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**HIGHER EDUCATION IN NEW ZEALAND:
A FORM OF *FAKALAKALAKA* FOR EDUCATED
TONGAN WOMEN?**

A consideration of the perspectives of educated Tongan women on their experiences of higher education in New Zealand, and how this relates to *fakalalakaka*.

By

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ABSTRACT

The key focus of this research is to understand whether or not higher education in New Zealand is a meaningful form of *fakalalakalaka* for educated Tongan women.

This research firstly considers the analytic frames of educated Tongan women derived from theories in literature about *Pasifika* education, holistic dimensions, *fakalalakalaka*, Tongan culture and identity. Secondly, this research considers these ‘everyday’ frames of thought alongside the images built up from the data gathered from *talanoa* (dialogue) with educated Tongan women in New Zealand. It is in the comparison of these two aspects of information that we can ‘challenge’ theories in literature, as well as ponder the range of ‘perspectives’ presented in *talanoa* of educated Tongan women (Ragin, 2011).

This consideration of the perspectives of educated Tongan women seeks to inform university educators and New Zealand tertiary sector policy-writers of the significance of supporting the holistic dimensions of learners, particularly *Pasifika*, in their higher education. The *talanoa* of the educated Tongan women have been captured and re-told in this study with the hope that it will better pave the pathway of further *fakalalakalaka* for the next generation seeking higher education in New Zealand.

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“You will keep in perfect peace, all whose trust is in you; all whose thoughts are fixed on you.”

(Isaiah 26:2, NLT Bible)

First and foremost I would like to acknowledge God, my creator and faithful friend. He deserves all praise and glory for the work completed and my learning journey of which he is the Author.

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‘Ofa ke tāpuekina kimoutolu ‘e he ‘Eiki!

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Fakamālō lahi atu!

I pray that the learning journey becomes enlightened as we move forward with a better understanding of who we are as educated Tongan women in New Zealand.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I tell a story of *ako* (education) and *fakalalakalaka* (progress) as it is the place to begin. Firstly, it will provide the aim, title and research questions with context; secondly, the reader will gain background information to the numerous stories that will unfold in this study, and thirdly, it is the beginning of my *talanoa* (story), which will follow subsequently. This chapter ends with a rationale for the study, followed by the overview.

1.2. A Story about *Ako* and *Fakalalakalaka*

Although my father was very proud of his roots in Tonga, he constantly challenged aspects of the ‘traditional’ practices that he deemed as obstacles to *fakalalakalaka*. For instance, his decision to migrate to New Zealand disappointed his parents at first as he was leaving behind his traditional role as ‘the head of the family’ (as eldest son) and the land he owned. Previous to his decision to leave Tonga, he was frustrated by his experiences within the traditional structures of society (hierarchy). As a commoner in Tonga, he had worked very hard in high school to become a prefect and Senior Dux. However, he missed out on a scholarship to an Australian university as a result of a traditional selection process whereby a noble’s son was given the scholarship despite his coming second place to my father. In order to avoid this type of traditional hierarchy in Tonga affecting his children’s opportunities of *fakalalakalaka*, he believed he needed to make the move to a new land. Despite the comforts of what he knew of land ownership in Tonga, and his teaching post at the local high school there, he left Tonga in 1973. As noted by Vause (2010), my father was one of many *Pasifika* who migrated to this land to work menial jobs. He arrived in New Zealand at a time where his teaching qualifications were not recognised and entered the factories with others like himself who had left their island homes in search of a better life. Why did my father choose such a path? He had a greater purpose for his children to rise above the ranks, of being ordinary ‘commoners’, through higher education – in a sense *ako* has become a means of betterment for us as individuals and as a family. Had my father remained in Tonga, there would have been very little chance of us, his children, attaining a tertiary qualification. Therefore, the decision to leave behind customary values of land and traditions in exchange for new

opportunities of *ako* was part of a learning journey that I observed my father live out in search of *fakalalakalaka*.

How has this one individual's learning journey led to further *fakalalakalaka*? Besides his decision to change, making a direct impact on the lives of his children, as well as through us (his children), we have been the first in our *kāinga* (extended family, community) to attend university and to graduate. As a result, the trail has been blazed for our younger cousins, who have been encouraged to take up further study and also graduate. We have now seen three generations of graduates over the last twenty years as a result of our *fāмили* (family) and *kāinga* receiving guidance from my father as an elder of our community in New Zealand. He is often credited at our gatherings for his promotion of the value of *ako* in bringing about *fakalalakalaka* amongst our Tongan people.

1.3. The Aim of the Study

The key focus of this research is to understand whether higher education in New Zealand is a form of *fakalalakalaka* for educated Tongan women or not. If so, it is important to ask why, or why not? Tongati'o (1998) alludes to the need for "continued discussion with Pacific peoples to establish dialogue and agreement on what good education outcomes should be for them" (p. 149). The review of literature indicates that in order for us to consider the underlying values and perceptions of educated Tongan women, we must delve further into what is 'meaningful education' in their experience. This research firstly considers the analytic frames of educated Tongan women derived from theories in literature about *Pasifika* education, holistic dimensions, *fakalalakalaka*, Tongan culture and identity. Secondly, it considers these 'everyday' frames of thought alongside the images built up from the data gathered from *talanoa* (talks, storying, and dialogue) with educated Tongan women in New Zealand. It is in the comparison of these two aspects of data that we can 'challenge' theories in literature, as well as ponder the range of 'perspectives' presented in *talanoa* of educated Tongan women (Ragin, 2011).

This consideration of the perspectives of educated Tongan women seeks to inform university educators and New Zealand tertiary sector policy-writers of the significance of supporting the holistic dimensions of learners, particularly *Pasifika*, in their higher education. The *talanoa* of the educated Tongan women have been captured and re-told in this study with the hope that it will better pave the pathway of further *fakalalakalaka* for the next generation seeking higher education in New Zealand.

1.4. The Title of the Study

HIGHER EDUCATION IN NEW ZEALAND:

A form of *fakalalakalaka* for educated Tongan women?

A consideration of the perspectives of educated Tongan women on their experiences of higher education in New Zealand, and how this relates to *fakalalakalaka*.

1.5. The Research Question

At the heart of the study is the overarching question:

Is higher education in New Zealand a meaningful form of *fakalalakalaka* for educated Tongan women?

This overall focus is broken down into four main research questions that will guide the study:

1. How do educated Tongan women define *fakalalakalaka* in relation to their higher education?
2. Is higher education in New Zealand considered ‘meaningful’? Why?
3. Do their ‘holistic’ dimensions matter in this process of *fakalalakalaka*? Why?
4. Does this form of *fakalalakalaka* affect the cultural or ethnic identity of educated Tongan women? Why?

1.6. My *Talanoa*

I am a Tongan woman, born and educated in New Zealand. As an inside researcher, it is appropriate that I situate myself in this discourse.

My father loves his beautiful island and talks about its history, its language, its people and from his *talanoa* (storying); I know that he is proud to be Tongan. Yet I remember that he was never too narrow-minded about keeping traditions for the sake of ‘being Tongan’. He was constantly challenging aspects of *anga faka-Tonga* (the Tongan way of life) that he deemed as obstacles to progress. In essence, my father’s teachings made sense to me and this gave me a confidence to make decisions about my own cultural identity that were non-compliant with the ‘norms’ in a traditional Tongan worldview. In these cultural ‘shifts’,

equilibrium was achieved by active acknowledgement of the significance of core Tongan values and attitudes that are worth keeping. Despite my parent's migration to New Zealand, they still chose to embrace several elements of *anga faka-Tonga* which they believed would help to ground us as Tongan people in a foreign land. For instance, *lea faka-Tonga* (the Tongan language) was used in our daily communication at home and this was further embraced in the Tongan church we attended. Our parents also chose to embed in us the important cultural value of *faka'apa'apa* (respect for elders, social position and gender roles embedded in the Tongan way of life). Today, *faka'apa'apa* still forms my present understanding of 'respect' both in my private world as a wife and mother, and in my public life as an educator and learner. Interestingly, *faka'apa'apa* correlates well with the Christian faith that I have chosen to live by. Having grown up in South Auckland, I had always disliked the negative perspectives media portrayed of *Pasifika*. Knowing that my father's story was similar to the sacrifices so many others had made to establish their families in this country, allowed me to also affiliate with the identity of being *Pasifika* because of the shared experiences within the New Zealand context of migration, education and progress. Personally, my identity as Tongan, as *Pasifika* has become a greater cause to do well in my *ako* and help others like me to overcome the odds, to challenge the 'naysayers' and to inspire other Tongans, other *Pasifika* to do the same. Today, I am happily married to a wonderful Samoan man, and we have five amazing children. Education is something we talk a lot about as a family and we stir up the dream of higher education in our children's minds with our *talanoa*. We encourage our children in the same way I was encouraged by my parents – to put God first, and to *ako mālohi!* (study hard and do well in my education!). With regards to higher education, the fruit of our labour has included a Bachelor of Arts (1995), a Master of Arts (1997), a Graduate Diploma in Secondary Teaching (2002), a Postgraduate Diploma of Education (2011) and with the completion of this study, a Master of Education. As a Christian woman, I am inspired to share the fruit of *ako* with others in my family and in my community. Thus, I have taken on this legacy from my father, that *ako* can bring about *fakalakalaka*; with the encouragement of my mother's spiritual guidance that "...I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength." (Philippians 4:13, NLT Bible). These aspects of my *talanoa* combine to make the attainment of higher education in New Zealand meaningful.

1.7. The Significance of the Study

A consideration of the perspectives of educated Tongan women on their experiences of higher education in New Zealand is important. It will allow other educated Tongan women to speak freely, as I have, about their *talanoa*, their understanding of what is ‘meaningful’ in their experiences of higher education in New Zealand. This study is significant in that it also captures what these women did not find ‘meaningful’ in their experiences. Both of these aspects are important to understanding the perspectives of these women.

The significance of heeding the ‘voices’ of these women and re-telling their *talanoa* within the framework of this study is that this understanding of ‘meaningful education’ will better support the learning and holistic success of *Pasifika* learners as well as educated Tongan women across higher learning institutes in New Zealand.

1.8. Overview of the Study

This First Chapter being the ‘Introduction and Overview’ of the study provides a background and context for the discourse that will unfold. This is followed by the aim, the research questions and a narrative that situates me as the researcher in the study. The chapter ends with a statement pertaining to the significance of the study and an overview.

The Second Chapter is the ‘Literature Review’. This chapter discusses the array of literature that has been selected to provide an important backdrop of information in the consideration of the perspectives of educated Tongan women in New Zealand. This literature review is arranged into three sections. The first section presents the fundamental social structures in *anga faka-Tonga*. The second section discusses the New Zealand education system considering the current situation for *Pasifika* in the context of higher education. The third section considers important features of *Pasifika* learners. More specifically, this section discusses the concepts of *fakalakalaka* and the holistic dimensions of Tongan women. The chapter concludes with a synopsis of the literature reviewed.

The Third Chapter discusses the ‘Methodology’ of the study. It firstly considers the research question in this study and the theoretical foundations of this being relativist ontology (constructivism) and qualitative research. Linked to this consideration, the use of the framework and principles of the *Teu Le Vā* approach will also be justified. ‘*Teu le vā*’ is a Samoan term that has been used in a Tongan context in this case; ‘*vā*’ is a widely shared

Pasifika concept of ‘spaces’ or ‘relationships’ which underpins the principles and understandings of the *Teu Le Vā* approach. Secondly, the collaboration of qualitative approaches (phenomenology, ethnography and case study) embedded in this study are discussed, including the *talanoa* approach. Thirdly, a discussion of the research design and methods used to collect and analyse data. The chapter ends with a consideration of the ethical matters relating to the collection of data, and lists minor changes that were made to the proposed study in the research process.

The Fourth Chapter is the ‘Data Summary’. This chapter firstly presents brief profiles of the fifteen informants, and a summary of the data collected. The review of the information gathered is presented in relation to each research question. Emerging themes are listed, and data displays and quotations drawn from the *talanoa* transcripts support the summary and identified themes. The chapter concludes with a synopsis of the findings.

The Fifth Chapter presents the ‘Findings and Discussion’ developing the key findings and themes presented in the previous chapters. The discussion interweaves the findings, themes, literature and inside researcher narratives in relation to each research question. Following this is a consideration of the theoretical framework, data collection methods and the implication of these on the key findings that have emerged in the research. The chapter concludes with a synopsis of the findings and implications.

Lastly, Chapter Six presents the ‘Conclusion and Recommendations’. Concluding comments and recommendations are given based on the key findings and implications presented in the previous chapters. The chapter provides a summary of the answers pertaining to the four main research questions, followed by an overview of the strengths and limitations of the work. The study concludes with an overall evaluation, along with suggestions for future research and a final statement answering the overarching research question posed in the introductory chapter.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses and reviews an array of literature that provides an important ‘backdrop’ for this study. Is higher education in New Zealand a meaningful form of *fakalalakalaka* (progress) for educated Tongan women? The selection of literature presented in this discussion has been arranged into three sections. The first section forms a basis for the research question ‘does this form of *fakalalakalaka* affect the cultural or ethnic identity of educated Tongan women?’ The second section provides a contextual basis for the research question ‘is higher education in New Zealand considered ‘meaningful’?’ The third section presents a conceptual framework for the research questions ‘how do educated Tongan women define *fakalalakalaka* in relation to their higher education?’ and ‘do their holistic dimensions matter in this process of *fakalalakalaka*?’

2.1.1. *Fakalalakalaka* in Context

It is important to note the various translations of the concept of *fakalalakalaka*, and which of these this study is focusing on, and in which context. ‘Ilaiu (1997) discusses the Tongan concept of *fakalalakalaka*; the original meaning of the word once meant the ‘economic’, ‘technological’ or ‘material’ development of a person or community. However, according to ‘Ilaiu (1997) true *fakalalakalaka* extends to all areas of life; as an individual true *fakalalakalaka* cannot take place without progress encompassing the three realms of their individual and familial well-being; *laumālie* (spiritual sphere including values and beliefs that guide well-being), *‘atamai* (mind sphere including emotions and frame of mind that determine well-being), and *sino* (body sphere including health status and living standards that influence physical well-being). Moreover, Herlin (2007) and ‘Ilaiu (1997) advocate that the sphere of *fāmili* and consequently the *kāinga* are important aspects of *fakalalakalaka* for Tongan women. I have found this to be true in my own experience of higher education in New Zealand. Different aspects of my life (*laumālie*, *‘atamai*, *sino*) including the progressive changes in my *fāmili* and *kāinga* as a result of my attainment of higher education in New Zealand are areas of *fakalalakalaka*. It is this holistic notion of *fakalalakalaka* that is embraced in this consideration of educated Tongan women in New Zealand.

2.2. *Anga Faka-Tonga* and Tongan Identity

Three main threads of thought emerge from the dialogue presented in the works of Afeaki (2004), Hanifian (2010), Maka (2006), Matoto (2010), Morton Lee (2003), Tau'akipulu (2000), Taufa (2010), and Vaihu (2010). The first of these acknowledges that *anga faka-Tonga* exists in New Zealand. The second reveals an emerging 'dichotomy' in the views of Tongan people about *anga faka-Tonga*. The third thread of thought that the literature clearly illustrates is the continuum of views held by Tongan women from younger generations in comparison to those Tongan women belonging to the older cohorts.

Anga faka-Tonga, the 'Tongan way of life', is the combined output or living out of two concepts; Tongan ethnic identity and Tongan cultural identity. Cultural and ethnic identities are both subjectively defined and are often measured against an 'imagined' norm (Morton Lee, 2003). The concept of *anga faka-Tonga* embraces all values, beliefs, and practices that are regarded as Tongan culture, socially accepted norms or tradition. Morton Lee (2003; 2004) has carried out in-depth research into the correlation between migration and the 'constructed' (Nagel, 1994) blurring of ethnic and cultural identity amongst diaspora Tongan communities. This understanding that the two concepts of ethnicity and cultural identity can be merged is taken on board in this study and thus will look at the two concepts simultaneously when dealing with the identity of educated Tongan women in New Zealand. According to Morton Lee (2003), *anga faka-Tonga* is a highly contested concept, both in Tonga and in the diaspora communities; it is debated particularly across generations. These findings are supported by Afeaki (2004) and Hanifian (2010).

Afeaki (2004) a practicing social worker and an inside researcher carried out research on four Tongan families residing in New Zealand, and presents in her study the conflicting views that can be found amongst Tongan-born parents and their New Zealand-born youth within the same family unit. Afeaki (2004) identifies the 'generational gap' between these two conflicting worlds; the worlds that exist between the New Zealand-born Tongan youth and their Tongan-born parents. Similarly, Hanifian (2010) shares the stories of young Tongan women and their struggles with their 'being Tongan' and what this means within a Western frame of mind or context. Tongan women residing both in Tonga and in the diaspora communities have become victims of traditional *anga faka-Tonga*. According to these young Tongan women, 'domesticating expectations' of being 'in the kitchen' has not given them the same opportunity with Tongan men, proposing that "both men and women should have equal

rights in any type of role and job in the society, family, church and government” (Hanifan, 2010, p.28). Personally, I find this view of being ‘victimised’ a bit extreme as Morton Lee (2003) points out in her study, Tongan people are actively involved in shaping their identity despite the “structural limitations, such as socioeconomic status and the impact of ethnic stereotypes, that can impinge upon this agency” (Morton Lee, 2003, p.3).

Although a strong sense of optimism exists amongst Tongans living abroad about ‘being Tongan’ there is a notable negative perspective about the ‘burdens’ and ‘limitations’ put in place by some aspects of *anga faka-Tonga*. In response to such tensions, the ‘norms’ of *anga faka-Tonga* are constantly under negotiation, challenged by the younger generations of Tongans. Morton Lee’s (2003) study of Tongans living abroad considers this constant negotiation and the evident ‘cultural gap’ in depth. The study identifies a negative view of *anga faka-Tonga* which stems from the contradictions and tensions that are arising between the ‘two worlds’ (Western and Tongan) in which Tongan people live. For instance, Morton Lee (2003) takes account of the perspective held by young Tongan people in her study who argue that it is important to meet the needs of the immediate family before others, and while they uphold the importance of *faka’apa’apa* (respect) and *tauhi vā* (keeping good relationships) with the extended family, they believe that such obligations create unwarranted demands on families already struggling to make ends meet. It is important to note here that this ‘cultural gap’ that Morton Lee (2003) describes, as well as the ‘generational gap’ identified by Afeaki (2004), are phenomena that involve both Tongan men and Tongan women alike.

More specific to the focus of this study, what is emerging from literature is the ‘continuum’ of views held by Tongan women about *anga faka-Tonga*; some on either extremes (conservative versus contemporary) while others hold middle of the road perspectives on ‘being a Tongan woman’. This raises the fact that the ‘continuum’ of views is largely subjective; important nevertheless to our understanding of the dynamic nature of Tongan culture (Helu-Thaman, 1996) and how this impacts on the perspectives of educated Tongan women in the present study. In my view, Tongan culture is not necessarily attached to a place and may change over time and space. I do not see this culture as *tapu* (untouchable or sacred), it is pliable in the hands of those courageous enough to challenge and mould it.

Both Afeaki (2004) and Morton Lee (2003) draw attention to the obvious distinction between the perspectives held by Tongan women of different generations. ‘Ilaiu (1997) discovered a

similar trend amongst the different cohorts of Tongan women in her Tongan-based study. However, although the data collated by 'Ilaiu (1997) reveals that there are obvious perception differences amongst different age cohorts, there were some revelations of younger women towing the 'traditional' perspective as being the preferred way of life for them, and vice versa. Some older Tongan women, particularly those who had been educated overseas, spoke quite plainly on their views against the traditional role of Tongan women. This is also well documented by Kupu (1989) in her research on the changing roles of graduate women in Tonga. Hanifian (2010) debates the issue of the 'kitchen' being a place for women in Tonga, arguing that the traditional roles of women in Tonga doing the cooking, washing, and cleaning are outdated and should be a shared responsibility with the men folk. Kupu (1989) captures this same view that was emerging amongst educated Tongan women in Tonga during the seventies and eighties. Kupu (1989) noted that educated Tongan women had been exposed earlier on to the freedoms of being a woman away from the traditional confinements of the 'home' whilst studying abroad. On their return to their islands once completing their studies, educated Tongan women had formed a new identity as Tongan women with overseas education and experience. Despite being frowned upon by some locals, these women have maintained their newly found identities of being 'educated Tongan women'.

More recent literature presents similar findings about the 'generational' differences of perspectives held by Tongan women living in diaspora communities. Taufa (2010) documents the identity stories of young Tongan women living in Australia, and similarly Hanifian (2010) shares the reflections of young Tongan women, based both in Tonga and abroad, on traditional Tongan culture. However, these studies do not consider in any depth any changes in perceptions or the implications of higher education on the perceptions held by these Tongan women. Hanifian (2010) and Taufa (2010) both emphasise the extreme differences in viewpoints based on Tongan women's perceptions of what their role is in the family, community and in the church. Taufa (2010) emphasises the inter-generational differences in perceptions held. At the mention of the 'role of Tongan women', Taufa (2010) noted that the younger Tongan women interviewees quickly defined their 'generational' differences in perspectives with the older Tongan women. On the other hand, the older women chose to elaborate on the cultural symbolism of being a Tongan woman and the significance of maintaining their traditional role in the home, church and community.

Thus, there are a range of perspectives on *anga faka-Tonga* and being Tongan. According to Morton Lee (2003), any attempt to measure the criteria that Tongan people use to define

'being Tongan' would prove to be futile. Why? Each individual Tongan has his or her own meaning of identity and value, shaped by their individual social background and experiences of life as Tongan people. However, what is also evident from the work of Afeaki (2004), Hanifian (2010) and Morton Lee (2003) is that there are certain elements that are widely accepted as being fundamentally Tongan. For instance *tauhi vaha'a* (keeping strong kinship ties and relationships) and *faka'apa'apa* (respect) are two values that govern Tongan families and communities. However, even these elements are under discussion and are being reconstructed on the basis of experiences and changes taking place in the lives of Tongan women residing in New Zealand (Matoto, 2010; Vaihu, 2010).

Tongan perceptions and experiences are still deeply-rooted in Tonga's cultural ideals, although there is now a movement to embrace aspects of being *Pasifika* in New Zealand (Morton Lee, 2003; Vaihu, 2010). This is true for both New Zealand-born Tongan and those who have made the move from Tonga to study work or settle in New Zealand (Morton Lee, 2004; Vause, 2010). This new identity as *Pasifika* allows the freedom to re-define and reconstruct ones' cultural and ethnic identity in New Zealand (Mara, 2006). According to Vaihu (2010), choosing to be *Pasifika* is often an attractive option for young Tongans who have grown up abroad and who lack sufficient knowledge of *anga faka-Tonga*.

This identity of being *Pasifika* is true of some Tongan people living in New Zealand. What stands out in the research carried out by Afeaki (2004) is that the majority of New Zealand-born Tongans still consider themselves as 'being Tongan'. Despite not speaking the Tongan language fluently, Tongan youth remain very much connected to the Tongan community through their parents and extended family. This takes place through their participation in Tongan events and church activities, or through association with Tongan friends and their knowledge and acceptance of *faka'apa'apa*. According to Afeaki (2004), this level of association with the Tongan community and extended family provides enough substance to 'be Tongan'. There is still an acceptance amongst Tongans, who have grown up away from Tonga, that there is a place for *anga faka-Tonga* in New Zealand.

It is important that this review delves into *Pasifika* literature that provides another layer of the New Zealand diaspora context for the educated Tongan women in this study who are categorically part of *Pasifika* living in New Zealand. In particular, aspects of the experiences highlighted above for Tongan women and Tongan people in general both in their contexts in Tonga and abroad in diaspora communities can also be compared and contrasted to the many

studies carried out with other *Pasifika* communities and diaspora cultures (Anae, 2002; Gershon, 2007; Koloto, 2000; MacPherson, 1999; Mara, 2006; Thaman, 1992; Tiatia, 1998; Tupuola, 2004). The work carried out by Tupuola (2006) with the young women of Samoan descent residing in New Zealand and the United States presents the perceptions and identity stories of Samoan women. Of particular interest is Mara's (2006) study that captures the narratives of twenty *Pasifika* women graduates. Mara's study explores the possible influence of tertiary education on ethnic identity and revealed that these women graduates actively construct their identities and assert their identities in a range of ways within tertiary education institutions. Mara concludes in the study that in many ways these female graduates became more articulate and clearer about their ethnic identities as a result of their tertiary education and related experiences. Pearson (1990) supports this notion that ethnicity is not a fixed entity because it evolves in response to social changes and circumstances as highlighted by Mara (2006).

Mara (2006) and Vause (2010) also stipulate that education and the achievement of educational qualifications have been and continue to be a very high priority amongst *Pasifika* migrating to New Zealand. According to Matoto (2010) and Morton Lee (2003), education is one of the main reasons for Tongan emigrating abroad. However, the overall picture of participation and achievement for *Pasifika* learners is not positive across all levels of schooling in New Zealand (Coxon, Anae, Mara, Wendt-Samu & Finau, 2002; Ministry of Education, 2005). Ironically, what Morton Lee (2003) reveals in her study is a growing dissatisfaction amongst Tongans with the current education system of their chosen destination.

2.3. Higher Education and Learning Contexts in New Zealand

In this section of the literature review, the status of affairs in New Zealand's education system is discussed in light of the *Pasifika* people (specifically Tongans) who reside in New Zealand. An overview of New Zealand-based literature presents a 'future-focus' in tertiary educational pedagogies and practices that seek to enhance *Pasifika* (including Tongan) academic success. Airini, Toso, Sauni, Leaupepe, Pua and Tuafuti (2010b) and Ferguson, Gorinski, Samu and Mara (2008) call for change to take place at a national level, where the pedagogies and practice that affect *Pasifika* learning, and the policies and structures that lie beneath these aspects of the New Zealand education system must be reconsidered with a

vision to raise educational outcomes for and by *Pasifika* learners in New Zealand (Airini, Anae, Mila-Schaaf, Coxon, Mara & Sanga, 2010a). An interesting development is the embrace of *Pasifika* localised knowledge in the changes taking place in New Zealand's future-focused *Pasifika* education planning (Coxon et al. 2002). These changes have been slow in coming and this lethargic progress is evident in the dissatisfaction felt by *Pasifika* learners (Rio, 2010; Tiatia, 1998), and Tongans living abroad (Morton Lee, 2003). In support of this desire for educational change, international discourse in the work of Entwistle (2010), Knapper (2010), and Summerlee and Hughes (2010) advocate for much needed change in higher education practice, in order to meet the specific learning needs of these local learning contexts (Rio, 2010).

A significant theme that emerges from both the international educational literature considered (Cushner & Brennan, 2007; Entwistle, 2010; Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2009; Hughes & Mighty, 2010; McWilliam, 2008; Summerlee & Hughes, 2010) as well as the New Zealand-based literature reviewed (Airini, et al. 2010a; Airini et al. 2010b; Ferguson et al. 2008; Manu'atu & Kepa, 2006; Rio, 2010) is the call for 'change'. What type of change? There is a need for institutional research-based change that brings about higher education which is more 'contextual' to the learners' community (Summerlee & Hughes, 2010), a collaborative process between educators and students (Airini et al. 2010b) and a meaningful learning experience for the student (Entwistle, 2010).

Further to this, Airini et al. (2010a) suggest that it is time for a change in the pedagogies and practice utilised in New Zealand teaching, particularly with *Pasifika* learners. Prior to the initiative put in place for a '*Pasifika* Education Plan' (Ministry of Education, 2001), deficit modes toward *Pasifika* educational achievement and higher education were evident in the policies, pedagogies and practices within the tertiary education sector of New Zealand (Penn, 2010). Ferguson et al. (2008) call for the "interrogation of current understandings, practices and terminology that work to inhibit equitable achievement outcomes for *Pasifika* learners" (Ferguson et al. 2008, p. 3). It is evident from the literature available on the topic of diverse learners or learners of ethnic minorities (Brookfield, 2006; Cushner, McClelland & Safford, 2003; Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2009; Gurung & Prieto, 2009; Helu-Thaman, 1996; Mara, 2006; McIntyre, Rosenberry & Gonzalez, 2001; McWhirter, Torres, Salgado & Valdez, 2007; Miller-Lachman & Taylor, 1995; Nakhid, 2003; Vasquez, 1982), that the significance of diversity issues in education have been long acknowledged both on an international and a local forum.

As reported in the ‘*Pasifika* Education Plan’ (Ministry of Education, 2009), the New Zealand *Pasifika* population is large, diverse and is growing at a rapid rate in comparison to the other ethnic groups of our nation. Hence, as part of the government’s wider work for education, this plan hopes to provide for the unique cultural needs of *Pasifika* learners. As a member of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the New Zealand government’s wider work for education has been guided by the OECD principles and directions for schooling policies. Robertson (2005) identifies that these OECD guidelines highlight the importance of engaging diverse learners in order to raise overall achievement and outcomes. Ferguson et al. (2008) identifies that in the last decade or so, teams of experts in the field have been commissioned by the Ministry of Education (MoE) to assess and investigate the learning experiences of *Pasifika* learners in an effort to understand how best to teach and to improve their achievement outcomes (Ferguson et al. 2008; Hill & Hawk, 2000; MoE, 2001 & 2009; Sheets, 2005).

Although, in this literature review, the issues of *Pasifika* learners have been highlighted for the purpose of this study, it is also important to note that there has also been ongoing debate amongst educationalists and politicians alike in New Zealand about similar issues involving *Māori* learners (Johnston, 1998; Shields, Bishop & Mazawi, 2005). In response to this, the MoE has taken a similar stance to that taken with the *Pasifika* debate. ‘The *Māori* Education Strategy 2008-2012’ is the Ministry’s (2011b) approach to improving the performance of the education system for and with *Māori*. A lead up to the current ‘*Māori* Education Strategy’ was the launch in 1999 of the first ‘*Māori* Education Strategy’ which was redeveloped in 2006 by the MoE, and with public consultation in 2007. ‘The *Māori* Tertiary Education Framework’ (Ministry of Education, 2011c) has also been designed to support *Māori* academic success and tertiary achievement.

According to the current ‘*Pasifika* Education Plan’, the MoE (2011d) focus in the tertiary education sector is on enabling *Pasifika* people to participate and attain higher levels of tertiary education. Goals seven, eight, and nine of the ‘*Pasifika* Education Plan’ firstly seek to increase the retention rate for *Pasifika* students; secondly, to increase the number of young *Pasifika* people achieving level four and above qualifications by age 25; and thirdly, to increase English literacy, numeracy and language levels for the *Pasifika* workforce. In addition to the ‘*Pasifika* Education Plan’, a holistic model of education for *Pasifika* learners in New Zealand, ‘The Compass for *Pasifika* Success’ (MoE, 2011a), presents the Ministry’s

current research-based understanding. In this model, the MoE acknowledges that *Pasifika* people have multiple world views and diverse cultural identities. It is positive to note that the MoE policy writers, consultants and analysts understand that *Pasifika* learners operate and can negotiate successfully through their spiritual, social, political, cultural and economic worlds. Further to this, the MoE also appreciates that *Pasifika* learners are not ‘flying solo’ and that their success is nestled in the progress of their families and communities. ‘The Compass for *Pasifika* Success’ suggests that such success will require the education system, leadership, and curricula in New Zealand to start with the *Pasifika* learner at the centre, drawing on strong cultures, identities and languages (Ministry of Education, 2011a).

Further to this, ‘The *Pasifika* Women’s Economic Development Plan’ is a government programme that aims at increasing *Pasifika* women’s achievement in education. One particular strategy in South Auckland targets *Pasifika* women and identifies opportunities to increase the successful transition of *Pasifika* women from secondary to tertiary education or employment (National Advisory Council on the Employment of Women, 2009).

With this new ‘future focus’ across the tertiary sector in New Zealand, relationships between policy makers, researchers and stakeholders (including families and communities of learners) are considered key to the progress of *Pasifika* achievement (Airini et al. 2010a; Anae, 2007). The acknowledgement and embrace of local *Pasifika* knowledge and understanding within future-focused planning in the ‘*Pasifika* Education Plan’ (MoE, 2009) has further influenced the current developments taking place in the New Zealand tertiary sector with regards to promoting *Pasifika* achievement in higher education (Rio, 2010). An emerging dialogue amongst New Zealand *Pasifika* researchers and educators is that of ‘relationship pedagogy’ (Airini et al. 2010a; Anae, 2007) and how the development of this is crucial to the success of *Pasifika* learners in New Zealand. The notion of ‘relationship’ or *vā* (a Samoan word, similar to the Tongan translation *tauhi vaha’a*) which balances the student, educator and policy makers’ influence on learning embraces the significance of the ‘responsibilities’ that each stakeholder in education brings to the ‘relationship’ (Airini et al. 2010b). Note the importance of relationships is not only applicable to the current educational changes taking place in a *Pasifika* context (Carpenter, McMurchy-Pilkington & Sutherland, 2001). There is evidence of this focus on Māori (Airini et al. 2009; Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Hill & Hawk, 2000) and European (Timperley, Wilson, Barrar & Fung, 2007) contexts as well. Thus, relationships and collaborative strategies have been identified as a key component of ‘best

practice' in education for not only 'community-based' learners, but inclusive of all learners in New Zealand (Anderson, 2004; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Johannson, 2003; Robertson, 2005; T'Kenye, 2005).

2.4. Holistic Dimensions and *Fakalalaka*

This third section of the literature review presents a conceptual framework for the research questions 'how do educated Tongan women define *fakalalaka* (progress) in relation to their education?' and 'do their holistic dimensions matter in this process of *fakalalaka*?' This section of the literature review considers important aspects of *Pasifika*, more specifically Tongan learners. Herlin (2007) and 'Ilaiu (1997) advocate the significance of the many elements that shape the perspectives of Tongan women. Herlin and 'Ilaiu discuss the Tongan concept of *fakalalaka*; as mentioned already the original meaning of the word has evolved from a one-dimensional perspective of 'hard' tangible outcomes (e.g. employment and material wealth) to include the 'soft' non-tangible benefits (e.g. insight and motivation) of progress (Dewson, Eccles, Tackey & Jackson, 2000). Thus, the concept of *fakalalaka* more fully denotes the holistic perspective held by Tongan people. This holistic understanding of *fakalalaka* suggests that all spheres of life must undergo progress or development in order for true *fakalalaka* to take place. According to 'Ilaiu (1997) true *fakalalaka* for the Tongan-based women in her study "extends to all areas of life, looking firstly at personal development, individual families, and secondly to the development of the community. Most importantly is the complete development of the individual; spiritually, in mind, as well as in material acquirement." ('Ilaiu, 1997, p.84). It is this particular holistic notion of *fakalalaka* suggested by 'Ilaiu (1997) that this study is embracing in the consideration of educated Tongan women in New Zealand.

In literature that spans three decades of research on Tongan women; early mentions of the concepts of *fakalalaka* or 'holistic' dimensions of Tongan people have been sourced from the works of academics whose findings are a result of inquiries into the holistic lives of *Pasifika*, Tongan people in general, and in a few instances Tongan women specifically (Airini, Brown, Curtis, Johnson, Luatua, O'Shea, Rakena, Reynolds, Sauni, Smith, Huirua, Tarawa & Ulugia-Pua, 2009; Faleolo & Faleolo, 2010; Herlin, 2007; 'Ilaiu, 1997; Koloto & Sharma, 2006; Kupu, 1989; Maka, 2006; Morton Lee, 2003).

Firstly, literature claims that the holistic dimensions of a learner are important. Faleolo (2009) advocates that the spiritual, physical, mental and familial realms interactively form the core of an individual learners' world and living; these are the interactions that inevitably produce what is essentially fruit of *ako*. Secondly, research carried out by 'Ilaiu (1997) and supported by Herlin (2007) maintains that *fakalalakalaka* is a 'holistic' process of development that should encompass these core spheres highlighted by Faleolo. In other words, for a Tongan woman to progress or develop completely, all aspects or dimensions of her life must go through this process of betterment. Thirdly, what is apparent from the available literature is that Tongan women's lives and roles are evolving. The changing roles of Tongan women over time have largely been a result of the social and economic changes that impact on the holistic dimensions of Tongan women. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, different aspects of a Tongan woman's life, including the changes that take place, are considered areas of *fakalalakalaka*. Home and family (including child-rearing according to *anga faka-Tonga* and traditional hierarchical social obligations to others, including extended family), education and employment, community versus individual success are components of a Tongan women's holistic world that literature deems to be significant in the progress or development of educated Tongan women.

MoE documents on *Pasifika* learner success (MoE, 2001; 2011a) suggest that in order for educators to be culturally responsive to diverse learners, one must take on this holistic perspective, and that the lack of acknowledgement promotes a loss of 'wholeness', negatively impacting on the learner (Airini et al. 2009). There is a truth about this notion of holistic dimensions promoted by the Ministry of Education that is pertinent in cultures other than the *Pasifika* cultures.

Similar to the notion of holistic *fakalalakalaka* suggested by Herlin (2007) and 'Ilaiu (1997), Durie (1994 cited in Macfarlane & Glynn, 2009) presents a Maori model of *whare tapa wha* (based on the four walls of a house). In this model presented by Durie, the first three are similar to those suggested by Irwin (1994 cited in Macfarlane & Glynn, 2009): mind (*taha hinengaro*), spiritual side (*taha wairua*), physical side (*taha tinana*) and the final, but an equally important side being the family (*taha whanau*). Durie further suggests that having these four sides to a learner ensures strength and balance; as in a *whare* (house) the four walls provide lasting well-being.

Bell Hooks (1994) also captures the essence of this notion of a learner's holistic dimensions in her work 'Teaching to Transgress'. Hooks, a revolutionary black intellectual and a distinguished professor of English in New York suggests that an educator's work is not merely to bestow information but to share in the intellectual and spiritual growth of students. Hooks advocates that teaching should occur in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of students and that this is essential to providing the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin. In her twenty years of teaching, Hooks has witnessed a growing need for students to be seen as 'whole' human beings with complexities and experiences that is a union of mind, body and spirit. Hooks unfolds her personal story of a quest to defy the dualistic separation of public and private in the world of academia in the United States where she has devoted herself to educating others, particularly those of minority groups, for freedom from racist, sexual, and class boundaries within education. In particular, Hooks promotes the idea of the intellectual questing for a union of spirit, mind and body.

The holistic dimensions of Tongan women are discussed by 'Ilaiu (1997) in her consideration of the changing role of Tongan women and 'development' (*fakalalakalaka*) at the individual, familial and community levels. According to the Tongan-born women of her study, their changing role as women is a sure sign of 'development'. However, these women were also adamant that true *fakalalakalaka* cannot take place without progress encompassing the three realms of their individual and familial well-being; *laumālie* (spiritual sphere including values and beliefs that guide well-being), *'atamai* (mind sphere including emotions and understanding which determines well-being), *sino* (body sphere including health status and living standards that influence physical well-being). These women felt that the purely materialistic and 'economic' focused programmes of *fakalalakalaka* in their towns and villages were not essentially focused on the spiritual wellbeing of their homes. This view is supported by the work of Herlin (2007) who agrees that the isolation of either one of these three facets (spiritual, physical, mental) inevitably leads to incomplete progress in the process of individual, familial and community progress. Moreover, 'Ilaiu found in her study that the general feeling amongst the 24 Tongan women she studied was that *fāмили* and consequently the *kāinga*, were a defining reason or purpose for any form of *fakalalakalaka* including educational progress. Similarly, Taufā (1979) in a descriptive study of Tongan graduates emphasises the significance of one's family and the obligation that a Tongan student has to his or her family and the considerable influence of this aspect on their way of life. Despite

this research being carried out many years ago, the importance of family is still a strong factor in Tongan culture and education today. Herlin's (2007) more current research of the concept of *fakalalakalaka* supports the view that the family and community aspects are still core values of the social associations in Tonga.

Similar notions of *fāmili* and *kāinga* are highlighted by Koloto who shares her personal experiences as a Tongan woman (Koloto & Sharma, 2006). In a report on *Pasifika* women's economic well-being in New Zealand, Koloto and Sharma consistently make links between the economic aspect of a *Pasifika* women's life and well-being and their familial and collective responsibilities. The underlying truth conveyed in the report that is relevant to most, if not all, *Pasifika* women is that they do not exist in isolation from their families and communities. 36 respondents in the study carried out by Koloto and Sharma (2006) provided definitions of 'economic well-being' that made references to their total or holistic wellbeing. These definitions were not confined to the financial aspects of their lives but included other areas such as physical, spiritual, social and cultural well-being.

According to Koloto and Sharma (2006), the Tongan family structure is made up of the father, mother, grandparents, father's sister, mother's brother, daughters and sons, cousins (note: *tokoua* can be sisters, brothers or cousins) and other members of the extended family. Based on these various relational connections within a family unit, a Tongan woman will then have multiple roles. Koloto and Sharma's findings illustrate the diversity and multiple roles played by all *Pasifika* women within their families, church and communities. It is important to note here that *Pasifika* women living in New Zealand only consider their well-being within their ability to meet their immediate family's needs, and at times including the extended family. However, Koloto warns of a tendency to simplify findings based on the similar ideology shared amongst *Pasifika* cultures. She makes a point that the Tongan family structures cannot be generalised to other *Pasifika* cultures and their concepts of family (Koloto & Sharma, 2006).

What is also apparent from the work carried out by Koloto and Sharma (2006) is the general consensus amongst the participants that paid employment is another way of 'helping the family' financially. In fact, of the 146 participants who took part in the study, 81% of the women were income earners for their families, undertaking jobs in a range of employment settings. Furthermore, about 18% of the women were also undertaking further education. Koloto and Sharma note that these women's multiple roles and responsibilities were closely

associated with their economic contributions to their family, extended family, church and/or community. What can be interpreted from this report is an important fact that in the context of their lives in New Zealand, the church and local communities to which these *Pasifika* women choose to belong have taken on a similar significance to their towns and villages back home in the Pacific islands. This will help to explain why it is paramount for many of the *Pasifika* women interviewed by Koloto and Sharma to have made regular financial contributions to their local churches despite it being a burden on their own family's economic situations.

Thus, the holistic dimensions of *Pasifika* women, and more specifically Tongan women, are important. As advocated by Faleolo (2009), Herlin (2007), 'Ilaiu (1997) and Koloto and Sharma (2006), the spiritual, physical, mental and familial realms of a Tongan woman interactively form the core of an individual's world and way of living. As one participant in Koloto and Sharma's report stated:

“(e)conomic well-being is being able to meet my financial needs as well as meeting the needs in other areas of my life, emotionally, spiritually, to be in a healthy state of mind, physically and psychologically. Having the freedom to express creatively in providing for myself and also at the same time help others to do the same...open minded to improvement and change” (p. 71).

This statement also alludes to the point made by both Herlin (2007) and 'Ilaiu (1997) that *fakalalakalaka* or progress is a 'holistic' process of development. Faleolo (2009) highlights the fact that these holistic spheres must be considered in the discussion of an *akonga* and therefore the process of *fakalalakalaka* can only be complete or 'meaningful' to educated Tongan women if it is holistic. Thus, for the purpose of this study of educated Tongan women in New Zealand these important spheres of a Tongan woman's life, including the economic and social changes discussed by Koloto and Sharma (2006), can be considered areas of *fakalalakalaka*.

2.5. Synopsis of Literature

The review of both international and New Zealand-based literature has entailed an important forethought of the fundamental social structures in *anga faka-Tonga*; the current situation for *Pasifika* in the context of higher education; and the important aspects of *Pasifika* learners, namely the concepts of *fakalalakalaka* and the holistic dimensions of Tongan women. These theories provide the 'analytic frames' that will be considered alongside the 'images' built up from the data gathered (Ragin, 2011).

The next chapter discusses the methods employed in this study to capture these important images.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter firstly considers the research question in this study and the theoretical foundations of this being relativist ontology (constructivism) and qualitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). Linked to this consideration, the use of the framework and principles of the *Teu Le Vā* approach will be justified. Next, the collaboration of qualitative approaches (phenomenology, ethnography and case study) employed in this study are discussed, including the *Talanoa* approach. Following this is a discussion of the research design and methods used to collect and analyse data. The chapter ends with a consideration of the ethical matters relating to the collection of data, and lists minor changes that were made to the proposed study in the research process.

3.2. Theoretical Foundations of Research

At the outset of this study the overarching research question asks: ‘Is higher education in New Zealand a meaningful form of *fakalalakala* for educated Tongan women?’ (Refer to ‘Introduction and overview’ chapter, section 1.5)

3.2.1. Ontological Relativism

What is clear from the focus of the question is the paradigm of constructivism (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) and more specifically ontological relativism (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). Within this paradigm, it is understood that the realities of the educated Tongan women in this study are constructions of their perspectives and experiences of higher education in New Zealand, as advocated by Guba and Lincoln (1998):

“Realities are apprehendable in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature ... and dependent for their form and content on the individual persons or groups holding the constructions” (p.206).

3.2.2. Qualitative Research

This work incorporates qualitative research to make sense of the perspectives and experiences of educated Tongan women in this study. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994) this mode of research is concerned with discovering the meanings seen by those who are being researched and with understanding their view of the world. Middleton (1996) suggests this as a legitimate set of approaches to gaining knowledge and understanding of the educational experiences of learners.

3.2.3. A *Pasifika* Framework – *Teu Le Vā*

McFall-McCaffery (2010) promotes the use of *Pasifika* models and frameworks in addressing *Pasifika* issues in research. *Teu Le Vā* (Airini et al. 2010a) is one such approach that provides a culturally appropriate framework for the study of *Pasifika* learners in the context of New Zealand. What is commendable about this approach is that it is not focused on the tail-end of *Pasifika* educational achievement (the ‘non-achievers’ and deficit theory), which also makes it a suitable model for the study of educated Tongan women in higher education.

The term ‘*teu le vā*’ is a Samoan concept, but it is used in a Tongan context in this case. Developing, cultivating and maintaining relationships are consistent with the principles and understandings that underpin the widely shared *Pasifika* concept of *vā* which is synonymous with the Tongan concept of *tauhi vaha’a* and *tauhi vā* (keeping good relationships).

The emphasis that the *Teu Le Vā* approach places on ‘relationships’ – *vā* supports the *Pasifika*-led creation of knowledge which shares the responsibility of research across all stakeholders of educational research (learners, community, educators, researchers and policy-makers) and optimises educational outcomes for and with *Pasifika* learners. Therefore, the principle of *Teu Le Vā* that relates to this study is the reciprocity of *vā*; the ‘valuing’ and ‘looking after’ of the researcher-informant relationship. This aspect of *Teu Le Vā* will be discussed further in the subsequent section on ‘Research design and methods’ in this chapter (3.5).

3.3. Qualitative Approaches

According to Malterud (2001a), and Miles and Huberman (1994), qualitative research helps to improve our understanding of people and their lives through the systematic collection, organisation, and interpretation of documented material derived from talk and/or observation. In the present study, a combination of the ethnographic, phenomenological and case study approaches has been used. These three approaches reveal the qualitative nature of the research, whereby there is little reliance on numerical data, a large sample size and scientific controls or measures (Malterud *b*, 2001).

3.3.1. Ethnography

Ethnographic research has a fundamental focus on the description of people and the culture of people, with the purpose of learning what it is like to be a member of the group from the perspective of the members of that group (Johnson & Christensen, 2011). The use of descriptive and explanatory questions will contribute to what is ‘meaningful’ education for Tongan women (Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994) whereby the cultural aspects of educated Tongan women’s realities are considered (Rubin & Babbie, 2010).

3.3.2. Phenomenology

In this approach, the aim of the researcher is to investigate consciousness as experienced by the subject, whereby the researcher describes the world as experienced by the subject (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, cited in Baker, Wuest & Stern, 1992). Thus, the object of phenomenological inquiry adopted in this research is the description of the phenomena of higher education in New Zealand and *fakalalakalaka* as they are perceived and experienced by the informants, without the influence of the researcher’s background knowledge and beliefs which must be bracketed off.

3.3.3. Case Study Research

The case study approach embedded in this research deals with each of the multiple cases (Yin, 1994) as a whole unit (holistically) as one exists in context. The detailed accounts of the multiple cases is utilised to both describe the perspectives of educated Tongan women and to explore how these relate to *fakalalakalaka* (Stake, 1995). Thus, there is the ability to

achieve greater insight into the perspectives of educated Tongan women by concurrently studying multiple units or cases in which the cases are compared for similarities and differences (Johnson & Christensen, 2011; Yin, 1994).

The multiple cases allow for the identification of a pattern of perspectives and experiences based on the ‘replication logic’ (Johnson & Christensen, 2011). This is when data shows a repetition of responses across the cases and allows for overarching observations to be made about the emerging themes or ideas. According to Yin (1994) in research, the validity of findings is enhanced when it has been replicated many times in multiple cases. This will further ensure more grounds for ‘refining’ theories and images for educated Tongan women. The same can be said of when the reverse happens. Findings that show no correlative pattern (Anderson, 1998) in the responses of the participants indicate that there is little basis for generalisations (Yin, 1994) to be made. A limitation of seeking ‘patterns’ of replication in data is that the ‘richness’ of qualitative data may be overlooked in the process. It is important to acknowledge the findings that show no correlative pattern, and consider these in further research.

3.3.4. Traditional Methods Reconsidered

Oakley (1981) and Vaioleti (2003) note that traditional methods of interviewing places a distance between the interviewer and participants that is not conducive to creating a positive relationship between researchers and those being researched. Oakley advocates the need to reconsider the methods of interviewing women participants in particular. According to Vaioleti, the objectivity base of traditional research approaches does not cater well for the subjectivity of the participants in *Pasifika* research contexts. Oakley refutes the stance that a lack of objectivity arises from such proximity between interviewer and interviewee. In fact the opposite is true. Rather, the ‘two-way’ interviewing process creates a space or *vā* for valid communication and reciprocity between people (Airini et al. 2010a).

3.3.5. Talanoa

Vaihu (2010) and Vaioleti (2003) both promote more culturally responsive methods of interviewing in *Pasifika* contexts. *Talanoa* (a Tongan term which means ‘conversation’ or ‘to converse’) is proposed as one such approach that creates ‘authentic’ *Pasifika* knowledge. It has become adopted as a concept of analysis across a range of disciplines within several

Melanesian and Polynesian academic circles and is a widely accepted method of collecting qualitative data in *Pasifika* contexts (Halapua, 2007; Latu, 2009; Otsuka, 2006; Prescott, 2008; Qalo, 2004; Vaioleti, 2003; Vaka'uta, 2009).

Vaioleti (2003) defines *talanoa* as:

“...a conversation, a talk, an exchange of ideas or thinking, whether formal or informal...and interacting without a rigid framework” (p. 16).

According to Havea (2010):

“*Talanoa* is more than storytelling...instead of simply retelling stories and hiding or harmonizing the paradoxes in stories, *talanoa* enables participants to engage, interrogate and may even frustrate those” (p 13).

“*Talanoa* opens sacred texts and traditional values to ordinary and queering tellers and conversationalists. *Talanoa* is inviting and permissive, not just to the learned readers but also to all participants who engage one another in telling, conversation and in story” (p. 14).

Both the simplicity of *talanoa* (Vaioleti, 2003) and the complexity of this approach (Havea, 2010) have been embraced in this study. *Talanoa* has been used to unveil the individual and collective perspectives of educated Tongan women in this study. Latu (2009) suggests that the only way to dig deep into the ‘warehouses’ and ‘libraries’ of knowledge kept within the hearts and minds of Tongan people is through *talanoa*.

Despite the benefits of *talanoa* as a research method, the downside is that gathering information in this way is a lengthy and often time consuming process (Otsuka, 2006). However, this is outweighed by the rich ‘mosaic’ of information created by the free-flowing dialogue.

3.4. Research Design and Method

The following is a description of the research methods employed within the theoretical paradigm and framework discussed in the preceding sections.

3.4.1. Participant Identification and Recruitment

Potential participants for this study were defined as ‘educated Tongan women’ on the basis of the following criteria: they were of Tongan descent; they had studied or were currently studying towards a tertiary degree or diploma (in any field) in a New Zealand university; and

they would have completed at least one year towards this degree or diploma at the time of the interview.

The recruitment of the fifteen participants was carried out in a series of stages. Firstly, initial contact was made with potential participants either by face-to-face contact, email or 'facebook' (a social media website). These women were a convenience sample (from the local churches, community groups, local schools and tertiary graduate networks) which was identified from within the Tongan academic community based in Auckland, New Zealand. This element of 'familiarity' with the researcher allowed participants to engage in an authentic and informal free-flow dialogue, which is suited to the style of communication common with *Pasifika*.

Secondly, on receiving an indication of interest, the researcher requested their personal details (address or email) in order to send each woman the 'Information/Invitation package' (Appendices One and Two). This package contained both English and Tongan translations of details of the study, a written invitation to participate and a consent form to be signed. Each potential participant who received either a package via email or post was given the choice of accepting the invite (by signing and returning the consent form in the postage paid envelope included in the package) or choosing not to accept the invite to participate (by returning the complete information/invite package in the postage paid envelope included in the package) or emailing the researcher a response of withdrawal from the study.

Thirdly, each woman consenting to participate was listed, and it was not until the *talanoa* meeting took place that a number was allocated (Informant 1 through to Informant 15) to replace their name. This numbering system was utilised to ensure confidentiality for each woman's identity on any records once the interviews commenced.

3.4.2. Fifteen Participants

It was indicated in the 'Information/Invitation package' that fifteen participants would be selected from the pool of potential participants based on their availability and accessibility. Given the timeframe for the study, it was decided this number of informants would be manageable and sufficient for the breadth and depth required to answer the research questions posed.

3.4.3. *Talanoa in Session*

With the nature of the research being a ‘qualitative’ case study, focusing on these women and their storying will provide rich and useable data to gain an in-depth knowledge of the perspectives of educated Tongan women on their experiences of higher education in New Zealand, and how this relates to *fakalalakalaka*.

Certainly there are ethical dilemmas that arise where there is least social distance between the interviewer and interviewee. In this particular study the fact that the interviewer and the Tongan women participants share the same gender socialisation and are of the same cultural background means that the social proximity impresses itself even more. Thus, it is only natural that a two-way personal involvement in the interview takes place. However, as suggested by Oakley (1981), it is only then that one can explore and truly understand what women perceive and experience, by ‘investing’ one’s identity in the dialogue. This study embraces this ‘investing’ of researcher identity into the research process, both in the *talanoa* process with the informants and in the discourse presented in this report. This reciprocity of information adds value to the study and supports the philosophy of the *Teu Le Vā* research approach (Airini et al. 2010a).

According to Latu (2009) it is important to base *talanoa* in an environment which is conducive to good discussions, as *talanoa* is aided by an environment where the participants feel comfortable. Thus, the *talanoa* sessions in this study were carried out in a space that was either familiar or handy to the participant, selected by each woman to suit their time of availability and working around their family or work commitments. Of the fifteen participants, several of the women chose to meet in their homes; while a couple of the women requested that we meet in a ‘neutral’ meeting place (the local MacDonald’s) ‘away from the noise’ in spaces where they could ‘talk without distractions’. A few of the women preferred to meet in their workplace, after work. Only one of the fifteen women required an ‘email’ interview which involved sending her a series of questions over the space of a month whilst she was overseas completing work projects. Thus, *talanoa* is conducive to free-flow dialogue that works around the ‘realities’ and daily lives of educated Tongan women.

During each *talanoa* session, notes taken were recorded either by the interviewer or the participant at different stages of the interview. The very first interview presented the option of allowing participants to write their own feedback to prompts given when part-way through the *talanoa*, the participant offered to write her reflections on the concepts in discussion. In

two of the sessions where there was more than one woman present (sisters, mother and daughters), it became evident that the women would need to do some of the writing in order to keep close to the timeframe scheduled for the interview. At one particular session, two sisters had requested to be interviewed together after work and in order to allow them to keep another engagement, it was suggested they both wrote their responses to the prompts given and then discussed aspects of the study along the way. Another time, a session took place at the home of one participant's home, where her mother-in law and sister-in law also requested a simultaneous interview. The decision not to use any recording instrument (videoing or tape recorders) was based on personal experience of being interviewed with such contraptions and not feeling comfortable with the knowledge that I was being recorded and could not really 'erase' what was said once I had made it known.

3.4.4. Analysis of Data

Early data analysis entailed typing up each set of interview notes within a three-day time frame on the completion of each *talanoa* session. The purpose of this was to capture the tones and shades of meaning presented by each woman whilst the conversation from each *talanoa* was still vivid in my memory. Each time transcribing took place, the contexts in which each comment had been made was revisited and captured in the transcript.

Once each set of *talanoa* notes had been typed, these were sent via email to the participants for verification. At this stage the women were encouraged to add to or delete any part of the notes as they saw fit. Once the final version of the *talanoa* notes were completed by each participant, they were returned to the researcher either via email or hard-copy. Four of the women amended the transcripts after revising the notes that had been recorded. It is also important to note here that a summary of the preliminary findings from this study was also presented to the fifteen women for perusal during the final stages of writing (late October, 2011) in the hope to gauge any 'gaps' or further developments required to tell *their* story. These thoughts will be captured in the findings and conclusion sections of the report. This simultaneous analysis of data and collection of data promotes reciprocal trustworthiness in the process (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

As suggested by Johnson and Christensen (2011), the case study approach embedded in this study firstly deals with each of the women's *talanoa* as a whole unit, to examine each woman's story holistically as she exists in her context. This is done before the process of

cross-case examination in order to provide both depths into individual units of study, as well as breadth from the comparisons of the multiple cases. The final report depicts this mosaic of descriptive and explanatory representations of the educated Tongan women as both ‘parts’ and ‘whole’ in the study.

A simple coding based on the numbering scheme allocated to the fifteen women and the categorising of themes that emerged in the dialogue captured from the *talanoa* sessions allowed further analysis of the data (Appendices Three and Four). This process of coding allows for ‘thematic analysis’ (Anderson, 1998) whereby patterns or themes across the multiple cases are easily identified, as well as allows the tracking of data links to individual cases throughout the analysis and writing stages of the research.

The use of data displays (continuums, matrices, mind-maps, tables, venn diagrams) helps to further make meaning of the information, as well as to expose the gaps or areas where more data are needed. The use of data displays has been incorporated into both the early phases of delving into the literature, developing the problem statement, data collection and data analysis, as well as the final presentation of the study. According to Glesne and Peshkin (1992), data displays provide the skeleton of qualitative work that allows one to see the overall patterns in data without ‘getting lost’ in the details.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

The ethical issues embedded in this research have been identified and addressed. The approval of this study to be carried out was received from the Massey University Human Ethics Committee (MUHEC) on the 10th of May, 2011 (Southern B, Application 11/24, as in Appendix Five).

A few of the ethical issues that are special to this study are as follows:

- It is understood that some topics of discussion may cause some discomfort for individual participants. Should any participant feel any discomfort during the *talanoa*, they have a right to refuse to answer questions, or to withdraw from the interview.
- It is also understood that for the women being interviewed English may not be their first language. Therefore, measures have been taken to translate information into both

English and Tongan languages, and dialogue during the *talanoa* sessions. The researcher has the ability to converse and capture dialogue in both languages.

- Family members were not excluded from the study as selection was based on the criteria above. It is understood by the researcher that all work done towards this study must be done with integrity as an academic and as a Tongan woman. All participants will be given the exact information and consideration as all other participants.

3.5.1. Changes Made to Proposed Study

It is important to note the changes to the proposed study which was approved by MUHEC. Despite the changes being minimal as well as typical of the way qualitative research evolves, it is important that the processes I have taken in this study are kept transparent for the purpose of maintaining the integrity and validity of this work.

The original project title proposed stated:

‘A consideration of the perspectives of Tongan women academics: Is tertiary education in New Zealand meaningful to the learner and how does this relate to *fakalalakaka*?’ This is evident in the statement of approval received from MUHEC (Appendix Five).

This project title was later amended to state:

‘A consideration of the perspectives of educated Tongan women on their experiences of higher education in New Zealand, and how this relates to *fakalalakaka*’.

The reason for this change was to better reflect the terminology used in literature reviewed in the study.

The proposed interview schedule listed only five semi-structured questions. It was later decided that the interview schedule needed to include a section of structured questions that would form the profile of each informant in the later stages of data analysis. The interview schedule was then arranged into three main sections (Appendix Six). The first section (S1) of the interview asked ten profile questions that allowed each woman to list her tertiary qualification(s) (questions one to six) and to indicate and explain her ethnic/cultural identity (questions seven to ten). The second section (S2) of the interview asked four questions relating to ‘meaningful education’ per university qualification attained in New Zealand. The third section (S3) of the interview outlines twelve ‘prompts’ that guided the *talanoa* of

informants to consider their tertiary experience(s) in relation to the concepts of ‘meaningful’ *fakalalakalaka*, holistic dimensions, the roles of Tongan women and *anga faka-Tonga*.

The first reason for this change was to ensure that the required profile information for each informant was kept uniform across all fifteen informants, although for the most part of the interviews, the dialogue was kept free-flowing and semi-structured. The second reason for this amended interview schedule was the need to incorporate some more of the important concepts (*anga faka-Tonga*, ethnicity and cultural identity) that had been gleaned from the literature. These concepts were only discovered during my readings a month after the submission of the proposal to MUHEC.

The proposal stated:

“Participants will only be required to give a maximum of 1 hour for the *talanoa* (interview), 30 minutes to verify/correct the *talanoa* notes, and another 1 hour (optional) for the meal provided at the end of the research when the findings will be shared with the participants as a group.”

The actual *talanoa* sessions ranged in length with the informants; lasting between 1 to 2 hours each.

The reason for this is the extended interview schedule and the nature of any type of dialogue and *talanoa* involving women! The semi-structured free-flow dialogue kept the women fully engaged and often they were not aware of the time that had passed. In fact, the women showed great delight in having their stories heard and the opportunity to reflect on how far they had come in their journey of *fakalalakalaka*.

3.5.2. Talanoa Languages Used

Another change that needs to be mentioned here, but was not stated in the MUHEC proposal although alluded to, was the decision made during the data collection stage of the study that a Tongan translation of the interview schedule would not be utilised with the educated Tongan women. This change came about after observing that the informants were proficient English speakers and that the use of the English language would be appropriate with this particular selection of Tongan women who would have completed their studies in New Zealand using the English language, both written and spoken. In fact, during the *talanoa* sessions with these

women, there was a preference to converse in the English language rather than in Tongan, although phrases of the Tongan language were used when a point of meaning was emphasised, e.g. “*koe ‘api a fefine*” (the women’s place is in the home).

The next chapter presents data collated from these *talanoa* sessions, including brief profiles of the fifteen women who took part in the study.

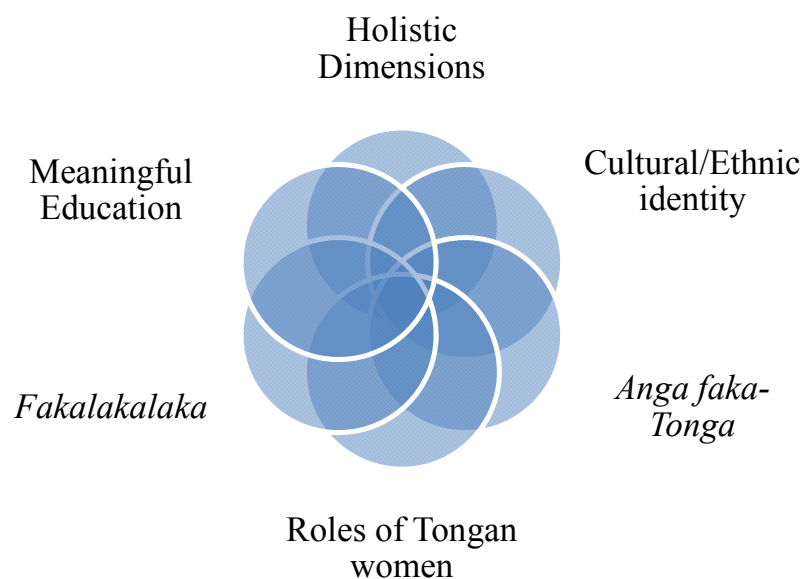
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA SUMMARY

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents brief profiles of the fifteen women, who were interviewed during the month of July, 2011. These profiles are ordered according to the numbering system utilised in the analysis of data. I have chosen to use decade cohorts to indicate the age range of each woman to ensure confidentiality. The significance of identifying the age range for each woman is the context it gives the data presented.

A summary of data and emerging themes are presented in relation to each research question. Six themes have emerged in the thematic analysis (Anderson, 1998) of this data: ‘holistic dimensions’, ‘cultural and ethnic identity’, ‘*anga faka-Tonga*’, ‘roles of Tongan women’, ‘*fakalalakala*’ and ‘meaningful education’. There are obvious links and overlaps between these categories as shown on the Venn diagram below (Figure 1), which emphasises the significance of these concepts in the lives of educated Tongan women.

Figure 1: Emerging Themes – Links and Overlaps



4.2. Brief Profiles

The following profiles give a brief overview of the tertiary qualifications that have been acquired by the fifteen educated Tongan women in New Zealand.

Informant One (I.1) is single in her early thirties. **I.1** was born in Tonga and migrated to New Zealand with her parents at the age of three. She is currently studying towards a Diploma of TESSOL, has completed a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Pacific Studies and Politics (2000), a Graduate Diploma of Arts (2003) and a further Graduate Diploma of Secondary Teaching (2006).

Informant Two (I.2) is married with three children and in her late thirties. **I.2** was born in Tonga and moved to New Zealand with her family as a preschooler. She completed a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Ancient History (1993).

Informant Three (I.3) is married and in her late twenties, and was born in Tonga and migrated to New Zealand after completing her secondary schooling. She completed a Bachelor of Health Science (2004), a Postgraduate Diploma of Public Health (2005) and a further Postgraduate Diploma of Health Science (2009).

Informant 4 (I.4) is married with four children and in her early fifties. **I.4** was born in Tonga and moved with her family to New Zealand for better opportunities. She has completed a Teaching Diploma (1983) and more recently completed a Diploma of TESSOL (2002) and a Bachelor of Education (2009).

Informant 5 (I.5) is single in her mid twenties. **I.5** was born in Tonga and migrated with her family to New Zealand as a primary student. She is currently studying towards a Bachelor of Science majoring in Mathematics and Statistics.

Informant 6 (I.6) is single in her mid twenties. **I.6** was born in Tonga and migrated to New Zealand to pursue tertiary studies. She has completed a Certificate of Health Science (2004), and is currently studying towards a Bachelor of Science majoring in Psychology.

Informant 7 (I.7) is single in her mid twenties. **I.7** was born in Tonga and migrated to New Zealand to commence higher education at university. She has completed a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Linguistics and English (2007) as well as a Graduate Diploma of Secondary Teaching (2009).

Informant 8 (I.8) is married with nine children (five biological children and four adopted children). **I.8** was born in New Zealand and is in her late thirties. She has completed a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Education and Politics (1997).

Informant 9 (I.9) is married with three children and is in her late thirties. **I.9** was born in New Zealand and has completed a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Political Science and Sociology (1998) and a Bachelor of Law (LLB) in 2002.

Informant 10 (I.10) is married with two children and is in her mid thirties. **I.10** was born in New Zealand and has completed a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Art History and Anthropology (1997) and a Master of Arts (Museums and Heritage Studies) in 2003.

Informant 11 (I.11) is married and is in her late twenties. **I.11** was born in New Zealand and has completed a Bachelor of Architectural Studies (2004), a Bachelor of Architecture with Honours (2006) and a Master of Architecture with Honours (2008).

Informant 12 (I.12) is married with two children and is in her late thirties. **I.12** was born in New Zealand and is currently studying towards a fourth tertiary qualification (Graduate Diploma of Primary Teaching). **I.12** has completed a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Education (1996), a Post Graduate Diploma of Education (2003) and a Master of Arts (2005).

Informant 13 (I.13) is married with one child and was born in New Zealand and is in her mid thirties. **I.13** is currently studying towards a Bachelor of Education in Primary Teaching.

Informant 14 (I.14) is a single in her early thirties who was born in New Zealand. **I.14** has completed a Bachelor of Social Sciences (2004).

Informant 15 (I.15) is a single in her mid twenties and was born in New Zealand. **I.15** has completed a Bachelor of Arts majoring in English Literature and Pacific Studies (2006), and a Postgraduate Diploma of Pacific Studies (2007).

4.3. Summary of Data

The following section presents a summary of data, per interview question, relevant to answering the main research questions asked at the outset of the study (refer to 'Introduction and Overview' chapter, section 1.5). The links and overlaps of the six emerging themes are

illustrated in the following summary of data. Quotations drawn from the *talanoa* transcripts support the summary.

4.3.1. Main Research Questions

Research Question One (RQ1):

‘How do educated Tongan women define ‘*fakalalakalaka*’ in relation to their education?’

Research Question Two (RQ2):

‘Is higher education in New Zealand considered ‘meaningful’? Why?’

Research Question Three (RQ3):

‘Do their ‘holistic dimensions’ matter in this process of ‘*fakalalakalaka*’? Why?’

Research Question Four (RQ4):

‘Does this form of ‘*fakalalakalaka*’ affect the cultural or ethnic identity of educated Tongan women? Why?’

4.4. Interview Questions

Three sections of questions were prepared on the interview schedule (Appendix Six) which was given to each woman at the start of a *talanoa* session. The first section (S1) of the interview asked questions that allowed each woman to list her tertiary qualification(s) and to indicate and explain her ethnic/cultural identity. The collated responses to the first six questions of S1 have been used to present the ‘brief profiles’ of the fifteen informants in this chapter. The second section (S2) of the interview asked four questions relating to ‘meaningful education’ per university qualification attained in New Zealand. The third section (S3) of the interview outlines twelve ‘prompts’ that guided the *talanoa* of informants to consider their tertiary experience(s) in relation to the concepts of ‘meaningful’ *fakalalakalaka*, holistic dimensions, the roles of Tongan women and *anga faka-Tonga*. The data from these three sections of the interviews is outlined in the matrix below (Table 1) according to their relevance to the four main research questions.

Table 1: Summary of Data Related to the Main Research Questions

Main Research Question	Section in Interview Schedule	Question number per section of Interview Schedule
Research Question One (RQ1)	Third Section (S3)	Q1, Q2
Research Question Two (RQ2)	Second Section (S2)	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4
Research Question Three (RQ3)	Third Section (S3)	Q3, Q4, Q5,
Research Question Four (RQ4)	First Section (S1)	Q7, Q8, Q9, Q10
	Third Section (S3)	Q6, Q7, Q8, Q9, Q10, Q11

4.5. Data Relevant to Answering Research Question One

Interview questions relating to RQ1 asked informants to describe their understanding of the concept of *fakalalakalaka* (progress or development) through further education and to relate this understanding of the concept to their own tertiary attainment and experiences at university. Each of the informants gave their definition of *fakalalakalaka* and all fifteen women placed high importance on having a tertiary qualification or the tertiary experience as a part of *fakalalakalaka*. A holistic (*fakalukufua*) approach was adopted by all fifteen women when they described what ‘*fakalalakalaka*’ meant in the context of their lives as individuals (spiritual, physical and mental), as part of a family and as part of a wider community or collective.

The range of definitions given by the informants were categorised under the following seven headings: *Fakalalakalaka* is a ‘holistic’ *fakalukufua* development; *Fakalalakalaka* is a process that occurs in a series of stages or levels ; *Fakalalakalaka* can happen through higher education; *Fakalalakalaka* can happen through life experiences; *Fakalalakalaka* broadens the mind and worldview; *Fakalalakalaka* clarifies and strengthens your identity and culture; *Fakalalakalaka* benefits both the individual and the collective; self and others. The definitions of *fakalalakalaka* given by the women have evident connections with their holistic dimensions and cultural identity as Tongan women. The informants refer to higher education as a form of *fakalalakalaka*. However, the informants consider these academic attainments as incomplete without the meaning that it obtains from their holistic dimensions.

4.5.1. *Fakalalaka* Develops All Areas of Life

All fifteen informants highlighted the importance of their holistic '*fakalukufua*' spheres in relation to their tertiary education and qualifications. For example, **I.2** sums up the notion that the fifteen informants convey about their 'holistic' development through higher education:

I.2: "...further studies is a must not only to change our attitudes towards life but to help us develop in all areas of life whether it be spiritually, physically or mentally. You cannot be just a learner of one sphere without the others, or it will not be 'holistic' and cannot be defined as *fakalalaka*."

Six informants relate their view of *fakalalaka* with their understanding of the spiritual dimension as Christian women. One informant clarifies this insight well:

I.8: "As a Christian, when the spiritual dimension of a person moves forward, other areas move forward positively. If an area moves forward without the spiritual aspect of a person, it can have very negative consequences...I do believe that your spiritual dimension is your foundation, your covering over the rest of your life – when this spiritual side is *fakalalaka*, everything else is aligned and progress happens in a more meaningful way. Your spiritual dimension sets your purpose and direction in life – it directs the other areas of your life."

4.5.2. *Fakalalaka* is a Process that Occurs in a Series of Stages or Levels

Eight informants said that *fakalalaka* is a process or pathway used to get to a destination. This process occurs either in "levels" or "a series of stages". This progression "from one level to another" can happen "through tertiary education."

4.5.3. *Fakalalaka* Has Many Avenues

Although there is a consensus amongst the fifteen informants that a tertiary qualification is important, the women clearly state that a formal education is only a part of the process of *fakalalaka*; a tertiary education "contributes to the process" and is only "one avenue for *fakalalaka*", it is "not the only aspect of *fakalalaka*". In fact, **I.15** notes that having a perception that higher education is the only avenue to *fakalalaka* "can be detrimental for people" who are forced into higher education because of the perception that "education is crucial". **I.2** states that *fakalalaka* can in fact come through other means such as life experiences in the church, home, family, friendship and work spheres.

Nine informants said that their experiences both within their tertiary studies and in their personal life journeys have led to a personal *fakalalakaka*.

In particular, these nine informants highlighted that the tertiary experience gave them an education that was not limited to the content delivered in the lecture theatres. **I.1** said that “academically” she was not motivated during the year of her Graduate Diploma of Arts programme. Instead, she had utilised this time to develop a network of people that established the Tongan Students’ Association at the university. **I.1** had become more connected in the academic and community circles she worked in during 2003 and attributes her ability to advocate for the Tongan community to her ‘life experience’ at university.

4.5.4. *Fakalalakaka* Empowers Tongan Women to ‘Sift Out’ What is Important

Seven informants said that their ‘horizons’, ‘thoughts’ or ‘worldview’ had been broadened by their tertiary experience. The movement from traditional Tongan perspectives and the ability to change the ‘status quo’ was attributed to an ‘open mind’, ‘more knowledge’ and an appreciation for ‘another way’ of perceiving. **I.6** states that:

“...there is a level of *fakalalakaka* experienced through tertiary education. It broadens one’s mind and level of understanding...and can change someone’s attitude to particular ideas and worldviews...other than the Tongan ones I have grown up with.”

I.15 speaks openly about her decision to redefine the ‘Tongan way’ based on her realisation that her parents’ version of it was ‘brainwash’:

I.15: “You think you’re born with your culture...but it comes to a point where you can choose whether to do it (culture) as you are taught to do it or you try a new way...”

Despite this obvious movement away from traditional Tongan perspectives evident in the data, the informants still claimed that the ‘Tongan way of life’ *anga faka-Tonga* was an important part of their identity in New Zealand. The process of *fakalalakaka* through higher education has enabled these informants to clarify and redefine what their Tongan culture and identity means to them and their family contexts:

I.12: “Studying and achieving all these qualifications has in a way helped me to develop from the ‘old’ mentality...it has helped me to move away from the traditional ideas that state what Tongan women are

supposed to be like...although I appreciate aspects of our Tongan culture, I've now got a new perspective on this. I am 'sifting' out what is important from our Tongan culture and what is not and using these important parts of our Tongan culture to raise my own kids."

Seven informants said that their personal *fakalalakalaka* through higher education raised and strengthened their understanding of their culture and identity as a Tongan woman. There is a particular sense of pride from being a part of the 'minority' group at university:

I.8: "...going to uni finally made me proud to be a Tongan/ Pacific Island female...I had found my identity..."

I.12: "...then, there weren't a lot of Pacific Islanders at uni...I felt good about it because at secondary school you needed to work really hard to get to uni...it was especially hard work for a Tongan woman or a Pacific Islander at secondary school trying to get into uni...it was something I wanted as a Tongan woman – to be an 'achiever'."

4.5.5. *Fakalalakalaka* Benefits Both the Individual and the Collective

All fifteen informants said that the achievement of tertiary qualifications was a way of personal as well as collective *fakalalakalaka*. **I.15** relates *fakalalakalaka* through higher education to her being a part of a 'collective':

I.15: "I learnt that ...I am part of a 'collective'...by finding out that I'm a holistic learner in this sense taught me that uni isn't going to progress me by 'myself'..."

I.12 speaks of her tertiary qualifications in Education and Primary Teaching as a form of personal *fakalalakalaka* that is overflowing into her desire to help her community:

I.12: "...a big part of why I did that degree... was about helping others and especially kids to succeed...I can 'reflect' on my experiences as a New Zealand-born Pacific Islander and I used this to encourage the children...to motivate children to keep going."

I.1 said that her time at university allowed her to both develop her networking skills as well as to "advocate" for her Tongan culture on campus: strengthening the support for Tongan students at the university she attended. **I.10's** passion for *Pasifika* art and Tongan material culture is driven by a desire to contribute to society at large:

I.10: "It's not only beneficial to you – it's beneficial to your family and to society at large...I believe that I'm really doing service to my people – not just to Tongans in Tonga or here in New Zealand, but to Tongans worldwide".

4.6. Data Relevant to Answering Research Question Two

Interview questions relating to RQ2 asked informants to give their perspectives of ‘meaningful’ education and *fakalalakalaka* (progress or development) through further education and to relate this understanding to their own tertiary attainment and experiences at university.

Talanoa data reveals the range of perspectives on what is a ‘meaningful’ form of education and there is an obvious link between the theme of ‘meaningful education’ and the previous theme of holistic *fakalalakalaka*.

4.6.1. Meaningful *Fakalalakalaka* Defined

All fifteen informants described what they considered to be ‘meaningful’ in their tertiary experience in New Zealand. Two informants gave reasons why some aspects of their tertiary experience were not considered ‘meaningful’.

I.8 firstly defines ‘meaningful’ education in relation to whether or not she had achieved her purpose at university, and shares her disappointment in not having remained on task:

I.8: “I wasn’t doing well, I was failing...there were aspects of my parent’s teaching that I did not keep...and wound up doing stuff which I found ...broke my principles as a Christian, as a Tongan girl. It wasn’t a constructive time in my studies...I didn’t achieve my goals or purpose”.

I.12 explains that education is meaningful when one knows the purpose for their learning.

I.12 said that her first year of university was “terrible” because she was not engaged in the content of the course, nor disciplined enough to attend all her classes:

I.12: “...I was not really aware of what the paper was really about...I started following other students who did not go to class.”

All fifteen informants said that higher education was a form of ‘meaningful’ progress or *fakalalakalaka*. The range of answers given by the informants are listed under the following seven headings: content relevance; a new experience; overcoming obstacles and challenges; understanding Tongan culture and identity; personal and professional development; life purpose and ‘a greater cause’; meaningful connections.

4.6.2. Content Relevance

Eleven informants said that they had found their higher education meaningful because of the relevance of content and knowledge to their career, field of interest or passion:

I.12: “I found this year at university very meaningful to me because this is where my passion for the health of the community started...I have learned about ways that I could improve the health of our people.”

I.10: “This has been meaningful also in that it has solidified what I wanted to do in my area of passion and drive, working with our Pacific people and our material culture, our arts. This is something that I’ve continued to do now in my current work.”

I.14: “Yes – it opened up my mind to things...I didn’t know what I wanted to do in secondary school when I left, I was sitting on the fence at the time I entered uni...going to uni helped me to decide on my future...I discovered that I like to work with people – social services was where I wanted to go...so, yes it helped me.”

4.6.3. A New Experience

Seven informants reflected on their new experiences; migrating to New Zealand, attending university for the first time or having independence and freedom as a tertiary student. Having this ‘new’ experience was seen as ‘meaningful’ in their attainment of a higher education in New Zealand universities:

I.3: “When I got into university...it was like a dream come true! I came from Tonga in 2000 and like any other Pacific student from the islands, I struggled...I have learned a lot from studying at university.”

I.6: “It was meaningful in the sense that this was my first tertiary experience...straight from high school in Tonga...to a liberal and opinion-free environment...I learnt to develop ideas that had I been in Tonga, I would have never experienced.”

I.7: “Tertiary life during this period was also meaningful because it exposed me to the freedoms of having to manage myself and not having to answer to anyone. Making new friends was important to me as it was my first year in New Zealand also.”

4.6.4. Lifelong Learners

Eight informants said that their tertiary experience was meaningful because of the success they had in overcoming ‘tradition’, ‘challenges’, ‘barriers’ and ‘prejudice’. This practice of overcoming obstacles during their university years has enabled the women to face life’s challenges and to be ‘life-long learners’. **I.9** tells of her experience when she decided to attend university:

I.9: “As a Tongan woman, my father didn’t approve of my going into tertiary education...in the end I graduated first in my family... and my dad was so proud of me! It was really hard work – I thought to myself at this time: ‘If I can make it through this, I can get through anything!’”

I.12 has used her experiences of ‘success’ to spur further studies:

I.12: “When I completed my research, I was heavily pregnant at the time....will power is something that I discovered during this time that made the whole experience meaningful to me...I knew I had really challenged myself. The determination I had with completing my M.A. made me realise that I could do anything – It kept me going...with my Graduate Diploma in Primary Teaching after this.”

4.6.5. Tongan Women ‘Trail Blazers’

Fourteen informants said that they had gained a better appreciation for their Tongan culture and identity as a result of higher education:

I.11: “...for the first time I saw what I learnt and did in the framework as a Tongan, Pacific woman. The importance of being a Tongan woman in architecture was not fully realised until my Masters research.”

Thirteen informants said that the significance of their cultural identity as Tongan women motivated them to complete their tertiary qualifications. There is an obvious pride in being ‘a minority’ in their area of study or being a pioneer and ‘trail blazer’ in their field. All fifteen informants uphold the value of higher education in their families and in the Tongan community. It is an element of their culture that is promoted by the attainment of a higher qualification. Twelve informants said that they had received ‘acknowledgement’ and ‘respect’ as a role model, as an academic leader or as a professional in their family, church or community.

4.6.6. Personal and Professional Development

Fourteen informants highlighted the importance of applying the knowledge and skills attained through higher education in their lives and careers:

I.1: “...practically, I was able to really use my skills...my ‘negotiation’ skills, ‘promotion skills’, and ‘creativity skills’...”

I.4: “...it was all a worthwhile experience – I was able to bring into my teaching practice a variety of teaching techniques that would benefit ESOL students at my school. I used these different teaching strategies with my own children at home.”

I.9: “Skills that I’ve gained (especially in my Law degree) that I might not have had have worked for me in the workplace...”

4.6.7. Life Purpose and ‘A Greater Cause’

Fourteen informants said that their higher education was ‘meaningful’ because it allowed them to ‘connect to’, ‘help out’, ‘inspire’ or ‘support’ others in their family, church, community, academic or social circles.

Nine of these informants said that their tertiary qualifications have allowed them to contribute to their family or community *fakalalakala* as much as they have their own. This aspect makes their tertiary education ‘meaningful’:

I.1: “...this qualification allowed me to put my youth leadership in a framework – skills and knowledge I got transferred everything I got to youth in church and my family – the qualification helped ...”

I.4: “I created a more understanding learning environment at home with my understanding gained from this study, and my children enjoyed their schooling years as a result of this.”

Seven of these informants say that their desire to be a part of ‘something bigger’ than themselves has led to their life purpose:

I.11: “...to have some kind of greater purpose more than just working in an architectural office for money. I guess this resonated from my Christian worldview that life should be about serving others or a cause greater than me....”

4.6.8. Meaningful Connections

Six informants also noted the ‘meaningful’ friendships that evolved during their time at university and these have remained significant networks in their lives today:

I.11: “...I met other Pacific women who were also studying towards higher research degrees...I learnt so much from them....Our *talanoa* times were great, voicing our perspectives...we informally became a support network...”

I.12: “...my friends kept me sane while I was studying...I talked a lot to both my husband and my friends during my study and it was their encouragement that kept me going...and now my friends are encouraging me to do a PhD.”

4.7. Data Relevant to Answering Research Question Three

Interview questions relating to RQ3 asked informants to give their perspectives on the concept of ‘holistic learners’ and how this relates to their tertiary experience in New Zealand, as well as *fakalalakalaka*.

In the *talanoa* sessions with the fifteen women, the ‘familial’ and ‘spiritual’ dimensions were the most frequently mentioned spheres of influence on them as individuals.

4.7.1. Many Dimensions

All fifteen informants agreed with the concept of Tongan women being ‘holistic learners’, particularly in relation to their experiences of higher education. Both **I.6** and **I.11** sum this up well:

I.6: “For a Tongan woman to completely be effective in learning at a tertiary level, all four dimensions should be lived out.”

I.11: “I constantly placed my learning in the other spheres of my life and allowed these dimensions to feed into my learning...I think these other spheres feed into our learning, learning feeds back into, motivates, gives reasons for decisions...that is my experience as a holistic learner”.

However, when asked to elaborate on the four dimensions in relation to *fakalalakalaka* and higher education, only two informants spoke about all four dimensions; mind, body, spirit and family. These two informants both said it was important to have a healthy body and optimal physical conditions to be successful in learning and in life. Four informants said that the enlightenment of the ‘mind’ through higher education was one of the significant aspects of their ‘holistic’ experience at university. **I.10** explained that the priority of developing the ‘mind’ sphere was something fostered in her by her father while she was growing up and that the spiritual/religious sphere was not so important until later in her life.

4.7.2. Values and Beliefs

On the other hand, nine informants spoke of the significance of their ‘spiritual’ dimension. These informants acknowledged God, God’s guidance, strength from Christ and their spiritual values and beliefs as core to their success at university:

I.6: “If I was to purely study and study, with no connection to the spiritual, studying would be meaningless.”

I.9: “You can’t do anything without God – in terms of my degrees – I needed to pray about it – what was His purpose for me?...God and family...these two worked together with my education and are what helped me at university.”

I.13: “Having God in my life is important...sometimes things are out of balance, but when your ‘spirit’ man is strong, you can get through things more easily...despite the things I’m going through I’m still strong.”

4.7.3. Most Influential Dimension

Thirteen informants highlighted their familial, communal and social spheres as the dimension that has the most influence on their higher education and *fakalalakala*:

I.3: “From my own perspective, family is the most important dimension in education.”

I.5: “Most importantly you need to have a very supportive and loving family, because families are everything.”

All fifteen informants said that being part of a family or collective was the driving force behind their desire to do well in their university study:

I.3: “As a Tongan woman, I must say that the beliefs, expectations or opinions of your family can have a major impact on the studies and the choice of career that you as a Tongan individual make....Without the support of my family, I would not have been able to complete my degree and studies at university.”

I.5: “Actually, the concept of holistic learners can easily relate to what I’m going through right now. Without the support of my family, especially my mother, I would have given up a long time ago.”

4.7.4. Other Spheres

The informants were also asked if ‘another’ sphere should be considered in this ‘holistic’ concept. Five informants made suggestions, and two of them said that the ‘workplace’ and ‘economic’ spheres were important to the holistic *fakalalakala* of Tongan women. Two suggested ‘friends’ and a supportive ‘environment’ as significant to the ‘familial’ sphere of a learner, and one said that a learner’s emotions should be considered a significant aspect of the ‘mind’ sphere.

Although informants mentioned ‘better living’ and ‘better financial situations’ as a result of their qualifications, these were always linked to the ‘familial’ aspect of their lives.

4.8. Data Relevant to Answering Research Question Four

Interview questions relating to RQ4 asked the informants to specify their identity. The ‘change’ factor was also a point of discussion, whereby informants were asked to specify whether a change in identity had occurred at any time during their lifetime, and for an explanation for any change in perception. Each woman was asked to define the term *anga faka-Tonga* and to list the aspects of *anga faka-Tonga* they considered most important. The informants were also asked to place themselves on a continuum of ‘Conservative’/‘Traditional’ to ‘Contemporary’/‘Modern’ and to comment on their experiences of *anga faka-Tonga*, considering whether it is an important part of *fakalalakalaka* and higher education.

4.8.1. ‘Being Tongan’ in a New Zealand Context

Talanoa data captures the ranging perspectives on ‘who’ the informants believe they are. It is important to note that the ‘ethnicity’ and ‘cultural’ identities of the women are used simultaneously and interchangeably by the women interviewed. Seven of the women were born in Tonga and five of these women have identified themselves purely as a ‘Tongan’; one of these seven women identified herself as both Tongan and *Pasifika*. Out of the eight women who were born and raised in New Zealand, only one of these women identified with being solely Tongan.

Six women make connections in their cultural/ethnic identity to either being a ‘Kiwi’ or New Zealand-born. It is notable that five of the six women who selected Kiwi/New Zealand-born Tongan are all citizens of New Zealand by birth. The one woman who identified as being ‘Kiwi’ but was born in Tonga migrated to New Zealand as a preschooler and said that she has formed a cultural identity that embraces multiculturalism in New Zealand. Four informants selected a combination of ‘Tongan’ and either ‘Kiwi’ or ‘Pasifika’. Two informants chose ‘all of the above’ (Tongan, *Pasifika* and Kiwi).

Two informants specified an ‘other’ category. One of these women stated ‘New Zealand-born Tongan’ to signify that she was Tongan, but born in New Zealand. The other of these two women stated her ‘divine identity as a Christian’ to signify that although she was Tongan, her Christian identity was also significant. Four informants said that a crucial change took place in their identity during their tertiary experience in New Zealand.

Later in the *talanoa*, some of the eleven women who did not respond to S1, Q8, Q9 and Q10, did reveal that their tertiary experiences had also strengthened their identities.

4.8.2. Perceptions of 'The Tongan Way'

Anga faka-Tonga is a theme that emerges throughout the *talanoa* dialogue; each woman has her particular perspective on what is and is not *anga faka-Tonga* depending on their perceptions of traditional Tongan practices in New Zealand. The definitions given by the informants show a connection between their perceptions of *anga faka-Tonga* and how this reflects in their lives as Tongan women living in New Zealand.

Twelve informants defined *anga faka-Tonga* as the cultural traditions and customs of Tongan people or the 'Tongan way'. Further to this, twelve informants defined *anga faka-Tonga* as the actual application of the core values of 'being Tongan'. More specifically, **I.7** said *anga faka-Tonga* defined the expectations of her as a Tongan woman while studying at university, and for **I.9** this meant 'discipline' as a tertiary student.

I.7: "*Anga faka-Tonga* to me adheres to the beliefs and customs of a Tongan...the expectations required of a Tongan woman."

I.13 said that it was difficult to distinguish between the values of *anga faka-Tonga* and her Christian principles. Moreover, **I.2** said that there were good aspects of *anga faka-Tonga* as well as bad. Because of this, **I.15** said that she had to create her own definition of *anga faka-Tonga* after discovering that the notion of *anga faka-Tonga* advocated by her parents was in fact non-existent in modern-day Tongan lives:

I.15: "...those traditionalists don't realise that things have changed...you can see the change in our Tongan culture..."

4.8.3. Important Aspects of *Anga Faka-Tonga*

All fifteen informants said that *faka'apa'apa* (respect) and *tauhi vaha'a* (good relationships and keeping family or kinship ties) were most important aspects of *anga faka-Tonga*, particularly in their lives as educated Tongan women. Nine informants said that *fai fatongia* (carrying out obligations) and *fua kavenga* (fulfilling responsibilities) were equally important

with *mamahi'i me'a* (loyalty and dedication) and *loto tō* (humility) in their *fakalalakalaka* inside and outside of the home.

Other aspects of *anga faka-Tonga* that three informants said were important are the promotion of education, the use of their Tongan language and upholding Christian principles. Three informants said that *anga faka-Tonga* is actually founded on Christian principles of 'love' and 'reciprocity' which govern their daily lives as educated Tongan women.

4.8.4. Roles of Tongan Women

The 'overlapping' of the theme of 'roles of Tongan women' and the themes of 'holistic dimensions', 'cultural and ethnic identity', '*anga faka-Tonga*', 'roles of Tongan women', '*fakalalakalaka*' and 'meaningful education' are evident in the *talanoa* data.

Nine informants agreed that home is an important sphere and their lives have meaning according to *anga faka-Tonga* where '*koe 'api a fefine*' (a women's place is in the home) means their roles and responsibilities bestow 'higher status' to them in the home:

I.4: "A good child comes from a good home where there is a good mother. This is where we as women are very important in our families. I have come to realise that my children display who I am as a mother."

However, twelve informants said that there is a choice to be made by Tongan women to either be at home or to work and develop a career. Ten informants acknowledge the significance of extending beyond the home sphere into communities and 'areas of influence'.

Seven informants also shared their desire to be home more. Two in particular have made a 'change of mind' after becoming mothers/wives and now they believe 'home' is a priority and the best place to be. One informant is single and hopes to get married one day and settle into the 'home' sphere despite her being a professional. This particular informant said that it is a desire of Tongan women to 'be home':

I.1: "...deep down in our little hearts we want to be at home, to teach our children, ensure good Tongan meals are cooked...storying is happening in the home...BUT, in the Western perspective, we are supposed to be at work...I don't mind being at home..."

Six informants said that they disagreed with the concept of the 'home' being their 'place in life'. They choose not to be defined by their responsibilities to the family and home:

I.8: “I disagree. I believe this to be an archaic and sexist statement. If women – Tongan women (my mother and I included) in particular can be bread-winners...why can't Tongan men take upon themselves the role that are ‘traditionally’ expected of women?”

Four informants were partially accepting of the traditional role of Tongan women, but noted that there was a lot more they could do beyond the ‘home’ sphere as educated Tongan women:

I.11: “Yes and no. Our place is in the home, to be the best wife and mother to our families. But also our roles extend out into our communities and areas of influence we have.”

It is the ‘choice’ or ‘freedom to choose’ that is important. Two informants note having a choice to stay home is important to them as educated Tongan women. Being home with a higher qualification allows them the flexibility to be home and to choose to have a career outside of the home sphere should they choose to. Having a tertiary qualification affords them this choice:

I.9: “Really, what we as Tongan women want is a choice to choose to stay at home, and we want to know that we can get a job if we wanted to and also to be home, but not because we were too dumb to get a job!”

4.8.5. Conservative or Contemporary?

Eight informants identified themselves as ‘Conservative/Traditional’; two are extreme traditional in their outlook, three are near-extreme traditional, three are ‘middle of the road’ traditional.

One informant placed herself in ‘the middle’ of the continuum and said that she can be both extremes depending on the situation.

Six of the informants identified themselves as ‘Contemporary/Modern’; four are ‘middle of the road’ contemporary, two are near-extreme contemporary. Two of the informants who identified themselves as ‘contemporary’ in their approach to *anga faka-Tonga* noted that they were progressively becoming more ‘modern’ in their outlook.

4.8.6. Importance of *Anga Faka-Tonga*

Fourteen informants agreed that *anga faka-Tonga* was an important part of *fakalalakalaka*:

I.5: “...without *anga faka-Tonga*, there would not be any progress...you must know your true identity as a Tongan and apply *anga faka-Tonga* into your daily life and also in your studies.”

One informant said that there are good and bad aspects of *anga faka-Tonga*:

I.14: “There’s always the good and the bad; yes, there are good things in our culture that will help in our movement or progress forward...I like the way that we come together and talk over things...but there are other things that may not be helpful.”

The women shared some important perspectives on *anga faka-Tonga*. Many of them discuss the notion that *anga faka-Tonga* promotes *fakalakalaka* for the collective which shapes their view that higher education is not an effort to progress alone. What is also evident from the dialogue is a new perspective that the more ‘Tongan’ they are, the more educated and knowledgeable they are and the better off they will be as academics. The women believe that they have the right to choose certain aspects of *anga faka-Tonga* that they perceive to be important and to put aside aspects that are no longer relevant. This is linked to the certainty amongst the women that Tongan culture is not static, particularly in the context of their lives in New Zealand. Hence, the application of *anga faka-Tonga* is changing within their homes according to the values they perceive to be most important, and based on their perceptions of these values. It is the application of the values of *anga faka-Tonga* rather than the traditions that is important to them as Tongan women. Interestingly, **I.11** points out that the core values of *anga faka-Tonga* are in fact universal and is not unique to Tongan people. According to **I.11**, if these principles are already operating in another cultural framework, then *anga faka-Tonga* is not necessary for *fakalakalaka*.

4.8.7. Application of Anga Faka-Tonga

Ten informants said that their values and actions as tertiary students reflected the values of *anga faka-Tonga*. One woman said that the responsibilities she carried out in the home for her family, while studying, were a part of her *anga faka-Tonga*. Another woman said that the application of her values of *anga faka-Tonga* in her life as a tertiary student in New Zealand was crucial to her success.

Eight informants said that *anga faka-Tonga* was closely tied to their ‘identity’ as Tongan women at university. One said that this embrace of her *anga faka-Tonga* entailed a deeper understanding of her Tongan culture, which included the Tongan language, while another highlighted that the principles she embraced as a Tongan at university were in fact the Godly principles she displayed as a Christian.

Two informants said that *anga faka-Tonga* did not actually feature in their lifestyle or study while at university. However, one of these informants did note that she attended church with her family on Sundays although she was usually “hung over”.

Two informants said that there were good and bad effects of *anga faka-Tonga* on their tertiary experiences. One informant said that she needed to ‘unlearn’ certain aspects of *anga faka-Tonga* that became a ‘barrier’ to her learning at university:

I.15: “The obvious hierarchy system in *anga faka-Tonga* teaches us to adhere to the rules at home under this hierarchy...and it kind of affected my Uni life...I had a fear of my lecturers...it made me feel like I had to be ‘smart’ to talk to them...this was my downfall because I didn’t want to speak to them about anything, especially when I didn’t understand something....This was linked to mum and dad’s teaching us to not question authority...mum and dad were unquestionable...and so I experienced the same thing at school where I was not questioning anything...because I saw asking questions in class showed that I ‘wasn’t listening’...and this was not a good thing...but really, I didn’t understand. That was a real barrier in my learning, it was something I had to go through and get over...I eventually did...at Pacific Studies, my lecturers knew that this was a barrier (this was a good thing because they knew already about this cultural aspect of not being able to ask for help) and they encouraged me to see them and I did...admitting to the fact that I didn’t understand.”

4.9. Synopsis of Findings

The summary presented in this chapter shows the overall relevance of the *talanoa* data to answering the four main research questions asked at the outset. The findings revealed how Tongan women define *fakalalakalaka* in relation to their tertiary education; that higher qualifications and going to university is a ‘meaningful’ form of *fakalalakalaka* and why this is so; that their holistic dimensions matter in this process of *fakalalakalaka* and why this is so; and that this form of *fakalalakalaka* does make an impact on the identity of these educated Tongan women. Moreover, the overlapping themes captured across the *talanoa* dialogue highlight the significance of these concepts in the lives of educated Tongan women.

The key findings will be discussed further in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the key findings that have surfaced from the *talanoa* analysed in the previous chapter. The discussion will weave strands from the findings, as well as the threads of thought that have emerged in the array of literature reviewed. My inside researcher observations will add to the tapestry. Thus, the intertwining of these elements of the study will seek to answer the four main research questions and indicate the implications of these findings for educated Tongan women.

Furthermore, the discussion will consider how the theoretical framework and methodology of this study has impacted the findings presented in this chapter.

5.2. *Fakalalakaka* is Supported by Higher Education in Various Ways

The educated Tongan women in this study advocate the significance of *fakalalakaka fakalukufua* (holistic progress) as key to their progress and success in higher education in New Zealand. Achieving higher education in New Zealand has helped to remove both social and economic barriers and most importantly has empowered educated Tongan women to ‘redefine’ themselves with regards to ‘traditional’ structures of Tongan culture. The ‘overflow’ of this in the wider community of Tongan people further promotes higher education as a pathway to holistic progress and successful living in New Zealand. However, it is important to note that higher education is not the only pathway to *fakalalakaka* for educated Tongan women. According to **I.9**, *fakalalakaka* can happen without a tertiary qualification, but never without spiritual enlightenment:

I.9: “I think spiritually you don’t need an education – when you have that relationship with God, it doesn’t matter”.

5.2.1. The Concept of *Fakalalakalaka Fakalukufua* Defines Holistic Progress as Key to Academic Success

The fifteen educated Tongan women in this study define the concept of *fakalalakalaka* in the context of their lives as individuals (spiritual, physical and mental), as part of a family, and as part of a wider community or collective. This finding supports the study carried out by 'Ilaiu (1997) which also considered the perspectives of Tongan women on the concept of *fakalalakalaka*. Both 'Ilaiu and the educated Tongan women in this study agree on the holistic concept of *fakalalakalaka*.

The range of definitions given in the *talanoa* dialogue (refer to section 4.6 of the previous chapter) captured in this study reveals a desire amongst educated Tongan women to have *fakalalakalaka* in all spheres of life. The purpose of pursuing a postgraduate level degree in a Western perspective often focuses on the economic opportunities provided by a tertiary qualification (Koloto & Sharma, 2006; Vause, 2010). Thus, the notions of what are important to these educated Tongan women can come across as 'soft' (non-economic, social-related) outcomes in comparison to the 'hard' (economically-driven) outcomes expected from attaining a higher education in New Zealand (Dewson et al. 2000). Although these economic benefits of a higher education were mentioned briefly by the women, this did not feature as a priority for their decision to pursue *fakalalakalaka* through higher education.

According to the women, what is significant in their *fakalalakalaka* through higher education is that it has allowed them to broaden their understanding and worldviews, strengthen knowledge of the Tongan culture and their identity, and to bring about progress for others in their family and communities. One informant captures this concept of a complete progress for educated Tongan women as *fakalalakalaka fakalukufua* (holistic development):

I.1: "...*fakalalakalaka* ...my understanding of the word is that it is *fakalukufua* ...I am the embodiment of *sino*, *laumālie*, academic attainment...then you use these and the ability to excel in all other areas...*fakalaumālie* (spiritually) in the church, society, and family. As a Tongan woman, I just can't advocate for Tongans, I need to advocate for all of my community. For the Tongan woman, '*ko ene lava ia o fakakakato ene kavenga*' (this is when her responsibilities have been fulfilled)...be it in church, work, education, family, community...When you have that tertiary education in New Zealand, you can really touch base in all of those aspects..."

'Ilaiu's (1997) study of twenty-four Tongan women in *Nuku'alofa, Tongatapu* revealed a similar view of the concept of *fakalalakalaka* that has evolved from the one-dimensional concept into a more 'holistic' and complete perspective of individual and collective progress. There is an obvious movement away from the original meaning of the word that was adopted

from the Western modernisation (economic and material advancement) efforts in Tonga. Thus, the new concept of *fakalalakalaka fakalukufua* advocated by the educated Tongan women in this study supports the holistic understanding of *fakalalakalaka* suggested by Herlin (2007) and ‘Ilaiu and builds on the notion of ‘soft’ outcomes promoted by Dewson et al. (2000).

As an educated Tongan woman researching this concept of *fakalalakalaka*, I personally identify with the perspective of *fakalalakalaka fakalukufua* promoted by the educated Tongan women in this study. As a Tongan woman and as a *Pasifika* living in New Zealand, I know that this qualification will lead to the spread of ‘local knowledge’ that will benefit those in my community by raising awareness about our learning styles and what is of value in higher education. I view my academic attainments as ‘useful’ in this way and the essence of the research focus that motivates me.

5.2.2. *Fakalalakalaka* Through Higher Education is a Way of Overcoming Barriers and ‘Passing the Baton of Success’

All fifteen women placed high importance on having a tertiary qualification or the tertiary experience as a part of the process of *fakalalakalaka*. An interesting comment was made by I.5 who said that *fakalalakalaka* through higher education was the removal of social ‘barriers’ for Tongan women to attain a higher social and economic status. This is one reason why higher education, particularly at postgraduate level study, is highly sought after by Tongan women. It is the removal of traditional barriers to a better life that once was only accessible to a certain social class in Tonga (Kupu, 1989).

I can remember the ‘mantle’ of pursuing higher education that was placed on me as a young woman by my parents. They had encouraged me to ‘raise the standard of living’ for our family by going to university. I don’t believe that they meant we were ‘poverty-stricken’ although the extra cash from a well-paying job would have helped. What I do believe they were referring to was the ‘social status’ that our family was labelled with – not only as ‘commoners’ in the Tongan hierarchical structure, but as ‘*Pasifika* living in South Auckland’ (among the many immigrants who migrated from the Pacific Islands during the 1970s and 1980s we had been labelled ‘uneducated’ and ‘unemployed’, a deficit-stigma that had resulted from negative media coverage). Thus, going to university became a priority for our

family. It was a way of ‘redefining’ ourselves in the future as well as ‘raising our standard of living’, like my father said.

According to Matoto (2010) and Morton Lee (2003), education is a key reason for Tongan families emigrating abroad. Five of the seven Tongan-born women in the study said that they had migrated to New Zealand purposed for better education opportunities and to access tertiary education in Auckland. The educated Tongan women in this study equate completed degrees or tertiary qualifications with better incomes and more opportunities which further translate to a better lifestyle for them and their families. The ‘overflow’ of their attainment is an important aspect of higher education for these women. With the completion of the study pursued, a Tongan woman is validated and warranted the right to ‘inspire’ others to higher education – ‘passing on the baton’ of a tertiary qualification is a form of collective *fakalalakalaka*.

I was fortunate enough to meet with ten of the educated Tongan women, who took part in the study, in the final stages of the analysis of data on the 22nd of October, 2011. The purpose of this meeting was three-pronged; to thank the women for their contribution to the study by way of a ‘feed’ (which is in line with the *Teu Le Vā* approach of reciprocity embraced in the study), secondly, to give feedback on the preliminary findings of the study. The third objective of the gathering was to allow the women to feed forward any of their comments on the preliminary findings and the research in general. We met at a local restaurant and spent an evening engaging in a dialogue that naturally was drawn back to the concepts of *fakalalakalaka*, holistic dimensions, *anga faka-Tonga* and identity as academics and as Tongan women. As an inside researcher I was inspired by the wealth of knowledge these women had brought to the table once again; the collective discussion added yet another dimension on the individual *talanoa* sessions that had taken place. It was assuring to hear that the findings were valid, and humbling to be the one to share the stories of such remarkable women. What was also memorable was observing the faces of the two younger women who had attended the evening. At the time, these two women were in the process of preparing for end of year examinations and assessments towards their first degrees. The amount of self-belief that they had gained from listening to the stories of those who had completed their studies was priceless. The true value of that evening’s gathering was the gift of inspiration that the graduate and postgraduate women had given to these budding academics.

I.2: “Education is not complete with the gaining of a qualification on paper, it is complete when we can look back and say, ‘I have done to the best of my ability’ and another generation can go through that same door of opportunity because of that one step of further education.”

5.2.3. Higher Education is Not ‘The Be All and End All’

Although the women agree that a progression “from one level to another” can happen “through tertiary education” they clearly state that higher education only “contributes to the process of *fakalalakaka*”. Again, this supports the notion presented in the literature (Faleolo, 2009; Herlin, 2007; ‘Ilaiu, 1997) that in order for a Tongan woman to progress or develop completely, all aspects or dimensions of her life must go through this process of betterment. Different aspects of a Tongan woman’s life, including the changes that take place, are considered areas of *fakalalakaka*. Home and family, child-rearing, education, employment, community versus individual success; these are components of a Tongan women’s holistic world that the literature (Faleolo, 2009; Herlin, 2007; ‘Ilaiu, 1997; Kupu, 1989; Maka, 2006; Ministry of Education, 2011a) as well as the findings from this study deem to be significant in the progress or development of educated Tongan women. One woman shared the importance of putting higher education into perspective after her work experience in Fiji:

I.11: “...*fakalalakaka* is a problematic term, since development and progress is subjective to a cultural, social, economical and technological consensus to name a few. I think there are so many things which education does not progress, and personally has created a narrowing perspective or unrealistic view of the practical life beyond the tertiary institution world. Education and further studies, therefore, are only a part of *fakalalakaka* in its wider sense. It is not the be all and end all, it is a means for a certain population and society that require skills, tools, qualifications to operate and fulfil their perceived purposes within their chosen communities and industries. I think of a lady who may live in a remote village in Fiji, further studies may not necessarily be *fakalalakaka* for her purpose within her village. Perhaps it may esteem her family having such a high qualification, but with entrepreneurial and practical skills with basic education from an elementary or secondary school could be sufficient....Personally, I found I have had to migrate from Fiji to a developed country like Australia to have my tertiary qualifications fully used to its capacity. So *fakalalakaka* varies in each society and community. *Fakalalakaka*, then for me is a step closer towards to what makes my life meaningful.”

5.3. Higher Education While Meaningful to Many, is Less So if it Does Not Engage a Women Holistically

Higher education in New Zealand is considered by the educated Tongan women of this study as a meaningful form of *fakalalakaka*. The notion of *fakalalakaka fakalukufua* links the holistic spheres of educated Tongan women both to their successes in higher education as well as to their perspectives on learner disengagement.

5.3.1. Higher Education is a Meaningful form of *Fakalalakalaka* for *Pasifika* learners

The significance of what is ‘meaningful’ education for *Pasifika* learners, as with the educated Tongan women in this study, is that this is a current focus in the New Zealand Ministry of Education ‘*Pasifika* Education Plan’ (2011*d*) and ‘The Compass for *Pasifika* Success’ (Ministry of Education, 2011*a*). The Ministry of Education (MoE) acknowledges that *Pasifika* learners operate and can negotiate successfully through their spiritual, social, political, cultural and economic worlds. Further to this, the MoE also appreciates that *Pasifika* learners are not ‘flying solo’ and that their success is nestled in the progress of their families and communities. The findings in this study of educated Tongan women’s perspectives support these truths acknowledged by the MoE (2011*a*; 2011*d*).

5.3.2. Higher Education is a Meaningful form of *Fakalalakalaka* for Tongan Women in New Zealand

The fifteen educated Tongan women in this study agree on the notion that higher education is a ‘meaningful’ form of progress or *fakalalakalaka* in New Zealand. The aspects of ‘meaningful’ tertiary experiences in New Zealand listed by the women (refer to section 4.7 of the previous chapter), reveal once again that the holistic dimensions are what bring ‘meaning’ to *fakalalakalaka* or higher education (Faleolo, 2009). For instance, the importance of content relevance in the learning programmes links to their ability to apply the knowledge and skills gained in their families and communities, as well as their careers and lives (MoE, 2011*a*).

I.1: “this qualification (Graduate Diploma in Teaching) allowed me to put my youth leadership in a framework – skills and knowledge I got transferred everything I got to youth in church and family...”

I.4: “I was able to return to Tonga and use that qualification in teaching for 13 years.”

The *talanoa* dialogue reveals that higher education in New Zealand enables educated Tongan women to ‘connect with others’, ‘help out’, ‘inspire’ or ‘support’ others in their family, church, community or networks. This social aspect makes tertiary education ‘meaningful’ to the lives of educated Tongan women (‘Ilaiu, 1997). The educated Tongan women identify that this desire to serve others or to have a cause beyond themselves ‘resonates from a Christian worldview’, which again shows a relationship between their ‘mind’, ‘social’ and ‘spiritual’ spheres.

Another particular aspect of attending university in New Zealand that has been deemed ‘meaningful’ by educated Tongan women is the ability to overcome obstacles in their personal journeys such as the language barrier, the culture shock, traditional boundaries, the new-found freedoms and the distractions that come with it. The educated Tongan women attribute their ability to face life’s challenges as ‘life-long learners’ to the tenacity achieved during their tertiary education experience:

I.3: “My one whole year at university when studying for the Postgraduate diploma in Public Health was very meaningful to me as a Tongan woman. I was 23 years old when I did this diploma, life wasn’t that easy especially at my age, there were lots of obstacles along the way, but I managed to get through it. It was a meaningful experience to me because I have learned a lot from this course; not only have I gained so much knowledge in my studies, but I have also gained so much confidence in myself as a Tongan woman.”

5.3.3. Disengagement in Higher Education is Also a Holistic Dimensional Matter for Tongan Women

On the other hand, some of the educated Tongan women gave reasons why some aspects of their tertiary experience were not considered ‘meaningful’. These women shared their disappointment of not achieving success at university because of a lack of engagement with the content in the course and a lack of attendance in lectures. As much as success at tertiary level correlates to the holistic dimensions of educated Tongan women, the opposite is true. The disengagement of Tongan women in their tertiary learning also relates to the events taking place in their holistic dimensions that may be a negative influence on their progress:

I.8: “The idea of education being ‘meaningful’ to me means ‘did I fulfil my purpose or not?’ This time (attempting a Bachelor of Commerce) was not meaningful...I hated that part of my study – it was a time when I had gotten myself into a serious relationship...it was very distracting; it emotionally tied me down, and it was a confusing time for me...one of my most worst years at uni because my mind was pulled in so many directions – my mind, my heart, my soul, my studies...I wasn’t doing well, I was failing...”

The ‘lack of engagement’ noted by the women in this study, although largely due to the ‘holistic dimensions’ of the learner, also requires a response from educators as suggested by Ferguson et al. (2008). According to Summerlee and Hughes (2010), there is a need for change that brings about higher education which is more ‘contextual’ to the learners’ community. Airini et al. (2010*b*), promote ‘relationship pedagogy’ as crucial to the success of *Pasifika* learners in New Zealand. This pedagogy of ‘relationship’ or *vā* balances the

‘responsibilities’ of meaningful learning (Airini et al. 2010a; Entwistle, 2010) as a collaborative process between educators and students.

I can personally identify with this frustration that the educated Tongan women in this study shared as they reflected on their ‘bad’ experiences of tertiary study. In hindsight, I look back on my earlier attempts at postgraduate study and I wonder if I could have made the situation better by being more engaged in my learning. It is a pity, but the purpose of going to class was ‘just to pass’ in those days. I was not captivated by the content, so I did ‘just enough’ to get the assignments done. Today, what I am learning about in my extramural studies is intriguing to say the least. Moreover, what is engaging me in my learning today is the fact that my ‘holistic dimensions’ are fully engaged in the process of *fakalalakaka*. I have gained confidence as a learner, professional confidence as an educator and ‘balance’ as a woman, as a wife and as a mother in the home. Most importantly I have gained a spiritual maturity where I completely rely on my God for strength and direction in life’s journey.

5.4. Holistic Dimensions Matter to *Fakalalakaka*

The holistic dimensions of educated Tongan women are significant in the process of *fakalalakaka*, particularly in their journey of higher education in New Zealand. Interestingly, the decisions made by the educated Tongan women in this study to complete further studies are largely driven by the familial and spiritual spheres of their lives.

5.4.1. Tongan Women are ‘Holistic’ Learners

If we refer to the findings and answers given to the first two research questions, it is evident already what the answer to this question is. Yes, the holistic dimensions of educated Tongan women do matter in this process of *fakalalakaka* and higher education. As with the concept of *fakalalakaka fakalukufua* mentioned earlier, all fifteen women agreed with the concept of being ‘holistic learners’. The *talanoa* dialogue revealed the importance of the holistic dimensions in the process of *fakalalakaka* through higher education. Once again, there is an obvious correlation between the ‘holistic dimensions’ of educated Tongan women and the other themes of *fakalalakaka* and ‘meaningful education’ that have emerged from the data.

I am personally drawn to agree with the findings as I reflect on my current situation as an adult learner. What has been a truly rewarding experience is my recent return to study in 2008, which has been directed by my spiritual growth and faith in God, as well as redefined my cultural beliefs and values. This holistic experience has renewed my mind-set about who I am as an educated Tongan woman, allowing me to realise my capabilities as an academic. It has been a ‘rebirth’ for me as an adult learner to take up an extramural postgraduate learning programme which has been a ‘perfect fit’ for my holistic world (as a wife, mother, teacher, learner). It has allowed me to be the ‘helpmeet’ for my husband, whilst continuing to financially provide for my family’s needs as well as have the opportunity to continue learning as an academic; it has reignited a hope that my life as a Tongan woman, as a *Pasifika* can be successful and fulfilling both as an individual and collectively as a family – *fakalalakalaka fakalukufua*.

5.4.2. The Familial and Spiritual Spheres are the Most Significant Spheres

When asked to elaborate on the four dimensions in relation to *fakalalakalaka* and higher education, the women dwelt mostly on two spheres in particular. This is only telling of the fact that these spheres are most significant to the educated Tongan women. The familial and spiritual spheres of their ‘holistic dimensions’ are highlighted throughout the *talanoa* dialogue as being most influential in their decisions made to study towards a tertiary qualification.

Eleven of these women noted their affiliation with a Christian faith, church or community that had a major ‘spiritual’ impact on their life decisions. These educated Tongan women acknowledged God, God’s guidance, strength from Christ and their spiritual values and beliefs as core to their success in higher education. In addition to this spiritual dimension was their familial, communal and social sphere.

Thus raises the question of whether the findings from this study of educated Tongan women promote the notion of *fakalalakalaka* suggested by Herlin (2007) and ‘Ilaiu (1997). It is understood from the study undertaken by ‘Ilaiu with a group of Tongan women in Tonga, that true *fakalalakalaka* cannot take place without progress encompassing the holistic realms of well-being; an individual’s mind (soul), body and spirit, as well as their *fāмили* (family) and *kāinga* (community).

However, Herlin (2007) and 'Ilaiu both suggest the realm of *fāmili* (and consequently *kāinga*) as a defining reason or purpose for any form of *fakalalakalaka* including educational progress. Therefore, it is interesting to note that the fifteen educated Tongan women in this study emphasise the familial as well as the spiritual spheres as most important to them as 'holistic learners' in their attainment of higher education in New Zealand.

The educated Tongan women in this study mentioned 'better living standards' and 'better job opportunities' as a result of their qualifications. However, these were always linked to the 'familial' aspect of their lives. Koloto and Sharma (2006) find these same links being made by the women in their study of *Pasifika* women's economic well-being. Ten of the educated Tongan women assert that that their families were the most important factor contributing to their desire to persist and succeed in higher education. **I.3** states that this would be because "the family dimension is one of the significant factors of Tongan culture." Similarly, Taufa (1979) in a descriptive study of Tongan graduates emphasises the significance of one's family and the obligation that a Tongan student has to his or her family and the considerable influence of this aspect on their way of life. Despite this research being carried out thirty years ago, the findings of Taufa's (1979) work holds true with the educated Tongan women in New Zealand today.

Related to this 'familial' sphere, the data reveals the shared desire amongst the educated Tongan women to 'help others' or to 'contribute to the community' with their tertiary skills and experiences. According to these women, *fakalalakalaka* is not just about the individual's progress, it is always about the betterment of the family and collective. This is an 'outward looking' rather than an 'inward looking' perception on the value of higher education in New Zealand that has its foundations in the cultural values of the educated Tongan women.

5.5. *Fakalalakalaka* through Higher Education Affects the Cultural and Ethnic Identity of Educated Tongan Women and Vice Versa

It is evident that the process of *fakalalakalaka* through higher education in New Zealand brings about a change in perceptions for the educated Tongan women of this study. The perception held of their ethnic identity, of *anga faka-Tonga* in New Zealand and of their traditional roles as women is constantly under negotiation and is influenced by the holistic dimensions of each woman. This shift has led to an emerging dichotomy in the perspectives held by educated Tongan women. However, despite the changes and differences in opinion, the deep-rooted

values of *anga faka-Tonga* such as *faka'apa'apa* and *tauhi vaha'a* remain a vital ingredient in the 'make-up' of educated Tongan women in New Zealand, shaping their identity as well as their perspective of what is true *fakalalakala* and meaningful education.

5.5.1. *Anga Faka-Tonga* Subjectively Defined

What is clear from what the educated Tongan women have said is that *anga faka-Tonga* is a perceived way of life for them as Tongan women in New Zealand. How *anga faka-Tonga* looks in their homes and daily lives depends on their perceived 'cultural values' and how they are to 'apply these' in their daily lives as educated Tongan women. According to Morton Lee (2003) *anga faka-Tonga*, the Tongan way, is subjectively defined and measured against an 'imagined' norm.

5.5.2. Perception Change

The real question then is, 'has the perception of *anga faka-Tonga* changed for the educated Tongan women as a result of having had higher education?' Yes. For the majority of them, their identity and understanding of *anga faka-Tongan* has been strengthened or affirmed. For half of the women interviewed, it has been a total overhaul of their outlook on Tongan culture and practice as Tongan women.

Going to university in New Zealand impacts an educated Tongan woman's frame of thought. It gives breadth to her cultural perspectives by allowing her to see her own Tongan culture more clearly, as well as giving her a better view of what other cultures offer by way of 'thinking outside of the box'. As an educated Tongan woman, I often find myself at family occasions and traditional Tongan events observing what can often be taken for granted, with a 'renewed' appreciation. I liken it to almost having an 'out of body experience'; watching and learning from another 'frame of thought' that is both analytical and appreciative of the Tongan culture. Having gone to university and becoming learned in a Western context, I now have a wide-eyed fascination for my Tongan culture that did not exist before. It has also given me depth in my own understanding and perception of who I am as a Tongan and a confidence to justify my particular 'angle' taken on being Tongan. I do not restrict myself to associating with being Tongan only. I am also *Pasifika* within the community that I belong to in New Zealand.

Only six of the women identified themselves solely as Tongan. Most of the women in the study made connections in their cultural and ethnic identity to either being a ‘Tongan’ and ‘Kiwi’ (or ‘New Zealand-born’) or ‘Tongan’ and ‘*Pasifika*’. Morton Lee (2003) and Vaihu (2010) have noted a similar trend amongst younger Tongan women who embrace aspects of being ‘*Pasifika*’ in a diaspora context, like New Zealand. This new ‘identity’ as ‘*Pasifika*’ allows freedom to re-define and re-construct ones’ cultural and ethnic identity in New Zealand (Mara, 2006). The women who have identified themselves as either ‘Kiwi’, ‘New Zealand-born’ or ‘*Pasifika*’ clearly indicate that they are still very much ‘Tongan’. This supports Afeaki’s (2004) findings that the majority of New Zealand-born Tongans see themselves as ‘being Tongan’ and that there is still a place for *anga faka-Tonga* in New Zealand. This finding, however, does not support the notion put forward by Vaihu (2010) that choosing to be ‘*Pasifika*’ is an option for those who lack sufficient knowledge of *anga faka-Tonga*. In fact, the educated Tongan women who have identified themselves as ‘*Pasifika*’ in this study are well-informed of both their Tongan culture as well as their new ethnic identity. According to Pearson, this change in ethnic identification is “how people make sense of their surroundings and the similarities and differences they see between themselves and others” (Pearson, 1990, p.17). Therefore, the decision of these educated Tongan women to identify as *Pasifika* is not an ‘opting out’ on their Tongan culture, but rather an act of ‘adding on’ to their ethnic identity in New Zealand.

5.5.3. An Emerging Dichotomy in the Views of Educated Tongan Women about *Anga Faka-Tonga*

There is a connection between what women are defining their cultural and ethnic identities to be and their conception of what it means to ‘progress’, ‘move forward’, ‘change’, ‘become better’; developing as individuals (as a Tongan woman, as a *Pasifika*) and as a collective (family, community). This has resulted in the continuum of views held by the educated Tongan women reflecting what Afeaki (2004) and Morton Lee (2003) suggest to be a generational and cultural difference in opinions. The results from this study of educated Tongan women show no ‘generational’ pattern which is largely due to the fact that the bulk of the informants were in their twenties and thirties. However, there is an emerging dichotomy in the views of the educated Tongan women about *anga faka-Tonga* (Afeaki, 2004; Morton Lee, 2003; Vaihu, 2010). An interesting change that has taken place is that some of these educated Tongan women have had a recent revelation that their ‘traditional’

roles and boundaries are desirable. This was countered by the remaining women who detested the mere thought of being defined by the ‘home’ sphere. Some of the women in this study were adamant that the traditional roles of Tongan women were ‘outdated’ and should be a shared responsibility with the men folk. Hanifian (2010) supports this argument. This withdrawal of educated Tongan women from the ‘traditional roles of women in the home’ is captured by Kupu (1989) in her research on the changing roles of graduate women in Tonga.

5.5.4. Broadened Horizons and Worldviews

The educated Tongan women identified that a lasting form of *fakalalakalaka* has been the broadening of their ‘horizons’, thoughts or worldviews through higher education. In particular, the movement from more traditional Tongan perspectives and the ability to change the ‘status quo’ was attributed to having an ‘open mind’, ‘more knowledge’ and an appreciation for ‘another way’ of perceiving:

I.6: “I learnt how to critically analyse things, voice my own opinion and have the freedom to argue my stance on an issue...these things were never taught to me in Tonga. Whatever the teacher would say was the truth of the matter. It was considered rude and disrespectful to argue against them. During my year of Certificate (Health Science) study, I learnt how to think on my own; I learnt to develop ideas that had I been in Tonga, I would have never experienced.”

I.15 also tells of overcoming her ‘fear of questioning’ authority. It was only in her second degree that she had learnt to overcome this when she took up Pacific Studies with a group of lecturers that had understood her cultural mindset. According to literature (Afeaki, 2004; Hanifian, 2010; Morton Lee, 2003; Taufa, 2010; Tiatia, 1998; Vaihu, 2010) concerned with first, second and third generation migrant Tongans exposed to Western contexts, there is a growing ‘tug-o-war’ between the traditional Tongan ideals and the values of newly found homelands, such as New Zealand.

I.9 speaks of the contrasting worlds that Tongan women must operate in when in the Western context of tertiary education institutes. Hanifian (2010) shares similar perspectives from young Tongan women who have struggled with their ‘being Tongan’ and what this means within a Western frame of mind or context. Some of the educated Tongan women stated there are both ‘good and bad aspects’ of *anga faka-Tonga*. Because of this, **I.15** said that she had to create her own definition of *anga faka-Tonga* after discovering that the notion of *anga faka-Tonga* advocated by her parents was in fact non-existent in modern-day Tongan lives.

Hanifian (2010) and Morton Lee (2003) suggest that this constant negotiation of the ‘norms’ of *anga faka-Tonga* is in response to the tensions, ‘burdens’ and ‘limitations’ put in place by some aspects of *anga faka-Tonga* on Tongan women.

For some of the women in this study, *anga faka-Tonga* is changing in its application within their homes according to the values they perceive to be most important, and based on their perceptions of these values. It is the ‘choice’ or ‘freedom to choose’ that is important. The women note having a choice to stay home is important to them as educated Tongan women. Having a tertiary qualification affords them this choice.

5.5.5. Deep-Rooted Culture

Despite this obvious movement away from traditional Tongan perspectives, the women still claim that the ‘Tongan way of life’ *anga faka-Tonga* is an important part of their identity in New Zealand. In fact the process of *fakalakalaka* through higher education has enabled these educated Tongan women to clarify and redefine what their Tongan culture and identity means to them and their realities. The significance of their cultural identity as Tongan women has motivated them to complete their tertiary qualifications. There is an obvious pride in being ‘a minority’ in their area of study or being a pioneer and ‘trail blazer’ in their field. This supports the findings of Kupu (1989), Tau’akipulu (2000) and Taufa (2010) that Tongan women’s perceptions and experiences are still deeply-rooted in Tonga’s traditional and cultural ideals.

These cultural structures that Morton Lee (2003) and Taufa (2010) refer to are well and truly embedded in the lives of the educated Tongan women in this study and influence their dialogue about identity and culture. Several of the women attribute their success as academics and as Tongans to their values and application of *anga faka-Tonga*. These women said the values of *anga faka-Tonga* kept them grounded as Tongan women in a liberal New Zealand society. In particular two of the women shared their regrets for not having embraced more of their cultural values and *anga faka-Tonga* during their time at university. With hindsight they believe that the application of *anga faka-Tonga* would have ‘closed them in’, ‘disciplined’ them and allowed more success in their study. These findings are in stark contrast to the negative perspectives portrayed in Morton Lee’s (2003) and Hanifian’s (2010) findings about ‘burdens’ and ‘tensions’ being a core focus of dialogue amongst Tongan when

discussing *anga faka-Tonga*. Hanifian (2010) shares stories of young Tongan women who have become ‘victims’ of traditional *anga faka-Tonga*. I am a strong advocate of the fact that Tongan women are capable of ‘moulding’ their culture if required; culture is not so untouchable that one should feel victimised by it. The findings from this study show courageous acts amongst the educated Tongan women who have both challenged and re-defined aspects of traditional *anga faka-Tonga* that do not suit them and their families. On the other hand, the findings also show the humility and grace of these educated Tongan women who have been able to reflect on aspects of the Tongan culture that they may have once neglected and now choose to embrace in their affirmation of *anga faka-Tonga* in their identity as Tongan women.

Although my views today do not fully reflect my mother’s perspectives on the practical arrangement of gender roles, based on traditional *faka‘apa‘apa* in the home, the principles of *faka‘apa‘apa* forms my present understanding of ‘respect’ both in my private world as a wife and mother, and in my public life as an educator and academic. Similarly, several of the educated Tongan women in this study have taken the core values of *anga faka-Tonga* and applied these according to their understanding of what allows *fakalalakalaka fakalukufua*. In essence, although we perceive *fakalalakalaka* as a progressive movement that often entails change to our ‘practice’ of culture, we are still anchored by the lasting truths and ‘values’ of *anga faka-Tonga*.

5.6. Theoretical Framework and Research Methods

When considering the theoretical framework and data collection methods employed in this study and the impact of these elements on the findings, the following points need to be highlighted:

- With the study being founded on constructivism (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) and more specifically ontological relativism (Guba & Lincoln, 1998), the research treats the realities of the educated Tongan women in this study as ‘informed’ and ‘sophisticated’ based on the constructions being specific to the Tongan culture and the individual informant (although elements are shared among the group of educated Tongan women in this study).

- The case study approach embedded in this research has considered each educated Tongan woman as she exists in her ‘complete’ reality or context. This has been an appropriate way of considering the ‘holistic dimensions’ of educated Tongan women in New Zealand.
- With the approach of this study being a ‘qualitative’ study that attempts to make sense of the perspectives and experiences of educated Tongan women with discovering the meanings seen by the women themselves (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), the research allows for a more narrative-rich focus that has provided useable data to gain an in-depth understanding of the perspectives of educated Tongan women in New Zealand.
- The philosophical basis of *vā* (relationships) borrowed from the *Teu Le Vā* approach (Airini et al. 2010a) and utilised in the collection and analysis of data in the study created reciprocity of information between the researcher and informants. This *vā* has further allowed the positive implementation of the method of *talanoa* that has provided the study with authentic *Pasifika* knowledge and discourse (Havea, 2010; Latu, 2009; Vaihu, 2010).
- The method of *talanoa* allowed for a more ‘free-flowing’ dialogue that has created a rich ‘mosaic’ of information from the dialogue.
- The validity of findings rests on the trustworthiness of the data collected and processes of analysis. Two checkpoints for this study uphold the validity of the study’s findings. The first of these have been the initial verification of *talanoa* transcripts by each of the informants after the interview transcripts were transcribed. The second point of confirmation received from the informants was the ‘feedback’ session that took place during the final stages before the final report. Preliminary findings given to the informants allowed informant feedback on these findings; either to confirm or to amend findings for the final report. This process of simultaneous data analysis and data collection promotes trustworthiness of the data (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).
- Certainly there are ethical dilemmas that arise where there is least social distance between the researcher and informant. However, such proximity allows for a two-way personal involvement in the *talanoa* that a researcher can utilise to explore and truly understand what an informant perceives (Vaioleti, 2003), particularly when interviewing women informants (Oakley, 1981).

5.7. Synopsis of Discussion

This study acknowledges, through the *vā* and *talanoa* approaches employed, that the perspectives of the educated Tongan women in this study are a valuable resource which provides a basis for constructing relevant and authentic knowledge of the perceptions and experiences of educated Tongan women in New Zealand.

This chapter has sought to consider the ‘images’ built up from the data gathered from *talanoa* with educated Tongan women alongside the ‘analytic frames’ derived from theories in the literature reviewed (Ragin, 2011). The key findings and themes obtained from the data have been examined in light of the literature on Tongan identity and culture, education and holistic dimensions in *fakalalakalaka*. As advocated by Ragin, it is in this process of interaction between the analytic frames of theory and images or constructions of ‘realities’ (Guba & Lincoln, 1998) that leads to our refined understanding of the worldviews and perspectives of those who are being researched (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

The next chapter will further consider the implications of these perspectives on the final outcome of this study.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Introduction

In this final chapter concluding comments and recommendations will be made based on the key findings and implications presented in the previous chapter. The initial section of the chapter provides a summative consideration of the answers pertaining to the four main research questions. The second section of the chapter gives an overview of the strengths and limitations of the study. The third section is an evaluation of the extent to which the study might inform tertiary educational practice and policy, and suggestions for future research. The fourth section summarises the contribution of the study to answering the overarching question posed in the introductory chapter and presents a concluding statement to the study.

6.2. Summary of Answers

Based on the key findings and overlapping themes presented in the *talanoa*, the answers to RQ1 (Research Question One) reveal that the educated Tongan women in this study define their *fakalalakalaka* in relation to their education as *fakalalakalaka fakalukufua*. Herlin (2007) and 'Ilaiu (1997) advocate a similar concept of *fakalalakalaka*. However, what challenges this notion is the high importance that the educated Tongan women in this study have placed on two particular spheres; their familial and spiritual.

Based on the key findings and overlapping themes presented in the *talanoa*, the answers to RQ2 assert that the educated Tongan women in this study consider higher education in New Zealand a meaningful form of *fakalalakalaka fakalukufua*. The holistic dimensions of educated Tongan women are fundamental to their development both through higher education and in their life experiences as learners. The MoE (2011a; 2011d) and leading educationalists (Airini et al. 2010b; Ferguson et al. 2008) acknowledge the significance of *Pasifika* as 'holistic' learners in New Zealand.

Based on the key findings and overlapping themes presented in the *talanoa*, the answers to RQ3 reveal that the holistic dimensions of educated Tongan women do matter in this process of *fakalalakalaka* through higher education in New Zealand. The concept of *fakalalakalaka fakalukufua* once again emerges in this part of the study. The women in this study highlight the significance of the familial and spiritual dimensions in their lives. Herlin (2007) and 'Ilaiu

(1997) support the notion that the *fāmilī* is a defining aspect in the lives of Tongan women. This study also reveals the significance of the spiritual realm which is a sphere that is not emphasised by Herlin and 'Ilaiu.

Based on the key findings and overlapping themes presented in the *talanoa*, the answers to RQ4 indicate that *anga faka-Tonga* is a perceived cultural way of life for educated Tongan women in New Zealand that has been affected by their higher education and broadening worldviews (Afeaki, 2004; Hanifian, 2010; Morton Lee, 2003; Taufā, 2010; Tiatia, 1998; Vaihu, 2010). Morton Lee (2003) states that *anga faka-Tonga* is subjectively defined and measured against an 'imagined' norm. According to this study, the values of *anga faka-Tonga* are important to educated Tongan women and they are not 'victimised' by it as suggested by Hanifian's (2010) study of Tongan women. The perceptions and experiences of educated Tongan women in New Zealand are still deeply-rooted in *anga faka-Tonga* as suggested by Kupu (1989). However, the ideals and norms of these cultural structures are moulded or affirmed by these educated Tongan women in their 'broadened' capacity to 'think outside the box' and 'renewed appreciation' for their cultural and ethnic identity as Tongan women in New Zealand.

6.3. Strengths and Limitations of the Study

A critical reflection on the extent to which this study substantiates the aims and findings by way of its theoretical and methodological approaches reveals a number of strengths as well as limitations of the study.

6.3.1. Strengths of the Study

A number of strengths can be identified in the research, these include the following:

- The consideration of the perspectives of educated Tongan women on their experiences of higher education in New Zealand contributes to a growing literature in New Zealand that is written by *Pasifika* for *Pasifika* with *Pasifika*.
- The study promotes the principles of collaborative and reciprocal relationships between *Pasifika* researchers and informants as suggested by the *Teu Le Vā* approach (Airini et al. 2010a; Anae, 2007).

- The development of the notion of *fakalalakalaka fakalukufua* contributes to the limited Tongan literature that addresses the holistic dimensions of Tongan people specifically and the notion of *fakalalakalaka* in general.
- The understanding of what is ‘meaningful education’ from this study will better support the learning and holistic success of *Pasifika* learners as well as educated Tongan women across learning institutes in New Zealand.
- The study promotes the positive outcomes of higher education for Tongan women and *Pasifika* in New Zealand endorsed by the MoE ‘*Pasifika* Education Plan’ (MoE, 2009; 2011*d*), ‘The Compass for *Pasifika* Success’ (MoE, 2011*a*), and the *Teu Le Vā* approach (Airini et al. 2010*a*; Anae, 2007).
- The study provided a forum for educated Tongan women in New Zealand to be ‘heard’ and to have a ‘voice’. The feedback received from the women during the final gathering was that they were appreciative of the opportunity to share their *talanoa* and suggested that this ‘gathering’ should take place again as a way of inspiring higher education and building positive networks with other like-minded women. On this note, this study has also provided a ‘space’ for reflection and dialogue around the notions of ‘*fakalalakalaka*’, ‘meaningful education’, ‘Tongan culture and ethnic identity in New Zealand’, ‘*anga faka-Tonga*’ and the ‘changing roles of Tongan women’. All these themes have emerged as significant elements in the lives and perspectives of educated Tongan women.
- The impact of this experience on my learning journey as a holistic learner has been significant; spiritually, I am in awe of God and open to His plans and purpose for me in this ‘area of influence’; physically I have been tested with minimal sleep; mentally I am further inspired to study; and with regards to my *fāmili* (husband, children and parents), second to God, they are a defining purpose in my life as a Tongan woman living in New Zealand.

6.3.2. Limitations of the Study

A number of limitations can be identified in the research, these include the following:

- The selection process of informants for the study did not allow for a better consideration of the ‘generational gap’ that Afeaki (2004) identified. In this study, only one informant

represented the over forties category. The remaining fourteen informants were either in their twenties or thirties. Attempts to make comparisons between these limited decade cohorts showed no significant generational patterns.

- The researcher was bound by time and travel constraints that would not allow for the inclusion of other educated Tongan women living in other cities in New Zealand. This limited the recruitment of informants to the locality of the researcher in Auckland. Although email was an option considered for the gathering of data that would have removed this distance barrier, it eventually was only used as a ‘stop-gap’ measure with one informant who departed New Zealand after giving her consent to take part in the study. The email interview did have its benefits, but the face-to-face contact with the other informants residing in Auckland at the time was irreplaceable. This was particularly evident in the final ‘feedback’ session with the ten informants who were able to attend the event in Auckland.

6.4. Implications and Suggestions

Based on the findings of this study, how might this consideration of the perspectives of educated Tongan women on higher education in New Zealand inform better practice and policy for the New Zealand tertiary sector?

Ferguson et al. (2008) call for the “interrogation of current understandings, practices and terminology that work to inhibit equitable achievement outcomes for *Pasifika* learners” (p.3). The interrogation can only be complete if the knowledge replacing the old understandings brings about ‘meaningful’ progress to *Pasifika*. The findings of this study promote a depth of meaning regarding the holistic aspects (*laumālie*, *‘atamai*, *sino* and *fāмили* or *kāinga*) of a learner that needs to be embedded into any process that seeks to progress *Pasifika*, more specifically Tongan learners. Thus the findings of this study, if read in context and understood well, could bring a better awareness to educators, tertiary institute administrators and policy makers in the New Zealand tertiary sector of higher education. In particular, an awareness of what ‘meaningful’ education looks like in the eyes of the Tongan learner and an awareness of the current experiences of educated Tongan women in universities; what contributes to a better educational outcome, and what does not. The fifteen educated Tongan women in this study agree on the notion that higher education is a ‘meaningful’ form of

progress or *fakalalakalaka* in New Zealand. The holistic dimensions are what bring ‘meaning’ to *fakalalakalaka* or higher education.

In light of what the Ministry of Education has put forward in their current *Pasifika* Education Plan (2011*d*) and ‘The Compass for *Pasifika* Success’ (MoE, 2011*a*), this consideration of what contributes to meaningful tertiary achievement specific to a sector of the *Pasifika* community will be useful in informing further initiatives for *Pasifika* education in New Zealand. An interesting development is the embrace of *Pasifika* localised knowledge in the changes taking place in New Zealand’s future-focused *Pasifika* education planning (Coxon et al. 2002). There is a need for researchers to document this *Pasifika* local knowledge, both with the young and older generations in order to collate the breadth of views and experiences across cohorts.

This study contributes to the limited literature written by *Pasifika*, for *Pasifika*, with *Pasifika*. This is something that Airini et al. (2010*a*) promote as a significant movement beyond the notion of *Pasifika* communities being the ‘passive’ consumers of information to the realisation that they must instead be ‘active agents’ in developing knowledge that they themselves value and desire. **I.1** alludes to this when she speaks of ‘active participation’ in the process of *fakalalakalaka* through the system of higher education in New Zealand:

I.1: “...active participation of *fakalalakalaka* through education...(means) being one who initiates, who follows through...you don’t want your degree to go to waste...If you’ve got a tertiary qualification, you need to make the most of it... with *fakalalakalaka*, you don’t always want to be a leader – but be a part of the ‘core group’, the decision making part of how things are run – to actively discuss, reflect, use the skills learnt in our studies...it is when I’m in this ‘core group’ that I feel I’ve achieved the purpose of my goal, the goal that we’re trying to fulfil... If you’ve got a goal, (a) purpose, run with it and always be at the drawing board.”

There is a need for more research, specific to the cultural groups blanket-labelled as *Pasifika* in New Zealand that will better acknowledge the diversity of learners within this sector of New Zealand society.

6.5. Concluding Statement

The evaluation and overview of this study, as well as the implications, highlight the significance of the findings in the context of higher education in New Zealand for *Pasifika*, but more specifically for Tongan women who have sought to better the lives of their families and communities through the attainment of higher qualifications in New Zealand universities.

I will now draw on the concluding evidence of this study to answer the overarching question posed:

Is higher education in New Zealand a meaningful form of *fakalalakalaka* for educated Tongan women?

According to the fifteen educated Tongan women in this study, higher education in New Zealand is a form of *fakalalakalaka* that brings betterment to them as individuals as well as to the collective to which they belong. These women have defined higher education in New Zealand as a part of the process that completes *fakalalakalaka fakalukufua* – this is a notion of *fakalalakalaka* that encompasses the holistic aspects that are meaningful to educated Tongan women. What deems their higher education to be ‘meaningful’ or *fakalalakalaka fakalukufua* is the progress that occurs in their holistic dimensions; particularly their spiritual and familial dimensions. These dimensions are fundamental to their success as learners through the pathway of higher education in New Zealand.

The *fakalalakalaka fakalukufua* that the educated Tongan women speak about in this study is in fact a dual process of ‘broadening’ worldviews that comes about with higher education, as well as a ‘deepening’ of their appreciation for Tongan culture which comes about with life experiences in the New Zealand context. According to the educated Tongan women in this study, a telling indicator that their holistic lives were both grounded and progressing was the clarity that they had about their culture and ethnic identity. In particular, the importance of cornerstone values such as *faka’apa’apa* continues to influence the views that the educated Tongan women have of their many roles and responsibilities within the family and community. This in turn has influenced their career choices and ultimately affects what is considered to be a ‘meaningful’ qualification to attain in their higher education.

As I reflect on this notion of ‘broadening’ and ‘deepening’ through *fakalalakalaka fakalukufua*, I consider how this relates to my learning journey. Through higher education, my mind has been ‘set free’ to explore other worldviews that I come into contact with in my professional and public roles. As an educated Tongan woman in New Zealand, this is my ‘broadening’. Yet my feet remain firmly ‘grounded’. Learning and achieving within the Western context of a New Zealand university has given me a renewed appreciation of what it means to be ‘Tongan’, to be *Pasifika*. My spirituality, my family, my identity, my culture and my community continually remind me ‘*ko e Tonga koe*’ (you are Tongan). As an educated Tongan woman in New Zealand, this is my ‘deepening’. Hence higher education in New

Zealand is a form of *fakalalakalaka fakalukufua* for educated Tongan women; and for this pathway, we are truly grateful.

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GLOSSARY OF TONGAN TERMS

- *Ako* – education, study, learn, learning
- *Akonga* – learner, student, disciple
- *Anga faka-Tonga* – the Tongan way of life
- *'Atamai* – mind sphere including emotions and understanding that determine well-being
- *Fai fatongia* – carrying out obligations or duty
- *Faka 'apa 'apa* – respect, respectful way
- *Fakalakalaka* – progress, development, movement forward, improvement
- *Fakalakalaka fakalukufua* – holistic progress or holistic development that includes *laumālie*, *'atamai*, *sino* and *fāмили* and/or *kāinga*
- *Fāмили* – family, usually nuclei, could extend to immediate extended, e.g. grandparents
- *Fua kavenga* – fulfilling responsibilities or duty
- *Kāinga* – extended family, community
- *Laumālie* – spirit, spiritual sphere of a person including values and beliefs that guide well-being
- *Lea faka-Tonga* – the Tongan language
- *Loto tō* - humility
- *Mālohi* – strong, with strength
- *Mamahi 'i me 'a* – loyalty, dedication and commitment
- *Pasifika* – belonging to the Pacific Islands, people or objects or concepts from the Pacific region
- *Sino* – body, physical sphere of a person including health status and living standards that influence physical well-being
- *Talanoa* – conversation, talk, discourse, dialogue, story, storying
- *Tapu* – untouchable, sacred
- *Tauhi vā / tauhi vaha 'a* – Keeping strong/good ties/relationships
- *Tokoua* – sister, brother, cousin

APPENDICES

Appendix One: 'English Translation of Information/Invitation Package'



Massey University

Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa

A consideration of the perspectives of educated Tongan women: Is tertiary education in New Zealand meaningful to the learner and how does this relate to fakalalakaka?

INFORMATION SHEET

Researcher Introduction

Dear fellow Tongan academics, my name is Ruth Faleolo. I am a Tongan academic currently studying towards a Master of Education degree in Adult Education with Massey University. As part of this qualification, I am undertaking a study that seeks to consider the perspectives of Tongan women academics with regards to their tertiary education in New Zealand and what this may mean to them in relation to *fakalalakaka* (holistic development).

Project Description

The focus of this research is to understand whether tertiary education in New Zealand is 'meaningful' and to understand how this might relate to the concept of *fakalalakaka* – holistic progress or holistic development.

I believe that in order to better support the learning and holistic success of Pasifika learners across learning institutes in New Zealand, a better understanding of what 'meaningful' education and *fakalalakaka* looks like in the eyes of the holistic learner is required.

It is my hope that this study will help to inform learning programmes in the tertiary sector on what is meaningful education to Pasifika learners, in particular Tongan women academics.

Invitation

I would like to invite you to take part in this important study if you are interested in taking part in this study, your participation would be much appreciated. Should you choose to take part fill out and sign the enclosed consent form and return it in the postage paid envelope provided. You may keep the information sheets for future reference.

If you decide you do not want to take part in the study, you will need to return this pack (information sheets and consent form unsigned) in the postage paid envelope provided.

Participant Identification and Recruitment

Potential participants will be identified from within the Tongan academic community based in Auckland, New Zealand. The recruitment of these potential participants will be carried out by the distribution of the "Information/Invitation package" whereby you as potential participants will have the opportunity to read through information regarding the research both in English and Tongan (translated copies of documents provided in each package sent). As a potential participant you will have the choice of accepting the invite (by signing and returning the consent form in the postage paid envelope included in the package). However, if you decide to decline this invite, could you please, kindly return the package (in the paid envelope enclosed).

Fifteen participants from the pool of potential participants will be selected based on their availability and accessibility. This number of participants takes into account the amount of time which has been allocated to collecting the data during the months of May-August, 2011.

It is understood that some topics of discussion related to personal experiences in Tertiary study in New Zealand may cause some discomfort. Should any participant feel any discomfort with the types of questions asked of them or with the topics that arise in the *Talanoa* meetings that take place, you are entitled to the rights listed below in the section "Participant's Rights".

Project Procedures

Participants will only be required to give a maximum of 1hour and 30minutes for the *Talanoa* (interview) and another 1hour (optional) for the meal provided at the end of the research when the findings will be shared with the participants as a group.

Talanoa (interview) meetings will be set in consultation according to your availability/accessibility (this may either be face-to-face, via email, via Skype, via Phone or other means of communication that you may have access to). Face-to-face meetings may take place either at your home or at a meeting place that is 'handy' or familiar to you (this is to ensure that you are not inconvenienced and are comfortable with the setting of the meeting).

It is understood that most of the meetings will take place after hours, outside of normal working hours (between 5pm and 9pm) on weekdays or at a suitable time for you during the weekends (9am to 9pm on Saturdays and Sundays). These meeting times will not take place during your scheduled times of worship, be they on a Friday, Saturday or Sunday – consultation with you is crucial to setting a meeting time that is suited to your needs.

Once your signed consent form is received, a follow-up phone call will be made to you in order to schedule a *Talanoa*/meeting time. Following this, a letter will be sent to you to formally confirm your participation in the research and to advise you of the agreed meeting details (date, time, mode of communication) as well as an interview schedule that will be utilised in the *Talanoa*.

Data Management

Talanoa notes that will be taken during face-to-face, email, Skype, Phone, or other online means of communication will be typed up and sent to participants to correct and/or verify; this is done to ensure the integrity of the data which is collected and utilised in the research. Once each set of *Talanoa* notes have been (corrected if required and) verified by each participant, these will then be analysed as part of the raw data collected for the purpose of the research. Note: the meeting will not be recorded using any recording device other than the notes being taken by the researcher.

Notes will be kept on hard-drive storage for security and confidentiality reasons and all online traces of communication will be removed or deleted from emails, etc. Note, although participants are known (not anonymous) to the researcher, names of participants will not be used in any of the *Talanoa* notes taken or in any of the final documentation of the research findings.

Once the overall analysis and report is written, a summary of the findings will be shared with the group of participants at a final 'get together' evening where a meal will be provided to show my

appreciation of their sharing and storying, and contributing to the research. Note: any participant who is unable to attend this evening, on request, will be sent a “thank you” package containing their copy of the summary of findings that will be distributed to those who attend the evening meal.

At the completion and submission of the final report for this research, all data obtained from participants as in signed consent forms and dialogue notes from the *Talanoa* meetings will be disposed of in respect of the consent given by participants to utilise information given for the purpose of this research alone. All data obtained will be retained until this time when data is disposed of by shredding.

Participant’s Rights

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to: decline to answer any particular question; withdraw from the study (specify timeframe); ask any questions about the study at any time during participation; provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher; be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.

Project Contacts

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If you have any questions about the research project, please feel free to contact the researcher and/or supervisors.

Committee Approval Statement

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 11/24. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Nathan Matthews, Acting Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 350 5799 x 8729, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz



Massey University

Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa

***A consideration of the perspectives of educated
Tongan women: Is tertiary education in New Zealand
meaningful to the learner and how does this relate
to fakalalakaka?***

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature:

Date:

.....

Full Name - printed

.....

Appendix Two: 'Tongan Translation of Information/Invitation Package'



Massey University

Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa

Ko hono fakakaukaua 'o e fotu mai 'a fafine Tonga 'i he ngaahi ako mā'olunga faka'atamai: 'Oku 'uhingamālie nai ki he tokotaha ako mā'olunga 'i Nu'u Sila 'a e fekāinga'aki 'a e ako mā'olunga mo e fakalalakaka?

Ko e Fakafe'iloaki 'o e Tokotaha Fekumi

Si'i kau fafineTonga ako faka'atamai,

Fakatulou atu, pea tapu mo hou'eiki. Ko hoku hingoa ko Lute ('Ilaiu) Faleolo. Ko e Tonga pea 'oku ou lolotonga ako 'i he Univesiti 'o Massey ki hoku mata'itohi MA 'i he ako faka'atamai kau ki he kakai lalahi, (Adult Education). Ko e kongā 'o e polokalama ako ni, ko e fekumi pe fakatotolo ki hono fakakaukaua 'o e ngaahi fakafotunga 'o e kau fafine Tonga ako faka'atamai 'i hano fakahoa ki he'enau ako mā'olunga 'i Nu'u Sila ni mo 'ene fekainga'aki mo e 'fakalalakaka'.

Ko e Taumu'a 'o e Fekumi mo e Fakatotolo

- Oku taumu'a 'a e fekumi ni ke fakamahino'i pe oku 'uhinga-malie 'a e anga o hono fakafelāve'i e ako mā'olunga ni pea anga feefee 'ena felave'i mo e fakakaukau 'oe fakalalakaka – pe tupulekina fakakātoa mo fakalukufua 'a e tokotaha ako.
- 'Oku ou tui ka lelei ange hano poupoua 'o e ako mo e lava'i fakalukufua 'e he kau ako mā'olunga mei he Pasifiki (taufefito ki he kakai fafine Tonga) 'i he ngaahi ako'anga mā'olunga 'o Nu'u Sila ni, 'e mahino lelei ange ai ha ako 'oku fonu 'uhinga lelei mo fakalalakaka 'o hangē ko hono fiema'ua 'e ha taha ako fakalukufua.
- 'Oku ou 'amanaki ko e ako ni 'e tokoni ke fakamahino atu kiate kinautolu 'oku nau fakalele 'a e ngaahi polokalama he 'elia 'o e ako mā'olungā 'a ia oku mahino ki he kau ako Pasifiki, kae taufefito ki he kau fafine Tonga ako faka'atamai.

Ko e fakaafe ke kau mai ki he Fekumi ni

'Oku ou fakaafe'i koe, kapau 'oku ke fie kau mai ki he fekumi ni, 'oku ou talitali lelei koe, pea ke kātaki fakamolemole 'o fakafonu mo fakamo'oni hingoa 'i he foomu pea meili mai 'i he sila ko ena kuo 'osi totongi ki hano li fakafoki mai kiate au. Kātaki 'o tauhi e ngaahi la'i pepa fakamatata ki ha'o fiema'u he kaha'u.

Kapau 'oku 'ikai te ke tali ke ke kau he Fekumi ni, kātaki 'o fakafoki mai e ngaahi pepa ni ('o ikai te ke fakamooni hingoa ki ai) 'i he sila ko ena kuo 'osi totongi ki hano li fakafoki mai.

Ko e Fakamo'oni 'o kinautolu 'e kau mai ki he Fekumi

Ko kinautolu 'e kau mai 'e fakapapau'i ia mei he kominiuti ako mā'olunga faka-Tonga oku 'i 'Okalani, Nu'u Sila. Ko e founa hono tali 'a kinautolu e kau mai, e fai 'aki ia hano foaki atu kiate kinautolu e ngaahi "kofukofu o e fakamatata mo e fakaāfe" a ia e ma'u ai ho faingamālie ke ke lau e ngaahi

fakamatala fekau'aki mo e me'a ke ke fai 'i he lea faka-Papālangi mo e fakaTonga (ngaahi tatau kotoa 'o e fakamatala 'i he kofukofu). 'Oku mahu'inga ke ke 'ilo pau kuo fakaāfe'i koe, ko ia kātaki 'o fakamo'oni hingoa leva pea meili'i mai ho'o foomu 'i he sila kuo 'osi totongi ke fakafoki mai ai). Pea kapau te ke fili ke 'oua te ke kau mai ki he ako ni (kātaki o fakafoki mai kotoa e ngaahi pepa 'i he sila kuo 'osi totongi ke fakafoki mai ai). 'Oku ou fakamālō lahi atu 'aupito.

Ko e toko 15 'e fili'i mei he kotoa 'o e kau loto ke kau mai, pea e makatu'unga ia 'i he 'enau 'ata'atā mo lava ke kau mai. Ko kinautolu ko eni e fili'i 'e fakafuofua pe tokolahi fe'unga ki he taimi nounou ke

Ko e anga 'o hono fokotu'utu'u 'o e palani fekumi

Kapau teke fie kau mai, 'oku 'i ai 'a e faka'amu keke tuku mai mu'a ha houa e taha miniti 'e tolunoa, ke fai ai ha *Talanoa* faka'eke'eke mo koe, pea mo ha houa e taha makehe (fili tau'atāina) ke tau fakataha 'o ma'u me'a tokoni ai he 'osi a e fekumi fakatotolo, pea e fai leva e talanoa fevahevahe'aki fakakatoa 'o e kulupu 'oku kau mai ki he fekumi.

Ko e ngaahi fakataha pō-talanoa faka'eke'eke 'e fokotu'utu'u ia 'o fakataha ki ho'o taimi 'ata'atā mo ho'o tau'atāina (mahalo pe ko e fakataha, pe tuku fekau he komipiuta 'imeili mo sikaipi, pe telefoni, pe ko ha fa'ahinga fetu'utaki kehe e fai ai ha fetaulaki). Ko e fakataha 'o po-talanoa 'e ala fai ki ho 'api pe fakataha'anga 'i ha potu ofi ki ha feitu'u 'oku ke anga maheni kiai ('oku 'uhinga eni ke fakapapau'i oku ke fiemālie mo 'ata'atā ki'he fokotu'utu'u 'o e fakataha ke pō-talanoa).

'Oku mahino ko e kongā lahi 'o e ngaahi fakataha 'e fai ia 'i he taimi 'ata'atā mei he ngaahi houa ngāue maheni (vaha'a 5 efiāfi mo e 9 efiāfi) 'i he lolotonga 'o e uike pe ha taimi faingamālie lolotonga 'a e ngaahi 'aho mālōlō (mei he 9 pongipongi ki he 9 efiāfi 'o e Tokonaki mo e Sāpate). Ko e ngaahi taimi fakataha 'e 'ikai fai ia lolotonga ho ngaahi taimi femo'uekina ki he lotu, 'e fai pe ia 'i he Falaite, Tokonaki, pe Sāpate –'oku fu'u mahuinga ke pau e taimi fakataha pea ke lelei kiate koe mo ho'o ngaahi fiema'u.

Ko 'ene ma'u mai pe 'a e foomu 'oku ke fakamo'oni ai 'oku fie kau mai ki he fekumi, 'e fai atu leva ha telefoni 'o fakapapau'i ha taimi fepōtalanoa'aki pe taimi fakataha. Hili ia 'e li atu leva he meili 'a e tohi ke fakapapau'i 'a ho'o kau 'i he kau fekumi pea 'e fale'i koe ki he fakaikiiki 'o e fakataha kuo fai e felotoi ki ai ('aho, taimi, anga 'o e fetu'utaki) pea 'ikai ko ia pe ka ko e ngaahi fehu'i mo e topiki 'e fai ki ai 'a e pōtalanoa.

Fakamatala 'o e Fakalele ngaue felave'i mo e ngaahi fakamatala kuo 'osi ma'u mai

Ko e ngaahi tohi fakamatala 'o e fepotalanoa'aki 'e hiki ia lolotonga 'a e taimi *Talanoa* femataaki, pe tuku fekau 'i he komipiuta 'imeili pe sikaipi, telefoni, pe ha founga kehe 'o e fetu'utaki. 'E taipi 'i 'a e ngaahi pō-talanoa pe fakamatala ko eni pea 'e 'oatu kiate koe ke fakatonutonu mo fakapapau'i, oku fai eni ke pau 'aupito 'a e fai totonu mo ma'a e ngaahi me'a 'oku tātānaki mo e'a mahino mai 'i he fakatotolo mo e fekumi 'oku fai. Ko e ngaahi fakamatala kotoape kuo fai hano fakamo'oni'i 'e he taha kotoape 'e fai leva hano fatufatu mo fakakalasi, pe 'analaiso, ko e kongā 'o e ngaahi fakamatala kuo tanaki mai ki he fekumi ni. Tokanga'i ange: ko e fakataha talanoa pe faka'eke'eke kotoa pe, 'e 'ikai lekooti ia 'aki ha misini hiki tepi pe faitā ka ko hono hiki pepa, tohi pe 'a e fakamatala 'e he Tokotaha Fekumi.

Ko e ngaahi fakamatala 'e tauhi malu 'aupito ia ki he ngaahi 'uhinga malu'i mo e ngaahi fakatotolo fetu'utaki komipiuta kotoape 'e tamate'i kotoa pe ia. Tokanga'i ange 'i he tu'unga ko eni 'o e fekumi 'e 'ikai fakae'a 'a e hingoa 'o ha taha 'oku kau ki he fekumi mo e fakatotolo. Pea 'e 'ikai fakahā hono hingoa 'i ha me'a lipooti fakatohi.

Ko 'ene lava kotoape e ngaahi fakaikiiki mo e fakamatala 'i hano hiki tohi, ko e fakaikiiki 'o e ngaahi 'ilo fo'ou e vahevahe atu ia kia kinautolu kotoape te nau kau he fakatahataha faka'osi 'i ha ma'u me'a tokoni fakeefiāfi, ke fakahaa'i 'eku fakahounga'i ho'o mou tokoni fekumi mo e pōtalanoa mo e tokoni'i

'o e fakatotolo ni. Tokanga'i ange: ko ha taha 'oku kau ka 'e ta'emalava ke ne 'i ai 'i he efiafi koia, 'e toki 'oatu pe ha'o kofukofu "fakamalo atu" 'oku 'i ai e fakaikiiki 'o e ngaahi 'ilo fo'ou pea 'e tufaki ia kiate kinautolu te nau lava mai ki he ma'u me'a tokoni fakeefiafi.

'I he'ene kakato mo hano tohi 'o fakahū 'a e lipooti faka'osi 'o e fakatotolo mo e fekumi ni, ko e ngaue kotoa pe kuo ma'u mei he kau tokoni pea fakamo'oni hingoa loto lelei ki ai he fepōtalanoa'aki kuo hiki pepa e faka'auha kotoa ia ko hono faka'apa'apa'i ho'o mou loto lelei ke kau he ngaue fekumi mo fakatotolo kuo fai. Ko e ngaahi fakamatala kotoa pē kuo ma'u 'e pukepuke pē 'o ngata pē 'i ha taimi e faka'auha ai.

Ngaahi totonu 'a e Tokotaha 'oku kau ki he ngāue fekumi mo fakatotolo

'Oku ikai ha me'a ke ke pōpula ki ai, pea 'oku ke tau'atāina ke ke tali pe 'ikai tali, 'a e fakaafe ni.

Kapau teke tali ke ke kau kau mai ki he fekumi ni, 'oku 'i ai leva ho'o totonu :

- Ke ke fakafisi ke tali ha fa'ahinga fehu'i pe;
- Ke ke mavahe pe nofo mei he fekumi ni (ki mu'a he taimi fakataha pōtalanoa)
- Ke ke fehu'i fekau'aki mo e fakatotolo 'i ha fa'ahinga taimi pe, - mei he kamata'anga ki he faka'osi 'o ho'o kau ki he fekumi;
- Ke ke 'omai fakamatala 'i ho'o 'ilo pau ko ho hingoa 'e 'ikai ngāue'aki kae'oua ke ke 'oange ha fakangofua ki he tokotaha fekumi mo fakatotolo;
- Ke ke ma'u e fakamatala fakalukufua 'o e ngaahi 'ilo fo'ou mei he fekumi 'i he taimi 'e faka'osi ai 'a e fekumi mo fakatotolo ni.

Ko e ngaahi fetu'utaki felave'i mo e ngāue fekumi:

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Kapau 'oku 'i ai ha'o fehu'i 'o kau ki he ngaue fakatotolo ni, kātaki ongo'i tauatāina ke fakafe'iloaki ki he tokotaha fakatotolo mo fekumi pe koe ongo supavaisa 'oku na tokanga'i mo tokoni ki he fekumi mo fakatotolo ni.

Ko e faka'ataa mei he Komiti 'Massey University Human Ethics'

Ko e ngāue fakatotolo ni kuo fai hono sivi'i pea faka'ataa 'e he Komiti ki he 'Ulungaanga fakatangata (Massey University Human Ethics) ke hook atu e ngāue ni: Tohi Kole ki he vāhenga Southern B 11/24. Kapau 'oku ke tātāla'a 'o kau ki he 'ulungaanga fakalele 'o e fekumi ni kātaki fetu'utaki kia Dr Nathan Matthews, ko e tokoni sea ki he Massey University 'i he tafa'aki 'o e Ulungaanga fakatangata (Human Ethics): Vāhenga Southern B, telefoni 06 350 5799 x 8729, Email ki humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz.



Massey University

Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa

***Ko hono fakakaukaua 'o e fotu mai 'a fafine Tonga 'i
he ngaahi ako mā'olunga faka'atamai: 'Oku
'uhingamālie nai ki he tokotaha ako mā'olunga 'i
Nu'u Sila 'a e fekāinga'aki 'a e ako mā'olunga mo e
fakalakalaka?***

FOOMU FAKAMO'ONI KE KAU

Oku ou 'osi lau a e ngaahi la'i pepa fakamatala fekau'aki pea mo e fakatotolo mo e fekumi 'oku fai pea oku osi mahino a e ngaahi fakaikiiki felāve'i mo e akoni. Oku ou fiemālie pe mo e ngaahi fakamatala fekau'aki pea moe e fekumi ni, pea oku mahino kia au 'oku malava pe keu fehu'i fekau'aki mo e ako fakatotolo 'i ha taimi pe lolotonga, mei he kamata'anga ki he faka'osi 'o 'eku kau i he fekumi ni.

Oku ou loto keu kau 'i he ako fekumi ko eni 'o fakatatau ki hono fakaikiiki kuo 'osi fokotu'utu'u 'i he ngaahi la'i pepa fakamatala fekau'aki mo e fakatotolo mo e fekumi ni.

Fakamo'oni:

'Aho:

Hingoa kakato:

Appendix Three: 'Thematic Coding Scheme'

CODE	Explanation	THEME
FK – Green highlight	progress, development, forward movement, betterment, improvement	<i>fakalalakala</i>
ME – Red text	education that is meaningful to the participant	meaningful education
HD – Blue text	the holistic spheres or realms of the participant – spirit, mind/soul/emotions, body, family/community/friends, etc.	holistic dimensions
CI – Yellow highlight	perceived culture, ethnicity, identity of the participants	culture/ethnicity and identity
RW – Pink highlight	perceived roles of Tongan women	roles of Tongan women
AT – Turquoise highlight	the understood way of life for Tongan people in New Zealand and back in Tonga, according to the participants	<i>anga faka-Tonga</i>

Appendix Four: 'Samples of Transcript Coding and Analysis'

(Transcript sample taken from Informant One Talanoa; Second Section, Qualification D, Q4)

4. Was it meaningful to you as a Tongan woman? YES / NO (Explain further):

- As a Tongan woman – my community respects me – with the Polyfest they really do respect you as a professional – someone who is a profession...the fact that you can be that role model (teacher) to them – makes it easier for them to pursue their dreams. (CI – culture/ethnicity and identity; HD – holistic dimensions)
- When you 'give yourself' as a representative of the profession – (it's a humbling job)...I'm given recognition at church for my profession...I'm asked to MC functions...I usually prefer to speak English, however, my Tongan language has enabled me to take up those opportunities and 'stage fright' has been eliminated...there are usually male in these MC roles – but as a woman – I know we can do it (FK – fakalalaka; CI – culture/ethnicity and identity; RW – roles of Tongan women)
- I always present myself in kiekie/ta'ovala...this has helped...the functions or events that I have MC'd at are traditional ones...I cover up – this is the safe way of doing things. (AT – anga faka-Tonga)
- Younger ones = want to wear short dresses
As a Tongan, and as a teacher, you adhere to NZC standards – and you present yourself well. (CI – culture/ethnicity and identity)

(Transcript sample taken from Informant Two Talanoa; Third Section, Q6 and Q7)

6. How would you define the term *anga faka-Tonga*?

- It has good and bad sides. Anga fakaTonga, it is good in the side of respect and knowing where you come from. But, it could be limiting when it comes to fakalalaka, as it hinders the way we learn, and our attitude to change i.e., cultural and traditional boundaries can limit someone from becoming the best that they can be. (AT – anga faka-Tonga; CI - culture/ethnic identity; FK - fakalalaka)

7. Which aspects of *anga faka-Tonga* do you consider as being most important?

- Being respectful towards other family members and elders
- Going to church on Sundays
- Learning to be 'young woman' (Proper Tongans)
- The importance of education (for our family at least)
- Taking care of my siblings (looking out for them)
- Learning to be hard workers and to be proud of it
- Praying together
- Times with extended families

(HD – holistic dimensions; RW – roles of Tongan women; AT – anga faka-Tonga; ME –meaningful education)

Appendix Five: 'Excerpt of MUHEC Statement of Approval'



MASSEY UNIVERSITY

10 May 2011

Dear Ruth

Re: HEC: Southern B Application – 11/24

A consideration of the perspectives of Tongan women academics: Is tertiary education in New Zealand meaningful to the learner and how does this relate to “fakalalakala”?

Thank you for your letter dated 4 May 2011.

On behalf of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B I am pleased to advise you that the ethics of your application are now approved. Approval is for three years. If this project has not been completed within three years from the date of this letter, reapproval must be requested.

Appendix Six: 'Interview Schedule Used in *Talanoa* Sessions'

(First Section, S1).

What tertiary qualifications have you studied towards or completed in NZ?

(Please fill out details, Circle correct answer)

1. Name of Qualification _____ (A)
2. Name of Institute/University/Tertiary Provider: _____
3. Study towards this qualification started (year): _____
4. COMPLETED? YES / NO completion date (year): _____
5. Study still in progress: YES / NO / NOT APPLICABLE
6. No longer pursuing this programme: YES / NOT APPLICABLE

1. Name of Qualification _____ (B)
2. Name of Institute/University/Tertiary Provider: _____
3. Study towards this qualification started (year): _____
4. COMPLETED? YES / NO completion date (year): _____
5. Study still in progress: YES / NO / NOT APPLICABLE
6. No longer pursuing this programme: YES / NOT APPLICABLE

1. Name of Qualification _____ (C)
2. Name of Institute/University/Tertiary Provider: _____
3. Study towards this qualification started (year): _____
4. COMPLETED? YES / NO completion date (year): _____
5. Study still in progress: YES / NO / NOT APPLICABLE
6. No longer pursuing this programme: YES / NOT APPLICABLE

1. Name of Qualification _____ (D)
2. Name of Institute/University/Tertiary Provider: _____
3. Study towards this qualification started (year): _____
4. COMPLETED? YES / NO completion date (year): _____
5. Study still in progress: YES / NO / NOT APPLICABLE
6. No longer pursuing this programme: YES / NOT APPLICABLE

1. Name of Qualification _____ (E)
2. Name of Institute/University/Tertiary Provider: _____
3. Study towards this qualification started (year): _____
4. COMPLETED? YES / NO completion date (year): _____
5. Study still in progress: YES / NO / NOT APPLICABLE
6. No longer pursuing this programme: YES / NOT APPLICABLE

1. Name of Qualification _____ (F)
2. Name of Institute/University/Tertiary Provider: _____
3. Study towards this qualification started (year): _____
4. COMPLETED? YES / NO completion date (year): _____
5. Study still in progress: YES / NO / NOT APPLICABLE
6. No longer pursuing this programme: YES / NOT APPLICABLE

7. Ethnic/Cultural identity – What do you identify yourself as?

(Please fill out details, Tick correct answer)

Tongan:

Pasifika:

Kiwi:

All of the above:

A Combination: of _____ and _____

Other (please specify):

8. *Have you always identified yourself as this?*

9. *Has this changed? If so, when?*

10. *If you answered 'yes' to question 9 – please explain further:*

(Second Section, S2. Note: this section was given in relation to the listed qualification A/B/C, etc. in the First Section, S1).

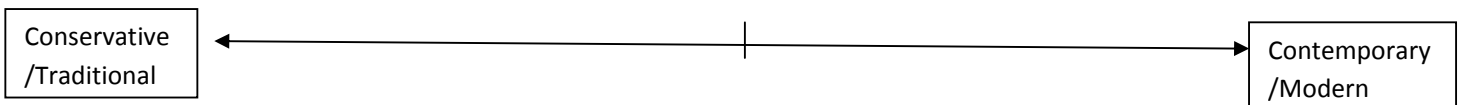
What has been meaningful in your tertiary education in NZ?

1. In relation to the qualification (A) _____ that you studied for at _____, during _____, would you consider this part of your education meaningful? YES / NO
2. If yes: Please describe what was meaningful about this experience and explain why:
3. If no: Please explain why this experience was not meaningful to you:
4. Was it meaningful to you as a Tongan woman? YES / NO (Explain further):

(Third Section, S3).

What are your perspectives on *Fakalalaka* and the holistic dimensions of a learner?

1. What is your perspective on the concept of *Fakalalaka* (progress or development) through education and further studies (tertiary level)?
2. Do you see your attainment of qualifications (A/B/C/D/E/F) as *fakalalaka*? YES / NO
Explain this further:
3. The concept of Tongan women being 'holistic learners' suggests that four dimensions should be considered in education – the mind/mental sphere, the physical sphere/body, the spiritual sphere, and the family of a learner.
 - a. What is your perspective on this?
 - b. Do you agree? YES / NO
 - c. Is there another sphere that should be considered in this 'holistic' concept of Tongan women as learners?
4. Does this concept of 'holistic learners' relate to your experience of qualifications (A/B/C/D/E/F)? YES / NO
Explain this further:
5. In your opinion, does *fakalalaka* relate to the four dimensions of – the mind/mental sphere, the physical sphere/body, the spiritual sphere, and the family of a learner?
YES / NO
Explain this further:
6. How would you define the term *anga faka-Tonga*?
7. Which aspects of *anga faka-Tonga* do you consider as being most important?
8. There is the view that our place as Tongan women is in the home. What is your perspective on this?
9. On the continuum below, where do you place yourself in relation to your current practice of *anga faka-Tonga*?



10. In your perspective, is *anga faka-Tonga* an important part of *fakalalaka* or progress?
Explain.
11. How was/is *anga faka-Tonga* embodied in your way of life as a NZ Tertiary student?
12. Any further comments?