acts ensured that the research was not extractive but instead contributed positively to the lives of those involved. Through this, I began to understand that research is a relational exchange grounded in mutual benefit, respect, and accountability.

Showing up consistently emerged as one of the most powerful aspects of this research process. Presence mattered. Being visible, available, and engaged signalled to participants and the community that this work, and more importantly, they themselves, were valued. It was not enough to facilitate sessions; it was the ongoing presence in the spaces where students lived their daily school lives that contributed to the development of trust. This required a commitment to be present without agenda, to listen more than speak, and to allow relationships to unfold at their own pace.

This study reinforced my belief in the value of honest conversations. Talanoa created a space where participants could speak openly about their experiences, including moments of frustration, confusion, and hurt. These conversations were not always comfortable, but they were necessary. They required me to listen deeply, to sit with discomfort, and to reflect critically on my own assumptions and practices. In these moments, loving tenderly meant holding space for students' voices with care and respect, even when what was shared challenged my own thinking or revealed uncomfortable truths about schooling practices.

Ultimately, this research has reshaped my understanding of what it means to engage in culturally responsive and relational practice. It has challenged me to move beyond assumptions of access and to recognise that relationships require time, reciprocity, humility, and care. To act justly, walk humbly, and love tenderly is not simply an ethical stance, but a way of being in research and in education. One that centres relationships, honours voice and commits to ongoing learning. Most importantly, this journey has reaffirmed that meaningful change begins with listening to the voices of those we seek to serve.

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Appendix A: Letter to Request to Enter Institution to Conduct Research

Tuesday, September 9th, 2025

Dear Sir,

Re: Permission to conduct research at [school name removed]

Research title: *How do Pasifika boys experience and define success at NZ secondary schools: Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) using talanoa*

My name is Clare Letting.

This year, I am writing my dissertation to complete my Master's in Educational Administration and Leadership at Massey University. I am seeking permission to undertake my research at [school name removed].

The research aims to collect and explore the experiences of success from Pasifika boys at [school name removed]. Using Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) notions of success will be explored, which may include concepts like belonging and well-being. I will work alongside the boys in years nine and ten to develop an action plan to help the students identify meaningful and motivational ways to support their success at school.

If participants and their caregivers agree, they will be asked to participate in YPAR. Participants will spend one lunchtime each week for eight weeks in Term 4 with the researcher, working together on the enquiry using the YPAR framework. The YPAR framework will entail participants collaborating with the researcher on a YPAR project to understand Pasifika boys' perceptions of supportive factors and challenges to their success in Aotearoa New Zealand high schools. This may raise awareness of and help inform school-based pastoral care practices and initiatives. It is hoped that teaching staff will understand and support the project, enabling participants to engage fully in this inquiry.

YPAR fosters critical thinking, communication, collaboration and leadership skills as the boys will take ownership of the project, make decisions, and advocate for change based on their findings. The purpose of YPAR is for participants to start with a problem or key question that is relevant to their own lives and experiences. Together, we will explore what success means to them. The key activities involved include:

1. Reflecting on past and present school and outside of school experiences of success.
2. Develop an action to initiate that supports their success at school.
3. After implementation, review the action and identify the next steps to present to the school's leadership team.

The participants will not be paid for this study; however, as a koha for their time, the boys will be provided with lunch, with the offering of mea taumafa / mea'ai serving as a

culturally appropriate expression of hospitality and reciprocity, reflecting Pasifika values of care, respect, and relationship-building.

Permission is also sought for these sessions to take place in the Pavilion. These sessions will be audio recorded and transcribed.

Data gathered during the group research sessions will be treated confidentially, and the identities of the participants and the organisation will be anonymous. All published and written information from this study will respect and protect the privacy of the organisation and participants.

An information evening will be held to explain the research project to potential participants and their whānau. A meal (mea taumafa / mea'ai) will be provided after the presentation as a culturally appropriate gesture of hospitality and reciprocity. Participants and their caregivers will be required to give their written consent before the research begins.

The information from the research and YPAR will be used in my master's dissertation. The results of this research project and YPAR can be shared with the school's senior leadership team, presented to the wider staff in a seminar, summarised for the [name removed], presented at professional workshops, and published in academic journals.

At the end of the project, there will be a celebration for the participants and their whānau to come together, share the findings, and acknowledge the hard work of the group. The action plan that the boys have collaborated on will be shared with whānau.

While every effort will be made to protect the school's identity, I acknowledge the potential for [school name removed] to be indirectly identified due to the nature of the research context. There is also a possibility of reputational or relational discomfort for the school community, particularly if the findings reveal systemic issues such as racism, exclusion, or unequal treatment. To mitigate these risks, the school will not be named in the thesis or any subsequent publications. Instead, it will be referred to as a "Faith-based secondary school located in a suburban area of Aotearoa-New Zealand." All data will be anonymised, and no staff or departments will be identifiable. Findings will be presented respectfully, using a strengths-based approach that acknowledges both areas of success and challenges. Prior to publication, a summary of the findings will be offered to school leadership to support transparency, encourage constructive dialogue, and ensure that the research contributes positively to the ongoing development of inclusive and culturally responsive practices.

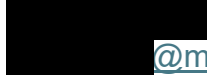
All research data, the group session transcripts, summaries and any recordings will be kept securely and destroyed on Wednesday, 13th November 2030.

I therefore request permission in writing to conduct my research at [school name removed]. The permission letter should be on your organisation's headed paper, signed and dated and specifically referring to myself by name and the title of the study.

Please let me know if you require any further information, or you are welcome to contact my supervisor, Prof. Jenny Poskitt. I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Clare Letting

@massey.ac.nz

Supervisor

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He kōrero whakamārama mō Ohu Matatika 2—Expertise in tikanga Māori, Pacific research and social sciences / Human Ethic Committee Ohu Matatika 2—Expertise in tikanga Māori, Pacific research and social sciences.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Ohu Matatika 2, Application OM2 25 40. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact the Chairperson, Massey University Human Ethics Ohu Matatika 2, email humanethics2@massey.ac.nz.

Appendix B: Information Sheets and Consent Forms for Participants and Whānau

Massey University College of Humanities and Social Sciences Letterhead

Information Sheet for Whānau/Caregivers [English version]

Kia ora, Talofa lava, Mālō e lelei, Ni sa bula vinaka, Kia orāna, Fakaalofa lahi atu,

Your son is invited to take part in this research. Please read this information carefully before deciding whether or not to participate. If your son decides to participate, thank you. If your son decides not to participate, thank you for considering this request.

O ai A'u? / Ko hai au? / Who am I?

My name is Clare Letting and I am doing my Master of Education (Educational Administration and Leadership) at Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa—Massey University. This project is part of my research.

O le a le fa'amoemoe o lenei galuega? / Koe ha á e taumuá á e ngaue eni? / What is the aim of the project?

The project aims to understand Pasifika boys' perceptions of supportive factors and challenges to their success in Aotearoa-New Zealand high schools and to explore how school practices might be improved to better support Pasifika boys' success.

E fa'apefea ona e fesoasoani? / É ala fefe hoó tokoni? / How can you help?

Your son has been invited to participate as he identifies as Pasifika and is currently in year 9 or 10. I want to collaborate with a group of Pasifika boys on a Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) project, using talanoa as the primary method of data collection to foster open, respectful, and relational dialogue. The purpose of YPAR is for participants to start with a problem or key question that is relevant to their own lives and experiences. Together, we will explore what success means to your son and what makes him feel like he can achieve. The key activities involved include:

1. Reflecting on past and present school experiences of success.
2. Develop an action to initiate that supports your son's sense of success at school.
3. After implementation, review the action and identify the next steps to present to the school's leadership team.

Your son will join the group for one lunchtime each week for eight weeks in term four. The sessions will take place in the Pavilion. As a koha for their time, the boys will be provided with mea taumafa/mea'ai/me'akai (food).

If he agrees to take part, we will work together on the project exploring success to identify an action that can be taken to enhance his overall school experience. Group sessions will be held once a week during lunchtime for eight weeks during term 4. I will audio record the sessions and transcribe them with your and his permission. He can

choose not to answer questions or not to participate in group activities at any time without giving a reason. He may withdraw from the study before these dates; **Friday, October 17th 2025** and **Thursday, November 27th 2025**.

O le a le mea e tupu i fa'amatalaga e te aumaia? / Koe ha e meá é hoko ki he ngaahi fakamatala óku ke ómai? / What will happen to the information you give?

Your son's ethnicity data will be collected as part of the research. Ethnicity data will be collected to ensure the research accurately represents the diverse voices and experiences of Pasifika boys, who are the focus of this study. This information will support culturally nuanced analysis and help explore how different Pasifika ethnic identities may shape students' experiences of success, identity, and schooling. The research is confidential. This means that only my supervisors and I will be aware of his identity. The transcripts and the research generated from YPAR will be combined, and his identity will not be revealed in any reports, presentations, or public documentation. However, he should be aware that in small projects, his identity might be evident to others in the community. Participants will have the opportunity to read their interview transcripts and make any changes or remove anything they feel uncomfortable about after the interview. Once students have been given the opportunity to read and adjust the transcripts, only my supervisors and I will read the transcripts of the group sessions. Consent forms, the group session transcripts, summaries, and any recordings will be kept securely and destroyed on Wednesday, 13th November 2030.

At the end of the project, there will be a celebration for the boys and their whānau to come together, share the findings, and acknowledge the hard work of the group. The action plan that the boys have collaborated on will be shared with whānau.

O ai e mafai ona ou feso'ota'i iai e lagolago mai? / Ko hai teke lavāfetuútaki kia ke pouou? / Who can I contact for support?

If this research or the topics discussed raise any worries for your son, he can contact **What's Up**, a free and confidential helpline for young people, on **0800 942 8787 (0800 WHATSUP)** or chat online at www.whatsup.co.nz. You are also welcome to contact the school's guidance counsellor, [name removed]. He can be reached by email [email address removed] to arrange an appointment. Please be aware that if your son shares information during the talanoa sessions that raise a concern for his safety or well-being, a referral will be made to Oranga Tamariki and [name removed] Deputy Principal Years 7-10.

O le a le fa'agasologa o le su'esu'ega? / Koe ha á e founga ó e fekumi? / What is the research process?

As this research is a collaborative enquiry, your son will have the agency to protect his identity as part of the YPAR process. This means:

- He will be involved in decisions about how the research information is shared.
- His identity will remain confidential and known only to the researcher and supervisors; no identifying information will appear in any reports, presentations, or publications.

- Although complete anonymity cannot be guaranteed in a small community, he will have the opportunity to review and revise his transcript to remove anything he is uncomfortable with before it is used in the research.

O le a se mea e maua ma ii le su'esu'ega? / Koe ha e ola é maú mei he ngaue ni? / What will the project produce?

The information from the research and YPAR will be used in my Master's dissertation. The results of this research project and YPAR may be shared with the school's senior leadership team, presented to the wider staff in a seminar, summarised for the [name removed], presented at professional workshops, and published in academic journals.

Afai e taliaina lenei vala'aulia, o a ou aiātatau o se tagata e 'auai i su'esu'ega? / Kapau teke tali á e fakaafeni, ko ha ho hoó totonu koe tokotaha óku kau í he fakatotolo? / If you accept this invitation, what are your rights as a research participant?

You and your son are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If he does decide to participate, he has the right to:

- choose not to answer any questions;
- ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the group sessions;
- withdraw from the study and the YPAR project at any time before the end of term 4;
- ask any questions about the study at any time;
- receive a copy of his contributions in the group session transcripts;
- be able to read any reports of this research by emailing the researcher to request a copy.

Afai e iai ni fesili po'o ni fa'afitauli, o ai e mafai ona e feso'ota'i iai? / Ka pau óku íai haó toe fehuí pe palopalema ko hai teke fetuútakei kiai? / If you have any questions or problems, who can you contact?

Student

Name: Clare Letting

Email: [REDACTED]@massey.ac.nz

Phone: [REDACTED]

Supervisor

Name: Jenny Poskitt

Role: Professor

School: Institute of Education—Te Kura o Te Mātauranga

Phone: +64 6 951 6070

Email: j.m.poskitt@massey.ac.nz

He kōrero whakamārama mō Ohu Matatika 2—Expertise in tikanga Māori, Pacific research and social sciences / Human Ethic Committee Ohu Matatika 2—Expertise in tikanga Māori, Pacific research and social sciences.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Ohu Matatika 2, Application OM2 25 40. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact the Chairperson, Massey University Human Ethics Ohu Matatika 2, email humanethics2@massey.ac.nz.

Massey University College of Humanities and Social Sciences Letterhead

Parental Consent Form [to participate in YPAR and Talanoa Sessions]

Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) to explore success in Pasifika boys
Researcher: Clare Letting Institute of Education—Massey University

Confidentiality Statement

All information collected during this research will be kept strictly confidential. Your son's name and any identifying details will not appear in any reports or publications. Talanoa/conversation recordings, transcripts and consent forms will be securely stored and password protected on Massey University's One Drive and accessed by the researcher and her supervisors.

Please tick the box once you have read, and agree with the statement:

1. I have read the Information Sheet, and the project has been explained to me. ☐
2. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can ask further questions at any time. ☐
3. I agree for my son to take part in YPAR and Talanoa (conversations) audio recorded group sessions. ☐

I understand that:

- I consent to my son's ethnicity data being collected as part of this research. ☐
- Data for each action research cycle will be analysed two to four weeks after collection. My son may withdraw before these dates; **Friday, October 17th, 2025**, and **Thursday, November 27th, 2025** though group data already analysed will be retained in the research study. ☐
- The identifiable information that my son has provided will be destroyed by Wednesday, 13th November 2030. ☐
- I understand that my son can leave the project at any time. ☐
- If my son withdraws before the data from that cycle is analysed, anything he has shared will be returned to him or deleted. ☐

- I understand that if my son withdraws after the data has already been analysed and anonymised, that data will be kept in the study, but no further individual data will be collected. ☐
- Any information provided will be kept confidential to the researcher and her supervisors. ☐
- I understand that if my son shares any information during the talanoa sessions that raises concerns for his safety or well-being, a referral will be made to Oranga Tamariki and [name removed], Deputy Principal Years 7-10. ☐
- Talanoa/conversation notes, recordings and transcriptions will be kept confidential to the researcher and her supervisors. ☐
- The findings will be used for a master's research. ☐
- The principal's consent has been obtained, and the school will not be named in any publications or presentations. ☐
- My son's name will not be used in reports or publications, and the utmost care will be taken not to disclose any information that would identify him. ☐

Please tick either yes or no, if you would like:

Yes

No

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • I would like a copy of the transcript of the group sessions (talanoa). | ☐ | ☐ |
| • I would like a copy of the group session (talanoa) notes. | ☐ | ☐ |
| • I would like to receive a copy of the final report | ☐ | ☐ |

Name of son / participant _____

Parent / Caregiver name _____

Signature of Parent / Caregiver _____

Date _____

Please add your email address if you wish to receive a final report.

Parent / Caregiver email _____

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Massey University College of Humanities and Social Sciences Letterhead

Participant Information Sheet

 Keen to share what success at school means for Pasifika boys – and have your voice heard?

You're invited to join a special project!

(But only join if you want to!)

 Who am I?

Hi, I'm Clare Letting. I'm studying for my Master's degree at Massey University. This project is part of my research.

 What's the project about?

I want to find out:

What helps Pasifika boys do well in school

What challenges they face

What actions help increase Pasifika boys' success at school

The goal?

To help schools and Pasifika students experience more success

Together, we will explore what success means to you and what helps you feel like you can achieve.

 How you can help:

You're invited because you:

Are Pasifika

Are in Year 9 or 10

We'll work together on something called Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR).

 That means you help decide what's important and what we talk about!

We'll explore:

What makes you feel successful at school

How to make school even better for you and others

If more than 15 students are keen to take part, the first 15 who return both their own and their parent or caregiver's signed consent forms will be accepted into the project.

What's involved?

Work in a small group for one lunchtime a week for eight weeks during term 4

A free lunch/mea taumafa/mea'ai/me'akai at the end of each session

Share your ideas

We will ask you to share your ethnicity for research.

Help create and test out an action to improve school life!

-  You can leave the project at any time during term 4
-  You don't have to answer anything you don't want to.
-  If you leave the project, your information will be returned to you.

What happens to your info?

Only my supervisors and I will know who you are

Your name won't be used in reports or presentations.

All recordings and notes are locked away safely.

Recordings and consent forms will be deleted by Wednesday, November 13th 2030

You get a say in what information you share and how it is shared!

What will come out of it?

At the end of the project, we'll have a celebration for you and your whānau. This will be a chance to share what we found, recognise all the hard work you've put in, and present the action plan you created together.

Your ideas will help my university project.

We might also share the final report with:

Your school leaders

Other teachers

Professional education groups

Academic journals

Your rights

If you join, you can:

Say "no" to any question

Ask to turn off the recorder anytime

Quit the project any time before the end of term 3

Ask questions about the research study whenever you want

See the transcripts of what you said in the sessions and make any necessary adjustments.

Read the final project report if you want



Need to talk to someone? If anything, we talk about in the sessions makes you feel worried or upset, you can call What's Up – it's a free, private helpline for young people. Call 0800 942 8787 (0800 WHATSUP) or chat online at www.whatsup.co.nz.

You can also visit our school guidance counsellor [name removed], please email him at [email address removed] to make an appointment.

If you talk about something in the talanoa sessions that makes me worried about your safety or wellbeing, I will need to let someone know.

📞 Who to contact about the research

Got questions?

You (or your parents) can get in touch:

Researcher:

Clare Letting – [REDACTED]@massey.ac.nz

Supervisor:

Professor Jenny Poskitt – j.m.poskitt@massey.ac.nz – +64 6 951 6070

Concern about the project?

Email: humanethics2@massey.ac.nz

🔗 Ready to make a difference?

He kōrero whakamārama mō Ohu Matatika 2—Expertise in tikanga Māori, Pacific research and social sciences / Human Ethic Committee Ohu Matatika 2—Expertise in tikanga Māori, Pacific research and social sciences.

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Massey University College of Humanities and Social Sciences Letterhead

Participant Consent Form [to participate in YPAR Group Sessions and Talanoa]

Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) to explore success in Pasifika boys

Researcher: Clare Letting, Institute of Education, Massey University

Confidentiality

Your personal information will be kept private. Only collected group information will be reported in the form of analysed findings. No individual will be identifiable.

Please tick the box once you have read and agreed with the statement

1. You are invited to participate in a project where we talanoa about how Pasifika boys can experience success at school. ☐
2. We will meet in a small group. The talanoa/conversations will be recorded so Clare can remember what everyone said. ☐
3. Be part of change: your input could help improve school experiences for other Pasifika students in the future. ☐

Please tick the box to show this has been explained to you and you understand

- I agree to share my ethnicity information as part of this research ☐
- I have read or been told about the project, and I understand what it's about and how long it goes for. ☐
- If you share something in the talanoa sessions that makes me concerned for your safety or well-being, I may need to tell a trusted adult who can help. ☐
- I can ask questions about the research study at any time. ☐
- I'll look (analyse) at the group's transcripts about every two to four weeks. If you decide you don't want to be part of the project anymore, you can pull out before these dates:
Friday, October 17th, 2025 and Thursday, November 27th, 2025. ☐
- If I leave before the work is looked at (analysed), anything I said will be deleted or given back to me. ☐
- If I leave after the group work has been looked at (analysed), what I said might still be used, but nothing else will be collected from me. ☐
- My name will not be used in the report. No one will know what I said. ☐
- Only Clare (the researcher) and her supervisors will hear the recordings and see the conversation notes. ☐
- The project will finish in November 2025, Consent forms, the group session transcripts, summaries, and any recordings ☐

will be kept securely and destroyed on Wednesday, 13th November 2030.

- My school principal, [name removed] has given permission for this project to happen. ☐
- The project will be used for Clare's master's study at university. ☐

Please tick either yes or no, if you would like:

Yes No

- A copy of what I said during the group talks. ☐ ☐
- A copy of the notes from the group talks. ☐ ☐
- To read the final report when it's finished. ☐ ☐

If you want to get the final report, please write your email address below:

Email: _____

Please fill this out:

My Name: _____

My Signature: _____

Date: _____

He kōrero whakamārama mō Ohu Matatika 2—Expertise in tikanga Māori, Pacific research and social sciences / Human Ethic Committee Ohu Matatika 2—Expertise in tikanga Māori, Pacific research and social sciences.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Ohu Matatika 2, Application OM2 25 40. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact the Chairperson, Massey University Human Ethics Ohu Matatika 2, email humanethics2@massey.ac.nz.

Appendix C: Samoan Translation of Whānau Information Sheet and Consent Form

Massey University College of Humanities and Social Sciences Letterhead

Fa'amatalaga mo Whanau / O ē o lo'o Tausia

Kia ora, Talofa lava, Mālō e lelei, Ni sa bula vinaka, Kia orāna, Fakaalofa lahi atu,

Ua vala'auina lou alo e 'auai i le su'esu'ega lenei. Fa'amolemole e faitau mae'a fa'amatalaga nei a'o le'i faia lau filifiliga pe e te 'auai pe leai. Afai e finagalo lou alo e 'auai, fa'afetai. Afai e le mana'o lou alo e 'auai, fa'afetai mo le iloiloina o lenei talosaga.

O ai A'u?

O lo'u igoa o Clare Letting ma o lo'o o'u feagai nei i le su'ega o lo'u fa'ailoga o le, Master of Educational (Administration and Leadership) i Te Kunenga ki Purehuroa – i le lunivesete o Massey. O le galuega lenei, o se vaega mana'omia o la'u su'esu'ega.

O le a le fa'amoemoe o lenei galuega?

O le fa'amoemoe o lenei su'esu'ega, e fia malamalama po'o a manatu o tama Pasefika i ni mea ua lagolagoina po'o ni lu'itau o lo'o latou fetaia'i a'o sa'ili manuia i a'oga mauualuluga i Aotearoa i Niu Sila, e fia sa'ili'ili fo'i pe fa'apefea ona fa'aleleia ni auala e fesoasoani ai a'oga mauualuluga ina ia fa'aleleia atili ai a latou taumafai.

E fa'apefea ona e fesoasoani?

Ua vala'auina lou alo e 'auai ona o ia o le tama Pasefika ma o lo'o i le tausaga 9 po'o le tausaga 10. O lo'o o'u fia galue fa'atasi ma se kulupu o tama Pasefika i le galuega a le Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR), o talanoaga, o le metotia muamua lea e fa'aaoga e aoina ai fa'amatalaga ma e maualuga le talatalanoa i le āvāfatafata ma le fefa'aaloaloa'i. O le manulauti a le YPAR, ia amata le talanoaga i se fesili e talafeagai ma ni fa'afitauli i o latou soifuaga. O le matou sue'sue'ina fa'atasi po'o le a le uiga o le manuia i a'oa'oga, aemaise fo'i o se lagona n ate mafai ona 'ausia tulaga maoa'e i le a'oga. O le gaioiga autu e aofai ai:

1. Toe tepa i taimi ua tuana'i i tulaga manuia sa 'ausia aemaise o le taimi nei.

2. Galuea'ina ni faiga e fa'amalosia ai le lagona fia 'ausia tulaga maoa'e i le a'oga.

3. A uma le fa'atinoga, toe lloilo ma fa'ailoa leisi la'asaga e folasia atu i le ta'ita'i ulu o le a'oga (Pulea'oga ma Sui Pule & Pule Lagolago)

O le a 'auai lou alo i le kulupu i le taimi o le malologa (lunch) e fa'atasi i le vaiaso mo vaiaso e valu (8) i le kuata lona fa. O talanoaga nei e faia i le Pavilion. O le a saunia se fa'amalosi tino mo tama e amana'ia ai o latou taimi mo le su'esu'ega.

Afai e ioe lou alo e 'auai, o le a matou galulue fa'atasi i le galuega e sa'ili'ili manuia e iloa ai se gaioiga e fa'atinoina ina ia fa'alauteleina ai tulaga uma ua na mauaina i ana a'oa'oga. O talanoaga i kulupu e faia i le taimi o le malologa, e fa'atasi i le vaiaso mo vaiaso e valu (8) i le kuata lona fa (4). O le a ou pu'eina i le leo (audio record) talanoaga ma tusia i lalo i lau ma lona fa'atagaga. E mafai ona ia filifili e le tali atu i fesili pe le auai i ni gaioiga a le kulupu i soo se taimi e aunoa ma se mafua'aga. E mafai ona ia to'esea lona auai mai le su'esu'ega a'o le'i o'o i nei aso; **Aso Faraile, Oketopa 17, 2025** ma le **Aso Tofi, Novema 27, 2025**.

O le a le mea e tupu i fa'amatalaga e te aumaia?

O le a aoina fa'amatalaga i lona tupu'aga ona o leisi lea vaega o le su'esu'ega. O fa'amaumauga e uiga i tupu'aga e aoina ina ia mautinoa o lo'o sa'o lelei ona fa'aleo fa'amatalaga tupu'aga ese'ese o tama Pasefika, o ē o lo'o taula'i iai le su'esu'ega lenei. O fa'amatalaga nei o le a lagolagoina iloilogia o fa'atalanoaga o aganu'u o tupu'aga e ese'ese o tama Pasefika. O le su'esu'ega lenei e fa'alilolio. O lona uiga e na o a'u ma lo'u supevaisa o le a iloina tupu'aga o tama e 'auai. O tautalaga ma le su'esu'ega mai le YPAR, o le tu'u fa'atasi, ma e le fa'ailoaina lavāle tupu'aga i ripoti ma so'o se fa'amaumauga fa'alaua'itele. Ae peita'i, e tataua ona iloina e lou alo, i totonu talanoaga i kulupu laiti, e iloina e tagata o lona sl'osi'omaga i le lotoifale lona tupu'aga. O e 'auai, o le a iai le avanoa e faitau ai i fa'amaumauga o talanoaga, ma e mafai ona ave'ese e iai ni fa'amatalaga e le man'o ia iloa e nisi tagata. E uma loa ona faitau ai, e na o a'u ma la'u supavaisa e faitauina fa'amaumauga tusitusia nei. O tusi talosaga i mātua mo lo latou fa'atagaga, o au'ilililiga o talanoaga ma isi fa'amaumauga e teuina fa'apitoa ma e fa'aleagaina ma fa'aleagaina i le Aso Lulu aso 13 Novema i le 2030.

I le fa'ai'uga o le poloketi, o le a faia se fa'amanatuga mo tama ma a latou aiga, e potopoto fa'atasi, fa'asoa atu i'uga o le su'esu'ega, ma fa'ailoa le galuega mamafa a le kulupu. O le fuafuaga o gaioiga na galulue fa'atasi ai tama o le a fa'asoa atu i aiga.

O ai e mafai ona ou feso'ota'i iai e lagolago mai?

Afai o le su'esu'ega lenei ma matā'upu o le a talanoaina e ono fa'atupu ai le popole o lou alo, e mafai ona ia fa'afeso'ota'iina le: What's UP, e lē totogiina, o se auala e fa'alilolilo le fesoasoani mo tupulaga talavou, o le numera e, 0800 942 8787 (0800 WHATSUP) po'o talanoa i le talanoaga online i le www.whatsup.co.nz. E mafai fo'i ona fa'afeso'ota'i le counsellor a le a'oga, o [name removed]. O lana imeli o le, [email address removed] e fai ai sou avanoa po'o se appointment. Ia mautinoina e lou alo afai e iai ni vaega o talanoaga e ono lagona e lou alo e a'afia ai lona saogalemu ma lona soifia maloloina, o le tu'uina atu lo ai le Oranga tamariki ma [name removed], o le Sui Pule o tama o le Tausaga 7 – 10.

O le a le fa'agasologa o le su'esu'ega?

Talu ai o le su'esu'ega lenei o se sa'ili'iliga efai fa'atasi, e iai se fa'alapotopotoga o le vaega o le YPAR, latou puipuia le tupu'aga o lou alo. O lona uiga:

- O le a 'auai o ia i taupulega o auala e fefa'asoa'i ai fa'amatalaga.
- O lona tupu'aga e fa'alilolilo ma e na o a'u ma la'u supavaisa e iloina, e leai se fa'amatalaga e iloa ai se tupu'aga e aliali i ripoti po'o ni tusitusiga.

O le a se mea e maua ma ii le su'esu'ega?

O fa'amatalaga e maua mai le su'esu'ega lenei, e fa'aaogā mo la'u pepa o lo'o saunia mo lo'u fa'aailoga Masters. O i'uga o lenei su'esu'ega ma le YPAR e ono fa'asoaina atu i pule o le a'oga, o se semina a faia'oga o le a'oga, ma se au'ili'iliga mo le [name removed], po'o se fa'alauteleina o malamalama o fgaia'oga pe lomia fo'i i lomiga mo faia'oga.

Afai e taliaina lenei vala'aulia, o a ou aiātatau o se tagata e 'auai i su'esu'ega?

E leai se noataga ia te oe ma lou atalii e talia lenei valaaulia. Afai e filifili o ia e auai, o ia e iai le aia tatau e:

- ua e filifili e te lē taliina ni fesili
- e talosagaina le tapeina o le masini pu'eleo i so'o se taimi a'o faia le talanoaga i kulupu
- fa'ama'amulu mai le su'esu'ega ma le galuega a le YPAR i so'o se taimi a'o le'i fa'ai'uina le kuata lona 3
- fesili e uiga i le su'esu'ega i so'o se taimi
- e fia maua sau kopi o au fa'amatalaga uma sa fa'asoaina atu i taimi o talanoaga a kulupu
- e mafai ona faitau i ripoti o le su'esu'ega lenei pe imeli i le o lo'o faia le su'esu'ega (Clair Letting). Afai e iai ni fesili po'o ni fa'afitauli, o ai e mafai ona e feso'ota'i iai?

Afai e iai ni fesili po'o ni fa'afitauli, o ai e mafai ona e feso'ota'i iai?

Tamaitiiti su'esu'e i le iunivesite

Igoa: Clare Letting

Imeli: [redacted]@massey.ac.nz

Telefoni: [redacted]

Fa'atonu o le Su'esu'ega

Igoa: Jenny Poskitt

Matafaioi: Polofesa

A'oga: Institute of Education—Te Kura o Te Mātauranga

Telefoni: +64 6 951 6070

Imeli: j.m.poskitt@massey.ac.nz

He kōrero whakamārama mō Ohu Matatika 2—Tomai i le tikanga Māori, su'esu'ega a le Pasefika ma le soifua lautele / Komiti o le Fa'ata'ita'i Amio Taualoa a Tagata Ohu Matatika 2—Tomai i le tikanga Māori, su'esu'ega a le Pasefika ma le soifua lautele

Ua iloiloaina ma fa'atagaina lenei poloketi e le Massey University Human Ethics Ohu Matatika 2, Talosaga OM2 25 40. Afai e iai ni ou popolega e uiga i le fa'ataunu'uga o lenei su'esu'ega, fa'amolemole fa'afeso'ota'i le Ta'ita'ifono, Massey University Human Ethics Ohu Matatika 2, imeli humanethics2@massey.ac.nz

Fomu o le Maliega a Mātua [mo le auai i le YPAR ma Fono Talanoa]

Su'esu'ega Fa'atino e Auai ai Tupulaga (YPAR) e su'esu'eina le manuia o tama Pasifika.

Tagata Su'esu'e: Clare Letting Institute of Education—Massey University

Fa'amatalaga fa'alilolilo

O fa'amatalaga uma e aoina i le su'esu'ega lenei o le a teuina fa'alilolilo. E lē aliali le suafo o lou alo ma ni fa'amatalaga uma e uiga iā te ia i so'o se ripoti po'o se tusitusiga e lolomiina. O talanoaga ma tautalaga e pu'eina ma le tusi fa'ataga a mātua, o le a mau lelei ma puiapuia malu i fa'amaumauga tekonoosi a le lunivesete o Massey, ma e na o le tagata o lo'o faia le su'esu'ega lenei ma lana supavaisa e mafai ona aumaia ma silasila iai.

Fa'amolemole, fa'asa'o le pusa pe a uma ona e faitau ma ua e malie i le fa'amatalaga.

1. Ua uma ona ou faitauina fa'amatalaga tusia o le su'esu'ega ma ua uma fo'i ona fa'amatalaina mai iā te a'u. ☐
2. Ua ou malie i tali o a'u fesili. Ua ou malamalama fo'i, e mafai ona ou toe fesili i seisi taimi ☐
3. Ou te fa'atagaina lo'u atali'i e auai i le YPAR ma le talanoaga e pu'eina (leo). ☐

Ua ou malamalama:

- Ou te fa'atagaina le aoina o fa'amatalaga e uiga i le tupu'aga o la'u tama mo le su'esu'ega lenei. ☐
- O fa'amatalaga ma gaioiga o le ta'amilosaga o le su'esue'ga lenei, e lua po'o le fa vaiaso e iloiloaina ai pe a ma'ea ona aoina. E mafai lavāona fa'ama'amulu mai la'u tama i so'o se taimi, ae o fa'amatalaga ua uma ma'ea ona iloiloaina e fa'amauina pea mo le su'esu'ega. ☐
- O fa'amatalaga uma lavāua tu'uina atu e la'u tama, e fa'aleagaina a'o le'i o'o i le Aso Lulu aso 13 o Novema i le 2030. ☐
- Ua ou malamalama e mafai ona fa'ama'amulu la'u tama mai le galeuga lenei i so'o se taimi ☐

- Ua ou malamalama o fa'amatalaga uma o le a iloiloaina, e lua i le fa vaiaso e faia ai se'ia mae'a fa'ata'amilosaga o le su'esu'ega e tasi. ☐
- Afai ae fa'ama'amulu la'u tama a'o le'i faia le fa'atamilosaga o le iloiloga, o fa'amatalaga ma tala uma lavāna ia fa'asoaina mai, e toe fa'afo'i mai i la'u tama pe fa'aleagaina fo'i. ☐
- Ua ou malamalama afai ae fa'ama'amulu la'u tama ae ua mae'a ona iloiloaina fa'alilolilo fa'amatalaga sa aumai, o le fa'amauiina pea ana fa'amatalaga ma tala na fa'asoaina mai, ae e lē toe aoina mai nisi fa'amatalaga a tagata ta'ito'atasi. ☐
- O fa'amatalaga ma tala uma ua aumaia, e teuina fa'alilolilo e lē o faia le su'esu'ega ma lana supavaisa. ☐
- Ua ou malamalama, afai e fa'asoaina atu e la'u tama ni fa'amatalaga a'o faia lenei su'esuega e ono a'afia ai lona saogalemu ma lona soifua maloloina, e logoina le Oranga Tamariki ma [name removed] le Pule Lua o Tausaga 7–10. ☐
- O talanoaga ma tala tusitusia o tautalaga ua pu'eina e teuina fa'alilolilo e le o faia lenei su'esu'ega ma lana supavaisa. ☐
- O i'uga uma o le su'esu'ega, o le a fa'aaogāina mo su'esu'ega o le fa'ailoga o le Masters. ☐
- Ua maua mai le ioega ma le fa'atagana a le pule o le a'oga ma e le lolomiina le igoa o le a'oga i ni tusitusiga. ☐
- E lē lolomiina le igoa o la'u tama i ni ripoti ma ni tusitusiga lomina, ma o le matuā malu puipuia so'o se fa'amatalaga e ono aliali ai la'u tama. ☐

Fa'amolemole fa'as'o le ioe po'o le leai pe afai e te finagalo: *Io* *Eai*

- Ou te mana'o i se kopi o talanoaga ma tautalaga a kulupu (Talanoaga) ☐ ☐
- Ou te mana'o i se kopi tusitusia o talanoaga a kulupu. ☐ ☐
- Ou te fia maua se kopi o le ripoti fa'ai'u. ☐ ☐

Suafo o lou alo / o lē e auai _____

Suafa o mātua / O lē o lo’o tausia

Saini a mātua / O lē o lo’o tausia

O le aso

Fa’amolemole fa’aopopo ifo lau imeli pe afai e te fia maua se kopi o le ripoti fa’ai’u.

Imeli a Mātua / O lē o lo’o tausia

He kōrero whakamārama mō Ohu Matatika 2—Tomai i le tikanga Māori, su’esu’ega a le Pasefika ma le soifua lautele / Komiti o le Fa’ata’ita’i Amio Tualoa a Tagata Ohu Matatika 2—Tomai i le tikanga Māori, su’esu’ega a le Pasefika ma le soifua lautele

Ua iloilo ina ma fa’atagaina lenei poloketi e le Massey University Human Ethics Ohu Matatika 2, Talosaga OM2 25 40. Afai e iai ni ou popolega e uiga i le fa’ataunu’uga o lenei su’esu’ega, fa’amolemole fa’afeso’ota’i le Ta’ita’ifono, Massey University Human Ethics Ohu Matatika 2, imeli humanethics2@massey.ac.nz

Appendix D: Tongan Translation of Whānau Information Sheet and Consent Form

Massey University College of Humanities and Social Sciences Letterhead

Koe laípepa fakamatala maá e famili pe tauhi fanau.

Kia ora, Talofa lava, Mālō e lelei, Ni sa bula vinaka, Kia orāna, Fakaalofa lahi atu,

Óku fakaafeí ho foha ke kau mai í he fekumi óku fakahoko. Kataki 'o lau á e fakamatala fakalelei kimuá pea ke fili pe teke kau he fekumi ni pe íkai. Kapau é loto ho foha ke kau mai pea óku ou óatu á e fakamalo. Kapau óku íkai loto ho foha ke kau mai pea óku ou óatu á e fakamalo í hoó tuku taimi ke fakakaukauí á e kole naé fai atu.

Ko hai au?

Ko hoku hingoa ko Clare Letting pea óku ou lolotonga fakahoko áe ako ki hoku Master í he Education (Administration and Leadership) í Te Kunenga ki Purehuroa- Únivesiti ko Massey. Koe ngaue koéni koe kongá ia éku fekumi ke fakakakato hoku MA.

Koe ha á e taumuá á e ngaue eni?

Koe ngaue koéni óku fakataumuá ia ke Mahino 'a e ngaahi fakakaukau 'a e fanau tangata Pasifika fekau'aki mo e ngaahi me'a 'oku nau poupou mo e ngaahi pole 'oku nau fehanga hangai mo ia 'i hono lavame'a 'i he ngaahi ako'anga ma'olunga 'i 'Aotearoa-Nu'u Sila, pea vakai'i 'a e founa 'e lavāke fakalelei'i ai 'a e ngaahi founa fakaako ke poupou'i lelei ange 'a e lavame'a 'a e fanau tangata Pasifika.

É ala fefe hoó tokoni?

Óku fakaafeí atu ho foha ke kaumi í he ngaueni he óku íloí ia koe tokotaha Pasifiki óku lolotonga í he yr 9 pe 10. Óku ou fie ngaue fakataha moha kií kulupu fanau tangata Pasifiki í he YPAR (Youth Participatory Action Research pe koe ngaue áki á e

toútupu ki he fekumi), ó ngaueáki á e founa tanaki fakamatala óku íloa í he Pasifiki koe ‘Talanoa’. Koe founa tanaki fakamatala éni óku ne fakaáíái á e fevahevaheáki í he founa óku tauátaina pea mo fetokaí áki pea mo fakapaápaápa. Koe taumuá óe YPAR ke kamata áki éhe toútupu óku kau mai áki ha palopalema pe koha fehuí óku kau tonu kihe énau mouí pea moénau ngaahi aúsia. Temau lavālevāó vakaií pe koe ha á e úhinga ó e lavāmeá ki ho foha pea moe ngaahi meá óku ne fakalotolahii ai ia kene lavameá. Koe ngaahi ékitiviti é kau ai koe:

1. Fakakaukau ki ha ngaahi aúsia ó e lavameá í he ako í he kuohili pe koe lolotonga.
2. Faú ha ngaahi palani ngaue kene poupouí ho foha kene lavameá í he ako.
3. Ósi hono fakahoko á e palani, pea toe vakaí á e ngaahi fokotuútuú ngaue ke fakamahino á e tuúnga ke hoko atu kiai í hono fakahoko ki he kau taki ó e ápiako.

É kau mai ho foha ki he kulupu í he taimi kai hoátaa tuó taha í he uike í ha foí uike é 8 í he teemi 4. Koe fakataha koéni é fakahoko ia í he Pavilion. Koe meá ófa maá e fanau tangata é kau mai koe teu atu pe haánau meátokoni.

Kapau é loto ke kau mai, te mau ngaue fakataha í he ngaue ni ko hono vakaií á e ola lelei ke fakapapauí ha ngaue é lavākene toe fakaleleií ai éne aúsia fakalukufua í he ako. Koe ngaue fakakulupu é fakahoko tuó taha í he uike í he taimi kaihoátaa í he uike é 8 lolotonga á e teemi 4. Teu hiki tepi á e ngaahi fakamatala é fakahoko pea teu toki hiki tohi ia í haó fakangofua mai. Óku ne fili pe peé loto kene tali á e ngaahi fehuí pea óku átaa pe kapau óku íkai fie kau mai ia í he fepolatalanoaáki pea óku íkai ke fiemaú kene ómai ha úhinga. É lavāpe kene fakafisi mei he fekumini ó íkai fiemaú kene ómai ha úhinga, í haáne fetu’utaki mai kia au í ha faáhinga taimi pe kimuá pea ósi á e teemi 4. ‘E lavāke ne to’o hake mei he fekumi ni kimu’a pea toki a’u ki he’aho ko ‘eni; **Falaite, ‘Okatopa 17, 2025** mo e **Tu’apulelulu, Nōvema 27, 2025**. Ka pau é íkai toe fie hoko atu í he fekumi ni pe koe ngaahi fakamatala kotoa pe naá ne fakahoko mai é fakafoki atu kiai pe ko hono fakaáuha.

Koe ha e meá é hoko ki he ngaahi fakamatala óku ke ómai?

É tanai á e ngaahi fakamatala fakamatala fakamatakali ho foha ko ha konga ia óe fakatotolo. 'E tanaki 'a e fakamatala fakamatakali ke fakapapau'i 'oku fakahaa'i totonu 'e he fakatotolo 'a e ngaahi le'o mo e ngaahi a'usia kehekehe 'a e fanau tangata Pasifika, 'a ia ko e tefito'i kaveinga ia 'o e savea ni. 'E poupou'i 'e he'ene fakamatala ke 'analaiso 'o e anga fakafonua mo tokoni ki hono vakai'i 'a e founa 'e lavāke fakafotunga ai 'e he ngaahi tu'unga fakamatakali kehekehe 'a e fanau ako 'i he lavame'a, tu'unga mo e ako. 'Oku 'ikai fakahahaholo 'a e fakatotolo ó úhinga ko éku pule ngaue pe pea mo au óku ílo ki he tu'unga ho foha. 'E fakataha'i 'a e ngaahi fakamatala mo e fakatotolo na'e ma'u mei he YPAR, pea 'e 'ikai fakahahaholo pe ko hai ia 'i ha fa'ahinga lipoti, fakamatala pe fakamatala fakapule'anga. Ka neongo ia, 'oku totonu pe ke mahinoí ého foha koe fanga ki'i ngaue iiki ange, 'oku malavāpe ke 'ilo'i hono tu'unga 'e he kakai o e kolo. É óange á e faingamalie ki a kinautolu óku kau mai ki he fakatotoloí kenau lau ai á énau ngaahi tali ki he ngaahi fehui' pea ke fakamahino óku totonu á e ngaahi fakamatala kuo tanaki pea ke to'o mo liliu ha ngaahi fakamatala óku íkai ke ongoí fiemalie kiai hili hono fakahoko á e ngaue. Hili hono óange á e faingamalie koéni kia kinautolu óku kau mai pea éku pule ngaue pe pea mo au tema lau á e ngaahi fakamatalani mei he kulupu ni. Koe ngaahi tohi fakangofua pea moe fakamatala naé hiki tepi mo hiki nima é tauhi malu ia pea é toki fakaáuha í he áho Pulelulu ko hono 13 ó Novema 2030.

'I he'osi 'o e poloketi, 'e fai ha fakafeta'i/fakamālō 'a e kau tama mo 'enau fāmili ke nau potopoto fakataha, fetufeeaki 'a e ngaahi ola, pea fakahā fakamālō ki he ngāue mālohi 'a e kulupu. 'E fakahā atu foki ki he fāmili 'a e fuofua ngāue (action plan) na'e fakataha'aki ai 'e he kau tama.

Ko hai teke lavāfetuútaki kia ke pouou?

Kapau koe fekumi pe koe kaveinga óku óhake ke talanoaí óku fakatupu hohaá ki ho foha é lavāke ne fetuútaki mai ki he What's Up, óku taétotongi pea óku malu kene tokonií á e fanau toútupu í ho telefoni ki he 0800 942 8787 (0800 WHATSUP) pe ko hoó talanoa í he internet í he www.whatsup.co.nz. Óku áta pe keke fetuútaki ki he tokotaha

faleí á e ako ko [name removed]. Teke lavāó email kiai í he [email address removed] ke fokotuútuú ha taimi keke sio ai kiai. Kataki 'o fakatokanga'i ange kapau 'e fakaha 'e ho foha ha fa'ahinga fakamatala lolotonga 'a e ngaahi fakataha talanoa 'oku ne fakatupu ha hoha'a ki he'ene malu pe ko éne mo'ui, 'e kamata ha referral kia 'Oranga Tamariki mo [name removed], ko e Tokoni Puleako ki he Ta'u 7-10.

Koe ha á e founa ó e fekumi?

Koe úhi koe fakatotolo koéni óku fengaueáki fakatokolahi é lavāho foha ó maluí hono tuúnga koe kongia ia ó e YPAR. Óku úhinga éni:

- É kau í he tútuúni ki he founa é fevahevaheáki ai á e ngaahi fakamatala mei he fekumi ni.
- É malu ai pe hono tuúnga koe pule ngaue pe pea moau tema ílo kiai, pea heíkai ke kau hono tuúnga í ha lipooti, ngaahi fakamatala pe tohi fakamatala.
- Neongo temau feinga áki homau lelei taha ke óua naá íloí koe áha taha he íkai ke mau lavāó fakapapauí atu é lavāéni í ha kií kolo óku tokosií. Te ne maú faingamalie kene toe vakaií éne ngaahi fakamatala ke toó ha meá óku íkai fiemalie kiai kimuá pea fakakau atu á e fakamatalani ki he fekumi.

Koe ha e ola é maú mei he ngaue ni?

Koe ngaahi fakamatala é maú mei he fekumi ni pea moe YPAR é ngaue áki ia ki he fakamatalaí éku Master. Koe ngaahi fakamatala ni é vahevahe atu ia ki he kau taki ó e ápiako pea ki he kau ngaue ái ia é fakahoko ia í ha semina pea é toótoómeá lalahi ó fakahoko kihe [name removed] áia é fakahoko ia í he énau fakataha fakalakalaka fakapalofesinale pea é toe fakakau atu ia í he tohi noa fakaako.

Kapau teke tali á e fakaafeni, ko ha ho hoó totonu koe tokotaha óku kau í he fakatotolo?

Ko koe moho foha óku íkai ke íai ha meá kene fakalotoí áki kimoua kemo tali á e fakaafe ni. Kapau é loto ho foha ke kau mai, pea óku íai éne totonu ke:

- Fili pe tene tali a e fehuí pe íkai

- Koe ke taófi á e hiki tepi í ha fa'ahinga taimi pe lolotonga á e ngaue fakakulupu.
- Fakafisi mei he fekumi pea moe YPAR iha faáhinga taimi pe kimuá pea ósi á e teemi 3.
- Fehuí ha faáhinga fehuí pe fekauáki pea moe fakatotolo ni.
- Maú á e tatau ó éne ngaahi tali í he ngaue fakakulupu.
- Lau ha faáhing lipooti pe fekauáki moe fakatotolo ni 'iha áne email ki he tokotaha óku ne tataki á e fakatotolo ni ó kole ha tatau.

Ka pau óku íai haó toe fehuí pe palopalema ko hai teke fetuútaki kiai?

Tokotaha óku ne fakahoko á e ngaue ni

Hingoa: Clare Letting

Email: [REDACTED]@massey.ac.nz, telefoni: [REDACTED]

Pule: Palofesa Jenny Poskitt

Ápiako: Insititute of Education - Te Kura o Te Matauranga

Telefoni +64 6 951 6070

Email: j.m.poskitt@massey.ac.nz

Ha fakamatala ki he Ohu Matatika 2—'Oku nau ma'u 'a e poto fakapule'anga 'i he tikanga Māori, ngaahi fekumi Pasifiki mo e saienisi fakasosiale / Komiti Fakaetika 'a e Tangata Ohu Matatika 2—'Oku nau ma'u 'a e poto 'i he tikanga Māori, fekumi Pasifiki mo e saienisi fakasosiale.

Koe ngaue koéni naé ósi vakaií pea fakangofua 'ehe Únivesiti ó Massey Human Ethics Ohu Matatiki2, Fika kole ngofua OM2 25 40. Kapau óku íai haó hohaá ki he founa óku fakahoko áki á e fakatotolo ni pea ke fetuútaki mai ki he sea, Massey University Ethicks Ohu Matatika 2, pe ko haó email ki he humanethics2@massey.ac.nz.

Massey University College of Humanities and Social Sciences Letterhead

Koe tohi fakangofua mei he matu'a (ke kau 'i he YPAR pea moe ngaue fakakulupu)

Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) ke vakai'i 'a e lavame'a 'a e fanau tangata Pasifika.

Koe tokotaha fakatoto: Clare Letting, Institute of Education - 'Univesi Massey.

Fakamatala 'oku 'ikai fakahahaholo

Koe ngaahi fakamatala kotoa pe 'oku tanaki 'i he fakatoto ko'eni 'oku tauhi malu ia. Koe hingoa ho'o ki'i tamasi'i pe koha fa'ahinga me'a pe tene fakaha atu ia 'e 'ikai faka'asi ia 'i ha lipooti pe koha fakamatala 'e paaki atu. Koe talanoa moe ngaahi fakamatala kotoa pe 'e hiki tepi pe hiki nima pea moe ngaahi foomu fakangofua kotoa pe 'e tauhi malu pea loka 'i ha founa malu mo falala'anga 'i he komipiuta 'ae 'Univesi Massey pea koe tokotaha fakatoto pe pea mo'ene supavaisa 'e lavake ne ma'u 'a e ngaahi fakamatala ni.

Kataki 'o maaka'i 'a e puha 'oku ke loto kiai 'i he ngaahi fakamatala 'i lalo:

1. Oku ou 'osi lau 'a e ngaahi fakamatala pea kuo 'osi fakamatala'i kiate au 'a e 'uhinga 'o e ngaue ni. ☐
2. Kuo 'osi tali 'eku ngaahi fehu'i pea kuou fiemalie. 'Oku mahino kiate au 'oku malavape keu 'e ke ha ngaahi fehu'i 'i ha fa'ahinga taimi pe. ☐
3. 'Oku ou loto ke kau atu hoku foha 'i he YPAR pea moe talanoa 'aia 'e hiki tepi'i 'i he taimi 'oe fakataha fakakulupu. ☐

'Oku ou mahino'i 'e:

- 'Oku ou 'oatu 'a e ngofua ke kau atu 'a e fakamatala fakamatakali hoku foha ke tanaki atu ki he fakatoto ni. ☐
- Koe ngaahi fakamatala kotoa pe 'e tanaki 'e fai hono 'analaiso 'i he uike 'e ua (2) hili hono tanaki. 'E malavake fakafisi hoku foha mei he fakatoto ni 'i ha taimi pe kimu'a pea toki a'u ki he'aho ko 'eni; **Falaite, 'Okatopa 17, 2025 mo e Tu'apulelulu, Nōvema 27, 2025.** Ka neongo ia, 'a e ngaahi fakamatala fakakulupu kuo 'osi 'analaiso 'e kei ma'u pe ke kau 'i he fakatoto ni. ☐

- Koe ngaahi fakamatala kotoa pe na'e fakahoko atu 'e hoku foha 'e faka'auha ia 'i he 'aho Pulelulu 13 'o Novema 'o e 2030. ☐
- 'Oku ou mahino 'e malavāpe ke nofo hoku foha mei he ngaue ko'eni 'iha fa'ahinga taimi pe. ☐
- Kapau 'e fakafisi hoku foha kimu'a pea toki 'analaiso 'a e fakamatala mei he takai ko ia, 'e fakafoki atu pe kiate ia pe 'e tiliti (deleted) 'a e me'a kotoa pe na'a ne fetu'utaki mai. ☐
- Kapau 'e nofo mai hoku foha meihe fakatotolo ni kimu'a pea 'analaiso 'ae fakamatala ko 'eni 'i he takai koia, 'e fakafoki kiai 'a e ngaahi fakamatala koia pe ko hano faka'auha. ☐
- 'Oku ou mahino'i kapau 'e fakafisi hoku foha mei he fakatotolo ni kimui kuo 'osi 'analaiso 'ene ngaahi fakamatala pea fakapuli mo hono hingoa 'e kei kau pe 'ene fakamatala 'i he fakatotolo ni ka he'ikai ke toe hoko atu hano tanaki ha'ane ngaahi fakamatala ☐
- Koe ngaahi fakatalaka kotoa pe kuo tanaki 'e tauhi malu ia pea koe tokotaha fakatotolo pe pea mo 'ene supavaisa 'e'ilo kiai. ☐
- 'Oku ou mahino'i kapau 'e vahevahe 'e hoku foha ha ngaahi fakamatala lolotonga 'a e 'talanoa' 'oku ne fakaha mai ha ngaahi me'a 'oku kau kovi pe fakatu'utamaki ki he'ene mo'ui pea kuo pau ke fai ha fetu'utaki ki he Oranga Tamariki pea mo [name removed], koe tokoni pule 'o e Yr 7-10. ☐
- Koe ngaahi lekooti kotoa pe mei he 'talanoa' 'e tauhi malu pe ia ki he tokotaha fakatotolo pea moe supavaisa. ☐
- 'E ngaue'aki 'a e ngaahi fakamatala kuo tanaki ki he fakatotolo ki he MA. ☐
- Kuo 'osi ma'u mai 'a e ngofua mei he Puleako pea 'e 'ikai ke faka'asi 'a e hingoa 'o e 'apiako 'i ha fa'ahinga fakamatala pe tohi. ☐
- 'E 'ikai 'aupito ke 'asi 'a e hingoa hoku foha 'i ha fa'ahinga lipooti pe koha tohi pulusi pea 'e matu'aki ngaue tokanga ke 'oua na'a 'asi ha fakamatala tene fakaha atu ai 'a hoku foha. ☐

Kataki 'o faka'ilonga'i mai 'a e 'lo pe 'lkai kapau teke loto:

'lo lkai

- 'Oku ou fiema'u ha tatau 'o e fakamatala hiki liliu mei he hiki tepi ki he tohi nima mei he talanoa fakakulupu.
- 'Okou ou fiema'u ha tatau 'o e talanoa fakakulupu.
- 'Oku ou fiema'u ha tatau 'o e lipooti faka'osi.

☐☐☐☐☐☐

Hingoa ho foha 'oku kau mai

Hingoa 'o e matu'a pe tauhi fanau

Fakamo'oni 'a e matu'a pe tauhi fanau

'Aho

Kataki 'o hiki mai ho tu'asila email kapau 'oku ke loto ke ke ma'u 'a e lipooti faka'osi.

Matu'a / Tauhi Fanau

Ha fakamatala ki he Ohu Matatika 2—'Oku nau ma'u 'a e poto fakapule'anga 'i he tikanga Māori, ngaahi fekumi Pasifiki mo e saienisi fakasosiale / Komiti Fakaetika 'a e Tangata Ohu Matatika 2—'Oku nau ma'u 'a e poto 'i he tikanga Māori, fekumi Pasifiki mo e saienisi fakasosiale.

Koe ngaue koéni naé ósi vakaií pea fakangofua 'ehe Únivesiti ó Massey Human Ethics Ohu Matatiki2, Fika kole ngofua OM2 25 40. Kapau óku íai haó hohaá ki he founa óku fakahoko áki á e fakatotolo ni pea ke fetuútaki mai ki he sea, Massey University Ethicks Ohu Matatika 2, pe ko haó email ki he humanethics2@massey.ac.nz.

Appendix E: Coded Talanoa Transcripts

Friday 10th October 2025

Dialogue	Code
R Well always start our lessons with a prayer and I've forgotten the [school name removed] prayer already so can anyone remember it Why don't we open it up so you can get something to eat P4 Thank you miss R What would you like to eat next week? P6 What about Panikeke R What are they P6 They're Samoan pancakes R Everyone want steak and cheese	Group Protocol Menu Researcher Question Menu

P3 I want steak and cheese R So Wednesday period 6 is your next meeting and Friday lunchtime. What do you think our rules should be for this group what do you think we need to keep in mind about each other P1 Respect our decisions P2 Yep, respect our decisions R My biggest concern is I want you guys not to put each other down so i suppose that fits into respectful remember this place and time is confidential P3 Shut up P2 He just put me down P4 Miss did you make these? I'm allergic to wheat-bix R Yep, its Weet-Bix slice; I made it. Don't eat it then P5	Group admin Group Protocol Banter Menu Group Protocol
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Respect our decisions Be honest P6 Listen to what others have to say P1 Listen and don't judge P4 Don't judge a book by its cover R What's it like being back at school P1 Boring I miss my phone P6 You know he got all of his devices taken off him miss R Why did mum do that? P1 I made a secret snap account, I'm not telling you the name R Its really important that you put your phones away during these sessions and you have to tell me if I'm being to teacher if I'm being too bossy or taking control cause were in this together	Researcher Question Banter Researcher Question Group Protocol
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P (all) Yep P3 Isn't that the point of us being here R No the point of this is for me to listen to you and find and decide on an initiative that you can implement with my support. P1 My mum knows everything she writes down my passwords P4 Even if I don't tell my mum where I'm going she always finds out, I swear she has a GPS on my brain or something. R I think it's really important for us to start with a prayer and that we do things together. I'm hoping we can come up with something to implement this year but as its term 4 it might be next year P1 Are you gonna go for Poly leader P5 When we're in year 13 maybe P1 You're not going to get it over James Boyle	Banter Group Protocol Participant Question (Participant)
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P4 Won't [name removed] go for head boy P6 Is he trying to go for head boy? P1 Yeah, he told me P5 Vote for me for Poly leader; I'll be the best Poly leader. I'll set up 3 MAPS a term, and I'll buy you guys like KFC for MAPS R Whats MAPS? P4 They don't do sports anymore, they're activities P5 Yeah, it's like all the Polynesian girls are there We like to do sports with Carmel R Ahh, that's the attraction, isn't it P5 Its only once or twice a year	Researcher Question (information seeking) Cultural Event
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P1 I go for the food	Menu
P2 [Pasifika] Prize giving is coming up its going to be a celebration they only sent it out last week	Cultural Event
P1 What did you get last year?	Participant Question (Participant)
P2 Sports award, they've added some, haven't they	Cultural Event Description
R I don't know, I'm not that high up in the world, [name removed]	
P4 I went last year the food was nice but I didn't win anything so I just went for the food. I was helping dish the food	
P1 Miss he didn't give me any of the chips	Banter
P4 Miss can you get wicked wings next time	Menu
R Okay so you like wicked wings No ones allergic to anything	
P4	

I'm allergic to vegetables R Who do you think will be Poly leader for next year. Thats year 12 this year P2 [name removed] P3 Yeah [name removed] R Who would you like to be the Pasifika leader? P1 We should vote for the 2026 Pasifika Leader as well Miss P6 It depends on whos going for it because I feel we should have our say cause they'll organise things for us P5 Who's [name removed] P2 He's the tall one; he's in the second 15	Banter Researcher Question (information seeking) Participant Agency Participant Question (information seeking)
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Wednesday, 15th October 2025

Dialogue	Code
R Take a seat; so grab if you want some lollies in front; you're fine, take a seat; you can help your self to some lollies; what things does the school do that support your identity as Pasifika boys, What things does the school do that support your identity as Pasifika boys? P6 The problem is that you guys take all the good ones and then leave the yuck ones to everyone else; P3 Yeah, it's a strike day P1 I worked on my Social Studies assessment and I got Excellence on it, I did work hard P5 I did my school work R We're missing [name removed] We'll start with a prayer What does the school do for Pasifika students? P3 Miss he took the whole thing. There's like so much left; miss	Researcher Question (information seeking) Banter School Calendar Academic Achievement Student Effort Group Admin Group Protocol Researcher Question (information seeking)

P6 MAPS, Poly breakfast R Whats MAPs? P6 You just get to like link up with the Carmel girls; R when do you go... how often does it happen? P6 like twice a term; It hasn't been run for the last year P4 Miss how do you like it at [school name removed]; what do you like reading; what's your favourite food, miss?; what kind of chocolate R I watch sometimes I watch the rugby; so I like it when they're kind of losing and it's a bit tense; quite enjoyed it	Banter Cultural Events Researcher Question (seeking information) Cultural Event Description Researcher Question (seeking information) Participant Question (Researcher) Participant Distraction Participant Question
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P2 Miss is there anything in the pantry Miss do you watch any sport?	(Researcher) Researcher Connection
P4 [name removed] coached my team	Participant Perception
R that was my eldest	Participant Question (Researcher)
P4 he targeted [name removed] lot	
P3 Miss, have you ever visited the islands in Polynesia;	
R I visited Rarotanga	
P2 what was your first impression of [class removed] class?	Participant Goal
R I actually had the [class removed] class and I had the easiest run	Researcher Encouragement
P2 When you get your masters degree, can we come to your graduation; we'll do the haka for you; I wanna go to uni. But I don't want to pay off the debt.	

R You could get a scholarship; you're smart enough; P3 I don't think I'm smart enough for a scholarship, maybe for PE R for Pacific students as well P Can you bring the spicy ones next; miss can you bring drinks next time; what food are we getting Friday? R Pork buns panipopo; 4 each P1 I've seen him in the library quite a bit; he is here; yeah he's in year 12 P4 Miss why don't we go and interview the kids playing like other peoples perspectives on how they see us; R I'm more interested in your perspective P5 Miss do you think we should join the kapa haka; what are your thoughts on [school name removed], Miss? What is the worst school on the [suburb removed], Is [school removed] a girl or boy school?	Menu Researcher Connection Participant Agency Participant Question (Researcher) Researcher Connection
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P6 Is that how you know [name removed] mum? R No, I taught her kids at [school name removed] R mum chose that over [school removed] What musical instrument is she playing; I failed bursary English, by one mark. Thats why I understand when you guys say to me	
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Friday, 17th October 2025

Dialogue	Code
P2 I have the list Miss, that's the team miss R I'll know I need to organise extra food P5 I'll be nice to you today You took all the cream P3 Ahh Miss, I'm sure you can put in a good word [suggesting I speak to someone about an award at prize giving] R Ok I'll speak to [name removed] P5 He's got eyes in the back of his head Get all that cream on it I know you want some P1 Sleep and stay at home; Just eat I did my schoolwork P3 I got excellence on it [English assessment]; Can I get an award for English?	School Calendar Menu Banter Participant Agency Banter Student Effort Academic Achievement

P4 Can I get an award for English?	Participant Agency
P5 For year 7 English the whole thing was NA [non achieve] NA, NA. When I look back now—shame.	Academic Achievement
P2 Miss, can you nominate me for a prize? I wanna get an award (Pasifika Prize Giving)	Participant Agency
R And you've got another strike day next week too How many of you are going to the Pasifika prize giving? They didn't send me any in the nomination forms out; No, I haven't got any forms	School Calendar Cultural Event
P2 I wanna get an award and make my mum and dad proud Getting prizes, going on the stage	Family Pride Academic Achievement
P4 I wanna get a certificate on stage to make my family proud	
P1 Being rich	Material Success
P5 I wanna be a builder? How can I become the boss?	Participant Goal
P2 Being good at school. Just behave in class	Student Behaviour

P4 Being good at school. Not being naughty Well behaved R Who's your English teacher? P1 Miss he's not going to pay for it. He looks like a thief. P4 You guys think she's bad but she's not; yeah, see, he's a really good teacher; R Wouldn't that be like all the teachers They wouldn't make fun of you; What does a thief look like; P5 Miss Look at him. He's got darker skin than us. P1 So, if I'm skipping class for like a specific reason, say I'm skipping maths, for example they'll say No you can't do that. You have to focus on math. P6 Not let my parents down P3 Give it your all, all the tasks you do My dad helps	Researcher Question Participant Perception Researcher Question (information seeking) Participant Perception Parent Expectations Family Pride Student Effort Family Support (Resource)
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as well as my nephew. He's one and I just really special to me. I wanna look after him P6 Give it your all. It's really important for life P1 Yeah, see he's a really good teacher P2 He's like straight, to it and he lets you know that if you need help you can ask. You'll get a straightforward answer? Does that make sense; P4 Yeah, straight forward, right on to it and to the point, and then, if you need to learn something, he'll go straight to it; but like doesn't like make fun of you for not knowing P2 [name removed], she called me a thief P6 Homework and all the tasks, give it your all Working hard P1 yeah , he is a cameraman, but it depends on my future P6 Wait, I swear I've seen him online;	Family Motivation Participant Perception Teacher Practice Perceived Injustice
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P1 You know the awards evening, he's filming that he did it last year too	Cultural Event Description
P1 I look up to Sean Johnson - very well respected among the whole of League. A good talker as well. I like his podcasts they are a lot better than any of the other ones	Role Model Personality Trait
R The Warriors' seven who retired?	Researcher Question (clarify understanding)
P4 He's very well respected among the whole of league	
P3 Miss, he's a good leader; He's loke smart as well	
P6 Be successful, have a good family and be an All Black or in the NRL	Participant Goal
P2 Being humble is important	Personality trait
P3 Don't have an ego Like smart as well	
P5	

having good grades P2 Yeah I wanna get good grades P5 Looking after your family. The ones you love. Being there for them at there lowest and showcasing your love towards them. So you're not alone when you're failing, and when you're succeeding you're doing it together P1 My family, they keep me going P4 Do you like being a teacher; A nurse, why did you move to teaching? Miss did you get paid way more than wanted; What likes keep you guys like pushing? R You're capable of doing anything [name removed]. So are you [name removed] P4 What about if like you're the manager? Don't you have to still be there to supervise, to complete? R It's probably my family [that keeps me going] No you don't have to been there to supervise. You are the boss.	Academic Success Collective Responsibility Family Encouragement Participant Question (Participant) (Researcher) Researcher Encouragement Participant Goal Family Encouragement
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Tuesday, 21st October 2025

Dialogue	Code
R Chicken tenders; quite keen on pizza and chicken tenders; chicken tenders from where; no pizza huts better; oh what are we gonna eat Phones away; E1 where you have the Pasifika breakfast; so we'll just start with a prayer can you please lead us in the prayer please in the name of the father the son and the holy spirit amen P2 Oh Christmas year, that's extra presents you should miss; R So how do you get to school in the morning; how was your weekend what did you do; how was music on Friday; no please tell me your pulling my leg; we might get you in choir one day, [name removed] okay so who's got mum in their ear going what did you talk about; tell me about your singing on Friday. How did it go P1 Give me a prize for that! oh winning stuff, so talking about awards but also on the field; P6 I got motivated to get a blue card with KFC, making your school proud. P5 being recognised for your efforts I liked seeing everyone get an award except for me. It was fun seeing other people win	Menu Group Protocol Researcher Question Academic Success Sporting Success School Pride Motivation Recognition Community Support

P6 I liked seeing how happy they were when they won	Participant Encouragement
P4 Man... thats mish you should get a prize for that;	Researcher Encouragement
R You're not dumb why do you think youre dumb? I'm going to bring in my school reports; do you think I'm dumb; no I didn't think so	Group Admin
R Lets have a look at KAMAR	Researcher Question (information seeking)
R Do you wanna know where he is food tech off you go? What did you do yesterday?	School Calendar
P4 Game at home; went to my friends house miss; I went to the kiwis game; I had a game; it was a great practice for us	Researcher Question (information seeking)
P6 We went singing at [name removed] Retirement Village and near [school name removed] College as a service to the community. We got to go to the mall for lunch	Participant Agency
R Did we win how was it	
P2 Miss, can we go to [name removed] University	

R So we want to think about this stuff, we want to look at doing something for Pasifika boys in the school, what do you think? I'm just going to put it out there	Researcher Question (information seeking)
P5 How do us students know if you're going to win something?	Participant Question (Participants)
P4 Winning your life not doing the bad things Tell me to try my best in everything I do	Student Goal Student Behaviour Student Effort
P6 Making your school proud	Cultural Pride
P6 Your culture and your identity; I think another is representing your country well. my country is the Cook Islands.	School Calendar
R Year 13s done any pranks; didn't [school removed] come here and pop the tyres or something; its normally the last week of school	Participant Perception
P4 he looks like he's going to steal from the tuckshop; he's got darker skin than us	Cultural Event
R There's Pasifika prize giving on Thursday. There's going to be kai there	Cultural Event Description
P2	

I'm not taking that on the bus with those [school removed] boys eyeing me up; P4 I have never been to a Fiafia night with no food. What sort of a Fiafia night doesn't have food Miss are you coming on Friday [o Fiafia night]? P6 They look for a tutor for Polyfest training P1 I'm not joining the Polyfest group... cause our numbers are too small compared to other schools and that's embarrassing. It's not like [school removed]. [school removed] like good as P1 They make sure that I'm not late, that I'm on time They give me support. They're always there no matter what happens P4 Making my family proud P3 Yeah I wanna make my family proud too. P4 I look up to him [dad] P4 My dad keeps me going. I look up to him. He carries the family name and he inspires me to be like him and he carries our last name with pride.	Menu Participant Question (Researcher) Family Support (Resourcing) Participant Perception Family Support (Resourcing) Collective responsibility Family Pride Role Model Family Support (Encouragement)
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P5 My dad keeps me going when things are tough My dad wants me to do well P5 Remind me to do my homework and stuff P4 My dad he's like a strong man and he helps me out They support you like if you do something bad; P6 Family they support you when times are bad like keep you going P2 family helps you to stay grounded, like not too cocky P4 My parents pay my fees P4 Mum she's overboard, she goes on too much about what I need to do P3 Give me lectures being good at school; they make sure that I'm on time	Family Support (Financial) Family Support (Encouragement) Family Support (Resourcing)
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P6

My dad he came to NZ when he was 14 and he had a rough childhood and he's still happy and he plays rugby

Friday, 24th October 2024

Dialogue	Code
P2 I just liked the food; I don't eat cake I'm healthy; Miss I'll just take the box home; R I had to hide that in the freezer so my own family wouldn't eat it; P6 I thought there was going to be ice cream there, but no there wasn't; what's trifle?; I hate trifle; R There was nice trifle though, trifle. What did you enjoy about the Pasifika prize giving? P6 It felt good. It felt like I had a lot of support around me and people backing me up P1 Yeah, we're in it together. I enjoyed it. P6 Yeah I definitely felt like I belonged, like mainly because people are there to support me. But I'm also not doing this alone Fiafia night is socialising with people you don't know, you get to know them and learn more about your culture R There was none of the chocolate sauce on the pizza, bit disappointing;	Menu Menu Community Support Collective Responsibility Community Support Cultural Identity Menu

P6 they cat fished you P3 like talking to them. Different people you haven't met and people you know Same culture and that so its more meaningful the people are like your people Just getting together with everyone P4 You're not alone with friends P5 Friends support you like if you do something bad. So you're not alone P1 Everyone understands where you are coming from Yeah the first time and I want to go again; P4 People showed up for me P3 It's basically a celebration of like our success during the year and also like service to our community P2 Miss [name removed] always goes to those things... first fifteen rugby games	Peer Support Peer Collective Responsibility Cultural Identity Cultural Event Description Teacher Practice Outside the Classroom
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P3 Is that the one with the [colour removed] hair?" before confirming, "Yeah, I've seen her and her friend [also a teacher at the school] at the rugby games and Fiafia Night P4 Yeah, I saw the principal and sir at the Pasifika Prize Giving R Always goes to those things [name removed], do you know [name removed]; She always goes to the drama shows as well P3 He had a really good conversation with me about what I wanted to do after the Pasifika Careers evening and what I enjoyed about it Like at rugby he was always helping me teaching me what I can do in the game and that. P4 The careers evening sets us up it gives us an idea of what we want to do R Do they do anything for you? What do you have to do with them? Like, yes, they are in year 13 but do what?; Can you give some examples of when they might have stepped in or supported you; P3 The Fa'ataupati was more like trying to farewell our year 13s. What they remembered when they first started. P6 The younger boys will miss the [year 13s] we all will. They [year 13s] helped me when I need it	Peer Support Participant Goal Researcher Question (seeking information) Peer Support Peer Support
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P5 We will all miss them. They help us and we can go to them for stuff R Do you feel comfortable sharing any experiences of racism ? Has that stopped now? He's laughing; because he feels a bit uncomfortable P4 I get blamed for having gout Miss, because I'm Poly. All Samoans and Tongans have gout so they assume you have gout too. P3 our whole Year 9... all of a sudden they started saying they were Poly even though they weren't Poly they were Pālangi. It was disrespectful because some of my family went through that. They explained like parts of it, but not the full understanding. They just understand half of it P2 When we do something wrong they [peers] say its because I'm Poly. I feel like its racist. P4 White people saying the n word [nigger] is that racist? A does. P1 Yeah A says it as a joke I get blamed for having gout too.	Researcher Question (seeking information) Perceived Injustice Perceived Injustice
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R Nigger refers to the blacks, like, hey n__ boy, come here. You know, like, get over here and pick this coffin. You're not doing it fast enough. P5 Most of my family, or my dad's side, all from Cook Islands and stuff like that, like yeah and they're all based in [suburb removed]. And I don't think you have to go like very far back so I have to go to street from the islands and then when they came in [suburb removed], it was like they said it was the worst thing it was like the police banging down doors every day I had a few uncles that got killed by police They told me about their stuff. P6 Miss, so my dad's like really dark and then my mum and sister are like white. We went to this hotel in Taupō, and the receptionist said, she slipped her [Mum] a note saying "Are you OK?" That's racist.	Researcher Explanation Family Stories
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Tuesday 28th October 2025

Dialogue	Code
P4 You have a tournament tomorrow so you need to stop eating sharing is caring P1 No I need to I need to fuel up R [name removed] give it to him How's your dad [name removed] was your dad who lost his mate or his brother P5 Its his uncle. Fine R Are you going up North; Do you have any brothers or sisters up there P1 Two, 4 and 2 R Was the water cold P1 Quite cold, miss; Stop moving my plate, what's this cookie R Its a peanut brownie cookie so chocolate with peanuts	Banter Researcher Question (pastoral check in) Researcher Question (seeking information) Menu

P6 Ewww thats unhealthy miss R So are the doughnuts and pizzas you've just eaten P2 I have a touch game its seriously raining R I've got a question I wanted you to think about any experiences of racism that you've had either in school or outside of the school are you brave enough to share them with us I'll give you some time to think. Do you feel the teachers have the same expectations of you and the other boys in your class P5 What do you mean by that miss R Well do they expect you to achieve the same P5 I feel like they'll expect that I get a non-achieved or an achieved then they expect the other boys to get excellences and merits R Why do you think that?	Banter School Calendar Researcher Question (seeking information) Participant Question (seeking clarification) Participant Perception Researcher Question (clarify understanding)
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P4 Nah, Because we talk too much R Can you tell me some more P5 It just depends on the teacher. It depends on how you act towards a teacher, I can see how a teacher will pick on you if you're like bad to them. I'm pretty sure some teachers in year 7 don't really like me P2 Sometimes teachers are like if you have a bad first lesson with them they'll keep it with them for the rest of the year and say oh yeah he's a bad kid and even if he changes, she'll give you a reputation for the rest of the year P2 and P4 Yeah it depends on how you behave. P5 I feel that they expect me like to get a not achieve or an achieve. But then other boys they're like expect them to get like excellence and merits P6 They don't expect good from us because we make the lesson fun like we make people laugh R Why do you try and make the lesson fun P6	Student Behaviour Researcher Question (seeking clarification) Participant Perception Researcher Question (seeking clarification)
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Because its just boring sitting at a desk and like watching the like doing stuff on the board you don't know what they're talking about or doing	Participant Perception
R So you're saying you talk too much because youre trying to make the lesson fun	Researcher Question (seeking clarification)
P6 Yep	
R Would you say most of the lessons like that or do the teachers try and make them fun	Researcher Question (seeking information)
P6 Most of the teachers are standing talking to us	Teacher Practice
R So you've decided that standing at the front of the class and talking is not helping you but what does	Researcher Question (seeking information)
P1 Games miss	Teacher Practice
R Give me some examples	Researcher Question (seeking clarification)

P6 Kahoot or something like a board game, we made a board game last year for social studies it was about America's history	Teacher Practice
P1 Yeah it got the stuff out of us and we used our creativity.	Participant Perception
R What else helps you with your learning	Researcher Question (seeking information)
P1 Like maybe if they explain more and walk through the steps Miss is really good at explaining herself like she goes step by step and straight to the point	Teacher Practice
P5 If you do something wrong he's not going to punish you, he's gonna give some advice on how not to do it again. Whereas Miss it's like, go to the Dean's room.	
R Do you do the work in his class?	Researcher Question (seeking information)
P3 Yes	
R And in other classes,	Researcher Question (seeking information)
P3 Not as much	

R Why do you not work so hard in other classes?	Researcher Question (seeking information)
P3 I got a detention and a cross for not completing my work. In class he'll whip you if you do something wrong	Teacher Practice
P3 and P6 Yeah	
P2 I forgot my homework and he gave me a cross	
P5 [name removed] he sucks	Participant Perception
R Okay why does he suck	Researcher Question (seeking information)
P5 Because he doesn't like he expects us to know on first try. If a teacher explains stuff like over and over and everyone gets it and not like writing random stuff on the board and expect us to know it	Teacher Practice
P4 [name removed] she writes it on the board and makes us copy it down	Teacher Practice
P6 [name removed] he thinks the stuff we learn in week 1 and then when we get to week 9 he expects us to remember everything from week 1	

R Okay do you need repetition?	Researcher Question (clarify understanding)
P6 Yeah, that's what its called repetition	
P3 Do you know who is such a bad teacher	
R Why is he bad	Researcher Question (seeking information)
P3 The week of our assessment, that's when he starts teaching us everything	Teacher Practice
P6 It's because he lags He's delayed	
P3 Miss we had to do our test and he taught us everything in that test like not taught but was like telling us he started teaching everything the week of our test	
P2 I agree if someones behaving or misbehaving they don't expect us to get the highest mark but if you focus in on class like take down notes and that, then theyll expect you to get at least merit or excellence	Teacher expectations
R	Researcher Question

So do you think that high expectation or low expectation is based on what they're seeing in class P2 Yeah R Do you think theres something else P2 Its based on what they see in class R What about EP and what about homework P1 They give us homework they make us do something in the last 5 minutes and make us do it for homework R Does your homework help with your learning (All said no) P1 Its different to what we learned in class P2 They give us homework and its what we learn in the next lesson	(clarify understanding) Researcher Question (clarify understanding) Researcher Question (seeking information) Teacher Practice Researcher Question (seeking information)
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R Some people think its good because its revising what you learn does that happen here	Researcher Question (clarify understanding)
P2 No not really	
P3 I'd rather recap in class than recap at home because when your home your like trying to not relax or stress too much when it comes to revision at home basically all of us will stress out trying to revise everything in one go thats when we get that low expectation	Participant Perception
R What did you think of the awards [Pasifika Prize Giving]	Researcher Question (seeking information)
P5 Its pretty fun we did the haka Its like all the boys supporting the older boys that are leaving	Cultural Practice Peer Support
[name removed] said its always us Polys putting smiles on teachers faces	Cultural Pride
P6 We're the ones that the teachers ask to set up the chairs and tables in the auditorium for school events	Participant Perception
R	

Were you proud of that? P4 Yip Seeing all their hard work pay off P6 It was good having all the families there P2 She called me a thief last year I found a ball in class and then I gave it back right after I walked out she thought I took the ball and then she came in to my class took me out and said she could get me in more trouble she put a comment on KAMAR P3 Oh, I remember that I was in [name removed] class last year she took him out of RE R How do you think your teachers make a connection with you P6 I think it's about forming a connection with your students and understanding them P2 Give us food P1 Talk to us P5	Family Pride Participant Perception Researcher Question (seeking information) Teacher Practice Menu Teacher Practice
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Get to know us more P3 Not always angry Don't be serious P4 Don't like yell and like take a joke and know when its a joke R How do teachers make you feel safe and you belong in your classroom P6 By not picking on us P3 Being kind P4 Like respecting us if my teachers dont have respect for me I never respectfully have respect for them R How do you know they don't have respect for you P4 They don't take you seriously Like you'll ask for help and they're like you're not listening And then they'll give u a cross	Researcher Question (seeking information) Teacher Practice Researcher Question (seeking information) Teacher Practice
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R What would you like to eat I was thinking of meat, there's this meat pie shop that I really want you guys to try and tell me if its all right P4 Chicken tenders baking R I could get some chicken tenders Cause what I'm thinking and you guys can tell me if you agree or not is that we work towards doing something for Pasifika boys so we bring in an action to help Pasifika boys P5 Like schoolwork and that helps each other out then we can just go P3 Like the free period P2 Can I go to university? R You want to go to the University [name removed]; tell me about that P4 Go to the city campus and look at our futures and like what we want to do in the future R	Menu Participant Agency Participant Goal Researcher Question (clarify understanding) Participant Agency
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So we would do some sort of a bit of an action research thing where we would look at maybe interviewing or surveying the pasifika boys in school finding out what they think	
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Friday 31st October 2025

Dialogue	Code
R You had a shared lunch; was it just the whole film class or your mates; cool; do you wanna take some cakes home; I dont have a lunch box Can you lead us in a prayer; can you do a school prayer or do you have a Samoan prayer P2 nah just that prayer and the bad words R So yeah you went to the auditorium before you came,to welcome next years year 7s P1 Miss, they've been small since the year sevens last year they're gonna be tiny by the year 13 they be tiny as we ever had, that's not going to be good in sports cause our year 7s came 35th out of 50 teams R What sports are on this weekend how has your weekend gone you had a haircut? Why is food at all Pasifika events? P5 because it holds something, it holds something in our wairua but also it means; connects you with everyone; it just brings more people in; It brings us together to talk about like what weve been up to and that like we can have like a feed when we talk and that;	Group Protocol Banter School Calendar Researcher Question (seeking information) Cultural Practice

R So what are we gonna use the survey for	Participant Agency
P4 We could do a survey. I'll tell you what we could ask, what you're interested in because it gives us ideas	
P3 I'll tell you what we could ask is what your interested in because it gives us ideas its a voice on ideas and what they want to do it could bring people in for example if they like to play rugby during the period most of the boys would like to come what connects the boys together	
R How do you feel now that those year 13s have gone?	Researcher Question (pastoral check in)
P3 Its more quiet, I'd say, but I think the year 7s and 8s will miss them mainly because they normally around here most of the time.	Peer Support
P6 The year 7 and 8s come hang with the year 13s at the start of the year 'cause they feel safe with them	
P3 I would look up to the year 13s, when they have been organising events for us, like the picnic early this year. Then later more year 7s join even the Pālangi ones	Peer Collective Responsibility
P1 The younger boys look up to them [all participants nod]. We all do We should make a period for us Pasifika boys to get together.	Peer Support

R Anything interesting out there ...(boys are looking out the window towards the rugby field) P5 Its trash; you see that kid getting hugged [name removed] he's actual decent Shes good but I think she could explain things a bit slower she can go a bit fast other than that she needs to slow down a bit; shes pretty good; dont be strict take jokes and that some of these teachers take jokes and stuff too seriously P4 In the panther story one of them got expelled because of his hair. I think personally if it holds something deep in your family I'd say the school should just allow it they need to be not too strict. I understand they want us to be neat and look good but it shows our identity R So, [name removed], did you have an afro? Yeah, I had a bit of an afro having the afro out in public was good P6 No it wasnt that it was the horsey he didnt like and then he said you had to keep it up and if not its going to be a detention and it just made me feel like not welcome and so I cut it off P5 [name removed] came here when I wasnt here	Participant Agency Participant Distraction Teacher Practice Family Pride Perceived Injustice Researcher Question (seeking information) Teacher Practice Belonging School Calendar
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Tuesday 4th November 2025

Dialogue	Code
R So you met new family P2 Yeah	Researcher Question (seeking information)
R I don't have KAMAR I can't download it when one of you has finished eating we might have to do a run around for ... and ... [name removed] right there, [name removed] not here I haven't seen him all day	Group Admin
R Ok so you've met some people down in Wellington P2 Yeah I met them in Rarotanga R How are you connected to them P2 Through my dads side through my Grandma R Never seen them before P2	Researcher Question (seeking information)

No it was my first time R And what did u do what happened did you go to church P2 Yeah we went to church on Sunday, and the days before we had the funeral service and the burial I kinda just explored the island and went shopping in the general store R You went shopping P2 Yeah R Did you buy anything P2 Mainly clothing I got some online sports wear and singlets from the general store it was mainly just that that we shopped for R you shared the picnic story. I'm just going through some notes that I took and you said that the year 13s came around and introduced themselves to your family and told mum and dad that they'll look after you P4 Yeah, they said they'll organise what they're planning to do this year	Peer Support Peer Collective Responsibility
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R Why do you think they did that	Researcher Question (seeking information)
P4 I think its just that for some of us they didnt know some of the year 13s before going in to this year Remember G the year 13s came and introduced themselves to our parents	Peer Collective Responsibility
R So why do you think that it was important to the year 13s to introduce themselves and have a conversation with your parents	Researcher Question (seeking information)
P4 The year 13s introducing themselves to our families and that. Getting to know our parents, so they know that we'll be under control looking after our Pasifika boys Its like when we talk about them they might not know who they are at first but when we talk about them now theyll obviously click onto and know who they are Yeah its about connection thats what the picnic was about	Peer Collective Responsibility
R [name removed] at the Pasifika evening after he said hello to me asked where my family was So why was it important why did he want to know my family?	
P2 We always bring our families to our events. It's like to get to know you, we've gotta know your background, your village, where you're from Usually most of the events that we go to we bring our family over and if we have a performance well have our family come over and watch us	Cultural Practice

R I've got another question You talked about some of the teachers dont expect you guys to get excellence they expect you to get achieves or non-achieves	Researcher Question (clarify understanding)
P1 I remember that	
P5 Well as I said last time it depends on how you behave in class because they prioritise those who focus and learn Do you agree P?	Teacher Practice / Student Behaviour
P3 Yeah like I said, it depends on how you behave at the start of the year do you agree with that	Student Behaviour
Yeah (all)	
R Do you think thats fair	
P5 Definitely not	Perceived Injustice
P3 Sometimes they're right	
R Do you think they treat the white boys like that	Researcher Question (clarify understanding)

P5 I think some teachers treat everyone like that and then some teachers treat the people based off their first impression which is usually how they like	Teacher Practice
P3 Yeah, I totally agree, I would say Miss would probably do that	
Like, I wasn't even doing anything, I was sitting on the was and on the E block how you have those lever windows it was up. I was talking to my mate can you ask the teacher if he can let me back in and then [name removed] came and said stop distracting the teacher aids I don't know why she said that because they were all doing their own thing no one was looking at me no one was doing anything. Then she said stop distracting and then I said, "Ms., I wasn't." She said, "Don't talk back	Perceived Injustice
R And how does that make you feel	Researcher Question (seeking information)
P3 It makes me feel like she looks at me like a rude person	Belonging
R Does that switch your learning off (P3 nods)	Researcher Question (seeking information)
R Why is it important to have your whānau at the prize giving	
P They give us support mainly	Family Support

P2 Yeah, they're always there no matter what happens like even if you dont get it all they are always there supporting you R Some people talk about getting support from their religion and ther God how do you see that P1 It gives like an end goal the goal might be to make 1000 dollars and then after theyve done that theyve got no more goals but then if you believe in christ your goal after that is to make yourself a better person or give more to Christ. R What does a good person look like in the Pasifika context like when you think of good people what do they do P3 I would say helping out around the house and especially when you're in a big household with lots of people, I've experienced that a lot like helping around just makes it more better and they actually are your family and appreciate you more instead of not doing anything R What chores do you guys do? P1 Mopping Emptying the dishwasher, vacuuming, cleaning the house, washing the dishes, sweep the deck Looking after my little sister	Researcher Questions (seeking information) Spirituality Researcher Question (seeking information) Chores
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P6 Dishes, vacuuming, the lawns, looking after my little brother P2 Washing the dishes, cleaning the car P5 Sweep the deck, do the vacuum P3 Vaccuming, cleaning the house P4 Helping with my family, mowing the lawns, just getting everything done that you need to R Tell me about your nana the one that passed away	
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Appendix F: Code Definitions

Code Definitions

Code	Definition
Group Protocol	Agreed expectations and norms that guide behaviour within the talanoa group (e.g., respect, confidentiality, listening).
Menu	References to food, eating, or shared kai, including its role in supporting engagement and connection.
Researcher Question	Questions posed by the researcher to prompt discussion, gather perspectives, deepen understanding or clarify her understanding.
Group Admin	Organisational or logistical talk related to managing sessions (e.g., scheduling, attendance, resources).
Banter	Informal, humorous, or off-topic conversation that builds rapport and reflects peer interaction dynamics.
Participant Question (Researcher)	Questions directed at the researcher, often reflecting curiosity, relationship-building, or role reversal.
Participant Question (Participant)	Questions posed between participants to clarify, challenge, or extend discussion.
Participant Distraction	Moments where participants lose focus or shift away from the discussion topic.
Researcher Connection	Comments made by participants to the researcher's family shows the participants making connections with the researcher.
Researcher Encouragement	Verbal affirmations or support from the researcher aimed at building confidence or motivation.

Participant Encouragement	Encouragement or positive reinforcement expressed between participants.
Academic Achievement	References to grades, awards, or formal academic success indicators.
Academic Success	Broader conceptualisations of doing well in school, including achievement and progress.
Student Effort	Expressions of working hard, persistence, or commitment to learning tasks.
Student Behaviour	References to conduct in class, including compliance, engagement, or misbehaviour.
Student Goal / Participant Goal	Aspirations or future-oriented goals expressed by participants (e.g., careers, success, university).
Academic Achievement	Mentions of measurable success such as Excellence grades or awards.
School Calendar	References to school events, schedules, or key dates (e.g., strike days).
Cultural Event	Mentions of specific Pasifika or school cultural events (e.g., Polyfest, Fiafia night).
Cultural Event Description	Descriptions of experiences, meanings, or activities within cultural events.
Cultural Identity	Expressions of identity connected to being Pasifika, including belonging and shared culture.
Cultural Pride	Expressions of pride in cultural identity, heritage, or representation.
Cultural Practice	Practices tied to culture (e.g., prayer, food sharing, traditions).

Community Support	Support experienced from the wider Pasifika or school community.
Collective Responsibility	Shared sense of responsibility for others' success, wellbeing, or group outcomes.
Peer Support	Emotional, social, or practical support provided between peers.
Peer Collective Responsibility	Shared accountability among peers for supporting each other.
Participant Agency	Instances where participants demonstrate voice, choice, leadership, or decision-making power.
Participant Perception	Participants' interpretations, beliefs, or views about experiences, systems, or people.
Teacher Practice	Teaching approaches, strategies, or behaviours described by participants.
Teacher Practice Outside the Classroom	Teacher actions beyond classroom teaching that support relationships (e.g., attending events).
Teacher Expectations	Perceived expectations teachers hold about students' achievement or behaviour.
Perceived Injustice	Experiences or perceptions of unfair treatment, bias, racism, stereotyping or teachers.
Belonging	Feelings of acceptance, inclusion, and being valued within school or peer groups.
Family Support (Resourcing)	Practical or material support provided by family (e.g, transport, help with school work).
Family Support (Encouragement)	Emotional encouragement and motivation from family members.

Family Support (Financial)	Financial contributions made by family to support schooling or activities. (e.g, paying fees).
Family Motivation	Influence of family expectations or aspirations on student motivation.
Family Pride	Desire to make family proud or recognition of family pride in achievements.
Family Encouragement	Verbal or emotional encouragement from family to succeed.
Parent Expectations	Expectations placed on participants by parents or caregivers.
Role Model	Individuals admired or looked up to for inspiration (e.g., family members, athletes).
Personality Trait	Personal qualities valued by participants (e.g., humility, leadership).
Material Success	Definitions of success linked to wealth or financial outcomes.
School Pride	Pride associated with representing or contributing to the school.
Motivation	Internal or external drivers that influence effort and engagement.
Recognition	Being acknowledged or rewarded for effort or achievement.
Spirituality	References to faith, God, or religious beliefs shaping purpose and success.
Chores	Responsibilities at home that reflect contributions to family life.
Family Stories	Family history stories shared by participants